"ME AND MUM":

New Zealand Adolescent Daughters' Stories
of their Relationships with their Mothers

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ABSTRACT

Adolescent daughters' perceptions of their relationship with their mothers were examined using a social constructionist approach, which identified two conflicting discourses regarding adolescence and the parent-adolescent relationship. The recent academic discourse emphasises the continuing importance of strong bonds between parents and adolescents, particularly between mothers and daughters. The popular culture discourse emphasises separation from and conflict with parents in adolescence, particularly between mothers and daughters. Ten adolescent girls aged between 15 and 17 were interviewed using the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI: George, Kaplan & Main, 1996) to investigate which of these discourses they subscribed to. A narrative approach was used to identify individual relationship themes and cross-narrative themes of agency and communion. These themes were very similar to those found in other comparable research, both national and international. New findings included the influence of the following contexts upon daughters' perceptions: their childhood relationship with their mother, significant events in their lives, their childhood and current relationship with their father, and cognitive maturation. Two groups of five were identified within the ten participants, distinguished by their ability to reflect on their relationship, their perception of their mother, and the amount of reciprocity in their relationship. Overall, the emphasis on mothers' continuing support and availability in daughters' narratives challenged popular culture's emphasis on separation and conflict in parent-adolescent relationships, particularly between mothers and daughters.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

"Mothers and daughters in adolescence". When people heard what the topic of this thesis was, their reactions were remarkably similar: a raised eyebrow, a frown, a cynical comment. The implication seemed to be that this relationship was always associated with trouble, conflict and intense emotion. To understand the reason for this stereotypical view it is necessary to review the changes that have taken place in how the second decade of life is viewed in academic circles and by society at large.

For much of its history, research on interpersonal relationships in adolescence has focused on the disruptive effect of the developmental changes of adolescence on attachment to parents (Collins, 1990). Researchers have been particularly influenced by psychoanalytic theories. From the analytic vantage point, the development of autonomy during adolescence is conceptualised as autonomy *from* parents; the assumption being that the adolescent is trying to separate from his or her parents (Apter, 1990; Steinberg, 1990). An adult identity is thought to be achieved by the adolescent moving outside the relationship with his or her parents (Youniss, 1983), and the adolescent's typical behaviour is interpreted in light of this assumption (Apter, 1990). Although these traditional theories are compelling, it is generally now agreed that they require extensive modification (Apter, 1990). Since the 1970s, a major shift has occurred in research on parent-child relationships during adolescence. Feminist revisions, attachment theory and research on adolescent development within the family have all contributed to this modification.

Feminist authors have highlighted the failure of traditional theories that describe an increasingly separate self to explain the results of studies of women. These results indicated that for women, self is not defined by moving away from interpersonal relationships, but rather is defined within a social matrix (Josselson, 1988). Attachment theory emphasises the importance of significant emotional bonds for healthy development and adjustment. This theory holds that the strong bond between a child and its primary caregiver fulfils an evolutionary need for protection, resulting in feelings of security and comfort through physical proximity (Bowlby, 1969).

Attachment theory argues that the importance of attachment bonds is maintained throughout adult life, and that security in adulthood is facilitated by psychological proximity to attachment figures (Bowlby, 1979). Research on attachment in adolescence has suggested that confidence in parents' support encourages adolescents' self-reliance and emotional wellbeing. More recent research and theory regarding adolescent development within the family posit that the developmental goal for adolescents is not to separate from their parents, but to redefine their relationship with them (Batgos & Leadbeater, 1994). This perspective views the parent-child relationship as a bond that continues throughout the lifespan, but is significantly transformed during adolescence and young adulthood as there is movement from unilateral authority towards mutuality (Youniss, 1983; Youniss & Smollar, 1985).

Thus, the academic view of adolescence and parent-adolescent relationships has moved away from 'separation' from parents outlined in traditional psychoanalytic theories to emphasise the development of self within continued connection with parents. However, Western society's view of adolescence, mediated through popular culture, is still heavily influenced by psychoanalytic theory, which holds that an important developmental task for adolescents is to separate from their parents, especially mothers. This task is portrayed as stressful and conflicted, with the most conflict thought to occur between mothers and daughters, particularly in early and mid-adolescence. It is argued that this view is also found within popular culture in New Zealand.

This study takes a social constructionist approach in its identification of these two contrasting discourses of adolescence and parent-adolescent relationships: the recent academic view and popular culture's view. These conflicting discourses are brought together in daughters' perceptions of their relationship with their mother. Recent academic theory and research suggests that adolescent daughters value and maintain connection with their mothers, yet because they are adolescent, they are under tremendous social pressure to gain independence from their family. Much of popular culture's writing focuses on the difficulties experienced by parents of adolescents. There have been few studies that investigate the lived experiences of adolescents themselves. In particular, until recently adolescent girls have not been much studied in psychology. This situation has been rectified, particularly by feminist

researchers, and there have been several recent overseas studies that have investigated the mother-daughter relationship in adolescence. However, there have been very few studies of adolescent-parent relationships in New Zealand, and none of these studies focused solely on the mother-daughter relationship during adolescence.

As a social constructionist study, participants' perceptions of their lives and their relationships with their mothers are considered as evidence of assumptions and beliefs about adolescence, motherhood and relationships between adolescents and parents in New Zealand. In particular, how participants perceive their relationships with their mothers (and other family members) provide evidence to suggest which of the conflicting discourses of adolescence and the parent-adolescent relationship they subscribe to. This study uses a qualitative design framework, specifically a narrative approach, to answer this central research question and others posed as a result of reviewing the literature.

Chapter 2 narrates the journey from traditional views of adolescence and the parent-adolescent relationship to more recent perspectives, as a background for the current study of mother-daughter relationships in adolescence and the specific research questions posed. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used for this study, including the reasons for the choice of research design, the interviewing procedure and the method and format of the analysis of findings. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study and compares these with other relevant studies, both national and international. Findings are presented firstly as participants' individual relationship narratives and then as cross-narrative themes. Chapter 5 is a discussion of the findings as answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 2. This chapter also evaluates the limitations to this study and its strengths, as well as suggesting areas of further research.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Although scholars have written about adolescents for centuries, adolescence as a separate life stage was not identified until the beginning of the twentieth century, when it was introduced to psychology by G. Stanley Hall in his work *Adolescence* in 1904 (Muuss, 1988). Hall and other writers around this time emphasised adolescence as a time of transition and restructuring, particularly within the individual's personality or sense of self, which remains a major focus of theory and research concerning adolescents to this day (Muuss, 1988; Petersen, Silbereisen & Sorensen, 1996). Although changes in many other developmental domains are also considered part of the stage of adolescence (for example, sexual, vocational, moral), the concept of identity formation (Erikson, 1963, 1968) is particularly dominant in the literature of adolescent psychology. Hall also introduced the notion that as a result of these changes, adolescence is inevitably a period of 'Sturm und Drang' – storm and stress (Muuss, 1988).

These early perspectives, which emphasise the disruptive effect of the developmental changes of adolescence, have had a significant influence on research and theory regarding interpersonal relationships in adolescence for at least the first half of the twentieth century. However, during the second half there has been a movement away from the influence of psychoanalytic theories to the recognition of the continuing importance of relationships with parents during adolescence. This chapter narrates the journey from the traditional views of adolescence and the parent-adolescent relationship to these recent perspectives, as a background for the current study of mother-daughter relationships in adolescence.

The chapter begins with an outline of the most influential psychoanalytic and neoanalytic theories, then illustrates the challenges and revisions made to these early perspectives by several theoretical frameworks: feminist theories, attachment theory, research on family relationships in adolescence. There is also a review of recent literature concerning the mother-daughter relationship specifically, and studies of

adolescence in New Zealand. The concept of social constructionism is then introduced, which contrasts the review of literature presented so far with society's view of adolescence, motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship. Finally, similar research studies of the mother-daughter relationship in adolescence are summarised as part of an outline of the development of the research questions for this study, which are presented at the conclusion of this chapter.

PSYCHOANALYTIC AND NEOANALYTIC THEORIES

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) founded the psychoanalytic theory of human development, which was based on biological characteristics of energy, drive and instinct (Muuss, 1988). Freud's theory remains influential in many areas of Western culture to this day, including this society's view of adolescence (see "The Social Construction of Adolescence, Motherhood and the Mother-Daughter Relationship" section later in this chapter). According to Freud, the adolescent's task is to free him or herself from emotional dependency on his or her parents, as part of resolving the second oedipal situation that occurs in puberty (Muuss, 1988). The first oedipal situation, referred to by Freud as the 'Oedipus complex' (Electra complex in girls), occurs in early childhood. During this phase (Freud's "phallic stage") children become aware of their genitals and begin to desire the parent of the opposite sex (Muuss, 1988). The Oedipus complex is resolved through boys identifying with their father. Girls, however, do not identify with their mother as a result of relinquishing their desire for their father. Instead, Freud believed, girls blame their mother for their 'castrated' state of femininity (Apter, 1990). There has been less empirical support for Freud's account of the female oedipal situation than the male's, and his assumptions about female gender identity formation have been challenged (Muuss, 1988) (for example, by Chodorow, as discussed later in this section).

In Freud's theory, the desire for the parent of the opposite sex is revived during puberty, albeit subconsciously. Emotional detachment from parents must be achieved in order to form an attachment to an opposite-sex partner (Muuss, 1988). Anna Freud, Sigmund's daughter, described detachment from parental authority as one of the most painful achievements of the pubertal period, involving the withdrawal of adolescents' affection from their parents and transferring it to their peers (Rice, 1999). An 'object hunger' develops as the adolescent disengages him or herself from

the primary love objects, his or her parents. The adolescent is now in a state of 'mourning' and may exhibit resentment and hostility toward parents as a result of this emotional loss (Adelson & Doehrman, 1980). Psychoanalytic theory thus provides an explanation for conflict between adolescents and parents and contributes to the idea of a 'generation gap' (Muuss, 1988).

Freud placed more emphasis on the first five years of life in human development than on adolescence. Among theorists who have been influenced by his work, Blos (1941) and Erikson (1963, 1968) in particular have tried to make up for this in their models of adolescent development (Muuss, 1988). Blos is one of the primary theorists in the neoanalytic orientation, which emphasises the process of individuation in adolescence rather than detachment (Steinberg, 1990). Blos has written extensively about the 'second individuation process' of adolescence. Individuation involves the adolescent developing a clearer sense of self as psychologically separate from his or her parents. In contrast to the traditional psychoanalytic view, neoanalytic perspectives do not focus on the behavioural 'storminess' of the adolescent's movement toward emotional and behavioural autonomy. In Blos's theory, much of this process is cognitive, not behavioural, and successful individuation does not necessarily require overt rebellion or conflict (Steinberg, 1990).

That this is a 'second' individuation phase indicates that it is based upon other theories about a first individuation phase. According to Margaret Mahler, the first individuation phase takes place during infancy, as the infant realises she is a separate being from her mother (Apter, 1990). Kroger (1996) explains the movement from the first individuation phase to the second:

> While the successful establishment of an autonomous self in life's earliest years rests with the toddler's ability to incorporate or internalise an image of its primary care-taker, such intrapsychic organisation hinders further development during adolescence. During the second individuation process, it is this very internalised parent which must be relinquished if development is to progress. Blos sees adolescence as a time spent unhinging the old intrapsychic arrangement of that which has been considered self (the parental introjects) and that taken to be other... A sense of heightened distinctiveness from others is the subjective experience following successful adolescent individuation.

Now others can be recognised as agents in their own right rather than merely as internalised orchestrators of one's responses to life (pp. 9-10).

According to Blos (1941), emancipation from the family is one of three goals that the adolescent must accomplish in order to achieve maturity. He speaks of the "shedding of family dependencies, the loosening of infantile object ties in order to become a member of society at large" (Blos, cited in Kroger, 1996, p. 71). Individuation does not require severing emotional ties with parents, however. Rather, discarding inter-nalised childhood object ties allows the establishment of more mature relationships with parents and new relationships outside the family (Kroger, 1996).

Another neoanalytic theory derived from Freud's work is Erikson's (1963, 1968) model of ego identity. Erikson's model uses Freudian psychosexual concepts, but also recognises the psycho*social* nature of identity, that the community has an important role in shaping the ego in adolescence (Kroger, 1996). This is evident in Erikson's definition of ego identity,

> [S]elf esteem gradually grows into a conviction that the ego is capable of integrating effective steps toward a tangible collective future, that it is developing into a well-organised ego within a social reality. This sense I have tentatively called, *ego identity* (Erikson, 1968, p. 49).

The process of developing a sense of ego identity begins at birth and continues throughout the life span; however, it is most important in adolescence, as it is during this time that "young people must become whole people in their own right" (Erikson, 1968, p. 87). Erikson views adolescence as the phase of the lifespan in which identity resolution can be achieved, by incorporating yet transcending all previous identi-fications to produce a new whole (Kroger, 1996).

> The final identity, then, as fixed at the end of adolescence, is superordinated to any single identification with individuals of the past: it includes all significant identifications, but it also alters them in order to make a unique and reasonably coherent whole of them (Erikson, 1968, p. 161).

However, Erikson also stresses that identity is never totally 'achieved' as a fixed entity, but is a "forever to-be-revised sense of reality of the Self within social reality" (Erikson, 1968, p. 211).

According to Erikson, the search for identity often forces adolescents to reject and rebel against their parents. The function of this rebellion is to free adolescents

from their childhood ego identifications with their parents and from their parents' control or authority. The peer group and other social settings (such as school, jobs) can also help individuals emancipate themselves from their family and find their own identity (Erikson, 1968). Although the individuation process is not specifically discussed by Erikson, he infers that individuation is part of developing an identity because in order for identity formation to be completed, the adolescent must achieve some degree of physical and psychological distance from the family (Sabatelli & Mazor, 1985).

It is important to note the gender differences in Erikson's model of identity formation. Erikson's identity formation stage of development in adolescence is about the "celebration of the autonomous, initiating, industrious self through the forging of an identity based on an ideology that can support and justify adult commitments" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 12). According to this model, the development of a secure sense of identity enables the adolescent to address the following tasks of intimacy, generativity and integrity in adulthood (Erikson, 1968). However, this is the male path of development. Erikson (1963) proposes that men first define their individual identity, and then are able to experience genuine intimacy. The developmental course is different for an adolescent girl: she does not develop her identity until she has found a suitable partner to fill her 'inner space' (Erikson, 1968). Her identity as a wife and later mother, is thus conferred upon her by her heterosexual partner (Nice, 1992). Feminist authors have criticised Erikson's model of female identity formation (see the following section, "Feminist Theories").

Chodorow's theory of gender identity development differs from traditional psychoanalytic theory in that it completely reworks Freud's female oedipal situation. According to Chodorow (1974, p. 46), all children begin life in a state of "primary identification" with their mother, in which they do not differentiate themselves from their mother. Chodorow (1974, 1978) posits that women define themselves in relation and connection to other people more than men do because women do not have to differentiate themselves from their mothers in order to develop their gender identity. Men, however, must differentiate themselves from their mothers in order to develop their gender identity and are therefore more likely to emphasise separateness more than connectedness (Chodorow, 1974, 1978).

Due to these differences in gender identities, girls and boys face their adolescence from very different positions. According to the psychoanalytic perspective, a boy is more likely to complete the adolescent task of separation successfully because he already has firm self-boundaries as a result of differentiation from his mother (Apter, 1990). In contrast, as a result of being cared for and socialised by women, a girl develops an identity based on relation and connection, a less separate self with less distinct boundaries between self and others, when compared with male gender identity (Chodorow, 1974). This then creates difficulties in developing autonomy, a sense of separateness, and extrafamilial attachments. Thus psychoanalytic theorists view the adolescent transition as more conflictual for girls than for boys: "the girl struggles with object relations more intensely during her adolescence: in fact the prolonged and painful severance from her mother constitutes the major task of this period" (Blos, cited in Apter, 1990, p. 68).

The continuing influence of this view has meant that the mother-daughter bond has often been portrayed as having an intensity so great that the relationship is difficult to navigate (Donovan, 1998). One of the chief sources of difficulty appears to be the process of differentiation and individuation. For adolescent girls, the movement towards individuation and identity development is thought to be influenced primarily by her mother, because the mother-daughter bond dominates the daughter's development at the very time she is developing a new sense of self (Apter, 1990). Chodorow (1974, 1978, 1980) believed that it is a girl's relational identity and identification with her mother that creates conflict within the mother-daughter relationship. Conflict between mother and daughter in adolescence is viewed by Chodorow and other psychoanalytic theorists as the adolescent girl's attempt to achieve differentiation from her mother, to loosen early object ties and establish an identity of her own (Aragno, 1998). Chodorow (1974) asserts that separation from the mother, breaking dependence, and establishment and maintenance of an individuated sense of self continue to be central psychological issues for Western middle-class women.

FEMINIST THEORIES

Chodorow's theory of gender identity development has had a great influence on feminist theories of gender differences in self-definition. During the 1980s many

feminist authors began to look at the psychology of women and how this differed from traditional theories of human development in adolescence and adulthood which were primarily concerned with male experiences. While some feminist authors have focused on modifying these traditional theories, others like Gilligan (1982, 1990) and Miller (1986, 1994) have listened to women's experiences and developed new theories based on assumptions that differ from prior models. Gilligan (1982) and others argue that these prior models of human development have not included or valued women's experience and have suggested that there is a need to theorise differently for males and females.

At the heart of this argument is the concept of gender differences in self-definition. Although these differences in self-definition do not necessarily divide along gender lines, several authors have noticed differences in the ways in which women and men conceive of themselves and their relationships (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Brown and Gilligan, 1992). Relatedness and connection, while important to both men and women, appear to be experienced and valued differently by each gender (Josselson, 1992). Specifically, feminist theorists have suggested that more women than men "define themselves in terms of their relationships and connections to others" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 8).

This argument is based on Chodorow's (1978) theory that posits that as a result of socialisation for relatedness since birth, women's self-esteem is based on their inclusion and competence in relationships. Miller (cited in Josselson, 1988, p. 99) states that "women develop in a context of attachment and affiliation with others [such that] their sense of self becomes very much organised around being able to make and then to maintain affiliations and relationships." Theoretical and empirical work has supported this statement, showing that women, in particular, define the self within a context of relationships to others, specifically in their ability to construct and maintain relationships (Jordan & Surrey; Kaplan, Klein & Gleason, cited in Batgos & Leadbeater, 1994). Gilligan (1982) has concluded that as a result of this relational self-definition, women conceptualise and experience the world differently to men; they have a 'different voice' which is more empathic and emotionally connected and less abstract.

> Illuminating life as a web rather than a succession of relationships, women
> portray autonomy rather than attachment as the illusory and dangerous quest.

In this way, women's development points toward a different history of human attachment, stressing continuity and change in configuration, rather than replacement and separation, elucidating a different response to loss, and changing the metaphor of growth (Gilligan, 1982, p. 48).

However, McAdams (1993) disagrees with Gilligan's claims of different ideological voices for men and women; he states that such differences have not yet been definitively proven by systematic psychological research. McAdams (1993) argues instead that men and women can have aspects of both agentic and communal ideologies in their conceptualisations of life.

Feminist authors have highlighted the strong gender bias in theories of human development. Belenky et al. (1986, p. 7) assert that the traditional developmental theories (such as those discussed in "Psychoanalytic and Neoanalytic Theories" section earlier) have "established men's experience and competence as a baseline against which both men's and women's development is then judged, often to the detriment or misreading of women." Both theorists and researchers have complained that the concepts of individuality, independence and achievement in traditional perspectives of development, particularly in adolescence, do not address the main issues of female development (Josselson, 1989). Several writers have also taken issue with the fact that the 'norm' has been determined by male concepts, with female development added on afterwards (Nice, 1992).

The problem that female adolescence presents for several of the traditional theorists of human development is apparent in Erikson's scheme (Gilligan, 1982). His theory of identity formation tends to be more like the usual male path to adult development, in which the adolescent must achieve some psychological separation from his or her parents in order to develop a personal identity, following which he or she can experience intimacy in interpersonal relationships. Feminist authors have argued that Erikson's theory does not make sense when used to study women's identity. Apter (1990, p. 111) states that "adolescent girls simply do not break those affective bonds so cleanly, nor do they develop a personal identity which precedes a capacity for intimacy."

In Erikson's model, female identity formation does differ from the male path to adult development. According to Erikson, a young woman tends to delay identity consolidation until she meets the man whose status will define her (Gilligan, 1982).

Many writers have criticised this concept, not only because it contradicts Erikson's proposal that identity must be defined before real intimacy can be experienced, but also because in today's society, many women are delaying marriage and children in order to pursue their identity in their careers (Kroger, 1996). Gilligan (1982) has argued that the identity and intimacy stages in Erikson's model should be reversed or coexist for women. Josselson (1988) believes Erikson's view of female development fails to acknowledge that for women, intimacy *is* identity, and is not achieved by choosing a partner, but in the development of ways of connecting with others – not just men. In her study of adult women, Josselson (1988) found that women talked about their relationships when asked about identity; issues such as industry, ideology and autonomy were not as important, or not mentioned at all.

The differences in women's ways of making sense of the world have resulted in several writers calling for a redefinition of identity that includes a concept of a self intertwined with others (Josselson, 1988). Miller and her colleagues at the Stone Centre (e.g. Miller, 1986; Surrey, 1993) have developed a 'self-in-relation' model of development which stresses the importance of connection rather than autonomy in adult development and describes self-development evolving within close relationships (Batgos & Leadbeater, 1994, Surrey, 1993). As Batgos and Leadbeater explain,

> the concept of a self within this theory is not one of a static individual being attended by the other, but of a self inseparable from dynamic interaction. …The ability to relate to others does not impair the individual's ability to be effective as a self (1994, p. 158).

These 'self-in-relation' writers also recognise the necessity of finding new psychological and cultural constructs to describe relatedness (Josselson, 1989; Miller, 1986), using a terminology "that is not based on inappropriate carryovers from men's situation" (Miller, 1986, p. 94). At the heart of the Stone Centre relational perspective is the concept of 'mutuality', which is "a way of 'being-in-relationship' where both or all participants can be authentically present" (Surrey, 1993, p. 119). A mutual relationship is characterised by each person being able to share their feelings and perspectives and influence each other (Batgos & Leadbeater, 1994).

The theorists involved in the development of this 'self-in-relation' model have questioned the validity of the dichotomies of dependence and independence,

autonomy and connectedness (Gilligan, 1990; Miller, 1986; Surrey, 1993). In the polarised view, one can *either* be focused on the development of the self (as valued in American, indeed, Western culture generally) *or* one can be focused on relationships with others (perceived as inferior, immature) (Josselson, 1992). To describe development solely from a relational perspective is just as misleading as describing it solely from the point of view of separation, as has been done in the past. As Josselson (1992, p. 15) points out, "Relatedness and individuality are not dichotomous." Development involves both differentiation of self from others and maintenance of connections with them. Differentation from others allows the development of individuality, which then produces greater responsiveness in relationships, which in turn helps redefine the self (Josselson, 1992). As Gilligan explains, "We know ourselves as separate only insofar as we live in connection with others, and... we experience relationship only insofar as we differentiate other from self" (1982, p. 63).

Studies of female adolescents have been particularly useful in illustrating this perspective. As Stern (1990) explains,

> If some sort of breaking away is a central concern of adolescence while connecting to others is a central concern for females, then we expect for female adolescents, the conflict between these opposing tendencies will create a major existential dilemma (p. 74).

Stern wanted to find out if adolescent girls maintained relationships at expense of their autonomy, or whether they could develop their sense of self without giving up connections to others. Stern found that her participants described themselves both in terms of their interpersonal abilities and their independence. The young women recognised and apparently valued their ability to differentiate themselves from others, but also felt that their experiences were more meaningful if they were shared with family or friends. Stern concluded that "the independence that is discussed by these women does not require renouncing interpersonal attachments" (1990, p. 81). In fact, they described independence as necessary in the development of more mature relationships. Independence for these girls meant being more able to take care of oneself, which in turn lead to being able to connect with others as people rather than providers of care. Continuing support within relationships in turn gave these girls the confidence to further their self-development (Stern, 1990).

If women define themselves in a context of relationship, a developmental orientation that sees autonomy as the goal will therefore place women on a lower level of development (Josselson, 1988). Instead of viewing the course of women's development as lacking in separation, Miller (cited in Josselson, 1988) argues that women's greater capacity for relatedness is a greater developmental achievement than autonomy. Miller's (1986) suggestion is that "the parameters of the female's development are not the same as the male's and... the same terms do not apply. Women can be highly developed and still give great weight to affiliations" (p. 86). Josselson (1988) suggests that development may not be a movement from dependence to autonomy, but a movement to more differentiated ways of relating to others. The 'self-in-relation' model argues that the capacity for relatedness is a characteristic of mature development, not a continuation of childhood dependency. In this view it has much in common with attachment theory (Batgos & Leadbeater, 1994).

ATTACHMENT THEORY

Attachment theory emphasises the importance of significant emotional bonds for healthy development and adjustment. The attachment framework, developed prior to and alongside feminist theories chronologically, has thus also helped to shift the focus onto relationships in the study of human development (Noam & Fischer, 1996). Bowlby defines attachment theory as

> a way of conceptualising the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds to particular others and of explaining the many forms of emotional distress and personality disturbance, including anxiety, anger, depression, and emotional detachment, to which unwilling separation and loss give rise (1979, p. 127)

Attachments usually, but not exclusively, occur between parents and their offspring. According to Ainsworth (1989) and Bowlby (1969), an attachment is an enduring affectional bond, in which there is a disposition for the child to seek contact and physical closeness with a specific individual, particularly in times of distress. This preferred individual is usually perceived as stronger and/or wiser (Bowlby, 1979). Ainsworth explains that attachment bonds differ from other relationships in that "an attachment figure is never interchangeable with or replaced by another"

(1989, p.711). "The experience of security and comfort obtained from the relation-ship with the partner, and yet the ability to move off from the secure base provided by the partner, with confidence to engage in other activities" (Ainsworth, 1989, p.711) are also qualities that set attachments apart from other relationships. The experience of security and comfort in the presence of the attachment figure, distress upon separation, pleasure upon reunion, and grief upon loss of an attachment figure are critical components of secure attachment bonds (Ainsworth, 1989).

Attachment relationships are beneficial because they provide the child with a secure 'home base' from which she or he can explore and master the external environment (Ainsworth, 1989). As Bowlby explains,

> Evidence is accumulating that human beings of all ages are happiest and able to deploy their talents to best advantage when they are confident that, standing behind them, there are one or more trusted persons who will come to their aid should difficulties arise. The person trusted, also known as an attachment figure, can be considered as providing his (or her) companion with a secure base from which to operate (Bowlby, 1979, p. 103).

Empirical studies have shown that when a mother is present or her whereabouts known and she participates in friendly interaction with her child, the child no longer displays attachment behaviour and begins to explore his or her environment. The mother is thus providing her child with a secure base to which she or he can return, particularly if she or he is tired or frightened (Bowlby, 1979).

In addition, attachment relationships result in the formation of 'internal working models', which guide the emotional and cognitive development of the child, and influence the child's understanding of and participation in other relationships during their lifetime (Bowlby, 1969). Internal working models are mental representations of self and others that the child develops through early experiences with attachment figures (Bowlby, 1969). When the attachment figure has been consistently available and supportive, attachment theory holds that the child will construct an internal model of self as able to cope and worthy of help, and an internal model of others as trustworthy and responsive. When the attachment figure has been unavailable and inconsistently responsive, the child will tend to develop an internal model of self as unworthy of attention and view others as unreliable and unresponsive (Bowlby, 1979). Internal working models are thought to influence how subsequent life

experiences are perceived and interpreted (Bretherton, 1985). Although fairly resistant to change, internal working models can be modified by interpersonal relationships and renegotiations of the balance between connections with others and independence (Bowlby, 1988; Main, Kaplan & Cassidy, 1985).

Bowlby (1979) has argued that although attachment behaviour is particularly evident during childhood when it is directed towards parental figures, it also continues to be active during adulthood,

> Intimate attachments to other human beings are the hub around which a person's life revolves, not only when he is an infant or a toddler or a schoolchild but throughout his adolescence and his years of maturity as well, and on into old age. From these intimate attachments a person draws his strength and enjoyment of life and through what he contributes, he gives strength and enjoyment to others (Bowlby, 1969, p. 442).

The perception of familial attachment as a continuing developmental requirement in adulthood places attachment theory in direct opposition with the psychoanalytic view. According to the traditional psychoanalytic perspective, once a child can provide for herself, he or she should become independent, and any signs of dependency from this point onwards are considered regressive. Any desire for the presence of an attachment figure in adulthood is thus regarded as infantile and part of an immature self that should have been left behind (Bowlby, 1979). With respect to adolescence in particular, Bowlby criticises the psychoanalytic view of adolescent development that requires detachment from parents. Bowlby believes that this perspective

> unwittingly tends to encourage the idea that an adolescent developing compulsive self-reliance is developing satisfactorily... it is believed that during normal development an adolescent 'is forced to give up a major love object' and that 'developmental exigencies require a radical decathexis of the parents (Bowlby, 1980, p. 374).

Bowlby believes instead that attachment fulfils an ethological and evolutionary need for protection and is expressed in behaviour designed to maintain closeness and accessibility of attachment figures (Bowlby, 1969; 1988). Attachment theory holds that attachment behaviour is elicited whenever a person (child or adult) is ill, frightened, or separated from their attachment figure, and is thus considered a normal

and healthy part of human nature (Bowlby, 1979). Over the life course, the attachment system follows a developmental pathway, and Bowlby views the expression of the need for security, comfort and closeness as an *adult* expression of attachment rather than a regression to infantile behaviour (Josselson, 1992).

Bowlby (1979) limits his definition of attachment relationships to those in which one person feels protected by someone who is stronger and wiser; however, most adult attachments do not involve protection. It seems that attachment after childhood moves from seeking physical proximity for protection toward psychological proximity for emotional wellbeing. Bowlby (1979) argues that the requirement for a secure base also applies to adolescents and adults. A secure base in adulthood seems to be just as important for exploration and self-development as it is in childhood (Josselson, 1992). It is assumed that throughout a person's life, he or she displays the same pattern of behaviour, moving away from their secure base for increasing distances and periods of time, yet always returning and maintaining contact,

> Throughout adult life the availability of a responsive attachment figure remains the source of a person's feeling secure. All of us, from the cradle to the grave, are happiest when life is organised as a series of excursions, long or short, from the secure base provided by our attachment figure(s) (Bowlby, 1988, p. 62).

An adult's secure base is usually her or his family of origin or a new base that they have created. Reliability, familiarity, continuity and constancy of attachment figures appear to underlie the secure base of adult attachment. Secure attachment in adulthood is not often demonstrated behaviourally, but in an inner sense of closeness, even if the attachment figure is not geographically close (Josselson, 1992).

Bowlby's (1979) concept of a secure base involves the behavioural systems of attachment and exploration. Bowlby (1979) points out that these systems are mutually exclusive: when we feel secure in our attachment relationship, we are likely to explore; we are only likely to return to attachment figures if we are tired, sick or frightened. In the case of children and adolescents, the more confident they are that their base is secure and will respond if called upon, the more they take it for granted. However if one parent becomes sick or dies, the great importance of this base to the emotional wellbeing of the child or adolescent becomes apparent (Bowlby, 1988).

During the second decade of life, young people begin to explore life without being emotionally dependent on their parents. Such exploration is essential for accomplishing the major tasks of social development in adolescence and young adulthood, such as establishing long-term romantic relationships and productive careers (Allen & Land, 1999). The attachment and exploratory systems are brought into balance through the adolescent's developing cognitive abilities, which allows her or him to keep in mind that parents are still available as attachment figures when needed. As Allen and Land (1999, p. 322) explain, "the analogy to exploratory and secure-base behaviour in infancy remains apt: Adolescents can explore (emotionally) the possibility of living independently from parents, in part because they know that they can turn to parents in cases of real need." As well as parental attachments being a direct source of security and support, they may also indirectly help adolescents cope through contributing to internal working models. Secure internal working models (that is, positive feelings of self-worth) that have resulted from secure attachments with parents are thought to contribute to adolescents' psychological resilience, being able to cope with adverse life experiences (Kenny & Rice, 1995). Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. Attachments to parents may also be 'insecure', as a result of attachment figures being unavailable or not consistently responsive. In turn, this contributes to internal models of self as not deserving of attention and of others as unresponsive and untrustworthy (Kenny & Rice, 1995).

Despite Bowlby's contention that a secure base is important for people of all ages, the need for an attachment figure is most evident and has been most studied in infancy and early childhood (Rice & Cummins, 1996) and mostly within the mother-child relationship (Ainsworth, 1989). However, in the 1980s, the study of attachment relationships moved beyond infancy and early childhood to include adult attachment relationships. Main et al. (1985) describe the development as a move from observable behaviour to mental representation, specifically, internal working models of attachment relationships. Internal working models, which were not able to be observed directly, began to be studied through their expression in narratives elicited from children and adults when describing their thoughts and feelings concerning attachment experiences (Steele & Steele, 1994). To gather these narratives, Main and her colleagues introduced the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI: George et al., 1996). The AAI is a structured, clinical interview designed to assess adult's internal working

models of attachment relationships. Interviewees are asked to recall attachment-related memories about their childhood and current relationships and to evaluate these memories from their present perspective. AAI interview transcripts are then coded and interviewees classified as secure-autonomous, dismissing, pre-occupied, or unresolved/disorganised in their representation of attachment.

There has been increasing theoretical and empirical interest during the past two decades in the relevance of attachment theory for understanding the development and wellbeing of adolescents and young adults. Several studies have suggested that close parental relationships can buffer the stressful effects of the many challenges of adolescence by providing a protective source of security (Kenny & Rice, 1995). A number of investigators (for example, Greenberg, Siegel & Leitch, 1983; Lapsley, Rice & Fitzgerald, 1990) have argued that secure attachment between adolescents and their parents may be beneficial for development and adjustment during this period. Researchers have found that greater attachment security is associated with higher levels of self-esteem and other aspects of psychosocial functioning. Self-esteem in Rice and Cummins' (1996) study appeared to be predicted by late adolescents' perceptions that their parents were emotionally supportive and encouraging of autonomy. Allen, Moore, Kuperminc and Bell (1998) assessed the connection between attachment organisation and adolescent psychosocial functioning, using the AAI (George et al., 1996). In Allen et al.'s study, adolescents who were classified by the AAI as secure/autonomous in their attachment organisation were more likely to be socially acceptable amongst their peers and less likely to experience depression or anxiety, or express delinquent behaviour.

However, the association between security of attachment and autonomy may be rather more complicated than has been proposed. Several recent studies that have examined this relation in adolescent attachment have had unexpected results. The late adolescents in Kenny's (1994) study generally described their attachment relationships with parents as affectively positive and reported that their parents were both encouraging autonomy and available for support if required. For the young women participating in this study, however, parental encouragement of autonomy was associated with assertion, not with feelings of connection to parents. The results of Rice, Fitzgerald, Whaley and Gibbs' (1995) study suggested that securely attached students were more dependent on their parents than insecurely attached students. This

was unexpected, as secure attachment was assumed to facilitate exploration and independence from parents (Bowlby, 1979; Josselson, 1988). Rice et al. suggested that this finding might have been due to the measures of independence and attachment that were used. However, both Kenny (1994) and Rice et al. stressed that their results were consistent with previous studies that found secure attachment was positively associated with psychological wellbeing in adolescence.

According to the attachment model, secure attachments are equally important to males and females, and gender has not been significant in research on infant and early childhood attachment. However, attachment research assessing sex differences in attachment organisation and the influence of parental attachments on males and females in adolescence has provided mixed results (Kenny & Rice, 1995). Kenny and Donaldson (1991) found that the adolescent females in their study of university students described themselves as significantly more attached to their parents than the adolescent males. The young women particularly described their parental attachments as more affectively positive and perceived that their parents had a greater role in providing emotional support, compared to their male classmates. Characteristics of secure attachment – positive affect, emotional support and encouragement of autonomy – were associated with higher levels of social competence and psycho-logical wellbeing for these young women. Similarly, Schultheiss and Blustein (1994) found that adolescent women who were strongly emotionally attached to their parents and shared similar beliefs and attitudes with them were more likely to be further developed in terms of purpose and academic autonomy. The results of these studies are consistent with other theory and research that suggest relationships are more central to the psychological development of women than men (see previous section "Feminist Theories").

There have also been studies that have not found significant gender differences in attachment to parents in adolescence. Kenny's (1994) study of late adolescents revealed few differences between men and women's descriptions of their parental attachments. One exception to this finding was that women were more likely to perceive their parents as a source of emotional support compared to men. Lapsley et al. (1990) found that the young women in their study scored higher than men on measures of trust and communication with peers, and on measures of personal and social identity. Yet men and women reported similar levels of trust and

communication with their parents through all their years at university. These results call into question feminist theorists' contention that relationships are more central to females than males, as recent attachment research suggests that relationships with parents are also important to males, with both sexes having close bonds with their parents in adolescence (Batgos & Leadbeater, 1994).

There is also the question of continuity in attachment bonds. As mentioned earlier, attachment theory holds that attachment bonds continue throughout one's lifetime despite changes in the way attachment is displayed behaviourally (Rice et al., 1995). In this way the attachment model contrasts with psychoanalytic theories that emphasise the breaking of ties with parents in adolescence. Several studies have indicated that attachment to parents is a continuous aspect of the parent-child relationship in adolescence and young adulthood, although confirmation of this conclusion by longitudinal studies is needed. Lapsley et al. (1990) compared attachment, identity and adjustment to university in a cross-sectional sample of freshmen and upperclassmen (first year and final year university students). For both freshmen and upperclassmen, communication with parents was associated with personal and social identity, and there were no differences in attachment between these two student groups. This finding was replicated by Rice et al.'s (1995) study of freshmen and upperclassmen. This longitudinal study found there was no significant change in attachment relationships with parents from first year to final year in university. Rice and his colleagues thus came to the conclusion that "the average level or metric by which late adolescents assess their attachment to parents does not change over time and, furthermore, that individual differences in ratings of attachment relations remain relatively consistent over time" (1995, p. 471).

The results of these studies support Bowlby's (1988) contention that the adolescents and young adults who are most emotionally stable and self-reliant have parents who are available and responsive when called upon. Bowlby (1979) argues that consistent support from parents, as well as encouragement of autonomy, provide the best conditions for the growth of self-reliance. Attachment theory therefore emphasises the importance of both connection and autonomy for psychological growth and wellbeing. Attachment research shows that autonomy and attachment are not opposed; rather, autonomy is a property of attachment. As Josselson (1988, p. 101) explains, "When we feel securely embedded with another, we feel freest to

express ourselves. And we feel certain that, having expressed ourself, our connections to others will be enriched."

Thus the attachment model is theoretically consistent with the 'self-in-relation' perspective outlined in the previous section, as this model also recognises the development of self through relationships with others. The attachment model is a way of explaining the continuation of family ties through adolescence and into adulthood, and also offers a way in which the development of autonomy can be achieved within close family relationships (Kenny, 1994). In these aspects, attachment theory also has similarities with other models of adolescent-parent relationships, which will be discussed in the following section.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN ADOLESCENCE

Another thesis regarding developmental changes in adolescents' family relation-ships evolved around the same time as the feminist and attachment theories discussed above. This thesis asserts that there is a process of transformation in adolescents' relationships with their parents that encourages social and emotional development while maintaining continued closeness and warmth. Like feminist and attachment theories, this view also challenges the psychoanalytic perspective of adolescence that emphasises conflict and detachment within the parent-adolescent relationship.

Research in the 1970s and 1980s showed that adolescents and young adults did not need to separate from their families in order to achieve psychological growth (Steinberg, 1990). Many authors have since contended that the developmental task of adolescents is achievement of psychological independence from parents but with continued connectedness. Whereas traditional theories of adolescence believed that a primary developmental task of adolescence is to achieve emotional autonomy from parents, more recent studies have argued that this disengagement is problematic for adolescents (Batgos & Leadbeater, 1994). In a series of studies with adolescents, Ryan and Lynch (1989) have reexamined the concept of emotional autonomy as developed by Steinberg and Silverberg (1986). Steinberg and Silverberg obtained evidence that, with age, a sample of American adolescents perceived themselves to be more emotionally and behaviourally independent of their parents. The concept of emotional autonomy (EA) was originally derived from Douvan and Adelson's theory of adolescence and defined by them as "the degree to which the adolescent has

managed to cast off infantile ties to the family" (cited in Ryan & Lynch, 1989, p. 341). Ryan and Lynch suggest that emotional autonomy, as defined by Steinberg and Silverberg, actually represents emotional detachment, where the adolescent perceives her or his parents as rejecting and unsupportive. Ryan and Lynch argue that individuation during adolescence and young adulthood is facilitated not by detachment from parents ('emotional autonomy') but by attachment to them, which encourages autonomy within a context of emotional support.

Youniss and Smollar (1985) found evidence that adolescent-parent relationships improve in later adolescence and hypothesised that a process of renegotiation takes place, leading to a more symmetric and mutual relationship, at least with mothers. Youniss and his colleagues have argued that transformations in family relationships during adolescence illustrate that the adolescent is beginning to understand their interdependence within the family (Youniss, 1983; Youniss & Ketterlinus, 1987; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). In their study of adolescents' relationships with their parents, Youniss and Smollar found that parents were able to retain their authority by giving more freedom to their adolescent children as they recognised their growing capabilities. They concluded, "It is clear that parental relationships have not been discarded nor have they lost their binding power. In fact, the adolescents said that the transformation helped to bring them and their parents closer" (Youniss and Smollar, 1985, pp. 162-163). The change from one-sided parental authority to mutual negotiation is considered to be necessary for the adolescent's social and psychological development; emotional detachment between parent and adolescent prevents this process from occurring (Steinberg, 1990).

There is now considerable consensus that many important developmental tasks of adolescence are resolved within the context of family relationships. Many writers now argue that for this reason, any study of adolescence must consider the family as well as the individual adolescent (Lapsley et al., 1990). To capture the complexity of relationships within the family, some researchers have come to view the family as a social system. This perspective holds that there is interdependence among relation-ships within a family, not just among individual family members (Gjerde, 1986). That is, the quality of one relationship influences and is influenced by other relation-ships within the family; if one individual or relationship changes, it affects the whole family system (Feldman & Gehring, 1988).

Research on family interaction has been almost universally based on observations of a single interaction within a particular family relationship – usually a dyad (that is, child and mother or father) or sometimes a triad (child and both parents) (Gjerde, 1986). Gjerde argues that this use of a single setting has prevented researchers from studying the association between family composition and family interaction. A single interaction situation also does not accurately represent the history and psychological context in which each parent interacts with the child. The age of the child also affects the generality of the conclusions, as parent-child interaction changes as the child gets older (Gjerde, 1986). Although past studies of family relationships have almost exclusively focused on families of infants and preschoolers (Gjerde, 1986), more recent studies have investigated families of older children and adolescents.

The role of the family in adolescent identity formation is one example of this growing area of research. Cooper, Grotevant and Condon (1983) focused on the family as a context for development of identity and role-taking skill in late adolescence. This study produced evidence that both individuality and connectedness in family interaction were important for adolescent development, particularly in relation to the adolescent leaving home. Cooper et al. suggested that the process of leaving was facilitated by individuation in family relationships, which encouraged the adolescent to develop her or his own point of view. Such individuation was facilitated within a context of connectedness, which provided a secure base from which the adolescent could explore new environments outside the family.

Grotevant and Cooper (1985) examined the relationship between adolescent identity exploration and family interaction. Parents of adolescents high in identity exploration were found to have encouraged individuation in their teenagers, which according to Grotevant and Cooper involves both individuality and connectedness. Adolescents in these families were encouraged to explore their differences and express their own point of view within a context of mutuality. Communication patterns related to identity exploration differed for males and females: sons' relationships with their fathers only were related to identity exploration, whereas daughters' relationships with both parents appeared to facilitate individuality and connectedness (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985).

Bell and Bell (1983) investigated the association between parental characteristics, family climate and adolescent daughters' personality. According to Bell and Bell, parental behaviour toward the daughter is derived from the family climate and affects the adolescent daughter's development of differentiated self-awareness and positive self-regard. Bell and Bell found that an adolescent daughter's self-regard and self-awareness were positively related to the mother's support and validation, but were unrelated to the father's validation, and negatively related to his support. Bell and Bell also found that the father-daughter relationship could not be adequately described without also looking at the marital relationship, which illustrates the importance of understanding each parent's behaviour as part of the larger family system.

Gjerde's (1986) study of parent-adolescent relations in dyads and triads, mentioned previously, suggested that the quality of parent-adolescent relations is dependent on the interpersonal context in which the interaction occurs. In particular, Gjerde's results indicated that the way a relationship works when looked at in isolation does not necessarily show how it operates within the family system. For example, there was more conflict in the mother-adolescent son relationship than in the mother-adolescent daughter relationship even in two-parent families, but only when the relationship was assessed without the presence of the father. It appeared that the presence of the father had a beneficial affect on the mother-son relationship (Gjerde, 1986). This study illustrates the interdependent nature of family relationships and the importance of studying one particular relationship within the context of the family as a whole.

Feldman and Gehring (1988) brought developmental and family systems perspectives together in their study of perceptions of family relationships across adolescence. Feldman and Gehring used two concepts to describe the structure of the family: cohesion (emotional closeness between family members) and power (hierarchical relationships). In the cross-sectional study covering a six-year period (corresponding with the beginning of intermediate to end of high school), adolescents in all the age groups perceived gradually decreasing cohesion and decreasing difference in power between themselves and their parents. However, even the oldest adolescents still portrayed family relationships as cohesive, and from their ideal representations of family relations, this was perceived as desirable. Across the

adolescent years satisfaction with cohesion decreased, while satisfaction with power increased. Adolescents of all ages portrayed their parents as having greater power, which was perceived as appropriate and desirable. Feldman and Gehring found no gender differences in the adolescents' perceptions of cohesion and power in their families.

Newman (1989) also investigated the changing balance between individuation and cohesiveness in the parent-child relationship during adolescence, using a cross-sectional comparison of families whose oldest child was 11, 14, or 17. Although the families in this study expressed a high level of harmony, a sense of closeness and understanding appeared to diminish from age 11 to 17. The 17 year olds expressed greater individuation in their defiance of their parents and in parents' expectations that their children should now make decisions on their own. While there was a decline in closeness to parents among both 17 year old sons and daughters, mothers and daughters expressed greater identification and satisfaction in their relationship than the other parent-child dyads. This was achieved by mothers being more willing to include their daughters in decision making, and daughters being more willing to consider the others' opinions when making decisions. Parents who were effective in promoting ego development in their 17 year old children continued to use frequent explanations, which helped the adolescents to examine and clarify their own perceptions and opinions. Newman also found that mothers were perceived by their children as promoting cohesiveness, while fathers were appreciated by the older children for their warmth, caring and understanding.

Larson, Richards, Moneta, Holmbeck and Duckett (1996) examined processes of disengagement and transformation within adolescents' family interactions across the 5th to 12th grade period (approximately 10 to 17 years of age), using time-sampling data from a longitudinal sample. Disengagement was evident in the steady and dramatic decrease in the time these adolescents spent with their family (from 35% of waking hours in 5th grade to 14% in 12th grade). Contrary to psychoanalytic theories, this disengagement did not appear to be caused by internal factors in family relationships that drive adolescents away from their family, but by factors outside the family. In early adolescence, less time spent with family was replaced by the adolescent spending more time alone at home. In later adolescence, the decrease in family time was related to participation in activities outside the home. Larson et al.

also observed aspects of continued connection and transformation in the time adolescents did spend with their families. Adolescents continued to spend the same amount of time alone with each parent across the age period, and girls spent significantly more time talking about interpersonal issues as they got older. Adolescents' family time was transformed through more direct and unilateral interaction with parents, and after a period of less positive emotional states in early adolescence, interaction with family was experienced more favourably in late adolescence. Larson et al. concluded that "within the confines of our sample, the findings clearly support the thesis that adolescents are not just disengaging from daily family interaction, but rather these interactions are being altered to maintain family connectedness" (1996, p. 753).

THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP

The term 'adolescent-parent relationship' may be too abstract and misleading in the literature; adolescents have a unique and different relationship with their mother and their father (Apter, 1990; Youniss & Ketterlinus, 1987). Gilligan, Rogers and Brown explain that these relationships differ in 'tone' at particular points in time, "During the period of adolescence, for instance, the harmonic pattern and the discordant notes of these various relationships tend to differ so that one would rarely mistake one for the other" (1990, p. 315). The mother-daughter relationship during adolescence is the main focus of this section. However, theory and research regarding the mother-daughter relationship in general has also been included in order to provide a context in which to understand this relationship during adolescence.

Several studies have illustrated the significance and distinctiveness of the mother-daughter relationship. In their three-generation study of affective closeness in parent-child relationships, Rossi and Rossi (1990) discovered that gender of parent and child was an important factor. Rossi and Rossi found little difference in intimacy across the four parent-child dyads up to the adolescent years. However, from adolescence onwards, they discovered an increasing gap between women and men's ratings of intimacy with their adult children. Ties between female family members in their study were found to be stronger, more frequent, more reciprocal and less dependent on circumstances than ties between men. The highest intimacy was in the mother-daughter relationship, based on ratings from both mothers or daughters, and

at all points along the life course the relationship between mother and daughter appeared to be closer than the father-son relationship (Rossi & Rossi, 1990).

Adolescent girls also often regard their mother as particularly significant in their lives, as Waal (1993, p. 35) discovered,

> Do qualitative research on teenage girls and you will find you cannot get away from their mothers. Literally, because before you can get to the daughter's room for your chat, you first have to spend the obligatory half-hour making small talk with mum over a cup of tea. And figuratively, because the mother is one of the most important people in teenage girls' world of experience.

The girls Waal interviewed placed their mothers first and second in terms of intimacy. Almost twenty years earlier, Konopka (1976) also found that adolescent girls listed their mother as the most important person in their lives, and the person they felt closest to among all adults. Even those girls who felt alienated from their mothers or the whole adult world yearned for a mother (Konopka, 1976). However, both Waal and Konopka discovered how ambivalent this relationship can be. As Surrey (1993, p. 119) argues, "There is perhaps no greater change to be negotiated in relationship than in the mother-daughter relationship over the life-cycle, and adolescence may be the period of greatest change."

There have been many studies in which adolescents have consistently differentiated mothers from fathers, particularly with regards to communication and seeking advice. Most studies have suggested that adolescent daughters have more open and frequent discussions with mothers than with fathers (Youniss & Ketterlinus, 1987; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Belenky et al. (1986) identified other differences between mother-daughter and father-daughter relationships. Although the main themes of attachment and autonomy were both present in each relationship, daughters perceived a greater sense of connection and more similarities with mothers, whereas a sense of distance and difference pervaded the daughters' portraits of fathers. Youniss and Smollar (1985) observed a similar pattern in their study of adolescents' perceptions of mothers and fathers.

Yet there is also an assertion in the literature that parent-child conflict in adolescence more often involves mothers than fathers (Apter, 1990; Collins, 1990). Laursen, Coy and Collins (1998) investigated this assertion in their meta-analysis of research regarding parent-child conflict. Their results supported this conclusion,

indicating that conflict between mothers and adolescents occurred more often than between fathers and adolescents, and that during adolescence, the rate of conflict between mothers and adolescents declined more than rates of father-adolescent conflict. Laursen et al. suggested that mothers could therefore be more directly involved in the reorganisation of the parent-adolescent relationship. Apter (1990) also found that mothers and daughters had more direct conflict, because they saw each other more often. Mothers also tended to exercise authority more often than fathers, and their authority covered more areas in an adolescent's life than fathers'. As a result, mothers received far more criticism from their adolescent daughters, and their authority was constantly being questioned and renegotiated. However, only girls who had healthy, caring mothers criticised their mother; girls who had real reasons for criticism usually did not (Apter, 1990).

Much of the literature regarding conflict in mother-adolescent daughter relationships has focused on early or mid-adolescence. Pipher (1996) argues that although most girls are close to their mothers when they are young and many regain such closeness as adults, few girls manage to stay close to their mothers during junior high (Intermediate school in New Zealand) and high school. By late high school, Pipher contends, some of the worst struggles with parents are waning. Other studies have also noted that conflict peaks after midpuberty and only slowly tapers off until late adolescence. Laursen et al. (1998) found that the frequency of conflict between mothers and adolescents decreased as adolescents got older, but arguments grew more affectively unpleasant across the adolescent years. Holmbeck (1996) noted a period of increased emotional distance in parent-adolescent relationships shortly after puberty, especially in mother-daughter dyads. Newman (1989) also discovered that feelings of closeness and understanding between adolescents and parents diminished with adolescent age for both sons and daughters. At the same time, however, mothers and daughters experienced high levels of closeness and understanding by the time daughters were 17.

There have been other studies that have found the most conflict and negative feelings between mothers and daughters during mid-adolescence. Smetana (1991) observed that differences in mother-daughter dyads peaked in mid-adolescence and waned after that, as adolescents became more able to understand their parents' perspective. In Kroger's 1982 study of New Zealand adolescents from Forms 1, 3, 5

and 7 at secondary school, girls' negative feelings towards their mother were highest in the Form 5 group (mean age 15.6). In Kroger's 1985 study, which replicated her 1982 study with a group of American adolescents, the only difference between the American and New Zealand groups was girls' attitudes toward parents. American girls generally felt more positive towards parents across all age groups, whereas New Zealand girls had very positive attitudes in Form 1 and 3, followed by a major decrease in constructive attitudes in Form 5.

So why does the most conflict between parents and adolescents seem to occur in the mother-daughter dyad? Gilligan (1990) believes that adolescent girls are most willing to disagree when they are in close relationships, as they believe that those to whom they feel closest will listen and try to understand their developing self. "Perhaps for this reason, girls often speak about conflict in their relationships with their mothers – the person who, one girl said, 'will always welcome me'" (1990, p. 20). Pipher (1996) has also found that adolescent girls are more willing to argue with their mothers because they trust their mothers to put up with their anger and still be there for them when they are unreasonable. Apter (1990) argues that adolescent daughter's expression of disagreement with her mother is positively correlated with self-exploration. It is through arguments that the daughter can define the differences between herself and her mother. Apter discovered that the adolescent girls she spoke to did not avoid conflict with their mother, even though they might find it painful; instead they continued to seek contact to correct their mother's perception of them. Apter also noted that fights between mothers and daughters arose about very minor things, and did not indicate a rift between them.

Apter interprets conflict between mother and daughter as an indication of a preoccupation with the relationship by both members, rather than a struggle for separation. As Surrey explains, "Conflicts between mothers and daughters may be reframed as part of the struggle or yearning for connection, or as a frustration or consequence of a disconnection that does not move the relationship in a positive direction towards mutual understanding" (1993, p. 119). Resolving conflicts is considered important in the development of mutuality between mother and daughter, which is characterised by each individual being able to share feelings and perceptions and influence each other (Batgos & Leadbeater, 1994).

Validation is a recurring theme in many studies of mothers and daughters in adolescence, and in adulthood as well. Participants in Josselson's (1992) study emphasised the importance of empathic others in their lives; the desire to be known and accepted seemed to be what people most wanted from each other. Apter (1990, p. 128) defines validation as "a way of responding which indicates 'I hear what you are saying, and what you are saying makes sense to me.'" Adolescence is one developmental transition period when validation is most needed, as adolescents recreate their selves (Josselson, 1992). Adolescents do not need their parents to agree with them, but rather understand them and appreciate them on their own terms. It has been suggested that the adolescent daughter turns to her mother for affirmation because her mother's views of her are supportive (Apter, 1990). The daughters Belenky et al. (1986) spoke to appreciated that their mothers valued them in their own terms even when they did not agree, in contrast to some fathers who felt their daughter's terms were not valid unless they were congruent with his.

Many studies of the mother-daughter bond have illustrated that closeness between mothers and daughters is often maintained during adolescence. Graber and Brooks-Gunn (1999) found that mothers and adolescent daughters perceived their relationship as having more cohesion than conflict. Konopka (1976) reported that over half the girls in her study who talked about parents stressed their closeness with them, a deep understanding and a sense of a more mature, mutual friendship. Newman (1989) suggests that daughters and mothers are more able to maintain closeness between them during adolescence because they both value it in relation-ships and are more likely to involve each other in decision making than fathers and sons. Although the adolescent girls Apter (1990) interviewed had many complaints about their mothers, they also said their mother was the person who understood them most. Apter argues that a daughter always cares about her mother's view of her, even if she is not close to her. Apter found that the most common reason for lack of closeness in this relationship involved some impairment in the mother's ability to respond to her daughter. About a quarter of the girls in Konopka's study who talked about their mothers stated they either did not feel close to them or actually disliked them. However there was always a sense of regret, sadness and pain associated with this lack of closeness.

The nine stories of problematic attachment presented by Salzman (1990) suggest that connection to mothers may be critical to adolescent daughters' developing identity. These narratives showed that even in difficult circumstances, young women may attempt to maintain connection in order to develop a sense of self (Salzman, 1990). While this group of nine girls all had very stressful relationships with their mothers and a general attitude of resignation regarding resolution of conflicts, attachment to their mothers remained important to them.

> Virtually all the girls discussed here… remain emotionally involved with their mothers. No other relationships reported on by girls in this study compare to the primary attachment bond in strength or influence. While these girls may be aware of missing elements in relationships with their mothers, on the whole they prefer to maintain a problematic attachment, even at some cost to themselves, rather than suffer a state of true nonattachment (Salzman, 1990, p. 141).

Despite maintaining distance from their mothers, all the young women admitted that they longed for connection with their mothers and guidance from them. Their goal was to maintain attachment, through which they developed a new recognition of self and others (Salzman, 1990).

Retaining ongoing connection does not mean that the relationship between mother and daughter will not change – renegotiation of the relationship is essential in adolescence, as mother and daughter come to relate to each other as two adults (Apter, 1990; Nice, 1992). Mothers and their adolescent daughters ideally develop their relationship from one of unilateral dependence to one that is interdependent, in which there is continued growth and development for both members (Kenemore & Spira, 1996). This concept is consistent with the thesis that there is a transformation in the adolescent-parent relationship which results in a more symmetric and mutual relationship (Youniss and Smollar, 1985). This process depends on the adolescent's cognitive maturation: formal operational thinking affects the adolescent daughter's view of herself and of her mother.

In Piaget's theory, the achievement of formal operational thinking, the most advanced stage of cognitive development, becomes possible in adolescence. In this stage, the young person is able to think hypothetically and abstractly, with an under-standing of relativity (Muuss, 1988). The young person is able to see herself or

himself as a complex, changing person, existing separately from interactions with others. The move to formal operational thinking enables the young person to compare relationships with different people (for example, with each parent), and to their perception of the ideal relationship. This ability to consider relationships abstractly allows the young person to recognise deficiencies in their relationship with their parents, but also to consider these relationships from their parents' perspective (Allen & Land, 1999).

If the adolescent daughter can achieve this level of maturation, she is able to review her past relationships and see her mother as a complex and independent person, which in turn enables her to better negotiate desirable outcomes for herself. If she only sees her mother according to her own interests and needs, her mother's behaviour will be understood only within this limited perspective (Apter, 1990). However, it should also be pointed out that formal operational thinking develops over several years, and may never be achieved by a significant proportion of adolescents (Muuss, 1988).

Overall, the studies of mothers and daughters presented here support the contention held by more recent theory and research – that adolescents do not develop their identity and individuality by separating from their family. Apter agrees with Rich (1990) that an adolescent girl's view of herself is developed in relation to others, particularly her mother. Apter contends that an adolescent girl's mother influences her more than either her father or her friends. Apter found that adolescent daughters did not usually psychologically 'walk away' from their mothers, and interpreted this as a continuing wish for acceptance and validation. The connection between mother and daughter continues beyond adolescence; it endures throughout their lives. Josselson (1996b) found that even for middle-aged women, their relationship with their mothers continued to be central to their identity definition, and most women remained intensely connected to their mothers: "While some women may report being estranged or emotionally distant from their fathers, all continue to engage fervently, even in the wake of conflict, with their mothers" (p. 228).

NEW ZEALAND LITERATURE

There have been very few studies of adolescent-parent relationships in New Zealand, and none of the studies found focused solely on the mother-daughter

relationship during adolescence (although several studies included investigation of this relationship as part of their study or as recollection from adult daughters). What follows is a summary of New Zealand research that is relevant to the current study, either in relation to the experience of adolescence in this country generally, or the parent-adolescent relationship in particular.

Two major longitudinal studies of New Zealand children have been conducted over the past three decades: the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study and The Christchurch Child Development Study. The Dunedin study comprised a sample of 1037 children from a cohort born in Dunedin between April 1, 1972, and March 31, 1973. This sample has been reassessed every two years from the age of three using a range of medical, behavioural and developmental measures. The study is ongoing, and has resulted in over 550 published reports and articles (Silva & McCann, 1996). The Christchurch study's sample was a birth cohort of 1265 children born in the Christchurch urban region during mid 1977. These children were studied at birth, four months, and then at annual intervals (Lloyd, 1990).

Both these studies have provided extensive information about the health (both physical and psychological), education and social development of New Zealand children over a long period of time. However, they do have their limitations. For example, the sample for the Dunedin study is almost all European: only 27 mothers and 20 fathers out of the parents of over 1000 children identified themselves as Maori and only eight mothers and 12 fathers identified themselves as Pacific Islanders. Although this cohort was representative of the Dunedin population when the study first began, it has never been representative of the whole New Zealand population, so it should not be assumed that the study's results can be generalised to the whole country (Silva & McCann, 1996). Within two such large-scale longitudinal research projects, there are also relatively few investigations of parent-adolescent relationships (two such studies are included later in this section).

A major outcome of the Dunedin and Christchurch studies is to illustrate the danger of assuming that overseas research results will be replicated in New Zealand samples (Payne, in Bird & Drewery, 2000), although there have been studies that have found many similarities. In a series of research studies in the 1980s, Kroger was one of the first researchers to investigate how the developmental changes in relationships among New Zealand adolescents compared with their British and

American peers. Kroger (1982, 1985) based her research on Coleman's focal theory of adolescent development, which held that at different ages, adolescents are concerned with different relationship patterns, and deal with changes in these relationships in a particular sequence. Coleman established these patterns in a cross-sectional sample of British adolescents in four different age groups (Kroger, 1982).

In her 1982 study, Kroger used Coleman's sentence completion test in a sample of New Zealand adolescents that was nearly identical in age to Coleman's group (Forms 1, 3, 5 and 7 – age range from 11 to 17). The test explored attitudes toward oneself and others, including relationships with parents. Negative feelings toward the parent of the opposite sex peaked at Form 5 for both males and females, while negative feelings toward the parent of the same sex peaked at Form 7 for both sexes. Girls' increasingly negative attitude toward their fathers contrasted with the British sample. Kroger found that girls appeared to resent their father's lack of involvement with the family or interest in what they (the girls) were doing. However, Kroger pointed out that the majority of New Zealand adolescents in all age groups felt positive about being with the parent of the same sex. Kroger replicated her 1982 study with a group of American adolescents who were comparable with the British and New Zealand groups in terms of age, sex, socioeconomic status and urban environment. The sequence of peak 'relationship themes' in the American group was very similar to that of the British and New Zealand adolescents. Within this sequence, good relationships with parents were characteristic of the youngest age group for both sexes, while there is a peak of negative feelings about parents at age 15 for both male and female adolescents.

In contrast to the attitudes of the adolescents in Kroger's (1982, 1985) studies, other New Zealand research has found that family had a significant positive influence on the lives of the adolescents questioned. In their survey of 100 fifth and sixth form girls, Bryant and Johnson (1990) found that 52% of these adolescents considered their family was the main influence on their lives. A second sample of 200 high-school girls named members of their immediate family as the person they most admired – particularly their mother. Bryant and Johnson suggest that this could be because the girls in the survey were living in a provincial city and still very much "tied to the home" (1990, p. 95). Other possible reasons were their attendance at a single sex school, and the conservative nature of the community they lived in.

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study and other research on adolescents in New Zealand (see summary of Gray, 1988 and Paterson, 1993 in "Similar Research Studies" section later in this chapter) counter the negativity toward parents found in Kroger's (1982, 1985) studies. They also support overseas research that has found a particular influence and connection between mothers and daughters in adolescence (see previous section "The Mother-daughter Relationship").

Other New Zealand studies provide support for overseas research that suggests that secure attachment to parents is associated with psychological wellbeing in adolescence (see "Attachment Theory" section in this chapter). Nada-Raja, McGee and Stanton's (1992) study, part of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study, examined adolescents' attachments to parents and peers and psychological wellbeing. The definition of attachment in this study was derived from Bowlby's theoretical formulations and included assessment of three aspects: communication, trust and alienation. Nada-Raja et al.'s study aimed to examine: (1) Steinberg and Silverberg's (1986) hypothesis of an inverse relationship between parent and peer attachment in adolescence; (2) sex differences in adolescents' perceived attachment to their parents and peers; and (3) Greenberg et al.'s (1983) hypothesis that wellbeing in adolescence is more strongly associated with attachment to parents rather than to peers. Nada-Raja et al. also aimed to determine the importance of these sources of attachment for adolescent mental health. Contrary to Steinberg and Silverberg's findings, adolescents in this study showed attachment to *both* parents and peers. High perceived attachment to parents and peers was associated with higher scores on a measure of self-perceived strengths, and attachment to peers did not seem to make up for low attachment to parents in terms of wellbeing.

Williams and McGee (1996) further investigated adolescents' psychological wellbeing as part of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study. Williams and McGee examined how a large group of 15 year old adolescents from the original sample perceived themselves, both in terms of psychological problems and personal strengths. This study aimed to fill a gap that existed in New Zealand research regarding the mental health of adolescents, "In New Zealand, negative views of adolescence are frequently voiced but it needs to be recognised that in the absence of good information on adolescents in this country, much of what is said about

adolescence is speculative at best" (1996, p. 235). Williams and McGee reasoned that if adolescence was experienced as a time of turmoil and upheaval, as assumed by the traditional psychoanalytic theories of adolescence, the 15 year olds would be reasonably unhappy or disturbed and have a negative perception of themselves. Williams and McGee found that most adolescents at age 15 did not in fact show any signs of significant psychological disturbance, a finding replicated in the Christchurch Child Development Study (Fergusson, Horwood & Lynskey, cited in Williams & McGee, 1996). Williams and McGee's findings confirmed that most New Zealand adolescents function well and have a very positive perception of themselves. Interestingly, self-perceived strengths were not related to home back-ground factors such as socio-economic status, parental separations and relationships within the family, but rather to the adolescent's involvement with the social environment.

There have been mixed results regarding gender differences in attachment in New Zealand studies. Nada-Raja et al. (1992) found no significant difference in perceived attachment to parents between females and males. However, females reported greater attachment to peers compared to males. Williams and McGee (1996) found that adolescent girls' self-perceived strengths were predicted primarily by attachment to parents (the extent to which they felt interpersonally close to parents) and to a lesser extent by attachment to peers and involvement in physical activities. Girls' strengths were based upon interpersonal skills while adolescent boys' strengths related to external interests such as sport and hobbies. Because girls' perceptions of their strengths were not as broadly determined as those of boys, Williams and McGee suggested that their self-image would be at greater risk by threats to attachment to parents or peers. Both these studies support the view that female identity is more focused on attachment to others in comparison with that of males.

With regard to the mother-daughter relationship specifically, it seems that there has been no New Zealand research that has focused exclusively on this dyad in adolescence. However, there have also been at least two New Zealand studies that have included mother-daughter relationships during adolescence as part of an investigation of parent-adolescent relationships or adolescent experiences generally in New Zealand (see Gray (1988) and Paterson (1993) in "Similar Research Studies" section later in this chapter). Gray (1992) has illustrated the depth and complexity of

the mother-daughter relationship in her interviews with twenty-six New Zealand adult women. Gray found that despite the differences between them, there was acceptance and affirmation of the bond between mothers and daughters. She concluded that "whatever its nature, the mother-daughter relationship is invariably significant and intense" (1992, p. 8).

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ADOLESCENCE, MOTHERHOOD AND THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP

Social constructionism is an alternative approach to the study of human development, one that is critical of positivist social science, and includes some areas of psychology and other social science disciplines (for example, social anthropology). Henwood and Coughlan (1993, p. 192) define social constructionism as the thesis that "knowledge is an interpretive activity and a product of social, cultural and historical circumstances, rather than a more or less direct reflection of a world of objectively defined facts". This thesis has created the analogy of 'reading' the world like a text, and identifying different 'discourses' that are inherent within it. Weingarten (1997, p. 309) adopts social historian Joan W. Scott's definition of a discourse: " 'a historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of state-ments, terms, categories, and beliefs' that are embedded in institutions, social relationships, and texts". The discourses within a society's historical and cultural context keep changing and may also contradict each other. Social constructionism views people's experiences, identities and relationships as products of these discourses, or constructions of a particular time and place, rather than fixed, natural realities (Henwood & Coughlan, 1993; Parker, in Bird & Drewery, 2000).

Thus adolescence and the parent-adolescent relationship may also be considered as a product of social construction rather than entities in themselves. The review of theoretical and empirical literature concerning parent-adolescent relationships that has been outlined to this point may be interpreted as a particular discourse. This 'academic' discourse has evolved through a shift in theory and research so that the current emphasis is on transformation and continuing attachment in the parent-adolescent relationship. However, Western society outside of academic circles seems to have a greater influence upon the norms and expectations of adolescence. Through early and repetitive exposure to images in the media, lyrics of songs, and stories from

their parents' experiences, adolescents anticipate with a great deal of accuracy what to expect over the next several years. This 'popular culture' discourse appears to be at odds with the academic discourse in its continuing emphasis on separation and conflict in adolescence, motherhood and mother-daughter relationships. These views could be seen as evidence of the continuing influence of the psychoanalytic theories of adolescence, which see such behaviour as an inevitable part of adolescent development (see "Psychoanalytic and Neoanalytic Theories" section earlier in this chapter).

Pipher (1996), family therapist and author of *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*, provides a particularly insightful discussion of North American culture's view of adolescence. She argues that the valuing of individual freedom in America is also valued in families. Adulthood is defined as moving away from families into the wider society. Adolescence is considered to be when children achieve emotional separation from their parents, which is associated with rebellious behaviour and withdrawal from family: "Adolescence is the time for cutting bonds and breaking free" (p. 24). Pipher argues that this assumption then creates a self-fulfilling prophecy – adolescents behave as they are expected to behave. This includes distancing themselves from parents, criticising their behaviour, rejecting information given by them and keeping significant information from them. Instead, adolescents are expected to turn to their peers for support.

So, is this view of adolescence also prevalent in New Zealand society? Some indication may be found in popular literature, books aimed at parents of teenagers. A small selection of recent books are reviewed here: *Growing Pains: What to Do When your Children Turn into Teenagers* by Dr David Bennett (1987); *Teenagers: A Guide to Understanding Them* by Terry Colling and Janet Vickers (1988); *Teenagers: A Parents' Guide for the 90s* by Michael Marris (1996); *Parenting Teenagers: A Self-help Guide for New Zealand Parents* by Kate Birch and Sue Mafi (1996); and *Parenting Teenagers in the 1990s: The White Water Rafting Years* by Ian Grant and John Cowan (1997).

Even within only five books, there were several themes that came up again and again. Firstly, adolescence is portrayed by these authors as a turbulent, tempestuous, difficult, even chaotic time in the lifecycle. Adolescence seems to be something for

parents to survive, rather than enjoy, as indicated in Marris' (1996) opening paragraph:

> 'Enjoying your teenagers'. Does that phrase sound like a contradiction in terms to you as a parent? If adolescence is a turbulent, tempestuous, troubled time for teenagers, it can be just as much so for parents as they struggle to master the strange world that their children have dragged them into (p. 3).

Parents are told to expect difficulties with their teenager, and much of the content of these books is taken up with the "crisis situations" (Marris, 1996, p. 4) that they will encounter, "Teenagers do get drunk, get involved with drugs, have sex, get involved with crime, become irresponsible, and torture their parents" (Grant & Cowan, 1997, p. 27). These difficulties are assumed to be almost universal, and parents are told that few families get through adolescence "unscarred" (Marris, 1996, p. 3).

The turbulence of adolescence is starkly contrasted with the happiness and tranquillity of childhood years: "These [childhood] memories are to be enjoyed, because parenting adolescents is not easy!" (Bennett, 1987, p. 223). Parents are warned that their familiar, compliant child of recent memory will suddenly turn into a moody, rebellious adolescent. "You know that it's supposed to happen; you've heard about it, read about it, and probably even been personally warned about it; but when its actually happening, it's not much fun – Teenage Rebellion" (Bennett, 1987, p. 26). The dramatic and sudden nature of this change is emphasised. Adolescence is considered to be the time when antisocial behaviour is displayed. "The following behaviours might be unpleasant, but are fairly typical of teenagers: Uncommun-icative, argumentative, secretive, angry when interrogated, confused and disinterested in the future, resents personal questions" (Grant & Cowan, 1997, p. 140). Feeling worried, stressed and depressed is also considered to be fairly normal for many adolescents. "While adolescence is no longer viewed as a time of continuous, agonising, emotional turmoil, it can be tough" (Bennett, 1987, p. 170).

Adolescents are expected to behave this way as part of the great developmental task of this period: separation from their family. The teenager is expected to learn how to become a "self-determining, self-fulfilling, autonomous, effective and self-responsible adult" (Marris, 1996, p. 14). Such separation is described as the breaking of the strong bond of attachment between parent and child. "Because these attachments have been so carefully forged over a large number of years, the dramatic

and abrupt severance of them in adolescence is of necessity intense" (Marris, 1996, p. 16). The breaking of these bonds is often described as a type of bereavement, with the same emotions. Bennett explains "On both sides there will be sadness. Elizabeth Kubler Ross has made us aware of the anger involved in normal bereavement" (1987, pp. 237-238). Marris advises parents "You may well feel twinges of hurt, jealousy, rejection, loneliness and of all the other normal feelings of people who are suddenly deprived of a very longstanding warm relationship" (1996, p. 140). Achieving independence from parents is considered antithetical to receiving support and validation from parents, and continued attachment to parents is a sign of immaturity: "The adolescent suddenly turns from a free-thinking sophisticate into a child, running to their parent for comfort and reassurance" (Marris, 1996, p. 138).

Breaking away from attachments to parents is necessary in order to develop an adult identity, "One of a teenager's major tasks is to develop a sense of personal identity that is separate from the family" (Colling & Vickers, 1988, p. 55). Conflict with and rebellion against parents is viewed to be normal and necessary for adolescents as they "become their own person" (Marris, 1996, p. 17). Adolescents are expected to flagrantly reject all their parent's values in order to achieve their own individually determined adult self. Parents are warned that becoming a disappointment to their children is almost inevitable. They are also reassured that such behaviour is to be expected, that it is healthy and developmentally normal. It should be recognised for what it is: "signs that teenagers are wanting emotional separation. They try to gain distance in this way in order to see themselves more clearly" (Bennett, 1987, p. 237).

During adolescence, it is also assumed that relationships outside the family become as important, if not more important, than relationships within the family. The peer group provides resources that were previously found within the family: "shared confidences, support, acceptance, rules and responsibilities" (Colling & Vickers, 1988). Teenagers are expected to stop talking to their parents and instead tell everything to their friends, which can lead to parents feeling rejected. "It is often said by parents of their teenagers, 'they don't communicate with us'. This loss of contact can be very distressing for the parents, who feel suddenly excluded from their children's lives" (Colling and Vickers, 1988, p. 22).

The main task for parents during this period of the lifespan is " 'letting go' of children who are figuratively and literally leaving home" (Bennett, 1987, p. ix). 'Letting go' involves "loosening the reins of control" (Bennett, 1987, p. 223) and acknowledging that adolescents are no longer helpless, vulnerable children. It also means parents should accept their teenagers' behaviour as an indication of their striving for independence and individuality. This task is often portrayed as difficult, for parents to achieve, and is associated with much reluctance and sadness,

> In babyhood they join our world, in childhood we share a world and in adolescence they move away into their own world. It is tempting to try to move with them, but that is not possible, nor is it our job. The best we can do is grieve for the joint world we shared and try to preserve at least some of the links (Birch & Mafi, 1996, pp. 19-20).

Marris (1996) does not believe that the portrayal of adolescence found in his book (and the others included here) is an overstatement or an overreaction. He states that "this is the picture that many parents experience and which really does reflect the norm" (p. 26). But is this actually the case? It should be borne in mind that Marris and all the other authors of the books reviewed above are medical or psychological professionals. David Bennett is the head of the Adolescent Medical Unit at a children's hospital in Sydney; Janet Vickers is a social worker; Terry Colling is a marital and family therapist; Kate Birch is a psychologist working with family and parent groups; Sue Mafi is also a psychologist specialising in assessment and therapy for children and families; Michael Marris is a psychologist specialising in families and children; Ian Grant has spent 30 years working with young people and their families in a professional capacity and John Cowan trained as a psychologist and has also been a youth worker and minister. Just as much of psychoanalytic theory was based upon experiences of people in therapy and treatment centres, these authors are likely to only see those adolescents and their families who come to them when they are needing professional assistance to resolve problems in their lives. Thus, their portrayal of adolescence may not necessarily be accurate for the majority of teenagers and their parents in New Zealand.

Themes of separation and conflict also dominate Western society's view of the mother-adolescent daughter relationship. Several writers have argued that American culture seems to have an expectation that there will be conflict between mothers and

daughters as girls become adolescents. Instead of subscribing to this view of highly conflictual mother-daughter relationships, some writers have begun to study the discursive production of this bond over the lifespan. This includes looking at the discourses of both motherhood and adolescence. Different cultures have particularly strong views of what is appropriate and acceptable when it comes to raising children; each culture has its own discourses of parenthood, particularly motherhood (Phillips, 1986). Woollett and Phoenix (1991) argue that psychology has been the authority that legitimates current views and produces new ideologies about motherhood and the nature of good mothering. The main body of theory in developmental psychology has traditionally considered mothers to be the most important figures in their children's development, and therefore mothers have been the usual focus of studies. From these, argue Woollett and Phoenix, psychologists make judgements about what constitutes 'good' mothering. This includes having strong feelings of attachment, staying at home when children are young and being mainly responsible for their care, and being sensitively responsive to their needs. Many of these assumptions about motherhood have pervaded Western culture and appear to still be considered the norm to a significant extent in New Zealand (Phillips, 1986).

It seems that there is a change in what is considered to be 'good' mothering between childhood and adolescence. Weingarten (1997, 1998) is one author who has exposed and challenged the dominant discourses regarding adolescents and mother-hood. By examining clinical and popular culture, Weingarten asked the question "What meanings about mothers and adolescents are given 'truth' status and why?" (1997, p. 310) – that is, what constitutes 'good' and 'bad' mothering? She identified several 'truths': the primary developmental task for adolescents is separation from their parents; this task is believed to be inevitably conflictual; and it is essential that adolescents separate from their mothers in particular. A 'good' mother of an adolescent accepts distance and conflict between them and encourages separation from her.

Pipher (1996) also believes that because of these mixed messages within Western culture, tension in mother-daughter relationships is inevitable, "Mothers are asked to love completely and yet know exactly when to distance emotionally and physically" (1996, p. 103). In turn, daughters are encouraged to distance themselves from their mothers and devalue their connection to them (Pipher, 1996). Weingarten (1998) believes these messages indicate a misunderstanding of the difference

between separation and differentiation, and confusion about the nature of intimacy. Intimacy is often thought to be synonymous with closeness, which is assumed to obstruct adolescent development. Mother-daughter closeness is of particular concern because it is believed to conceal a mother's dependence on her daughter, which invariably hinders the daughter's movement towards independence (Weingarten, 1998).

Weingarten (1998) asserts that it is relationship, not separation, that enables adolescents to develop independence and competence, because it is their mothers who are best able to help them develop these skills. Weingarten points out that perceiving mothers as allies rather than obstacles in the lives of their adolescent children requires a reconceptualisation of adolescent and maternal development. Weingarten argues it should be assumed that adolescents want to maintain positive connections with their mothers, that mothers have their own lives and that their continuing desire to be involved in their adolescents' lives arises from appropriate concern, not interference and dependence.

Nice (1992) echoes Weingarten's reconceptualisation of adolescent and maternal development in her alternative solution to the 'problem' of separation. The problematic situation of mother and daughter not being psychologically separate is resolved by both seeing each other as separate adults. However, Nice questions whether this problem (lack of separation) actually exists. She suggests instead that connection is the starting point, which is undermined by the prevailing discourse of disconnection in motherhood and mother-daughter relationships. "New theories of development which allow for connection in relationships and the growth of the individual through attachments start us on the path to rethinking the mother-daughter relationship in theory and a chance to experience it differently in practice" (Nice, 1992, p. 233). The question is, how is this relationship experienced in practice by daughters in New Zealand?

SIMILAR RESEARCH STUDIES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This review of the literature has illustrated that developmental theories about adolescence and the parent-adolescent relationship have changed considerably during the last century. Although the theories described in this chapter offer important insights and have had considerable influence, they do have shortcomings and leave

several 'gaps' in the literature. This next section is an overview of the difficulties and absences in theory and research in the field that have been pointed out by critics and theorists, both overseas and in New Zealand, and the contribution the current study makes to these areas. This section begins with a summary of other studies that have investigated the mother-adolescent daughter relationship, and concludes with the research questions for this study.

Similar research studies

The literature on mother-daughter relationships includes some useful similar studies that are relevant to the proposed research questions. Most of the studies included here focus exclusively on the mother-daughter relationship in adolescence, but some include adolescent girls' perceptions of their relationship with their mother as part of a larger research project. In the case of the New Zealand literature, there are no studies found that investigate just the mother-daughter relationship. The two New Zealand studies included here look at the experiences of adolescents generally (including familial relationships) and male and female adolescents' perceptions of attachment to parents and friends.

Apter's (1990) book *Altered Loves: Mothers and Daughters During Adolescence* is based on her interviews with 65 mother and daughter pairs, 27 from Britain and 38 from North America. These interviews spanned nearly three years (1985-1988), during which their shape and content changed as Apter's view of the mother-daughter relationship changed. She started her project with the theoretical question: "How does the daughter deal with the problems of separation from her mother during adolescence?" (p. 14). From listening to the girls and following their lead, her questions changed from a focus on separation to recognition of continuing connection and renegotiation of the mother-daughter relationship during adolescence. Apter's study is unlike any of the other studies included in this summary in its inclusion of both adolescent daughters' *and* mothers' perceptions of their relationship.

Apter defines adolescence as lasting from age 11 or 12 to about 21, but she does not specifically state the ages of the adolescent girls she interviewed. Her sample also includes families from a variety of social and racial backgrounds. Apter recruited participants through advertisements in national magazines, random selection from a list of employees of a large company in England, from state and private secondary

schools, and universities, and through informal information from social workers. Apter used a qualitative interview style and interviewed the mother-daughter pairs face to face where possible. Apter talked with the mother and daughter separately on her first visit to their home. Ideally, a day or two later she visited them again to observe mother and daughter spending time together, preferably for an entire day. However, Apter was able to follow this procedure for only 32 pairs. 14 pairs were interviewed by telephone, three could not be interviewed separately, and the remainder were interviewed but had no follow-up observation session. Apter considered these observation sessions to be mandatory, as the private conversations tended to emphasise either positive or mundane aspects of the relationship.

Apter's method of analysis was highly intuitive, identifying patterns or themes within interview transcripts without relying on psychological tools of measurement. Apter's patterns become the focus for her book chapters, which included discussion of existing theoretical approaches to adolescence and the mother-daughter relation-ship and how her data relate to these approaches. In her book there is also discussion of themes such as competition and envy between mothers and daughters, comparison between adolescent friendships and the mother-daughter relationship, and risk factors such as divorce and the death of a mother. Her findings did not fit with traditional views of adolescence that emphasised separation from parents; instead, she found that the adolescent daughters she interviewed retained a strong emotional bond with their mothers, and arguments between them were interpreted as daughters' attempts to get their mother to recognise their changing selves.

Rich's (1990) dissertation, *Change within Connection: A Study of Adolescent Daughters' Views of their Relationships with their Mothers*, is part of a larger group of studies that were conducted at a private boarding school for girls, Emma Willard, in North America, from 1981 to 1984. Rich (1990) investigated adolescent daughters' perceptions of their relationship with their mother in light of the conflicting theories about female adolescence: the psychoanalytically-influenced view that separation from parental attachment is the main task of adolescence, versus feminist theory's claim that relationship is central to female identity. Rich inter-viewed 22 students annually for three years using open-ended interviews. No indication of the age group of this sample is given in the chapter in the book *Making Connections: The Relational Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School*,

which summarises Rich's dissertation. All Rich's participants were white, intelligent, verbal and from middle to upper class homes, and 16 out of 22 of them were boarding students and did not see their mother every day.

In the first interview, the participants were asked to describe a relationship with a parent, and in the second and third interviews, they were asked about their relationship with their mother. Rich initially identified her 28 themes by doing in-depth readings of eight girls' transcripts for all three years. The remaining 14 cases were then read to identify these themes and to add any new information to the original notes summarising the themes. Rich's study included both qualitative and quantitative methods: gathering descriptive transcript quotes and coding themes for absence/presence. Rich used the patterns derived from the descriptions to generate hypotheses about mother-daughter relationships as perceived by adolescent daughters.

Rich presented her results under three main headings: attachment/connection; increasing differentiation and independence; and change over time. Rich discovered that the daughters generally portrayed ongoing connections with their mothers during adolescence, a perspective that does not correspond with traditional theories of the parent-adolescent relationship. The girls in Rich's study adapted to change in their relationship through negotiation and arguments, or learned to live with unresolved disagreements. They also described a wide range of mother-daughter relationships; some became closer, others grew more distant or conflicted; some remained strong, others were consistently weak, and others changed over time. Rich concluded that "Overall, the interviews suggest that girls' views of themselves are intricately related to their views of their relationships with their mothers" (1990, p. 259).

Waal (1993) also described the relationship between adolescent daughters and their mothers from the daughters' perspective. Waal, a cultural anthropologist, carried out her research as part of her doctoral dissertation at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, entitled *Girls: A Separate World. An Ethnography of Girls at Secondary School*. The portion of Waal's study read by this researcher was based on the chapter 'At home' in her dissertation and focused on the movement from one-sided parental authority to more mutual negotiation between parents and adolescents in the household. By visiting schools, club houses, swimming pools, snackbars, discos, and girls' homes, Waal talked with over 50 adolescent girls over

four years. The age group of her sample was not stated in this chapter. She saw 30 of these girls regularly over a one-year period, and followed 10 girls for three or four years. She also went beyond simply interviewing the girls to include observation of their environments, correspondence with them and analysis of their letters, diaries and photographs.

Waal identified several common patterns amongst daughters' perceptions of their relationship with their mothers. She found that all her participants generally experienced the same limitations to their freedom, placed upon them by their parents. Girls were not allowed to go to certain places, had to be home at particular times of the day, were prohibited from participating in some activities (or were allowed to only when they had reached a particular age) and were not allowed to have social contact with certain people (for example, those who were several years older). Waal's participants all agreed that they had considerably less freedom than boys, because their parents were protecting them from undesirable consequences. Waal interpreted her data as evidence of mothers trying to persuade their daughters to adopt a particular social character that leads to them wanting to do what their mothers want them to do. Mothers did this by explaining their reasons for limitations, giving examples of how they behaved as adolescents and what they would do in similar situations, telling stories about others and indicating whether they approved of their behaviour or not, and by encouraging certain social contacts and activities, often by not paying for those they felt were undesirable. Waal concluded that her findings indicated that adolescent girls still find it difficult to develop an identity that is separate from their mothers'.

Although the mother-daughter relationship in adolescence is not the main focus of the two New Zealand studies that follow, it is mentioned in these investigations of adolescence generally and parent-adolescent relationships. Gray's (1988) book *Teenangels: Being a New Zealand teenager* looks at what being a teenager was like in the late 1980s in New Zealand. It is based on interviews with nearly 300 male and female adolescents over a period of six months from February to July 1987, as well as including information from existing research and the researcher's own experience with adolescents. Gray spoke to a varied cross-section of adolescents: students from Form 3 to Form 7 at about 20 New Zealand secondary schools, including co-educational, single-sex and private schools, from small towns or rural areas,

provincial towns and cities; students in work experience or transition schemes; unemployed adolescents; 'street kids'; and adolescents who had left school for jobs or further study. Gray's participants were a mixture of Pakeha, Maori, Pacific Island and others for whom English was their second language. As Gray points out, her sample was not statistically random, but there was a range of opinions. At the same time, participants agreed about the most important issues, which shaped the content and order of the chapters, which were: family, friends, having fun, highs and lows, school, work, social issues, looking ahead. Within these chapters there were many extracts from participants' interviews. The nature of adolescents' relationships with parents and the differences between mothers and fathers was explored in the 'Family' chapter. This chapter discussed themes found within parent-adolescent relationships, such as talking and listening; arguments; increasing independence; as well as discussing various types of families and adolescents' experiences within them, such as parental separation; step-families; adoption, fostering and living away from home; sexual abuse and violence; and street kids.

The adolescents in Gray's (1988) study named their family as the most important influence in their lives. The functions of the family most valued by these adolescents were good communication, trust and security (in that order). Gray discovered that many of these teenagers had very good relationships with their parents, and communication was the key to how close they were. Those teenagers who were able to talk easily to their parents and were listened to, valued this greatly, but those who were not able to were often angry and resentful. Not all communication with parents was positive; the teenagers in this study accepted that there would be some conflict and criticism, but this did not necessarily prevent the maintenance of a good relationship with their parents. The adolescents in Gray's study reported that they felt closer to their mothers and got on better with them. They also talked more to their mothers than their fathers, and in turn mothers talked more to them than fathers; sons did not talk with and were talked to less often by their parents compared to daughters; and both daughters and sons talked to their parents more often when parents shared more confidences and information with their children.

Paterson's (1993) doctoral thesis *Adolescent Perceptions of Attachment: Parents, Friends, and Impact on Self-esteem* explored changes in New Zealand adolescents' perceptions of their attachment to mothers, fathers and friends, and how

these relationships affected their self-esteem. Two dimensions of attachment were assessed: the utilisation of emotional support and proximity, and the quality of affect. There were three studies within this project, using a cross-sectional sample of Pakeha, Maori and Pacific Island adolescents aged 13 to 19. Patersons' study adapted measurement scales from a quantitative questionnaire, the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, as well as qualitative interviews of a smaller group of the main sample. Study One (180 participants) showed that adolescents utilised their mothers for support and proximity more than their fathers. Study Two (493 participants) revealed that females reported that they utilised maternal support and proximity more as they got older, whereas males utilised their mothers less. However, both female and male adolescents continued to experience a high quality of affect towards their mothers during adolescence. With increasing age, both female and male adolescence utilised paternal support and proximity less, and reported a lower quality of affect towards their fathers. Study Three (80 participants) found that the reasons for utilising parents and friends for support and feeling close to them did not differ according to the age or sex of the adolescent but varied according to the attachment figure.

Paterson found that adolescents' utilisation of their parents for support and proximity was weakly associated with all the self-esteem measures, but adolescents' quality of affect towards their parents significantly influenced self-esteem, social competence and coping abilities. Many adolescents in this study described them-selves as close to their parents even though they did not talk to them in depth and/or had frequent arguments. This seemed to indicate that it is confidence that support is available that is crucial to adolescents' wellbeing, rather than actual utilisation of that support. In contrast to overseas studies that found greater distance and dissatisfaction with parents during early and mid adolescence, Paterson's study revealed that from early (13 years) to mid (15 years) adolescence neither females nor males significantly decreased their utilisation of or quality of affect towards their parents. These findings support Kroger's (cited in Paterson, 1993) suggestion that New Zealand adolescents begin to seek independence from their parents later than their counterparts in other Western countries.

Paterson (1993) also found that adolescents have very different perceptions of their relationships with their mothers and fathers. The adolescents in her study

reported that they would go to their mothers for emotional support more often than their fathers. Adolescents perceived their fathers as less responsive and important than their mothers when they sought support and proximity, and reported a higher quality of affect towards their mothers than their fathers. Although they did not utilise their fathers as much for support and proximity, female and male adolescents continued to regard their fathers as responsive and important to them from early to late adolescence. Daughters in particular increased their utilisation of their mothers' support and proximity in adolescence and appeared to share a closer connection with this parent (Paterson, 1993).

These studies, conducted in the 80s or early 90s, were instructive in the formulation of this research project and the research questions that follow.

Formulation of research questions

A social constructionist approach would suggest that attention be paid to the meanings inherent in the perceptions of adolescents, especially those associated with adolescence, parenthood and the parent-adolescent relationship. Social construc-tionism assumes that all descriptions of life events and relationships are shaped by the discourses within each culture. Thus, personal narratives illustrate these particular discourses: "The culture 'speaks itself' through each individual's story" (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992, p. 7). In such a study, the participants' narratives about their lives and their relationships with their mothers (and fathers) would be considered as evidence of assumptions and beliefs about adolescence, motherhood, and relation-ships between adolescents and parents in New Zealand.

In particular, how participants perceive their relationships with their mothers (and other family members) would provide evidence to suggest which of the conflicting discourses of adolescence and the parent-adolescent relationship they subscribe to. The most recent academic discourse argues that the importance of strong bonds between parents and adolescents does not abate, while the popular culture discourse is still heavily influenced by psychoanalytic theory, which holds that an important developmental task for adolescents is to separate from their parents, especially mothers. This separation is also associated with stress and conflict – Hall's 'Sturm und Drang'. These conflicting discourses are brought together in daughters' perceptions of their relationship with their mother. Recent theory and research

suggests that adolescent daughters are thought to value and maintain connection with their mothers, yet because they are adolescent, they are under tremendous social pressure to gain independence from their family. It is therefore proposed that the central research objective would be to investigate which of these discourses are found in adolescent daughters' descriptions of their relationships with their mothers.

As illustrated in the conclusion of the literature review above, there is now considerable consensus from several different theoretical perspectives that development involves the integration of both self-definition and interpersonal relatedness. The development of one dimension is dependent on the development of the other, a process that continues throughout the entire lifespan. Recent theory and research has argued that attachment to parents is maintained during adolescence, yet at the same time the parent-adolescent relationship is transformed into a more mature, mutual relationship. If this is the case, there should be an emphasis on themes of both self-definition *and* interpersonal relatedness. The mother-daughter relationship is usually the primary attachment, and is therefore an appropriate context in which to investigate the complementary processes of self-definition and interpersonal relatedness (themes of agency and communion; McAdams, 1993) and their integration through transformation of this relationship. Thus the current study will investigate how participants perceive their relationship with their mother has changed since they were a child, and seeks evidence of transformation or renegotiation in participants' narratives, whether there is movement towards a more mutual relationship between these mothers and daughters. It is also important to find out whether there are themes of agency (development of a new self-definition) and communion (retaining a connection or closeness) within the participants' narratives.

One of the most influential legacies of the psychoanalytic view, found in the popular culture discourse, is the belief that conflict and detachment, rather than harmony and attachment, characterise normal family life during adolescence – particularly between mothers and daughters, and particularly during early and mid-adolescence. As discussed in the literature review, analytical theorists consider parent-adolescent conflict to be a normal and necessary part of the detachment process. Harmonious parent-adolescent relationships are believed to hinder this process and are viewed as immature. Much research has therefore focused on the problems in parent-adolescent relationships and the growing distance between

parents and adolescents, rather than investigating how close family ties are maintained, and the value of continuing attachment between parents and adolescents (Steinberg, 1990). Associating adolescence with conflict also implies that adolescents are a single group, rather than distinct and unique individuals (Gray, 1988). Research into mother-daughter relationships in adolescence should therefore investigate participants' perceptions of conflict and find out if there is evidence to support the view that early and mid-adolescence is most often associated with conflict between mothers and daughters.

A second influence of the psychoanalytic view relates to discontinuity. In the psychoanalytic perspective, the preadolescent period is abruptly ended by detachment from parents. This view, found in the popular culture discourse, emphasises the sudden and dramatic change between childhood and adolescence and implies that a harmonious relationship between parent and child prior to adolescence is irrelevant to their relationship in adolescence; developmental changes associated with puberty are believed to undermine even the strongest relationships (Steinberg, 1990). The emphasis on the disruption and unpredictability of adolescence has resulted in a lack of research on the continuity between relationships in families in childhood and those in adolescence. There are few studies that examine the ways in which earlier family characteristics (for example, levels of harmony or conflict) affect the family's transition into adolescence (Steinberg, 1990). This research project will examine the influence of the past on participants' present perceptions of their relationship with their mother, particularly their relationship with their parents (and sometimes siblings) in childhood, and other significant events in their lives.

Rather than using the family or a particular relationship as a starting point, many influential developmental theories focus on the individual as the centre of the developmental process. There does not appear to be much attention paid to the interaction between individuals and their families, communities and societies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). An extension of this is a tendency to study the parent-adolescent relationship in isolation, without considering the context in which this relationship occurs (Josselson, 1992; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). As Josselson (1992, p. 27) points out, "Who there is in our life influences who else we need and how we need them." Theoretical frameworks such as family systems theory have challenged this individualistic approach by looking at individuals and relationships within a

broader perspective, that is, as embedded within the contexts of family. The current study investigates how other familial relationships, particularly between fathers and daughters, affects daughters' perceptions of the mother-daughter relationship in adolescence.

As discussed in the "New Zealand Literature" section, overseas research findings may not necessarily be applicable to the New Zealand population, as societal, cultural and economic factors will influence our development in distinctive ways. However, because research on adolescence and parent-adolescent relationships in this country is only just beginning, there is very little information to compare with overseas studies. This only encourages inappropriate assumptions and generalisations based upon what is happening in other Western countries. The current study will contribute to the growing number of studies that are beginning to fill the gaps in research-based understandings of human development in New Zealand. In particular, few studies have investigated the experiences of New Zealand adolescent women and their relationship with their mothers. This study aims to contribute to this area of New Zealand research and also compare its data to overseas theory and research findings.

Research questions

The central research question is:

- It is argued that there are two conflicting discourses regarding adolescence and the parent-adolescent relationship. The academic discourse emphasises continuing attachment to parents through transformation of this relationship, with a movement toward greater mutuality. The popular culture discourse emphasises detachment from parents and conflict between parents and adolescents. Which of these conflicting discourses do adolescent daughters in New Zealand subscribe to?

Answers to the following subsidiary questions will contribute to this central research question:

- What do these girls perceive to be 'good' and 'bad' qualities of mothers? How do these participants' perceptions relate to socially constructed discourses of motherhood?

- The mother-daughter relationship during adolescence has often been associated with greater conflict than other dyads, particularly during early and mid-adolescence. Do participants' narratives support this contention?

- How do these girls perceive their relationship with their mother has changed since childhood? Is the mother-daughter relationship being renegotiated or transformed in the participants' narratives? Is there evidence of a movement towards a more mutual relationship?

- Are these girls developing a new definition of themselves (agency)? Are they retaining connection and/or closeness with their mothers at the same time (communion)? In what ways are these themes expressed in their narratives?

- How do the following contexts influence these participants' perceptions of their relationship with their mother in adolescence:
    - their relationship with their mother in childhood
    - significant events in participants' lives
    - their relationship with their father in childhood and adolescence?

- How does this New Zealand data compare to overseas research findings, particularly other studies of mother-daughter relationships during adolescence?

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This study explores the character of the relationship between adolescent girls and their mothers using a qualitative design framework; specifically, using structured interviews and a narrative analysis of themes and content. A narrative approach, as part of qualitative research methodology, is particularly suited to the research questions posed at the conclusion of Chapter 2. As such this chapter presents an outline of both qualitative methodology and narrative research, highlighting the features of each that made them suitable for the current study. Part of this justification includes the reasons for choosing a qualitative research interview to investigate the topic of study, rather than another data-gathering method. There is a general overview of the particular interview (the Adult Attachment Interview); its use in the current study and how this differs from its normal application; and an outline of additional interview questions used. The methods used and the difficulties encountered in recruiting participants are summarised. Following this there is an overview of the interviewing procedure. The particular ethical issues associated with a narrative approach are mentioned, as well as how these are addressed in the current study. The issues of reliability, validity and generalisability are explored, including how they apply in qualitative research methods, narrative research, and the current study. The influence the researcher has on participants is discussed, both generally and in the current study. Finally, the method and format of the analysis of findings are presented.

CHOICE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research design – a narrative approach – was chosen in the current study because there were several features of both qualitative research generally and a narrative approach specifically that were particularly suited to answering the research questions posed (see pages 55-56). These features are discussed in more detail below. Firstly, we must return to the original impetus for undertaking the current study.

In 1998 I completed a small-scale study with six New Zealand adult women which explored the nature of the relationship between daughters and mothers during adolescence. This project functioned as a trial for the current study, as the same interview protocol, the Adult Attachment Interview, was used. The adult women I interviewed in this trial study all identified that the most conflict and change within their relationship with their mothers occurred between the ages of 15 and 17. Therefore I chose to interview adolescent girls of this age group to explore their current perceptions and experiences regarding their relationship with their mother.

This relationship could only be understood within the context of participants' relationships with other family members, how these had evolved since their child-hood, and other life events that had influenced they way in which they construed these relationships. In order to gather such information, to answer the questions posed in this study, the research methodology would have to elicit detailed, personal accounts of the participants' lives and relationships, their perceptions and beliefs. Such data would only be gathered in a qualitative research design, using a face-to-face interview. This interview encouraged participants to tell their own personal story. As such, a narrative approach was considered to be the most suitable for this study, in which participants' stories are viewed as texts to be interpreted. The particular features of qualitative research and the narrative approach that made them appropriate for the current study are presented below.

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Merriam (cited by Creswell, 1994) outlines several assumptions of qualitative research designs that are relevant for the current study:

> Qualitative researchers are concerned primarily with *process*, rather than outcomes or products. Qualitative researchers are interested in *meaning* – how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world. The qualitative researcher is the *primary instrument* for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines. [....] Qualitative research is *descriptive* in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures. The process of qualitative

research is *inductive* in that the researcher builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories from details (p. 145).

These assumptions may be explained in further detail. The current study is an example of the most common form of qualitative research, in which researchers simply seek to "discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved" (Merriam, 1998, p. 11). According to Merriam (1998), all types of qualitative research are based upon one philosophical assumption: that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds. Qualitative researchers seek to understand how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in it. Stiles (1990) goes further by stating that another characteristic of qualitative research is the researcher's empathy with their participants: "Whereas psychological research in the received view looks only at the outside of people – only their behaviour counts as data – qualitative research additionally uses the researcher's understanding of their inner experience" (p. 25).

The current study subscribes to the assumption that meaning is found in people's experiences, and that this meaning is mediated through the researcher's own perceptions. Therefore qualitative researchers must be aware of the biases inherent in this type of research: "Because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human, all observations and analyses are filtered through that human being's worldview, values, and perspective" (Merriam, 1998, p. 22). Narrative analysis is also concerned with "how protagonists interpret things" (Bruner, 1990, p. 51), and narrative researchers systematically interpret participants' interpretations. Such subjectivity is often distrusted in mainstream social science, which aims for context-free laws and generalised explanations (Riessman, 1993). Yet in personal narratives, "it is precisely because of their subjectivity – their rootedness in time, place, and personal experience, in their perspective-ridden character – that we value them" (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, pp. 263-264).

Since qualitative research is interested in meaning, understanding and process, the content of a qualitative study is highly descriptive. Words and actions rather than numbers are used to convey what has been discovered about a phenomenon (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Stiles, 1990). As in the current study, there are likely to be researcher descriptions of the context and the participants themselves. Participants' own words in the interviews become the texts that are examined; the

texts become the data. Data in the form of participants' own words are also likely to be included to support the findings of the study (Merriam, 1998). The current study has quoted extensively from participants' interview transcripts to illustrate the themes discovered.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) explain that using participants' words better reflects the principles of the qualitative paradigm. Qualitative research is interested in understanding a situation as it is constructed by the participants, and does this by recording what people say and do, that is, the products of how people interpret the world. Words are the way most people understand their situations; this idea will be further elaborated upon in the discussion of the narrative approach (see below). The qualitative researcher's task is to capture this process of interpretation, find patterns within participants' words and present those patterns as research findings, while at the same time staying as close to the participants' construction of the world as they originally experienced it (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The current study has strived to maintain the 'voices' of the participants throughout, while also analysing their stories and presenting them as evidence in a research argument.

THE NARRATIVE APPROACH

Recently, there has been a focus on 'story' by personality psychologists, which according to McAdams (1988a) reflects a broader increase in interest, among many social scientists and other scholars, in the concept of *narrative* as it applies to people's lives. "By the mid-70s," Bruner (cited by Casey, 1995, p. 212) explains, "the social sciences had moved away from their traditional positivist stance towards a more interpretive posture: meaning became a central focus." Others also associate the recent popularity of narrative with the widespread shift away from positivism. "Narrative... has intuitive appeal to people who become weary of variables and the quantification of the positivistic approach" (Josselson, 1993, p. xv).

Polkinghorne (1988, p. 1) calls narrative "the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful." Sarbin (1986) suggests that narrative may be thought of as a 'root metaphor' for understanding human behaviour and experience. The shift from positivism towards an interpretive approach can be understood by contrasting the root metaphors inherent in each perspective. "The positivist perspective flows from the mechanistic world view, one of the basic metaphysical

positions identified by Pepper (1942)" (Sarbin, 1986, p.19). Sarbin states that twentieth century psychology has adopted the root metaphor of mechanism, which emphasises cause and effect and accepts the authority of facts. "An alternate world view, contextualism, includes change and novelty as central categories, categories that are applicable to the human condition. The root metaphor of contextualism is the historical act, a metaphor that corresponds to the description of the narrative" (Sarbin, 1986, p. 19).

Bruner (cited by Casey, 1995, p. 212) claims narrative is one of two natural ways of cognitive functioning, a distinctive way "of ordering experience, of constructing reality." The first way human beings understand the world Bruner (1990) calls the 'paradigmatic mode' of thought. In this mode, we try to understand our experience in terms of analyses, logical proof and empirical observation. In the 'narrative mode' of thought, we concentrate on human motives, organised in time. McAdams (1993, p. 29-30) states, "[The paradigmatic mode] is not able to make much sense of human desire, goals, and social conduct. Human events are often ambiguous, and resistant to paradigmatic efforts to understand them." The authors included here argue that the narrative mode is inherently more suitable for making sense of human experience. They point to the ubiquity of narrative in Western societies (Chase, 1995), noting that people often try to understand their experiences by constructing narratives or stories out of them (Baumeister & Newman, 1994).

Narrative views human lives and other social events as texts to be interpreted (McAdams, 1988a). In this approach, "identity is a life story" (McAdams, 1988b, p. 29). Polkinghorne (1988) explains,

> We achieve our personal identities and self-concept through the use of the narrative configuration, and make our existence into a whole by under-standing it as an expression of a single unfolding and developing story. We are in the middle of our stories and cannot be sure how they will end; we are constantly having to revise the plot as new events are added to our lives. Self, then, is not a static thing or a substance, but a configuring of personal events into an historical unity which includes not only what one has been but also anticipations of what one will be (p. 150).

McAdams (1988b, 1993) believes we each seek to provide our experiences with a sense of coherence by arranging the episodes of our lives into stories. He asserts that

the process of identity formation begins in late adolescence, when we become "biographers of self, mythologically rearranging the scattered elements of our lives – the different 'selves', or what Erikson terms 'identifications' – into a narrative whole providing unity and purpose" (1988b, p. 29).

The narrative approach is part of what Bruner (1990, p. 105) calls "the contextual revolution" that is occurring in psychology. According to the social constructionist framework (as discussed in Chapter Two), individuals' narratives are situated in particular interactions but also in social, cultural, and institutional contexts or discourses, which must be taken into account in order to interpret them (Riessman, 1993). Narratologists view self descriptions as forms chosen from a cultural repertoire of stories which then become personal stories, rather than reflections of the teller's actual experiences (Gergen, 1994). As Gergen explains, "psychologists interested in social constructionism…are keenly aware of the potential of narratives as a means of creating reality. One reality of central concern is the individual's understanding of self" (1994, p. 20). Potter and Wetherell (1987) point out that the concept of self is dependent on the linguistic practices we use to make sense of our own and others' actions. In order to make sense *to* others, the selection process we go through in constructing our self-narratives relies on "cultural heuristics: …the conventional or acceptable biographical forms of the culture" (Gergen, 1994, p.20). Personal narratives are considered particularly rich sources of data because they illustrate both individual stories and perceptions as well as how these have been shaped by the sociocultural context (Personal Narratives Group, 1989). Thus a narrative approach was considered to be ideally suited for fulfilling this study's aims of presenting participants' unique stories as well as discussing the way in which their descriptions of relationships are socially constructed.

Several researchers have highlighted other advantages of a narrative approach, and contrasted it with the more traditional social science research methods. Josselson, in the introduction to the first volume of the series *The Narrative Study of Lives* (1993) says she and her colleagues were attracted to narrative by its holism, richness of data and "by the sense that we were grappling with all that was missing in more distant, variable-based research" (p. ix). As Runyan (1984) explains,

> Narrative is useful for indicating how people thought and felt, what they said and did, what situations they were in, how their words and actions were

interpreted by others, and the processes by which they interacted with their worlds over time. Many of these tasks are not handled easily, if at all, by more standard social scientific methods such as measurement, quantitative analysis or experimentation (p. 61).

Investigators usually choose narrative methods because of the power they have with respect to the particular topic being studied (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992). This was certainly the case in this investigation of such a complex and personal subject.

THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INTERVIEW

In order to explore the character of the relationship between adolescent girls and their mothers using a narrative methodology, ten New Zealand adolescent girls were interviewed using both a structured and semi-structured interview format. The structured part of the interview was provided by the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI: George et al., 1996), which is included in Appendix 5. Following the AAI, several semi-structured questions were added, designed to explore the mother-adolescent daughter relationship in more detail. The main questions used for this part of the interview are included in Appendix 6.

Several authors who have worked with adolescent women advocate the use of in-depth interviews. A qualitative research interview was chosen because it allowed a more flexible interview guide (Tolich & Davidson, 1999) which encouraged greater expression of participants' personal narratives (Apter, 1990). As Apter (1993) explains, "though adolescent attitudes towards parents have been covered through detailed, well constructed questionnaires [for example, Youniss & Smollar, 1985], the results of these leave out the micro-responses that would allow further description and interpretations" (p. 165). Although data from questionnaires are easier to analyse because the replies are contained, they cannot be placed into different contexts, and the interpretation of these replies may be inflexible or presumptuous. In an interview, the interviewer is able to perceive whether there is a problem with the question, and can then modify the next question, and take a different approach (Apter, 1990).

The qualitative research interview, when compared to quantitative survey interviews or questionnaires, has other advantages. One is that interactions in relationships can be investigated in a variety of situations and over a range of time periods, rather than being limited to a single situation in a constrained time frame

(Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Probably the main value of the research interview is that it allows both researcher and participant to explore the meaning of the questions and answers involved. "There is an implicit, or explicit sharing and/or negotiation of understanding in the interview situation which is not so central, and often not present, in other research procedures" (Brenner, Brown & Canter, 1985, p. 3).

Narrative researchers contend that narratives are a recurrent and prominent feature of participants' accounts in all types of interviews. If respondents are allowed to continue speaking until they indicate that they have completed their answers, they are likely to relate stories (Mishler, 1986a, 1986b; Polkinghorne, 1988). Interviewers can invite participants to tell their stories through carefully constructed questions and the orientation to participants inherent in the questions (Chase, 1995). Brown and Gilligan (1992), in their interviews with adolescent girls, found that many of their initial questions did not seem 'right', they seemed to be preventing the girls from fully expressing their experiences. Brown and Gilligan found that the girls became more engaged when asked to tell stories about their lives, and that this was facilitated by using more open-ended, flexible interview questions. Mishler (1986a) points out that participants' responses are a reflection of the interviewer's assessment of whether the participant has said 'enough' for the purpose of the interview. In order to allow participants room to speak and relate stories, interviewers must learn to tolerate silences in the interview as participants reflect on their experiences, something that is difficult for many New Zealand researchers (Tolich & Davidson, 1999).

The growing awareness that people construct narratives of their experience of the world and their role in it has led to a reconsideration of how the research interview is used (Bruner, 1990). Mishler (1986a) argues that the standard survey interview is essentially faulted:

> [T]he standard interview through both its form and the hierarchic structure of the interviewee-interviewer relationship tends to obscure relations between events and experiences and to disrupt individuals' attempts to make coherent sense of what is happening to them and around them (p. 120).

Mishler (1986b) explains that the mainstream approach to research interviewing has focused on standardisation, on how to ask all participants the same question and analyse their responses using a standardised coding system. However, the narrative approach recognises that there are multiple and changing meanings in discourse,

which are contextually grounded. According to Mishler (1986b), this is the main contribution of the narrative approach: interpreting participants' stories by referring to the context within which they were constructed, in contrast to the standardised approach where such inferences are based on "decontextualised bits and pieces" (p. 241).

The Adult Attachment Interview

General overview

The AAI is a structured interview that asks interviewees for descriptions of their past relationship with parents, specific supportive or contradictory memories, and descriptions of current relationships with parents. The first set of questions focuses on factual aspects of the early family situation (family composition, residence patterns, parents' occupational history, and extended family). Interviewees are then asked to choose five adjectives to describe their childhood relationship to each parent, and then for specific memories to illustrate those adjectives. Other questions then ask to which parent they felt the closest; what they did in childhood when they were upset, hurt, or ill; and what they remembered about separations from their parents. Interviewees are asked whether they had ever felt rejected by their parents; whether parents had been threatening towards them in any way; why they thought their parents behaved as they did; and how the relationship with their parents had changed over time. Questions are also asked about interviewees' experiences of loss through death of important figures, both as a child and as an adult. Finally, questions are included that ask for evaluations and reflections about the effects of their childhood experiences on the interviewees' adult personality and subsequent relationships (Bakermans-Kranenburg & van IJzendoorn, 1993; Dean, 1997; George et al., 1996; Main et al., 1985).

The AAI, which usually lasts between 30 and 90 minutes, is structured in order to 'surprise the unconscious' (George et al., 1996). The interview investigates not only what the adult's early attachment experiences were like, but more importantly, how they think and feel about attachment issues now; how they represent them in their mind (their internal working model) and whether they can access painful memories and discuss them openly. Therefore transcripts are carefully analysed for coherency, quality of memory, and anger; and it is these issues – not reported events

in childhood – that are used to determine security of attachment (Karen, 1994). As Karen puts it, "More than an interview, it was a psychological assessment, almost like a Strange Situation for adults" (p. 366). Although the AAI was originally intended for use with adults, it has been used with adolescent samples (for example, Adam, Sheldon Keller & West, 1996; Bakermans-Kranenburg & van IJzendoorn, 1993; Dean, 1997; Kobak, Cole, Ferenz-Gillies, Fleming & Gamble, 1993; Rosenstein & Horowitz, 1996; Ward & Carlson, 1995).

Use of the AAI in the current study

In the current study, the AAI was not used as it is intended, that is, as a clinical interview resulting in a classification of attachment style. Instead, it was a way of eliciting a narrative account of childhood in general and relationships with parents specifically. This was then used as a backdrop for interpretation of the interviewee's narrative about her relationship with her mother during adolescence. The AAI was chosen over a questionnaire, another semi-structured interview or an open-ended interview for several reasons. A narrative approach is interested in the meaning that people make through the stories they construct, and an interview is the most effective way to access their stories. The AAI is particularly suited to a narrative approach, because it elicits detailed memories of childhood and adolescence by asking interviewees to describe their relationship with their parents during childhood and adolescence and to provide specific biographical episodes to support their descrip-tions. In contrast to a more unstructured, open-ended interview, the AAI provides a framework for participants to illustrate their perception of their relationships with parents in more detail, and allows comparison between participants as they all answered the same questions. The AAI also permits flexibility for the interviewer and interviewees in elaborating on and clarifying questions and responses (Dean, 1997).

The current study aims to investigate interpersonal relationships between mothers and daughters in adolescence. The AAI is well suited for this purpose because it deals with attachment relationships in childhood and adulthood, one of which is the mother-daughter relationship. In discussing childhood experiences and relationships, the AAI provides a context for the participants' perceptions of their current relationship with their mother in adolescence. It is possible, by comparing the childhood and present mother-daughter relationship, to see how it has changed since

childhood and is still changing in adolescence. The AAI allows for comparison between father- and mother-daughter relationships and illustrates how each of these relationships influences the other. This interview also enables contextual influences such as family interactions and other life experiences to be included.

The mother-daughter relationship in adolescence can stir up powerful emotions, and the impact of these can have long-term consequences. I realised it was possible that the topic of the current study and the experiences of adolescent daughters could also be emotive and that the range of experiences these young women had had would not easily be captured through anything other than fairly open questioning. The AAI deals with emotive issues in the questions it asks and as such is very suitable for investigating the emotional interpersonal relationship that is the focus of the current study.

Additional interview questions

Following the AAI there was an additional set of interview questions, designed to gather information and biographical memories about participants' current relationship with their mother. Although a list of these questions is provided in Appendix 6, they were not followed as closely as the AAI questions. In qualitative interviews such as these, I found it was necessary to let the person interviewed lead the interviewer. Similarly, Apter (1990) found that if she followed the question base rigorously then she missed essential points. Konopka (1976) also had misgivings about standardised questionnaires: "People's opinions and feelings are too different one from the other and they cannot be sampled as one can sample soup by tasting a spoonful" (p. 3). In order to preserve the integrity of their participants' narratives, Konopka (1976) and Apter (1990) relied on open-ended interviews. The advantage of such an interview is that it allows the participant's own frame of reference to become apparent, rather than the researcher imposing one upon them (Konopka, 1976).

Although the questions in this open-ended part of the interview varied for each participant, I began this part of the interview by asking all the participants for several adjectives to describe their current relationship with their mother and to provide specific biographical episodes to support these words or phrases. The structure of these questions was based on similar questions in the AAI. I also asked about sources of dissatisfaction in the relationship, whether they had arguments, what these were

about, and how they were resolved, whether they felt their mother was available for support, and aspects of the relationship they were satisfied with or particularly happy about.

RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

Selection of participants

The participants in this study were ten New Zealand Pakeha adolescent girls aged between 15 and 17 from a rural district (largest city pop. 70 000). There were two ways in which participants were recruited for the study. The first was through placement of two advertisements in the largest local daily newspaper (sample copy included in Appendix 1). I recruited four participants using this approach. The second was through personal networks – people I knew who put me in touch with suitable participants who were willing to volunteer for the study. I was able to recruit the remaining six participants in this way.

The girls who indicated their interest were initially sent an information sheet and two copies of a consent form (sample copies included in Appendix 2 and 3). As this research was interested in the mother-daughter relationship, the participants' mothers were also sent an information sheet about the research, addressed separately to them (sample copy included in Appendix 4). However, mothers of participants were not interviewed and were not able to influence what their daughters said during inter-views. The girls confirmed their participation by signing and returning one consent form to me, while keeping the other consent form and the information sheet for their own reference. Once I had received their consent form, I rang the participant and arranged a mutually suitable time to meet for the interview.

The participants in the current study are all Pakeha New Zealanders, and this thesis is Pakeha in emphasis. I chose to restrict this study to the experiences of Pakeha adolescent girls because I am a Pakeha and feel most comfortable in Pakeha culture and want to gain a better understanding of it. As Tolich and Davidson (1999, p. 43) point out, "Aside from the question of whether non-Maori can ever understand the Maori world in its own terms, there is a serious question about whether they even have *the right to attempt to*." I believe that the mother-daughter experiences of Maori, or any other non-Pakeha culture in New Zealand, would be better approached and understood by a researcher who is of the same culture as their participants.

Difficulties in recruiting participants

It took significantly longer than I anticipated to recruit the ten participants that I initially aimed to interview for this study. I received only four replies to two advertisements in the local daily newspaper, which has a circulation of over 50 000 readers. Potential participants found through personal contacts were also slow to volunteer. This lack of response in itself may shed some light on the social construction of adolescence, motherhood and family relationships in New Zealand. In contrast to North America, there is a general reluctance in the New Zealand culture to talk about personal relationships in a public situation such as an interview, particularly when the interviewer is a complete stranger. Mothers of potential participants may have been unwilling for their daughter to be involved in this study, and may have openly prohibited or otherwise deterred them from volunteering. Daughters themselves may have been unwilling to participate because they had events in their past they did not wish to discuss, or were generally reluctant to talk about their private interactions with their mothers. Mothers' and daughters' reluctance could be due to a belief that to talk about family relationships challenges family loyalty and privacy. There may also be a wariness of having intimate interactions and experiences 'judged' by the researcher. Nonetheless, the ten girls who did participate have provided valuable insights into how they perceive their relationships with their mothers.

THE INTERVIEWING PROCEDURE

The interviews took place between April 1999 and July 1999. They ranged from 45 minutes to 3 hours in length, and all took place during the day in the school holidays or after school hours. Eight interviews took place in the girls' homes, one was completed at Massey University and one at my house. Whatever the location, all interviews were held in a private room to ensure confidentiality and avoid distractions. Prior to each interview, the study was briefly outlined and the information on the consent form (which had already been sent to all the girls) was explained again to each participant. Participants were also asked whether they had any questions about the study or the ethical procedures, and these were answered. The interviews were taped, transcribed and sent back to each person for confirmation or amendment.

ETHICAL ISSUES

In a narrative approach

All research based on in-depth interviews raises ethical issues, but narrative research requires a particular awareness of participants' vulnerability and the researcher's interpretive authority (Chase, 1996). The extensive use of individuals' stories in narrative research makes the participants more vulnerable to exposure than those in conventional qualitative studies (Chase, 1996). Therefore researchers have an obligation to provide protection for participants and to safeguard their responses (Bakan, 1996; Tolich & Davidson, 1999). Anonymity and other ways of fictionalising research texts are thus important ethical concerns in narrative studies (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). However, Tolich and Davidson (1999, p. 76) argue that interviews can never be truly anonymous, only confidential. "A respondent is anonymous when the researcher cannot identify a given response as belonging to a particular respondent; confidentiality is where the researcher can identify a certain person's response but promises not to make the connections publicly." Tolich and Davidson (1999) add that anonymity and confidentiality are especially important for those doing research in New Zealand, because of the smallness of the country and the greater likelihood that participants may be identified.

There are several ways in which researchers can empower participants in qualitative research studies that are also applicable in narrative studies. Tolich and Davidson (1999) stress the importance of giving participants their own information sheet, thus making them their own 'gatekeeper'. Chase (1996) advocates sending copies of transcripts to participants and asking permission to use specific passages, which gives greater control to participants and reduces the vulnerability they may feel as a result of telling their stories.

Despite these practices, many authors continue to voice concerns about the power of researchers in narrative studies. Riessman (1993, p. 61) raises such questions as "Whose voice is represented in the final product? How open is the text to other readings? How are we situated in the personal narratives we collect and analyse?" Apter (1996), in a critique of psychology's methods, argues that when the researcher's voice claims, or is presumed to have 'expert' status, it is more difficult to modify the narrative and the interpretation is more threatening to participants. When researchers enter into a research relationship with participants and ask them to

share their stories, there is the potential for researchers to shape participants' stories as well as their own (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Bar-On (1996) speaks of the researcher's ongoing struggle to interpret and understand people's stories while also trying to accurately portray the experiences of the participants.

There is some difference of opinion regarding the interpretive authority of researchers in narrative studies. One view is that researchers should share control of the interpretation of findings with participants. Mishler (1986a, 1986b) and Connelly and Clandinin believe that narrative inquiry is a collaborative process that results in "a mutually constructed story created out of the lives of both researcher and participant" (1990, p. 12). As part of this collaborative relationship, it is argued that participants should have a say in the interpretation and use of research findings, to ensure that the voices of both researcher and participant are heard (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990).

In contrast, Chase (1996) believes it is important for the researcher to claim and acknowledge their interpretive authority. While Chase gave her participants copies of their transcripts and asked permission to use specific parts of their narratives, she did not share her interpretations with these women. Price (1996) argues that the acknowledgment of ownership by the researcher is the foundation for an ethical study when accompanied by the recognition of one's own biases and prejudices. The Personal Narratives Group (1989) insist that they retain their responsibility as interpreters because their participants' personal narratives do not "speak for them-selves" (p. 264), despite the truths inherent within them. The Personal Narratives Group (1989) also suggest that the agendas of the narrator and the interpreter are distinct and not always compatible. Bar-On (1996) believes that once the narrative has been analysed, it is the researcher's text as well as the participants'; whether the interviewees are happy or unhappy with the way their texts have been interpreted, the researcher is entitled to defend and clarify their point of view.

However, narrative researchers must consider what effect their interpretations will have on the participants once the research has been completed. Bakan (1996) points out that narrative research, based on real lives of people, converts their private personal stories into a public form. Josselson (1996a) cautions researchers to be aware of the authority their interpretations have once transferred to print. Bar-On (1996, p. 20) agrees, saying "in such a delicate kind of research, we hold the meaning

of people's lives in our hands. Our successes will be gratifying, but our failures may become irreversible."

Although doing narrative research is ethically complex, Josselson (1996a) and Apter (1996) do not believe researchers should stop doing it. Josselson (1996a) points out that exploring people's lives to make them into an example of a principle or concept or to support or refute a theory will always be intrusive and unsettling for people who contribute their stories in research. Josselson (1996a) does not feel there is anything researchers can do to prevent this beyond the usual procedural safeguards. Apter (1996) cautions researchers to be aware of the power of an 'expert' narrative and its claim to be a "master narrative" (p. 42). Josselson (1996a) urges researchers to be fully aware of what they are doing, and to acknowledge their concerns, "To be uncomfortable with this work, I think, protects us from going too far" (p. 70).

In the current study

Ethical considerations are always important when conducting research on human participants, especially when using in-depth interviews. The Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for Research and Teaching Involving Human Subjects outlines several major ethical principles: (1) informed consent; (2) confidentiality; (3) minimising of harm; (4) truthfulness; and (5) social sensitivity. Informed consent involves providing a comprehensive explanation of the nature and purpose of the study, possible risks involved in the study and the participant's right to: decline participation, withdraw from the study at any time, have privacy and confidentiality protected, turn off a recording device at any time, ask questions at any time and receive information about the outcome of the study in an appropriate form. In the current study, these aspects were explained to participants and their mothers in their respective information sheets, followed by a request for written consent from participants (see Appendices 2, 3 and 4).

Clear indication was given in both the information sheet and the consent form regarding procedures for reviewing the audiotapes and transcripts, and their disposal at the completion of the study. The participants consented to the interview being audiotaped. They were given a copy of their interview transcript to read, and were able to edit or delete any part of the transcript they did not wish to appear in the study. Two girls requested that minor changes be made, to increase confidentiality,

correct factual information or add to a particular answer they had given in the interview. However, participants did not have any input into the interpretation of their stories in the current study. Participants were also advised that once they had checked the transcript (and altered it if necessary), and given permission for it to be used in the study, the researcher's supervisor was also going to view the transcripts. All interview tapes and transcripts were held by the researcher and destroyed at the completion of the research. Participants were told that a summary of the research findings was available to them if requested.

Due to the detailed and very personal nature of the material obtained, it was important to bear in mind my responsibility to protect my participants' privacy. Given the small number of young women interviewed within a relatively small city, this was particularly important. As a consequence all participants in this study are identified only by their chosen pseudonyms, and all place names, people's names or other distinguishing features mentioned during interviews were removed from the interview narratives. It was explained to participants that their mother and the researcher would be the only people who knew that they had participated in the study. The participants' real names were not disclosed to the researcher's supervisor, nor to others who participated.

Narrative researchers have cautioned that the use of people's narratives in research can violate privacy and even cause harm to participants during the recall of possibly painful or sensitive aspects of their lives (Bakan, 1996). This was a definite possibility in the current study, and therefore was specifically mentioned in the information sheet given to potential participants. It was important to allow them sufficient time to consider this possibility and give them the choice to decline to participate (two in fact did so), not answer questions they find upsetting, or withdraw from the study altogether. Both Apter (1990) and Josselson (1996) have found that narrative interviews can be cathartic for the participant, and the researcher's ability to understand the participant's experience is affirming for the person telling their story. Nevertheless, participants were told beforehand that access to counselling was available if they felt that talking about these issues had been disturbing. Although none of the participants requested this service, it was important to discuss how they were feeling after the interview, and remind them that professional help was available

if necessary. To this end, a list of counselling services available in their area was included in daughters' information sheet.

RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND GENERALISABILITY
In qualitative studies

Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated (Merriam, 1998) and validity is the degree to which the finding is correctly interpreted (Kirk & Miller, 1986). However, from a qualitative research perspective, reliability and validity are not the goal (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). As Merriam (1998) points out,

> Reliability in a research design is based on the assumption that there is a single reality and that studying it repeatedly will yield the same results. Qualitative research, however, is not conducted so that the laws of human behaviour can be isolated. Rather, researchers seek to describe and explain the world as those in the world experience it. Since there are many interpretations of what is happening, there is no benchmark by which to take repeated measures and establish reliability in the traditional sense (p. 205).

Replication of a qualitative study will not produce the same results, even if the same method is used with the same participants. Several factors may influence participants' responses, such as their health, mood when interviewed, motives for participating in the study, and, as discussed later in this chapter, their relationship with the interviewer. If the same participants were interviewed again at a later point in time, many of these factors may have changed. In addition, all information provided by a participant has been selected from their experiences; what is obtained in an interview is simply the participant's perception (Merriam, 1998), which is also likely to change over time. Replication of a qualitative study using a different group of participants will not produce the same results either; these participants are individuals, with their own unique perspectives and experiences.

Reliability then is not about whether findings can be replicated but whether the results are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 1998). There are several techniques that may be used to ensure that results are dependable. Researchers should disclose their orientation, preconceptions, and expectations for the study (Stiles, 1990), including the theoretical background to the study, how participants were

selected and a description of the sample, and the social context in which participants are embedded (Merriam, 1998). Several authors advocate the use of an 'audit trail', where the researcher documents their procedure, so that independent judges can confirm the findings of the study by following the trail of the researcher (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Merriam, 1998; Stiles, 1990). This also includes the researcher's internal processes during data collection and interpretation (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Stiles, 1990).

In all research, internal validity refers to how research findings match 'reality'; that is, whether the findings capture the actual phenomenon, event or experience being studied (Merriam, 1998). However, qualitative research assumes that reality is multidimensional and always changing; it is not a fixed objective phenomenon able to be observed and measured as in quantitative research (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, assessing whether the data match 'reality' is not an appropriate measure of validity. Validity in qualitative research is an interpretive concept, related to plausibility of the conclusions reached. As Tolich and Davidson (1999) explain, "it is not the numbers that make the data valid but rather the logical integration of data from different sources and different methods of analysis into a single, consistent interpretation" (p. 34).

External validity refers to the extent to which a study's findings can be applied to other situations, or its generalisability. This is often very limited in qualitative research, as its methods do not focus on representativeness in selecting a sample. Samples are not drawn according to probability theory (random selection); but are instead based on theoretical sampling (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). The important factor is not the number of participants but the potential of each person to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. A small non-random sample is selected "precisely *because* the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many" (Merriam, 1998, p. 208). The aim of qualitative research is not to discover sweeping generalisations but rather, contextualised findings (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Tolich & Davidson, 1999).

In a narrative approach

Like other qualitative methods, narrative research relies on criteria other than validity, reliability and generalisability (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). Traditional definitions of reliability are simply not applicable to narrative studies and validity is very different from that required in quantitative research (Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 1993). Reliability in a narrative approach usually refers to the dependability of the data, and validity to the strength of the analysis of the data (Polkinghorne, 1988).

Reliability in narrative research cannot be assessed by the extent to which research findings can be replicated. As Riessman (1993) points out, "Narratives are laced with social discourses and power relations, which do not remain constant over time... There is no reason to assume that an individual's narrative will, or should be, entirely consistent from one setting to the next" (p. 65). Instead of having formal proof of reliability, narrative studies rely on reporting the details of their research procedures in order for others to determine the 'trustworthiness' of the data (Polkinghorne, 1988). This includes describing what the researcher did, how interpretations were developed, and making data available to other researchers (Riessman, 1993).

In narrative research, 'valid' still means well grounded and supportable. The aim is to produce results that have the appearance of truth and reality. However, the results of narrative research cannot claim to correspond exactly with what has actually taken place (Polkinghorne, 1988). Narrative researchers cannot rely on external measures of realism, as in positivist methods (Riessman, 1993). They are not interested in studying 'true' events in the realist sense, but rather "the construction of that event within a personal and social history" (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992, p. 3). Although stories are more vivid than theories, they are also more tentative, and conclusions drawn from narrative research remain open to change (Polkinghorne, 1988; Stiles, 1990). As Belenky et al. (1986) explain, in presenting their stories of women's intellectual development, "our intention is to share, not prove, our observations" (p. 16). However, narrative researchers still strive to present a 'plausible' account (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Tagg, 1985). Plausibility is greatest when theoretical claims are supported with examples from participants' stories and when alternative interpretations of the data are considered (Riessman, 1993; Tagg,

1985). This means being alert to the stories not told as well as to those that are (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Another validity check on findings in narrative studies is the fit between researchers' interpretations and the participants' understanding (Mishler, 1986a). For this reason researchers are encouraged to take work back to their participants. However, it is questionable whether the validity of a researcher's interpretations can be confirmed by this practice. People's stories are not static; meanings of experiences change as their thinking and lives change. Researchers' theorising across several narratives also cannot be evaluated by individual participants (Riessman, 1993) As discussed earlier, many researchers choose to defend their interpretations as their own and take responsibility for them. Whatever the stance taken, it is clear that validation in interpretive studies is not defined by formal rules or standardised procedures, and is an issue that requires further consideration by narrative researchers (Riessman, 1993).

In focusing on an individual's story, a narrative approach sacrifices the generalisability of quantitative methods in favour of comprehensiveness (Baumeister and Newman, 1994). Narrative research contributes to knowledge not by identifying generalisations, but by increasing our understanding of human experience (Bakan, 1996). As Josselson (1995) explains,

> When we aggregate people, treating diversity as error variance, in search of what is common to all, we often learn about what is true of no one in particular. Narrative approaches allow us to witness the individual in her or his complexity and recognise that although some phenomena will be common to all, some will remain unique (pp. 32-33).

However, as Riessman (1993) points out, it is also more difficult for researchers working with personal narratives to make substantive points across interviews due to samples that are often small and unrepresentative. Although this is a limitation, Riessman asserts that theories can be, and have been, developed on the basis of detailed study of a few individuals.

In the current study

As the current study uses a narrative methodology, traditional notions of reliability, validity and generalisability are not applicable. It is not possible to exactly

replicate this study, as the girls' experiences, cognitive abilities and perceptions would have changed, and their responses would differ depending on the interviewer used. I have attempted to enhance the 'trustworthiness' and 'plausibility' of the data by providing detailed information on interviewing procedure and analysis of findings, and by including many examples from participants' narratives.

The girls in this study are not presented as an ideal sample or as representative of all adolescent girls. The aim of this study was not to present a composite picture of *the* New Zealand adolescent girl and her relationship with her mother, or to make generalisations about all adolescent girls, but to find a variety of experiences and relationships and relate them to the research questions. In particular, this study sought to understand how these girls perceived their relationships with their mother. Although all the girls were very different in their perceptions, there were some similarities among many of them, as well as small subgroups. Yet the uniqueness of the individual narratives was as important as what they had in common with other stories.

INTERVIEWER INFLUENCE ON PARTICIPANTS, INTERVIEWER BIAS

In qualitative research generally, and narrative research in particular, it is acknowledged that the interviewer influences the research through their relationship with the participants. Mishler (1986b) states that narratives are "context sensitive" (p. 248) in that their form and content are affected by the interview situation. The way an interviewer behaves, questions, and responds in an interview shapes the relationship and, therefore, how participants respond and provide an account of their experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Mishler, 1986a). As Shostak (1989) explains,

[P]ersonal narratives do not exist independently of the collaborative process involved in their collection. People's stories are not in final form, shape, and content, waiting patiently for a glorified mechanic (i.e., biographer, anthropologist, or the like) to open their 'verbal tap,' allowing the preformed story to escape. Instead, an interview is an interaction between two people: one, with unique personality traits and interests at a particular time of life, answers a specific set of questions asked by another person with unique personality traits and interests at a particular time of life (p. 231).

The stories participants tell to a particular researcher are a joint product of the interviewer and interviewee, and must be evaluated with this in mind (Bruner, 1990). Researchers should not assume they know more about their participants' ongoing lives than is warranted by their research relationship (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994).

Because researchers deal with ambiguous representations of participants' experiences, it is not possible to remain neutral and just represent (rather than interpret) the world (Bruner, 1990; Riessman, 1993). The researcher's relationship to the participants and the inquiry shapes the 'research text' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). The features of participants' stories the researcher chooses to write about are related to the research question, the theoretical and epistemological position adopted by the researcher, and often, her or his personal biography (Riessman, 1993). The values, expectations and understandings of the researcher are an important but often overlooked part of the contextualisation of participants' stories and the research process (Personal Narratives Group, 1989; Tolich and Davidson, 1999). As Tolich and Davidson (1999) put it, "Where you end up depends in a large measure on where you start" (p. 42).

Once it is accepted that it is impossible to remove the effect of the researcher on the research process, these effects should be openly discussed (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). As Mishler (1986a) explains, "how the interviewer's role is to be taken into account is of course a difficult problem, but it is not solved by making the interviewer invisible and inaudible, by painting her or him out of the picture"(p. 82). Instead, researchers need to give some thought to their influence in the study and include such self-reflections as part of the research report.

In the current study

Throughout this study I have been aware of my own beliefs and perspective and how these might impact on the research. In contrast to much of the research and theory already discussed, I started and finished this study with a belief that the mother-daughter relationship is not inherently or always problematic, but has the potential to offer support and personal growth for both daughters and mothers. While interviewing I have tried to keep my views to myself, and maintain a supportive and open stance towards participants, whether or not I agreed or identified with them.

It should also be noted that there were many similarities between the participants and myself. I am from a middle class family, some of my adolescent experiences were similar to the participants', I was also living at home with my parents at age 15 to 17 and received financial support from them during these years. These similarities may be viewed as both an advantage and a disadvantage in this study. They allowed me to identify easily with the girls and their experiences, which I believe facilitated greater communication and understanding in the interviews. I also had the advantage of personally knowing and understanding the context and culture within which the girls' experiences were situated, which helped when it came to interpreting the data. On the other hand, these similarities increased the likelihood of interviewer bias, and the chance that I would overlook aspects of the narratives that an interviewer of a different background would not.

How the girls reacted to me as an interviewer and as a person also had some influence on the narratives that were gathered. My age (25 at the time of interviewing), gender, verbal ability and physical appearance were all likely to be advantageous in a study that interviewed adolescent girls. Even so, I was still surprised at the extent to which these girls opened up to me, a total stranger. Even those who had not had good relationships with adults and who felt betrayed by them trusted me with very personal information.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Using Merriam's (1998) definitions, the current study may be categorised as a "basic or generic" qualitative study (p. 11). In such studies, research data are collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis. Findings include both description and analysis; the analysis uses concepts from the theoretical framework of the study. The identification of recurring patterns within the data is usually the end result from such analysis. In the current study, this takes the form of themes. The analysis in the current study does not extend to the formation of a substantive theory as in grounded theory studies. It is not a case study either, as it is not defined by a bounded system or functioning unit (Merriam, 1998).

This study may be further classified as narrative research. Such an approach dictates both the focus of the research and how it is carried out. As Clandinin and Connelly (1994) explain, narrative is both phenomenon and method: "Narrative

names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study" (p. 416). Gudmundsdottir (1996) adds to this thesis, stating that narrative is the phenomenon because participants' words in research interviews are often organised in a narrative, and researchers 'hear' narratives as they try to understand their experiences. Gudmundsdottir sees narrative as method because the entire research process – data collection, interpretation and writing – can be conceptualised as a story in itself. Thus, narrative can be both research data and a way to present research findings. Narrative discourse seems well adapted for presenting qualitative data (Mishler, 1986a; Polkinghorne, 1988). Stiles (1990) states this is because narratives are linguistic and encourage empathy with the teller. Narratives also supply the context for events (Runyan, 1984).

There is great conceptual diversity in narrative analysis, with no standard set of procedures as found in experimental psychology or survey research (Riessman, 1993). Narrative studies bear a general resemblance to each other but differ in theoretical orientation, research questions used, and method (Mishler, 1986a). Despite such diversity, most narrative investigations involve movement from participants' stories to a conceptual level beyond the data. A narrative approach goes beyond simply providing a detailed story. Polkinghorne (1988) believes life stories can and should be analysed, not just described. Josselson (1993) stresses that story cannot stand alone; it must be linked to some theoretical context or previous knowledge. Clandinin and Connelly (1994) acknowledge that this may be difficult, as the stories may be so interesting that researchers want them to speak for themselves. But these "field texts" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 423) must be reconstructed as research texts. The goal of the narrative investigation of human life is the interpretation of experience (Josselson & Lieblich, 1995).

There appears to be three levels involved in such interpretation. First, participants' stories are collected. A narrative research account then "looks for the patterns, narrative threads, tensions and themes either within or across individuals' personal experience" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994, p. 423). Finally, the researcher writes a superordinate narrative that illustrates the similarities across the stories collected (Josselson, 1995; Riessman, 1993). The common themes or plots identified may then be elaborated into a theory (Polkinghorne, 1988; Stiles, 1990). Stiles (1990) points out that narrative research thus has a very different starting point from

received view research. In contrast to received view research that states the hypotheses and theory in advance, narrative research begins with unanalysed stories.

These levels of interpretation may be identified in the current study. Firstly, the participants were interviewed and their interviews transcribed. Secondly, the transcripts were read in order to find out what themes or patterns were present. Finally, these themes were presented, focusing firstly on the unique and individual stories and moving outwards to conclude with themes found across these stories. The findings and analysis are presented together in the following chapter, including a summary of each participant's narrative; the subgroups present within these individual narratives, the textual features of the narratives that these groups had in common; cross-narrative themes; and their relation to other comparable research studies, most of which are from North America, but New Zealand material is also included.

The influence of a particular North American study of mother-daughter relationships during adolescence upon the analysis of data for the cross-narrative themes should be acknowledged here. Sharon Rich's (1990) study of adolescent daughters' perceptions of their relationship with their mother identified several themes within participants' responses to interview questions. As discussed on page 48, Rich divided these themes into three main headings: attachment/connection; increasing differentiation and independence; and change over time. The themes Rich identified included: daughters' valuing of mothers 'being there' for support (both emotionally and physically), reciprocal support given to mothers by daughters, similarities and differences between daughters and mothers, realistic perceptions of mothers, distinct views and disagreements, realistic perceptions of relationships (including how conflict is perceived and resolved), and limitations to relationships. The current study initially used the above themes to analyse participants' interview transcripts. However, as analysis progressed, it became clear that there were other themes emerging that were different from Rich's, and that some of her themes were not found in participants' narratives. Therefore, while the similarities between Rich's study and this one may be explained by the common themes used to analyse research findings, there are also differences in content and emphasis in the themes identified. These similarities and differences will be summarised in Chapter 5 (Discussion).

A brief explanation of the term 'textual features' is also appropriate at this point. A narrative approach is not just concerned with the content of participants' stories, but also with the process of their telling and the way they are told (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992). Participants' narratives in the current study are analysed both for content and form; the textual features of the girls' stories refer to the way they tell them, the physical aspects of their speech that are unique to their narrative.

The findings are presented as part of a narrative approach, which stresses the importance of the whole (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Presenting the participants' individual narratives before the cross-narrative themes provides an important background context. As Josselson (1992, p. 26) explains, relationships "must be characterised by their thematic background as well as their more visible dramatic moments." The individual narratives are presented as unique and complete wholes, but are also grouped together to illustrate similarities and differences between them.

It should also be noted that the nature of this study and the qualitative method has resulted in a large volume of material being gathered. As part of a narrative approach, and in order to preserve the fullness and richness of what the young women said, participants have been quoted liberally. While this has resulted in a lengthy thesis, it is hoped that this is justified by the greater meaning gained from including many examples from participants' narratives.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents both the findings of this study and how these findings compare with relevant overseas and New Zealand studies. Firstly, the participants' individual stories are presented. These narratives focus on the daughters' perception of their relationship with their mother, but they also mention their relationship with their father. Each narrative includes childhood and adolescent experiences, and highlights the changes in daughters' relationships with their parents through their lives to date. This chapter begins with a brief summary of significant life events for each participant, as a way of introducing each girl and her personal history. Secondly, the girls' individual narratives are presented as part of larger groups to illustrate similar perceptions of the mother-daughter relationship and the way the stories are told. Thirdly, themes found across these individual narratives are presented, grouped as themes of agency and themes of communion. Finally, a comparison is made between these themes and findings of other similar studies.

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants are presented in the order in which they are discussed in the individual narratives section of this chapter. Their names are pseudonyms.

Michelle

Michelle was 16 years old at the time of her interview. She was a high school student and lived at home with her mother and younger sister. Her father died when she was nine years old. Michelle said she and her mother *"started to drift apart after Dad died"* (p. 3). There appeared to be some evidence of role reversal in their relationship. Following her father's death, Michelle said she took over the running of the household from her mother, as her mother was depressed and not able to cope by herself. Michelle has clearly identified with her father since her childhood, believing that their personalities were similar. She had detailed memories of her father's death

and still appeared to be affected by this loss in adolescence, *"Miss him heaps... I'm still sad about it"* (p. 12).

Nicky

Nicky was 16 years old at the time of her interview. She was a high school student and lived at home with her parents and younger brother. Her family has moved eight times since she was born, throughout the country and overseas. Both parents have taken turns being full-time caregivers for Nicky and her brother during their childhood, with either one or both of them working during the day. Neither has stayed at home for any extended period of time, that is, a period of several years in a row. They both worked full-time at the time of Nicky's interview. Because of the repeated separations from her parents, Nicky felt she has had to become quite independent.

Robin

Robin was 15 years old at the time of her interview. She was a high school student and lived at home with her parents and older brother and sister. Her mother has been at home for most of her childhood, but Robin's father travels widely for his job and is only home every second week. Because of this it was difficult for Robin to recall many detailed memories about her relationship with him in childhood. Robin said she has always felt closest to her mother because her father was not home as often. Robin has done gymnastics since she was two years old, and is now a gymnastics coach. She has also competed in horse shows since she was a child, and played several musical instruments. Robin suddenly developed double vision when she was ten, which forced her to take time off school and limited her hobbies. She went on an overseas exchange trip for four months last year.

Kate

Kate was 15 years old at the time of her interview. She was a high school student and lived at home with her mother and stepfather. Kate's parents divorced when she was two or three years old. Kate didn't see much of her father, who lives in another town. Kate described herself as *"resistant"* (p. 3) towards her stepfather at first, but she appeared to have accepted him now. She believed she has a *"real good relationship*

with my Mum" (p. 3) but with her stepfather *"sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad"* (p. 3). In order to provide for her children, Kate's mother has had to work long hours and has often had several jobs at once. Kate's older brother and her stepfather often fought during her childhood, and her brother moved out a few years ago to live with their father.

Claire

Claire was 16 years old at the time of her interview. She was a high school student and lived at home with her parents. One of her first memories was being in hospital for a serious kidney infection when she was three years old. Because of this she was *"quite looked after"* (p. 2) when she was a young child. Claire's father is a farmer and was not at home as often as her mother. Because Claire's mother was available more often, she spent more time with Claire and was more involved with her activities than Claire's father was.

Ruth

Ruth was 16 years old at the time of her interview. She was a high school student and moved regularly between her mother and father's houses (her parents are divorced). Ruth was six years old when they divorced. Her stepfather has lived with her mother for many years, and Ruth has several stepsiblings. She said *"I don't get along with my stepfamily very much (laugh)"* (p. 6). She did not mention her stepmother (her father's partner) at all, despite evidence that she did exist, *"on my Dad's side I've got two stepbrothers"* and a *"stepsister"* (p. 2). She felt that she has always got along better with her father, but at times she liked her mother better than her father. Ruth said *"we always talked about everything, I've never had a real problem with my parents at all"* (p. 2).

Jane

Jane was 16 years old at the time of her interview. She was a high school student and lived at home with her parents and two younger brothers. Jane's mother has not worked since Jane was about four or five, *"Mum hurt her arms, they don't actually know what it was but she had to leave her job, so she's been a housemother"* (p. 1). Jane's father works long hours in his delivery business and his family only sees him

at night and in weekends. He wasn't away so much in Jane's childhood, and she went with him on his delivery runs then. Both Jane's brothers have ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), diagnosed when Jane was seven or eight, so in her childhood *"a lot of the time was spent on them"* (p. 3). Jane and the older brother fought a lot in childhood and still do in adolescence. He has assaulted her twice and was removed from the home but has returned now. He has also been in trouble at school, and Jane's mother often takes him to counselling. Jane's brothers and their problems have affected Jane's relationship with her parents in childhood and in adolescence.

Miriam

Miriam was 17 years old at the time of her interview. She was a first year university student and lived at home with her parents. When Miriam was very young her sister burned herself and her mother had to take her to hospital a long distance from home several times. Because of this Miriam had many separations from her mother as a young child. Miriam's father was busy on the farm and she didn't see much of him in childhood. Because Miriam's mother was her primary caregiver, she knew Miriam better in childhood and adolescence, and Miriam said she has felt very close to her mother since she was young. Miriam's father was verbally and physically violent when she was a child. Miriam experienced irrational fears in childhood and had ongoing health problems in adolescence, including an eating disorder in her early teens.

Karlene

Karlene was 16 years old at the time of her interview. She was a high school student and lived at home with her parents and her younger sisters and brother. Her relationship with her father in childhood was characterised by emotional and physical abuse. He made and enforced strict rules in their house and punished any disobedience by hitting the children with a *"naughty stick"* (p. 2). Karlene also felt pressure from her parents to achieve at school, and as a child felt rejected by her school peers. Karlene's mother developed cancer when Karlene was six years old; this was the first significant separation from her parents. Her mother has had two nervous breakdowns, when Karlene was about seven and when she was in her early teens. Karlene's experiences in childhood meant she became very independent,

because she felt she couldn't rely on her parents for support. Her relationship with her father was still very strained in adolescence, but her relationship with her mother had improved a lot since childhood, and she felt they were now quite close. Karlene's boyfriend was seriously injured in an accident shortly before her interview, and was in hospital in another city.

Ania

Ania was 16 years old at the time of her interview. She was a high school student and lived at home with her parents. Ania's mother didn't return to work until Ania was about eleven years old, so she has been at home with Ania right through her childhood. Ania didn't see her father as much because he worked long hours in his job, but being together as a family whenever possible was valued by both Ania's parents, *"we had a lot of family time when I was younger, because my parents thought that was really important"* (p. 2). Ania's grandmother has lived with the family all Ania's life, either next door or in the same house. Ania's parents have been very encouraging and have stressed that school achievement was important. Ania has always been a high achiever academically, even having been put up a year in school. Spending time together as a family was still important to Ania in adolescence; she often goes away on holiday with her parents.

INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVE THEMES

Michelle's narrative is presented here by itself because it differs in several ways from the two groups of individual narratives that follow. Michelle is one of only two daughters (the other is Ruth) who felt closer to their father than their mother in adolescence, even though her father died when she was nine years old. Michelle has strongly identified with her father since she was a child, and still compared him to her mother in adolescence. The words Michelle used to describe her relationship with her mother in both childhood and adolescence emphasise this, with her mother portrayed as opposite, separate, compared to her father. Michelle found it difficult to describe her relationship with both her mother and her father during childhood. She was unable to think of more than three adjectives to describe her relationship with her

mother and only four for her relationship with her father. It was noticeable in her long pauses that Michelle found it harder to describe how things were with her mother.

Unlike the first group of individual narratives presented below (Nicky, Robin, Kate, Claire and Ruth), Michelle's relationship with her mother is not characterised by one-sided support from mother but rather by role-reversal, where Michelle provides support to her mother. Role reversal is also present in Karlene's narrative, but Michelle's narrative differs from Karlene's in that there is no evidence of reciprocal support between both mother and daughter. Michelle also differed from the first group of narratives in her awareness of her mother's inadequacies, which is probably due to this role reversal. Although Michelle stood out in her portrayal of herself as opposite to her mother and her desire to maintain her independence, at the same time she appeared to regret the lack of closeness between them.

Michelle (aged 16) – "Opposite people"

In Michelle's narrative there is a clear difference between her relationship with each parent in childhood. These relationships seemed to complement each other, in that her mother and father *"both took care of different sides of me"* (p. 7). *"Dad was more fun time going out and doing stuff and Mum was... talking and sorting out stuff"* (p. 7). Michelle felt that her attitudes were different to her mother's during childhood. She also liked different things and identified with her father's interests more. This is a continuing theme in Michelle's narrative; she felt that she and her father had very similar personalities, and liked the same things. Because of this she felt closer to her father, *"We just connected more than me and my Mum, and we just... had more common interests"* (p. 2). Her identification with her father and his interests was obvious in the phrases she chose to describe her childhood relationship with him: *"personality similarities"*, *"our attitudes towards things were the same"*, *"we had the same interests"* and *"opposite to me and Mum"* (p. 5). Michelle felt that her mother was jealous of their relationship, of the closeness she had with her father.

In adolescence Michelle had a strong desire to show her mother the differences between them. She did this by showing her mother that she still identified with her father and his interests. She wanted to show her mother what was important to her.

"I made her come for a walk with me once (laugh), this was about a month ago, I just felt like going for a walk right around [town] and that, right

around in the country parts, and so she came with me. She didn't like it much but, like, I was showing her all the stuff that Dad used to show me, so I'd tried to show her that I still like the same stuff that Dad did, but she didn't like it much, it was just... so I tried to make her see that I'm still like that, just 'cos I've grown up a bit more, doesn't mean to say that they're same things, still there" (pp. 18-19).

Michelle described her relationship with her mother in adolescence using words that emphasise their separateness, their differences. She said they were *"more distant"*, *"not as emotionally tuned in as before"*, that they *"lead separate lives"* and were *"opposite people"* (p. 16). Michelle felt her relationship with her mother was more distant now, in that they didn't talk to each other as much as in childhood, *"it's just weird talking to her now"* (p. 14).

Michelle felt she could talk about general things but not personal things with her mother, for two reasons. Firstly, because her mother compared her adolescence to Michelle's experiences. Michelle felt her mother couldn't understand or identify with what was going on in her life as a teenager today, and that her mother wanted her to still be a little girl. Michelle believed things are different now, and therefore thought her mother's teenage experiences were not valid.

"Like, general stuff I talk to her about but when it gets personal she just says that I'm her little girl so I've got to wait 'til I grow up to do stuff like that. So it's a bit more harder to talk to her 'cos she's against... some of the stuff people do now. Like, heaps has changed since when she was little, that's how she puts things" (p. 14).

Secondly, Michelle felt her mother 'gets personal' about her life and asked intrusive questions about her boyfriend and sexual experiences. After her mother let her boyfriend stay over, Michelle explained,

"so she's like 'Oh what did you guys get up to?' as if, oh yep, just 'cos he stayed we have to get up to anything, but... she just, she goes too far sometimes. So I don't like putting up with that all the time" (p. 17).

Another barrier to communication is that Michelle believed her mother had to have the final word in any argument. Michelle felt she couldn't discuss things with her mother because of this, as it prevented any negotiation or discussion. Michelle

wouldn't let her have the final say, however, which led to many arguments between them.

'*Not as emotionally tuned in*' (p. 16) meant that Michelle did not talk about emotional subjects with her mother any more. This included talking about her father's death. She explained that it was too emotional and upset her mother, which Michelle didn't like doing. It seemed Michelle was also trying to protect herself from further pain by not talking about her father's death any more. Not being emotionally in tune with each other was associated with two other adjectives, "*more distant*" and "*separate lives*"; Michelle said she was not at home much any more and therefore did not talk to her mother in depth about anything. Michelle also believed she didn't talk about emotional issues with her mother because she was now more mature, "*I've grown up a bit more now, I can like control my emotions a bit more, and I'm just not around her as much so she doesn't know what's going on really*" (p. 18).

Following her father's death Michelle said she took on much of the responsibility in the household, which was still the case today, "*I'm still doing it now really*" (p. 12). Michelle admitted she enjoyed this control and liked to think that she did everything. She perceived her mother as needing her help but also wanting to have full control of the family again. This was a source of arguments between mother and daughter, as Michelle resisted being organised by her mother, having had to fend for herself for so long. Another example of role reversal in this relationship is that Michelle's mother talked about her life to Michelle but she didn't talk to her mother.

> "'*Cos I don't talk to her as much any more, I seem to always know what's happening in her life anyway, 'cos she tells me straight away, like I won't go to her straight away any more to tell her all my stuff. I usually go to my friends for that now*" (pp. 16-17).

Michelle also gave her mother her opinion and support as requested, but there was no evidence of Michelle asking for her mother's opinion or support in return.

Despite their differences Michelle and her mother enjoyed doing things together like going shopping, just the two of them. While Michelle perceived that she and her mother lived separate lives, she still came back home to maintain a connection with her mother, even if not on a really personal level. Michelle seemed to regret the lack

of closeness she had with her mother, and thought it could have been different if her mother had participated in more family activities during her childhood,

> *"I would've liked Mum to be more like Dad in some ways, like coming out and doing more stuff so it was like more of a family than just me and Dad and me and Mum. So that might have been... that might've changed stuff. Me and Mum would have a better relationship now, 'cos then we'd go out and do more stuff"* (p. 10).

Michelle wanted to spend more time with her mother and let her mother get to know her better, but was unsure how to bridge the gap between them.

> *"Not spending time with her. [Interviewer: You're not happy about that?] No. I mean, I'd like to, 'cos um, just as Dad died suddenly, well, pretty much suddenly to me, it could happen to her at any time, so I'd like to, like, spend time with her and let her know me as I am now and let me know her more than I am now. So, I wish that could happen but it's not as easy to do as just to say"* (p. 19).

Michelle's father's death had made her realise the importance of family. Michelle was secure in the knowledge that her mother was available for her if she needed support, even though she might not utilise this support at the moment. *"It's good to know that she's always there, just like waiting for me at home if I need her"* (p. 19).

The next five individual narratives have several similarities, and are presented as a group below. A common theme in this group of stories is one-sided support provided by mothers to daughters. In Claire and Nicky's narratives, their mother's support is characterised primarily by physical and practical aspects. Claire felt closer to her mother than her father because she was physically there and was involved in her activities, not because she provided emotional support. Similarly, in childhood and adolescence Nicky said her mother was *"just at home and she was there"* (p. 5), but there is no mention of her mother comforting her emotionally, of her providing any other support other than simply fulfilling her physical needs. Robin and Kate viewed their mothers as providers of help, encouragement and financial assistance. Robin is the only one in this group that appeared to reciprocate her mother's support.

There is also little evidence of the daughters in this group having intimate or in-depth conversations with their mothers as a source of emotional support.

Throughout these narratives there seems to be a perception of the mother as a social role only, with these girls apparently having almost no comprehension of their mother being more than just their mother, as a person with her own problems and needs. When asked what her mother 'did' for a living, Robin included in this list *"She's my mother"* (p. 1). At first Robin had difficulty in describing her relationship with her mother in childhood, saying *"She was my mother!"* (p. 3) as if this answered the question. Similarly, Kate and Nicky seemed to see their mother only as their provider; there was no evidence that they could yet see past this social role to perceive their mother as a person. Nicky appeared to be thinking only of her mother's practical support, what she got out of the relationship. Nicky did not specifically say she was grateful for all this support, but she was happy that it was there.

Generally, this group of daughters did not appear to have thought about their relationship with their mother in much depth, compared with the second group of individual narratives presented after this first group. Although there was an appreciation of what their mother did for them, these girls seemed to take their mother's support and presence for granted. This lack of detailed examination of the relationship in their own minds is shown in the way that these girls told their story. They had a tendency to describe their relationships with their parents by using personal attributes of the person, particularly their father. With the exception of Nicky, these narratives were the shortest of all the interviews undertaken. The girls gave very brief answers to the interview questions, and appeared unwilling to elaborate, even when encouraged to. There is not as much information given about unique family experiences as the second group of interviewees, because often these girls were unable to illustrate adjectives with specific memories or incidents. Because of this, rather superficial relationships were portrayed.

Nicky differed from the other four interviewees in this group in that she was both articulate and withdrawn. She was very eager to talk at times, so much so that it was often difficult to get a word in without interrupting her. She explained situations at length that sometimes didn't have any relevance to the question. Yet at other times she found it difficult, or was unwilling, to express her emotions in words, saying *"I don't know"* a lot. She often avoided answering questions, going off the topic in her

explanations of events. She had many false starts and changed her words mid-sentence, often trailing off at the end of sentences. Nicky was also tearful throughout a lot of the interview and was not very animated in her demeanour. It is unclear whether she was just depressed or upset at the time of the interview, which was her explanation, or whether talking about her childhood aroused some distressing memories for her.

Nicky (aged 16) – "Independent"

When asked which parent she felt closest to in childhood, Nicky said *"I don't think I felt really any connection with either of them"* (p. 7). This could be because both her parents were away so much, as Nicky said *"I think Mum was there less"* and *"even though Dad works kind of around home, 'cos he works on the farm, you know... the farm's always been away"* (p. 7). Nicky's answer to the question *"do you remember being held by either of your parents... when you were upset or hurt or sick?"* was *"I suppose"*(p. 9) but she could not remember any specific examples of being hugged by her parents at these times. Nicky said that during childhood she felt ignored by her parents. She didn't believe it was deliberate; she described it as simply ignorance to what she was thinking.

Nicky has tried to lessen the impact of the repeated separations from her parents during her childhood, *"I think I've you know, been left, or not like left, but you know, kind of like supported to a point"* (p. 12). However, her experiences with her parents have obviously affected her, *"made me kind of distant from people"* (p. 12). Nicky explained that she and her father *"really don't get along"* (p. 12), which she attributed to their similarity. Their relationship has had an effect on Nicky's attitude toward other people, especially males, *"because of my father's relationship maybe I'm a bit sort of anti-people... mainly males* (p. 12). This may also be related to the separations from her parents and her forced independence. Nicky acknowledged that so many moves in childhood was a setback in her development. She tried to see the positive side to this as well, explaining that she was comfortable meeting and talking to new people. But she was unable to hide the distress these experiences have caused her and was tearful when she said *"I don't know what a long friendship is like"* (p. 12).

When asked to describe her relationship with her parents as a young child, Nicky said *"I don't remember much"* (p. 3), describing the relationship as *"kind of average"* (p. 3). Nicky described her childhood relationship with her mother as *"normal"* (p. 3). For Nicky this meant that their relationship was unremarkable, that her mother didn't do anything unusual, she was *"just there"* (p. 4). Her mother was often 'there' because she was a teacher at the school Nicky went to, so was immediately available when Nicky hurt herself at school. Nicky also remembered her mother being caring when she was sick in childhood. In adolescence Nicky still perceived her mother as caring because she stayed with her when she went to the doctor, and brought her food after she had her teeth out, *"she bought me custard, 'cos that's all I could eat"* (p. 19). Nicky also still described her mother as *"just there"* (p. 18), for example driving her to school. Nicky described her mother as supportive, *"sometimes"* (p. 19). For Nicky this meant her mother helped her with school work and was there to watch school plays and prizegivings.

Nicky remembered her mother being *"helpful"* (p. 5) in childhood, sewing costumes for her, helping her learn new skills. In the present mother-daughter relationship there was an ongoing emphasis on Nicky receiving practical support from her mother. She still described her mother as helpful, mainly because as a librarian her mother could access information for her. Her mother's previous occupation as a teacher also meant she was able to help her daughter with such things as a science fair project, *"she's a science person"* (p. 18).

Nicky perceived her mother as *"cautious"* (p. 19) in her attitude to some activities, in contrast to her father. Her mother wanted Nicky to be careful, to stay safe, and did this by preventing Nicky from doing certain things, *"Like Dad will say something like, 'Drive me down the road' or, you know, 'cos he's always like stupid ideas and stuff, and she'll be all like 'No, don't do that' and stuff, 'cos she knows it's not sensible"* (p. 19). Nicky also described her mother as protective regarding her male friends. Nicky didn't show overt irritation at her mother's attitude but there was some indication that she wanted her mother to acknowledge that she could take care of her own safety, that she was responsible and capable.

Nicky stated she and her mother do not have many arguments, but could recall being irritated about her mother's attitude towards her applying for an AFS scholarship. Nicky's main complaint was not about the subject of the argument, but

how her mother argued. Nicky didn't feel her mother's argument was valid because she was using emotion instead of logic, *"I didn't think she had any valid points, like she was like 'But I'll miss you'"* (p. 20). Nicky also complained when she felt her mother was not giving her full attention when Nicky was talking to her, even though she could see her mother did not do it deliberately.

Nicky concluded her narrative by saying she was happy that she could talk to her mother, even though she did not do this very often. It appears that although she and her mother were not close enough for intimate confidences, she knew her mother was available if she really wanted to talk to her. Nicky also seemed to realise that she was lucky to have this option available to her, by comparing her relationship with her mother with those of her friends.

Robin (aged 15) – "She's real helpful"

Robin mostly used impersonal descriptions to portray her relationship with her father during childhood, *"he always gave us money whenever we wanted it"* (p. 6) or personality attributes, *"funny"* (p. 7). In adolescence Robin perceived her father as demanding because he was away a lot yet still expected the family to *"revolve around him"* (p. 9). Her father's religious beliefs interfered with Robin's plans for her free time, *"I have all these things planned, I go horse riding, I do work, and he didn't like it because it was on a Sunday and he wanted to go to church – I didn't want to go to church"* (p. 9). Robin believed her father was reluctant to help her with her activities firstly because they were on a Sunday and secondly because he didn't agree she should be doing them. Robin *"had to prove that it was worth doing"* (p. 9) before he would support her. Robin said her father did not know as much about what was happening in her life because he is not at home very often, and because he *"doesn't listen"* when he is there (p. 27).

Robin's father's attitude was in clear contrast to her mother's involvement and support. Robin said in her childhood her mother was encouraging with her activities, watching her participate and praising her achievements, *"she'd watch, and if I did something good she would come up to me and go 'Oh that was really nice'"* (p. 4). She encouraged Robin to play musical instruments, took her to concerts, and went to watch her first violin solo. Her mother being there helped Robin's confidence, for example during this first solo performance, *"she was there sitting there, and I*

thought 'Ahh, I can do this'" (p. 6). Robin also remembered her mother watching her performance at horse shows and being proud of her when she received her first ribbons. Her mother was *"real helpful then too"* (p. 5) because she helped Robin prepare her pony for the horse show, even though she was allergic to horses. Robin's mother still comes to horse shows in Robin's adolescence, to watch her compete.

Robin's description of her mother as helpful is a central theme in Robin's narrative, from childhood into adolescence. When Robin developed double vision suddenly aged ten, her mother helped her do things at home, allowed her to have time off school, and they went to health camp together. Robin enjoyed this time with her mother, *"Doing things together, it was great"* (p. 5). Robin also remembered her mother being affectionate in times of distress, for example when she had double vision,

> *"And we made some biscuits and I just went to pick up one side of the tray and I picked up one side but I missed the other side and it flipped, and the biscuits went everywhere and I remember being upset and Mum gave me a big hug for that, saying it wasn't my fault"* (p. 12)

and when she had an accident doing gymnastics,

> *"I was doing this scissor-kick thing on the beam, and I slipped and I smacked my tail bone. I had a badge test in like, two days later, and I couldn't get on that beam. I was scared, and I really wanted Mum to go tell the judge what happened but you can't do that. And I was just, I was so upset, and I did it and I passed, but scarcely, and my Mum was, like, really supportive about that and she gave me a hug and stuff"* (p. 12).

Robin continued to describe her mother as helpful in adolescence, in several ways. She assisted and motivated Robin to do her school work. She encouraged Robin to become involved in activities, like joining an orchestra, and the events associated with them, *"we had a, not long ago an intensive course weekend with [the orchestra] and she... made sure I went and enjoyed myself, because I didn't want to go, but it was fun"* (p. 27).

Robin's mother was very involved with Robin's activities and did a lot for Robin,

"she came on the art trip with us, she took photographs and stuff for me, so I could actually go back and redraw them and stuff, 'cos I didn't get half the stuff, so yeah, she's real helpful with that" (p. 25).

Her mother also paid for gymnastics coaching and checked that Robin could participate, because she was underage for a gymnastics coach. Robin's mother also arranged tickets for her overseas trip that was coming up. Another way Robin's mother helped her was by suggesting ideas and organising her time. She helped Robin organise her busy schedule, to fit in all her activities around school and homework. She suggested whom Robin could ring to get transport to her activities, and offered ideas when Robin was planning a friend's surprise birthday party. Robin said she also enjoyed doing things *with* her mother,

"because of having to go the orthodontist every so often, I have the orthodontist in my lunch break so I get to stay off school longer, and she takes me out to lunch and stuff" (p. 29).

Robin's parents noticed she had changed when she came back from overseas last year. For example, she would now *"go out to parties and stuff"* (p. 21). Her parents gave her freedom as long as they know where she was going, what she was doing, if there was an adult present. Despite these conditions, Robin insisted her parents *"were fine"* about her activities outside the family home. Her father was more strict in some ways than her mother however, *"I still want to get my ears pierced but I'm not allowed to. Mum doesn't mind but Dad does"* (p. 21). Robin seemed to accept that there were limits to her freedom and felt her parents respected that she is growing up, *"they're really cool about it"* (p. 21). However Robin and her mother did have arguments about responsibility and commitments,

"Well sometimes she thinks I should go to [workplace] more often... I just can't be bothered any more but I've made the commitment so I should, I just don't want to. [....] I have a big argument about when I should go down" (p. 29).

Robin liked the fact that all her friends know her mother, *"they all like my Mum so it's cool"* (p. 28). By comparing her relationship with her mother with her friends' descriptions of theirs, Robin realised how lucky she was to have a mother who was helpful and there for her. There was an element of reciprocity in their relationship: when her mother *"gets down"* Robin supported her by helping out around the house.

She felt she had to help her mother firstly to 'repay' her for all her support, and secondly because she claimed no-one else would do it if she didn't and then her mother would *"get sick."* Here Robin showed concern for mother's well being and an obligation towards her. *"Give her a hug. Help out, yeah, just help out"* (p. 30).

Kate (aged 15) – "It's better telling the truth"

Kate's stepfather was the disciplinarian in the family. Kate compared him to her mother; she complained that he was *"mean and boring"* (p. 6) because he did not let her do some things that her mother would have permitted. Related to his role as a disciplinarian was Kate's perception of him as *"strict"* and *"bossy"*, *"he'd be picky as. Just want everything perfect, and boss us around and like tell us to do like dishes or something like that, and we didn't want to"* (p. 6). She could see how these adjectives are related to each other, *"[he] was just strict. I suppose that comes under bossy, and grumpy (laugh)"* (p. 7). Kate perceived her mother as more tolerant. Kate said she felt closest to her mother in childhood because she was not the one that disciplined her.

Kate felt that her mother still seemed to be more permissive than her stepfather in adolescence, and told of times when she and her mother conspired to prevent him knowing about Kate's actions. Kate had been told that she was allowed to smoke cigarettes in the house when she turned fourteen, but her mother let her start earlier, *"about a month before my birthday she said I could smoke but [stepfather] wasn't allowed to know"* (p. 15). Kate said her parents slowly let her have more freedom as she got older, *"it took them a little while, they didn't use to let me go out"* (p. 16). But she was able to negotiate with her mother now because she had proved she was *"responsible"*, for example Kate's curfew had become later, *"I'd go 'Oh what time do you want me to be home' and... she'd go 'Well give me a time and then we'll work on it from there'"* (p. 16).

Kate didn't like being separated from her parents when she was young. In one incident, aged four or five, she knew they were going to the pub, which she was annoyed about, because she thought they should have been home with her *"I just remember missing them. I didn't think that was fair"* (p. 9). When she was seven, Kate returned home from a trip with her father and her mother wasn't there. Kate's first thought was *"that she'd ran away from me or something, didn't want me any*

more" (p. 10). Kate became a boarder in a hostel for part of her first year at high school. She and her mother were very distressed at this separation, *"I was upset, and like every girl in there was crying, all the third form girls... And Mum was upset too, she was crying"* (p. 10).

Kate felt her mother was *"loving"* (p. 5) when she was a child. This was shown through affection when Kate was upset, *"she was always like there for me, like when I was crying or [brother] was being mean to me she'd like give me a hug and tell me it's all right"* (p. 5). Kate also remembered her mother trying to make her laugh when she was upset, *"try and make me happy again, tickle me"* (p. 9) and comforting her with food when she was hurt, *"the time I got hit in the head with a rock... [Mum] got me a chocolate bar"* (p. 8).

Kate described her mother as providing for her in childhood, which was also associated with food, *"if like I wanted... a chocolate bar or something little then she'd go and buy it... When you got home from school she'd like have a packet of biscuits or something sweet for us"* (p. 4). In adolescence Kate still perceived her mother as a provider, as *"generous"* (p. 19),

> *"on payday she'll go buy me a pack of smokes, or just bring me home something from the shop. Just something nice that I might like, like buy some chocolate bars or something like that, just nice like that, gives me money when I want it"* (p. 19).

Kate's mother bought her ball dress, and she was also saving up for Kate to go skiing with her brother, even though *"she can't really afford it and I know that, but [brother] wants me to go"* (p. 19).

Because of her mother's many jobs Kate remembered her being *"very busy"* (p. 5) in childhood. Yet she was always there when Kate got home from school, but she never had time to sit and talk; she was *"constantly on her feet"* (p. 5). Her mother still worked a lot during Kate's adolescence. Kate was annoyed that her mother *"gets grumpy"* when she's busy, because Kate couldn't talk to her, she *"doesn't like being disturbed"* (p. 19). Kate found ways of getting around her grumpiness to talk to her though, *"just talk to her later when she's not busy, like I don't know, when she's watching TV, in the ad breaks"* (p. 19).

Kate became angry when her mother didn't concentrate on what she was trying to tell her, *"I don't know what she was going on about and I was just getting angry*

'cos she wasn't listening to me" (p. 21). Usually their arguments were about *"just usually stupid things. Like she brings up the past"* (p. 21). Kate and her stepfather argued a lot in her adolescence. Kate believed this was because she was the only one left at home, *"when [brother] was around I didn't fight with him as much, but now he's gone, guess he has to pick on someone so he picks on me"* (p. 15). However there was a positive side to having her brother gone: Kate and her mother could talk more freely about personal matters.

Kate described her mother as supportive, because she didn't push Kate to achieve beyond her abilities, for example in upcoming School Certificate. Kate talked to her mother about fights with her friends, and her mother comforted her by taking her side. Her mother also stood up for her in conflict, even to the extent of directly confronting the perpetrators. Kate felt she and her mother had an open relationship, because she told her mother the truth about her intentions, *"I've learned like not to lie about where I'm going and just tell her where I'm going now"* (p. 17). She had learned from lying to her mother in the past that she would get caught out and the consequences would limit her freedom. Kate therefore concluded *"it's probably easier being like open and telling her the truth so I don't get caught out (laugh)"* (p. 18). Kate said she was pleased that she could tell her mother the truth, that she *"can talk to her easily"* (p. 22).

Claire (aged 16) – "Mum still worries"

Claire had happy memories of her father in childhood, of him being 'funny', for example reading her Roald Dahl books and playing all the characters. There was a sense of security here, of togetherness as a family, *"We all used to jump in Dad's bed, lie on Dad's bed and we were all like sitting there and he used to read us this story and it was really funny"* (p. 6). Claire's relationship with her father was characterised by practical activities; for example he helped her get her pets ready for lamb and calf day, and practised sport with Claire. Claire identified with her father in his sporting interests; she played squash because he used to. *"He was willing to get into what you were doing"* (p. 7). There was also an emphasis on practical support in Claire's relationship with her mother, in that she took Claire to school, to sports practice, and watched Claire's sports. As an adolescent Claire still enjoyed doing

things with her mother, for example going to soccer tournaments, and was happy that her mother helped her with her interests.

Claire acknowledged that her parents trusted her more since childhood and gave her more freedom.

> *"Since like my age now, and when I was little there's been quite a lot [of changes], 'cos we live in [rural town], so I have to get to school and stuff, and I've got my car and my full licence and think Mum and Dad like trust me way more. And like give me quite a lot more respect and the fact that I'm growing up, but Mum like still worries and stuff. And like they let me go to parties and you know, as long as, if I tell them where I'm going, and give them like where I'm going, the phone number and everything I think you know, that's all right. Where when I was younger, maybe eleven and twelve, they wouldn't let me do anything, like as far as I would go would be to my best friend's place, and that would be like, that's all sort of thing. So I think they've given me a lot more freedom and trust me more"* (p. 12).

Claire explained that her mother let her go out if she was honest about her plans, "Just as long as I tell her the truth about if she asks me where I'm going sort of thing, as long as I tell her the truth she doesn't mind" (Claire, p. 15). The freedom that Claire enjoyed was conditional however, in that she had to meet certain standards set by her parents. Her mother threatened to limit her freedom or favourite activities if she did not meet these standards.

Although there have been changes in the relationship since childhood in the increased trust and respect Claire received from her parents, protection and worry by her mother is a also recurrent theme in Claire's narrative. Her mother was very protective during Claire's hospital stay, asking lots of questions *"so I wouldn't get hurt"* (p. 3). Claire also remembered her mother being protective of her when they went out, which was still the case in adolescence, *"like had to when we cross the road hold my hand really tight so I wouldn't run away or anything. It's like she still tries and does it now (laugh)... tries to keep me safe"* (p. 3). Claire said *"Mum like still worries and stuff"* (p. 12) about her safety when she is out. Claire was annoyed about this and thought she was too protective. Claire's interpretation of her mother's worry and protectiveness was that her mother didn't want her to grow up and leave, because as the baby of the family there would be no-one left to look after. Her

mother's concerns did not appear to have limited Claire's freedom too much, so it was not clear why she was irritated with her. It could be that she wanted her mother to see she is competent enough to look after herself, but Claire did not elaborate. It was also not clear whether Claire argued with her mother about her worrying, whether this issue was actually discussed directly.

It appeared that there was little in-depth discussion in general in this relationship. The level of intimacy in Claire's conversations with her mother did not seem to be very high. Claire said she was happy her mother didn't ask too many questions. She felt her mother was there for her and that she could talk to her about anything, but at the same time she also said she didn't divulge personal information, *"I don't tell Mum much as in personal things, but if I need help I know she's there"* (p. 16). Her mother had made it clear that she was available to talk to about anything, and Claire knew this. But she was not currently making use of this support.

Ruth (aged 16) – "She's quite understanding really"

Ruth did not think her parents' divorce was a setback in her development; she believed *"everything added to my development"* (p. 11). She thought her relationship with parents now was much better than it was in childhood, because and her parents had regained some stability and routine in their lives after a traumatic time following the divorce. When asked whom she felt closest to in childhood, Ruth answered in the present tense, saying she *feels* closest to her father. Ruth also admitted that after the divorce *"I absolutely hated my Mum, I wouldn't talk to her or anything like that"* (p. 2) because at the time Ruth thought it was her mother's fault that her parents divorced. Ruth also felt rejected by her mother after the divorce; she thought at the time *"that she didn't want to be round us or whatever, that's why she left"* but could now see that *"of course that wasn't the case"* (p. 10). Ruth perceived that her sister and her mother were closer than she and her mother were, whereas she thought she was more similar to her father in personality and attitudes.

In contrast to her mother, Ruth felt that in childhood her father communicated and connected with her on her level; her mother *"was always the adult. My Dad was more of a kid (laugh)"* (p. 5). Her mother was perceived as the 'adult' probably because she was the disciplinarian in the family and did more everyday things with her daughter. Ruth remembered her father making her laugh and playing with her to

make her feel better when she was upset. *"He was just being a dork (laugh)"* (p. 5). Ruth trusted her father with information, apparently because she was confident that he wouldn't overreact, unlike her mother. She thought her father was less protective, *"more willing to let me go"* (p. 6). Ruth described having an open relationship with her father, for example telling him about her problems with her stepfamily, particularly her stepsister. She could also understand that it was difficult for him to take sides in this situation. *"I just told him about how I didn't like her... it must have been hard because I mean he was trying to make the family work and I was telling him that I didn't like her"* (p. 6).

Ruth also described her childhood relationship with her mother as *"open"* (p. 2) because she could talk to her mother about anything. For example Ruth felt comfortable telling her mother how she really felt, *"like after the divorce if I hated her I'd tell her (laugh)"* (p. 3). She could see her mother was hurt by her blame at the time, but mother and daughter discussed it more rationally afterwards, *"I felt really mean but you know, we talked about it later"* (p. 3). In adolescence Ruth said she preferred to talk to her mother rather than argue. She liked that she could talk to her mother about anything, and without her *"getting all angry"* (p. 16). It was for this reason that she perceived her mother as more like a friend at times, describing their relationship as *"friendish"* (p. 4).

Ruth described her mother as loving, *"she was lovely"* (p. 3) in her childhood. Her mother had always been affectionate with Ruth; even now, *"just whenever I need it she comes and gives me a hug, if she's not too busy"* (p. 3). Ruth also thought her mother was caring, in that she worried about Ruth's safety, even when she was at her father's house, *"if we ever wanted to come back here for just a little while she'd come and pick us up"* (p. 3). In adolescence Ruth still described her mother as loving, *"My Mum still loves me 'cos she tells me* (p. 17). Ruth also perceived her mother as supportive, because she drove Ruth to her job and helped her with school work. However, Ruth said she and her mother did not do a lot together in adolescence, except for shopping.

Ruth felt that at times her mother worried too much about her safety, describing her as protective in childhood. This was embarrassing for Ruth in public situations, when she was trying to establish greater independence. When Ruth and a friend went into town for the first time by themselves, her mother wanted to make sure she was

all right, which Ruth eventually got irritated with, saying to her mother *"It's okay! It's only to town"* (p. 4). In adolescence Ruth continued to perceive her mother as overprotective. Ruth thought her mother did not trust her to be responsible and look after herself, which *"bugged me a little"* (p. 15). Ruth wanted to be seen as capable of looking after herself, and wanted to have enough freedom to prove she was able to do this. She saw her mother being protective as *"unnecessary"* (p. 15).

Related to this perception was Ruth's irritation at her mother asking a lot of questions about her activities when she went out. Yet Ruth also said that she did not mind answering them anyway. She insisted that their relationship was open in this way, that she told her mother what she was doing. Despite her irritation at her mother's questions, Ruth said *"I suppose that's understandable, she is my Mum"* (p. 17). The main reason Ruth appeared to be annoyed with her and argued with her is because she had to ask – Ruth wanted her mother to trust her that she wasn't doing these things. Yet at the same time Ruth said her mother did trust her, in that she knew what she would be doing when she went out but still let her go. Ruth also believed her mother trusted her to do her homework and study for exams because she didn't check up on her. Other than her mother being 'overprotective', Ruth argued with her mother about a lot of things, but *"not really anything major"* (p. 17). Despite their disagreements, Ruth was satisfied with many aspects of the current relationship she had with her mother. One particular source of satisfaction for Ruth was that she knew her mother was available and could be relied on for support.

The second group of individual narratives also has several features in common. It is interesting to note that Jane, Miriam and Karlene all have contextual features outside of their relationship with their mothers, such as abusive fathers or brothers with ADD. These features may have led these daughters to examine their relationship with their mother in more detail, compared with the daughters in the first group who tended to take their mothers for granted. These narratives are characterised by reciprocal support between mothers and daughters. The level of intimacy in conversations in these relationships appears to be higher. There is a movement in these narratives toward negotiation rather than dictation, with Karlene and Ania describing their relationship as more like friends than a disciplinary mother-daughter

relationship. The daughters in this group were beginning to have a new perception of their mothers as people, and could understand situations from their mother's point of view.

The daughters in this group also told their stories in a similar manner. Generally they were able to recall detailed memories to illustrate each adjective they chose to describe their relationship with their mother. They were more articulate than the previous group, yet their transcripts were not overly long, with the exception of Karlene's. These girls expressed a range of emotions and shared very personal experiences, tempered by a sense of humour.

Jane (aged 16) – "We have a really open relationship"

Jane found it difficult to describe her childhood relationship with her father. She described their relationship as *"distant"* (p. 6). Because they didn't spend as much time together, father and daughter didn't have a very close relationship. Jane compared her father with peers' fathers, and complained to him, *"I wish you were like so and so's father' because he was always coming on [school] trips and things like that"* (p. 6). Even though she felt she was missing out, Jane could see that her father did not have a choice and felt guilty about his absences, *"I think he was a bit hurt as well"* (p. 6).

But Jane remembered having fun with her father when they were able to be together, for example when she accompanied him on his delivery run. Her father's way of connecting with her was to make her laugh, be playful,

> *"he'd be driving ahead and he'd put his arm out and punch me, so slightly, and then I'd go 'Stop it!' and we'd be driving along a bit more and he'd do it again... and he'd pull funny faces and things like that"* (p. 6).

Jane also enjoyed play fighting with her father, spending time with him by herself; she was annoyed when her brothers came along and spoilt this closeness, *"it was really good and there was a closeness there, until the boys came in and wanted their bit"* (p. 7).

Jane also remembered arguing a lot with her father in childhood, she believed this was because they were so similar, *"Dad and I have always argued about things... I think Dad and I are so alike that we argue"* (p. 7), and because they had different opinions and were not afraid to express them to each other. Jane said this was a

characteristic of her family, *"our whole family's headstrong, and we have to have our opinions across and if... I've got an opinion and he thinks it's not right... we get into an argument"* (p. 7). Father and daughter argued about *"everything"* (p. 7). One source of tension in childhood and adolescence was her father's frequent absences. Jane admitted that she missed him when he was not home, but she was angry with him for not being there, and used this against him, *"you turn around and say 'You don't know, you're never here'"* (p. 7). Jane was aware of the effect these comments have on her father, but couldn't help herself at times, *"I know it hurts him and I know I shouldn't say it but you know sometimes it just slips out"* (p. 7). Jane said she has always felt closer to her mother because she was there more often than her father was. When her father was at home he was often angry about something that her brothers did, so Jane tried to avoid him. Despite this lack of closeness and the arguments, Jane said her parents have always been affectionate with her, *"even though we all used to argue a lot – we still do – they've always got time for hugs"* (p. 10).

Jane said she had always had a *"pretty good"* (p. 3) relationship with her mother. She perceived the stereotypical adolescent mother-daughter relationship as being characterised by conflict, which was in contrast to her own relationship with her mother.

> *"Mum and I [are] more like sisters most of the time than mother and daughter because you hear of mother and daughter always arguing and fighting and things like that but we have a really open relationship"* (p. 3).

Jane perceived their relationship to be open because they talked about things, for example sexuality, from a young age.

> *"I think I was about nine when Mum first bought me my little packet of pads for my period, and I didn't get my period until I was eleven (laugh)... and I was a very early developer in the chest area and... she'd say 'Oh jeez, you're developing early!' and things like that... but I've never felt embarrassed talking to her about things like that"* (p. 4).

Jane felt they have always had more of a friendship than mother-daughter relationship, because of this openness, *"we can tell each other anything and... a lot of the time I see her more as a friend than a mum. Just the age difference thing"* (p. 4).

In adolescence this openness was still evident; for example Jane and her mother talked freely about sex, although at first Jane was reluctant to disclose things to her mother. Jane didn't tell her mother when she lost her virginity, but somehow her mother just knew, *"I was like 'How the hell did you know?' It's like there's this big sign on my face or something (laugh)"* (p. 24). Jane realised that she had to be honest with her because her mother knew what was really going on,

> *"like I asked to be put on the pill and made up some line that I wanted it to make my periods regular or something. And she goes 'I know why you want to go on it, so don't bother lying to me.' So she went and put me on it and things like that"* (p. 25).

Jane appreciated that she could talk openly with her mother about sex and any concerns she had.

There was a mutual sensitivity to emotion in Jane's childhood relationship with her mother, which Jane described as a connection between them, *"I reckon we've got this connection and I've always known when Mum's upset"* (p. 4). There was also mutual support in their relationship; when Jane's mother was frustrated and upset during legal proceedings relating to her arm injury, Jane would *"just cuddle her and comfort her and like rub her shoulders and things like that and just tell her that I was there for her"* (p. 5). The connection between mother and daughter was evident in the way they shared each other's thoughts, for example by writing poems for each other, which they have done since Jane was about ten years old. This was also another way they supported each other in times of distress, *"I write poems for her if she's sad or something... I've actually got a poem she wrote for me one time when I must have been quite upset about something and it's in my wallet"* (p. 5).

In adolescence Jane felt closeness with her mother that she described as being *"spiritually connected"* (p. 25), which again was characterised by sensitivity to emotions, *"I could sense this tenseness in Mum... I knew there was something wrong and I was right"* (p. 25). Jane was also affected by her mother's emotions, *"if Mum gets upset I get upset. She upsets me a lot, well, a lot of the time. And I upset her, it's a vicious circle really. And she gets angry if I get upset when she's upset"* (p. 24). Even though arguments often resulted from this 'vicious circle', Jane's reaction was grounded in a context of concern for her mother; *"I care about her so much, and I*

don't like seeing her upset. And I very rarely see my Mum cry, so when I do it really stresses me out and upsets me " (p. 24).

Jane enjoyed going out with her mother *"by ourselves"* (p. 22) and doing things together, which she said helped them to stay close. However this closeness had been disrupted by arguments throughout Jane's childhood and adolescence. Jane believed these arguments began when her brothers were diagnosed with ADD. She felt they were getting more attention from her parents than she was, particularly the older brother, *"my older brother was diagnosed with it first and I felt, I've always felt that they spend more time with him than they do with me and my other brother, so... that's when it started I think"* (p. 5).

Jane was aware that her brother demanded a lot of attention from her parents and put a lot of stress on them, but she resented the effect this had had on her relationship with them, particularly with her mother. Jane's mother has had to take him to counselling a lot so was not able to spend as much time with Jane, which Jane was angry about, *"I felt it wasn't my fault that my older brother had these problems, why should I be missing out on this quality time?"* (p. 23). Because her mother was not at home as much, she was not there for Jane to talk to when she needed to.

Jane often felt she was the most sensitive to her mother's feelings and the stress she was under, *"I'm the only one who cares how she feels"* (p. 23). However she admitted she did not feel as close to her mother as she used to in childhood, but this was mainly because she talked to her boyfriend instead, who she had been with for two years at the time of the interview. He was twelve years older than her, an age-gap that would have caused problems in many parent-child relationships, but Jane said her parents appeared to be comfortable with him. One reason for this could be that Jane's boyfriend and her parents shared common interests, *"Mum and Dad get on really well with him, 'cos they used to go motorcycle riding with him"* (p. 20). This meant there were many opportunities for Jane to spend time with both her boyfriend and her parents, without her brothers being there,

> *"we go to motorbike rallies and so do Mum and Dad, and this year we'll probably be going to the same one, the Cold Kiwi. And that'll be a time for just us, as four people, so that'll be really good... without [brothers] making it hard to get along"* (p. 20).

Generally Jane felt comfortable with the relationship she had with her mother. Jane believed her mother could see how she was different since childhood, and she felt her mother gave her enough freedom. Jane did mention that she was scared of being abandoned by her mother, *"I am worried though, sometimes she threatens to leave. But she always comes back"* (p. 26). Yet Jane also expressed her confidence that her mother would always be available and responsive.

Miriam (aged 17) – "Mummy's girl"

In childhood Miriam's father disciplined the children with violence, hitting Miriam and her siblings with a dog collar. Miriam believed her father didn't want her, and was not interested in what she did. *"I know he didn't want me, I know I was the accident according to him"* (p. 6). Her father *"didn't take all that much notice of me"* (p. 5) because Miriam made it clear that she didn't want to follow in his footsteps and become a farmer, like her brother and sister did. Because she felt rejected by her father, Miriam spent a lot of time with her mother and avoided her father.

Miriam was aware of the major differences in her relationship with her parents. She realised how good her relationship with her mother was by comparing it with the relationship with her father. In contrast to her father, Miriam's mother was nurturing and supportive in childhood, and knew Miriam and her siblings better because she spent more time with them. She encouraged Miriam to achieve at school, placing her in accelerated learning classes and convincing her to publish a book of her poems. Not being a rich family, Miriam remembered her mother sacrificing her own needs in order to provide for her children,

> *"if I needed new track pants or something for school for netball or whatever, she'd often like not buy something for herself, like go for a couple of weeks without her Woman's Day magazine, which is a big big sacrifice (laugh)* (p. 4).

Between the ages of seven and nine Miriam experienced irrational fears that *"everything was going to kill me"* (p. 3). Her mother couldn't understand these fears and found it difficult to deal with Miriam's irrational behaviour while her brother and sister had illnesses. *"I know it was quite hard for Mum, especially dealing with my*

brother and sister and their illnesses and stuff" (p. 3). Because of this the mother-daughter relationship during this time was strained.

Miriam said she has always been 'Mummy's girl.' *"Oh I was a Mummy's girl. I clung to my Mum, I remember that..."* (p. 2). Miriam remembered being 'clingy' with her mother until she was about eight years old; she stayed physically close to her mother, and found it difficult to leave her to go to school. Miriam felt she and her mother had got closer still in adolescence. She described her mother as her best friend, and they had nicknames for each other. She and her mother did a lot of things together,

> *"I mean even now I'm still a Mummy's girl. We go shopping... and she comes and meets me at [place of study] and we go for lunch, which all my friends think is mad. And we bake together and we read together and we watch TV together... I do a lot of things with my Mum. Go to the movies, go to the theatre"* (p. 16).

However Miriam and her mother still had arguments while retaining this closeness. Miriam had threatened to move out, because she realised that she now can, but didn't really want to. Miriam and her mother argued about social contacts, in particular a male friend *"who Mum hates"* (p. 17). Miriam felt her mother was overprotective regarding her male friends. Miriam could see that her mother was trying to prevent her being hurt, but also wanted to be able to be responsible for her own actions. Miriam also argued with her mother about responsibility and freedom in other areas of her life, for example how she spent her money, and complained that she was not allowed her own phone and TV. There were arguments about tidiness as well, particularly the state of Miriam's room and car, *"I think mess is character-building, it's nice, I like mess, but Mum doesn't"* (pp. 17-18).

There was a high level of intimacy in conversation between Miriam and her mother. *"I can tell her practically anything"* (p. 16). Miriam obviously didn't feel her mother was too intrusive because she offered information about boys that she has met. Her mother was cautious and involved at the same time – being both a mother and a more equal confidant.

> *"Like you know how you can tell your best friend like practically anything... like your first guy... I know it's really odd, but I tell my Mum this and she's... still trying to be a Mum at the same time, being cautious ra ra ra but she's*

sort of at the same time gets totally involved and 'Oh what was it like?'" (p. 16).

Miriam's mother was understanding and supportive when Miriam was upset or when Miriam was sick and her friends had forgotten about her. *"Mum'll bring me flowers from the garden and chocolate and sit together and she'll bring the TV into my room... She's a sweetheart"* (p. 16). Miriam's mother also actively supported her, for example berating Miriam's ex-boyfriend after he had treated her badly. She also helped Miriam recover from an eating disorder in early high school, by motivating her to eat with praise, making her feel special. Miriam could see how unhappy her mother was regarding her food problem, and also how this impacted on other problems her mother had to deal with. Miriam saw this as another example of how her mother has *"always been there for me"* (p. 18).

Karlene (aged 16) – "We both keep an eye out for each other"

Karlene said she was close to her parents as a young child, but *"it just slowly deteriorated"* (p. 2). Between the ages of about six and eight, Karlene described the situation with her parents as *"really strained"* (p. 2) because Karlene was lying and keeping things from them. Her parents tried to regain closeness with Karlene but she resisted their attempts. Karlene *"just kept drawing away from them more and more and more"* (p. 3) until by the time she started Intermediate she said she had cut herself off emotionally from her parents, *"it was like I was just living under a house roof with these people and they paid for the things... there was nothing"* (p. 3). Karlene could see how her behaviour was difficult for her parents to deal with, and provided a bad role model for her siblings, but she still resisted any closeness with her parents. *"I've always isolated myself in my childhood... I've just kept to myself"* (pp. 3-4).

Karlene showed strong emotion when describing her childhood relationship with her father. This was evident in the first word she chose, *"hate"* (p. 9), which was really describing Karlene's feelings, not the relationship itself. The hate she felt for her father was so strong that *"I wished he would die... I wished that Mum and him would get a divorce"* (p. 10). Karlene appeared to be preoccupied with this relationship and how it has affected her, *"I could go on for ages about my father"* (p. 11).

Karlene believed that her father liked seeing her cry when she was hit with the naughty stick, so she wouldn't just to spite him, which meant she would be hit again. Karlene remembered being punished with physical violence many times, *"if you told a lie, if you yelled at your mother, if you yelled at your sister, if you weren't at the table on time, if you did this wrong, if you did that wrong"* (p. 10). Karlene traced this back to her father's own abusive father and considered she was lucky he wasn't *"really abusive"* (p. 10). While she believed her punishment crossed the line from discipline to abuse, *"[I] would beg to differ that it crossed the line but they still say it was discipline"* (p. 10), Karlene could see that this was all her father knew, that he couldn't see the effect it was having on her. Her father's actions and his perceived desire to hurt her was one reason for Karlene's feelings towards him,

> *"It was over a period of time, and I just remember thinking 'You bastard' and that was... what started, like kind of the seed was planted, and then it was a lot of other things that helped it grow, I think. But yeah, it was the fact that he hurt me on purpose, and I just couldn't handle that"* (p. 11).

Karlene also remembered her father ridiculing her in public, making jokes about personal experiences, for example getting her first bra. Karlene was unable to complain because her father apparently believed *"it's his right as a father to tell things about his children"* (p. 11).

Karlene felt she was under a lot of pressure from her father to achieve at school, to the extent that he would do work *for* her if he thought hers wasn't good enough. Karlene had vivid memories of her father destroying a poster she had worked on for weeks as a school project, and making a replacement himself. This was obviously a very traumatic experience for Karlene – described in great detail with strong emotion – and was still upsetting for her now, *"I still can't believe he ripped it up"* (p. 14).

Karlene's father could not deal with noise or negative emotions, *"we're not allowed to yell, we're not allowed to scream, we're not allowed to stomp our feet, we're not allowed to do any of that, we had to keep our voice calm"* (p. 16). Karlene took her anger out on a cushion, or cried into it silently, *"I just had to get it out but I wasn't allowed to make a sound"* (p. 16). She couldn't confide in her sisters about her hatred of her father, because she didn't want to taint their opinion of him, and she couldn't trust her mother enough to confide in her. So most of the time Karlene kept her emotions to herself. When her father asked her what the matter was she would

say *"nothing"* because *"I felt like it would give him pleasure or something, to know why I was upset"* (p. 17).

As a child Karlene didn't have any friends at school *"because I would do so much homework (laugh) and they hated people that did work... I was always the teacher's pet"* (p. 21). Karlene was scared of rejection by her peers, so *"I'd try harder to get them to like me, but I'd try so hard that it'd turn people away"* (p. 21). Because she was used to being alone and introverted at school, she pushed her parents away when they wanted her to open up at home. Karlene did not perceive them as a source of security or comfort. In fact Karlene says she didn't feel close to either parent. However if she had to chose one of them *"it would have been Mum, because... I still actually loved her, but with Dad I didn't even love him"* (p. 15). She appreciated that her mother was willing to give her another chance, in contrast to her father always bringing up her past behaviour *"she believes people can change, and he doesn't"* (p. 15).

There were also many strong emotions associated with her mother when she was young. She felt betrayed by her; Karlene would tell her mother something in confidence but her mother would then tell her father and Karlene would get in trouble. Karlene was angry that her mother would never stick up for her, that her mother would agree with her about something but then not defend her against her father's anger, *"that just made me feel 'Fine, you're not with me, even if at times you think, you say you are, you're not'. It made it pretty obvious where [her] loyalties were, and they were always to Dad"* (p. 4). However she admitted at one point, *"it wasn't her I was really mad at... it was mainly Dad, but I took it out on her because she never stuck up for me"* (p. 7). She couldn't trust her mother to keep her secrets so no longer confided in her. Karlene also didn't trust her mother to respect her privacy, *"she'd just sit there and read them* [Karlene's poems], *she'd go through my journal"* (p. 8).

Karlene felt she and her mother were a lot closer in her adolescence, in part because she could now confide in her, because her mother no longer betrayed her confidences to her father. Karlene described her mother as trusting, meaning that her mother trusted her to be responsible, for example with drinking and going down to visit her boyfriend alone. Karlene liked her mother's growing acceptance that she could look after herself, and that her mother didn't go through her private things any

more. Karlene trusted her mother to be open with her too if she was upset, so she could help her before she had another nervous breakdown.

Karlene described her relationship with her mother in childhood as *"forced"*, unnatural. She felt pressure to talk to her mother and behave a certain way to achieve a perfect public image, *"in our family there's a certain code of ethics you have to follow if you're going out together and stuff, and you have to follow them because reputation is everything and our family's got to look like this"* (p. 5). But it all fell apart once the family returned home,

> *"whenever we were out, between me and Mum I'd always have to treat her a certain way and she'd always treat me a certain way, and we'd look like a lovely family, la de da. We'd get home and it would just fall away, and then we'd be completely separate"* (p. 5).

Karlene felt that her mother accepted her more now and did things with her because she wanted to, not because she had to in order to maintain the facade. Karlene appreciated her mother's honesty because she perceived it as supportive. She and her mother also had fun together, joking and *"being silly"* (p. 36), even wrestling on the floor. This 'silliness' only happened when her father was away, *"when he's around we're usually a bit more serious"* which Karlene attributed to her continuing fear of retribution, *"I still close off when he's around, I'm like very reserved 'cos I don't like do anything in case I get in trouble"* (p. 36). Karlene appreciated these times alone with her mother even more today because they happened less often, *"it's been happening less and less because I'm busier and she's busier"* (p. 36).

Karlene believed her mother's nervous breakdowns were associated with her father being *"very overbearing"* (p. 7). She could see that her mother was much more relaxed when her father wasn't there; the whole atmosphere of the house changed. Karlene felt she had to help her mother stand up to him. She remembered her father forbidding her mother from painting the kitchen when he was away, *"he was like 'No, you'll screw it up, you'll do a terrible job, you're not going to be able to do it"* (p. 8). But Karlene encouraged her mother to do it anyway, which was a way for Karlene to resist her father's rules and support her mother at the same time.

> *"I don't know how she felt about it but to me that was my way of saying 'Stuff you' kind of thing. And it was my way of saying to Mum "Look I'm here to help you' kind of thing"* (p. 8).

Karlene was scared of her father so couldn't stand up to him directly, but was very protective of her mother around her father, *"I really was, still am, more so now"* (p. 8).

Because of her mother's fragile emotional state Karlene felt she couldn't get angry with her,

> *"I have tried so hard to be angry with her, and it annoys me to the max, because she's like, in herself she's really insecure and everything anyway. And so if you're mad with her, she just feels so bad and she'll just break down and cry, and you'll be like 'I'm sorry"* (p. 6).

Karlene also found it difficult to get angry with her mother now because often she could actually understand her reasons for arguing, or could see that her mother was just worried about her. But this meant that her mother often 'won' their arguments, *"I just couldn't be mad because like the fact was she was worried and it was like ohhh. So like even when we do argue it's like she always wins, and it's so annoying"* (p. 41). However this was not always the case; her mother sometimes relented and let Karlene go out or Karlene would agree with her mother and change her plans. There was no compromising here; either mother or daughter 'won'.

Karlene perceived her mother as supportive now, in both emotional and practical terms. Her mother comforted her following her boyfriend's accident, and helped her by organising a trip for Karlene to visit him and posting Karlene's letters to him. There was now more mutual support in the relationship, where mother and daughter helped each other and good-naturedly rebuked each other for their mistakes, *"we both keep an eye out for each other kind of thing and if she starts to do stuff which she shouldn't be doing I'll be like ooh, and if I do then she goes 'Hmmm'"* (p. 37). Karlene felt that she could tell her mother if she *"screws up"* (p. 37) now because there were no unacceptable consequences, which was not the case with her father.

Finally, Karlene said she and her mother were *"good friends"* (p. 34). She saw the differences between her relationship with her mother and her peers, but described their relationship as being more similar to friends than mother and daughter, because it was not forced. Her mother had authority over her if it was needed but Karlene felt they were mostly equal. However there were still arguments in this relationship, mainly about responsibility (whether Karlene has practised for guitar group) and safety (Karlene's relationship with a much older male friend). Another source of

tension was Karlene's relationship with her father. Karlene perceived that her mother was torn between husband and daughter who still had a very strained relationship and had to try and take sides. But Karlene said they now discuss things more often than argue; Karlene liked how her mother gave reasons for her objections rather than just arguing or saying no without explaining.

Karlene's experiences in childhood meant she became very independent, because she couldn't rely on her parents for support. Problems have arisen in Karlene's relationship with her parents due to this early independence, *"that causes a lot of friction because I want to be able to go do what I want to do and they don't want me to 'cos I'm still young"* (p. 25) She felt her mother was overprotective, but could see it was mostly her father who caused the limitations. Karlene was pleased that her mother was beginning to give her more freedom and let her make her own mistakes, and yet still be supportive when she did,

> *"she's really protective and she gets really scared. But at the same time when she does that she's also willing to get past that. I mean if I can... prove to her that it'll be okay, then she's fine, until I screw up. And then she doesn't like saying it but she does, 'I told you so' (laugh). But... when she does that she always is like she's still there"* (p. 42).

Ania (aged 16) – "She's my rock"

Because her father wasn't there after school, Ania would mostly do things with her mother. Her sister did too at first, but later it was just Ania and her mother,

> *"I always remember walking the rabbits around the garden while Mum did the gardening (laugh). But yeah, we did... lots of stuff together because we had times when Dad wasn't home and it was just the three of us. And then as [sister] got older she didn't want to do things with us. So it'd be left with me and Mum"* (p. 4).

Ania remembered her mother always being available to comfort her when she was upset, *"I always remember coming home from primary school, whenever something bad had happened to me, and I'd always be crying, and she'd always be there to comfort me"* (p. 3). Her mother was also sensitive to her emotions, *"it was useless to try and hide things from her (laugh). She'd know something was wrong"* (p. 3). Her father was more uncomfortable with emotional situations, *"she had more sympathy*

than Dad. Dad would, if I'd fallen over, pick me up, dust my knees off and send me off (laugh)" (p. 6). However Ania remembered both her parents being affectionate when she was upset, being hugged by one or the other, or both at the same time!

Ania's relationship with her father was more distant; because he wasn't at home as often, he didn't know her as well as her mother did, *"my Dad's always been a workaholic"* (p. 5). Her father tried to make up for his frequent absences by making things he did with Ania exciting and fun, and she had happy memories of these times with her father. *"We had a sandpit and a paddling pool out the front, so these are the two things I remember (laugh). I remember having sand fights with Dad and in the paddling pool... we've got heaps of photos"* (p. 6). Yet these family times were always rushed because he had to go back to work.

Ania felt she had to do well at school and do things to please her father because he was the breadwinner in the family. She felt she owed him something, so tried to behave according to his standards, *"I was always trying to behave properly in front of my Dad"* (p. 7). Ania looked up to her father and wanted to be like him *"because he was like a big figure"* (p. 7). While she felt the need to impress her father, *"make him proud of me"* (p. 17), she was more relaxed with her mother because she knew her better, having spent more time with her in childhood. However Ania felt a strong connection to both her parents, and believed this will be the case with her own children, *"I'd still feel really attached I think, because there's always been quite a strong bond with my parents"* (p. 17).

Ania said that her parents have *"always been very me orientated"* (p. 11). Ania believed her parents' encouragement has allowed her to achieve her successes to date,

> *"they've always said I can do anything I wanted to. And that achieving, you know it's not that hard, you can choose anything you want to do and now because I'm older and... they've been telling me all this time that I can, then I really believe it"* (p. 11).

In childhood Ania felt an obligation to repay her mother (and her father) for this encouragement and support, *"it was never... just take, 'cos I always felt that was wrong, so if she gave me something then I'd try and give something in return"* (p. 5). As a child she *"couldn't give her anything as such"* (p. 5) so she spent as much time with her mother as she could. When she got older she tried hard at school, because

this was valued by her parents. Ania tried to *"keep them involved"* (p. 5) with her school work *"so they felt like they were getting something back from it as well"* (p. 5). In adolescence Ania was still grateful for her parents' support. Ania described her mother as *"generous"* with her time and appreciated her reliability, *"she's never let me down yet"* (p. 20). Ania gave her mother credit for how she and her sister have turned out, *"she's put so much into us"* (p. 20).

Ania said she was still close to her mother in adolescence, but their relationship was different now. She could see that their relationship had both changed and remained the same, *"I don't tell her as much any more but I mean we still spend time together and everything, I mean we still do stuff together. So in that respect it hasn't changed"* (p. 16). Ania described her mother as her *"support crew"* (p. 16), because her mother still encouraged her and shared in her successes, *"she's always been there, you know, to celebrate with me"* (p. 18). Ania perceived that now they had more of a mutual closeness, that both mother and daughter could do things for each other, which were often emotionally supportive.

Ania also described their relationship itself as emotional. She felt they have an *"emotional attachment"* (p. 19), especially evident in arguments, when their emotions were strong and changed quickly. Even within such an emotionally charged relationship, it seemed that Ania and her mother could discuss problems openly and overcome them. Ania said she was able to resolve problems with her mother by talking to her directly, for example when her mother used to sulk during arguments. This was very difficult for Ania because she couldn't talk to her, which meant that *"it'd end up unresolved, and that'd really get to me, (laugh) 'cos I can't have things... unresolved"* (p. 21). Because Ania told her mother how difficult this was for her, their communication improved, *"now we talk more and we get everything out in the open"* (p. 21). Ania preferred to talk with her mother rather than argue and believed their relationship was a more positive and equal one now because of this change in communication. She identified a difference between talking and arguing,

> *"More rational. Because when you argue you say things that you regret (laugh). And you end up feeling really sorry for them (laugh). But yeah... now it's probably a more positive relationship, more than you know give and take because we both give"* (p. 21).

However Ania did admit that she argued with her mother about some things, for example limits to her freedom compared to her friends, who were all older than her.

Ania described their relationship as *"untouchable"*, *"stability"* and *"very constant"* (p. 19). She believed that through all they have been through it hadn't changed, *"whatever happens in my life, Mum's still there"* (p. 19). Ania felt her mother was there for her to support her when she encountered *"knock-backs"*, so she didn't have to be strong all the time. She knew that she could *"lean on her"*, that she could *"rely on someone"* (p. 20) to be there for her. The metaphor Ania used here is *"she's my rock"* (p. 19).

Ania believed she and her mother are more like friends; she characterised the stereotypical mother-daughter relationship as more disciplinary. Ania also perceived that their relationship has improved since her early adolescent years; they have grown closer particularly in the last year. Ania believed this is because *"there's just better communication going on and everything"* (p. 22). Ania liked to 'touch base' with her mother before going to sleep or when she came home late, *"I'll go up and talk to her and sit on her bed and stuff, before I go to sleep, if I come home late, I'll always go and wake her up"* (p. 22). Ania also appreciated being able to talk to her mother and do things together, like going away last summer with her parents and her boyfriend. Ania concluded, *"really I have to say the most impressive things are probably the little things... just the everyday things that you don't... really think about until they're gone"* (p. 23).

CROSS-NARRATIVE THEMES

No two daughters are the same, and no two mother-daughter relationships are the same. Despite all the differences, however, there appears to be several similarities in the ways daughters perceive and relate to their mothers. The remainder of this chapter illustrates these common patterns. There are two groups or types of themes: those that illustrate the girls' movement towards a new definition of self as individuals able to make their own choices and take action on their own (agency); and those that illustrate the girls' continuing connection and varying degrees of closeness with their mother (communion).

AGENTIC THEMES

"She'll get shitty" – Disagreements

Topics of disagreements

1. Protectiveness

A recurrent theme in daughters' transcripts was protectiveness by their mothers. This involved limitation of freedom and was a source of disagreement in many of the mother-daughter relationships. This theme illustrates how the relationship can be renegotiated between mother and daughter, with the goal being greater independence and trust. Daughters interpreted protectiveness differently, but they all placed it in a context of mothers' support and concern, despite their complaints about it.

The first limitation of freedom related to activities outside the parental home. Ruth told of being limited in her activities when going out with friends, even when she was trying to show responsibility for her safety.

> *"Just in some circumstances she's quite protective and you know, needs to know unnecessary information. And that bugs me. [....] Like the other night she didn't want me to get a taxi or something, even though we were in a big group. [....] We were just going out to a party. You know, like I was taking responsibility and I was being safe and everything like that"* (p. 15).

Ruth also associated protectiveness with questions from her mother that she didn't think needed to be asked. *"She's usually okay sort of, but you know she just asks a lot of questions. Like I don't mind telling her or anything but it's sort of unnecessary"* (p. 16). For example, *"'Who's going to be there?' she always asks me that, heaps. 'Mum, just the usual people, I don't know!' [....] 'So what are you going to do there?' 'Play Monopoly Mum.' Stupid question (laugh)"* (p. 16).

The second limitation related to social contact with males. Three girls mentioned this aspect of protectiveness in their relationship with their mothers. Nicky experienced this as 'joking' by her mother when she was going out with male friends, *"But she's always joking, she'll always say something like, oh this guy... I know, just a friend, we were going to go out and she was going 'Oh you're sure he'll be, he'll be nice?'"* (p. 19). For the two other girls, this kind of protectiveness was a source of major conflict with their mothers. Miriam described her relationship with her mother as sometimes 'tense' when discussing one particular male friend, in clear contrast to the intimate confidences she has with her mother about other men she meets.

"Oh about a month, month and a half ago, I wanted to move out desperately because Mum, I mean as much as she likes to get involved and hear about all the guys and stuff... There was this one guy that he's my best friend and I adore him beyond words and Mum hates him. And so any time I have anything to do with him she gets really grumpy and sort of 'Why do you want to go near him?' ra ra ra, and I just had enough of it about a month ago and she wouldn't let me go to the movies with him" (pp. 16-17).

Conflict between mother and daughter escalated when the male friend was considerably older, as Karlene found. Her parents' protectiveness led to her rebelling against their directions, although without their knowledge.

"Oh the main source of arguing is I've got this friend, who's twenty-eight, and we're just mates, nothing more, but don't you know, he wants to rape me. [....] Oh my God, it is so stupid, they seriously cannot believe that someone that old can want to be friends with someone my age. And they won't let me do anything with him, I'm not even allowed to go round to his place, I'm not allowed to talk to him on the phone hardly... oh it's so ridiculous. And so I'm ending up having to go behind their backs to do it all, which I really don't want to do, but I've tried to talk about it, and I can't" (p. 40).

Miriam found it difficult to understand the discrepancy between two levels of responsibility in her life. At the same time she could understand why her mother was protective, and saw this as being part of a caring relationship.

"I couldn't understand why I can go to university and choose what I want to do with my life but I'm not allowed to go out with my friend. [....] She gets really like overprotective when it comes to guys 'cos, she knows she doesn't want me to get hurt and stuff and I know that but she's got to let me make my own mistakes, and she doesn't want me to do that. [....] I mean it's sweet that she cares but she goes too far" (p. 17).

Miriam and Claire both believed that being the youngest in the family was another reason for their mothers' protectiveness.

"I know it's because I'm the baby and she doesn't want me to grow up and leave, but she's sort of trying to keep me as a little girl, and I'm not allowed my own phone and my own TV, even though I can buy them myself, I'm not allowed them" (Miriam, p. 17).

124

> *"She like doesn't want me to grow up 'cos once I've grown up, no one else to look after except for Dad"* (Claire, p. 11).

Nicky felt that her mother's warnings were unnecessary because she thought of herself as a responsible person. *"She'll say stuff like, 'Be careful', whatever, you know. But I'm sensible, like I'm like so the sensiblest person ever and like I'd never do anything stupid so they never really need to sort of tell me"* (pp. 19-20). For example, when Nicky goes out with a male friend and her mother wants reassurance that he will be 'nice', even though her mother knows him, *"but you know at the same time she's just joking, 'cos like she's met him so many times and she knows that he wouldn't try anything. [But] she'll say it anyway"* (pp. 19-20). When asked why she thought her mother didn't want her to go home in a taxi, Ruth could understand the reason for her protectiveness, but still did not think her mother needed to worry about her. *"I don't know, probably 'cos (laugh) I don't know, some story about girls and taxis and taxi drivers not being very business-like I guess (laugh). Yeah, so she's very protective like that, even if things are kind of unnecessary"* (p. 16). Even though Ruth complained that her mother asked too many "unnecessary" questions, at the same time she didn't mind answering them, describing her relationship with her mother as "open". *"I usually tell her what we're going to do anyway, so that's open"* (p. 17). Ruth did not seem to be annoyed at her mother being overprotective because she limited her freedom, because this is not the case. Ruth seemed more concerned about how her mother saw her; she wanted to be perceived by her mother as capable and responsible.

Because Karlene's mother had had nervous breakdowns, at times roles were reversed and Karlene was protective of her mother. She could also see that at times it was not her mother who was limiting her freedom. When asked if she minded her mother being protective, she said:

> *"No 'cos she is protective, and the fact that she's like had these breakdowns and all, made me a lot more protective of her, and I'm like I don't want to hurt her either, so I mean I'm a lot more understanding of when she says no that means Dad says no (laugh)"* (p. 42).

Karlene explained how her relationship with her mother is being renegotiated, that her mother is giving her more freedom as Karlene shows her she is able to take responsibility for her own safety. Ruth illustrates the general feeling of the girls in

saying, *"Sometimes she doesn't quite realise that I'm okay and that I'm quite capable of looking after myself"* (p. 15).

2. Responsibility

Another common source of disagreements in these mother-daughter relationships was responsibility; for example, keeping work commitments,

> *"Well sometimes she thinks I should got to [place] more often where I work, I just can't be bothered any more but I've made the commitment so I should, I just don't want to. I'm going down tomorrow to make her happy... I have a big argument about when I should go down, that I should be going down more often"* (Robin, p. 29)

how money was spent,

> *"I'm fairly... impulsive when it comes to spending. I like to shop. ...'Cos I have to get like money off, on my student loan, I get like three hundred a fortnight living stuff and I tend to just go and spend it. I pay board, buy petrol, spend the rest. And Mum sort of goes mental about that quite often"* (Miriam, p. 17)

keeping things tidy,

> *"I'm not a terribly tidy person either... So quite often she just blows it completely out of proportion, and goes mental about the state of my room or the state of my car"* (Miriam, pp. 17-18)

and school performance.

> *"I love soccer, and Mum just was in a shitty with me and she said that if I didn't do something or I didn't you know, buck up my ideas and be good at school then I wasn't allowed to do any soccer and I wasn't you know allowed to go out in the weekends"* (Claire, p. 10).

3. Freedom

Arguments were prompted by the amount of freedom girls had to pursue their own activities and what they did in this free time. This is also related to mothers' need to protect their daughter from harm (see above). Ruth thought her mother's worry about her activities out of the house was unwarranted,

"just about stuff that I do in my free time, I guess, that she gets worried about but really I don't do anything wrong. ... 'Cos she's got this thing that every sixteen year old's always out there doing drugs getting drunk and sleeping with people, so of course I'm doing that. But no, that's not the case at all" (p. 18).

Ania and her mother often disagreed about the amount of freedom she had because Ania was younger than her peers but still wanted to participate in their activities, *"most of my friends are a year older than me, because I was put up a year [at school]. So basically it's you know, freedom, doing things, what I want to do, me me me (laugh)"* (p. 22).

Not all the girls were dissatisfied with the amount of freedom they had. Jane thought her mother gave her enough freedom to do the things she wanted. However she was still occasionally grounded, which caused arguments between mother and daughter, although Jane's reaction might not always have been necessary,

"I scream and yell (laugh). One incident in particular, me and my brother had a fight. My partner and I had planned to go to the Army Museum and I got grounded and I yelled and screamed and stuff like that. And as it turned out I only got grounded for the one day in the weekend anyway so we went up on Sunday. So, it was a bit silly (laugh)" (pp. 23-24).

Michelle already had a lot of responsibility and independence, and had done since her childhood. In her adolescence a lot of disagreements were due to Michelle's unwillingness to let her mother regain control of the household,

"I like being in control, kind of (laugh), I like being able to organise stuff... I still help out heaps, and I know she needs it, but she still wants that power back, and I don't like it (laugh). So we like, have arguments about that 'cos I learned really young to be independent and responsible and everything, just to help her out" (p. 4).

4. Relationships with other family members

For two of the girls, other relationships in the family affected their relationship with their mother, and caused disagreements between them. For Karlene it was her strained relationship with her father,

"The main one is my and Dad's relationship really affects her, because it affects the way Dad talks to her, it affects the way I talk to her, so she gets plonked in the middle of it, which is really harsh... And quite often she'll just plead with me, 'Just don't argue with him, please' I mean 'cos it makes her life miserable, because he's just really worked up with all the stress and stuff. So the main friction between, the main problem that she has, that we have is the relationship I have with Dad because... I mean she loves us both to bits and at times it's like she's torn, 'cos she has to try and take sides, and she hates taking sides... And the problem is her first commitment is and has to be to Dad, because I mean she's married to him, she's got to live with him for the rest of her life, as she says to me, she's like 'Look, I know he's a real dick sometimes, but I've got to live with him for the next sixty years, you don't!' (laugh)" (p. 39).

Jane's relationship with her mother was strained and they had more disagreements, firstly because her mother was worried about Jane's brothers' behaviour, *"with the stuff with the boys... And stress, 'cos she's under a lot of stress, she gets uptight and upset and she argues a lot"* (p. 22) and secondly because Jane was resentful that her mother had to spend a lot of time with her brother,

"A lot of the time I have a go at her because she's spending so much time with the stuff with [brother] and things like that. [Brother] got taken out of our home, he's back now, because he beat me up twice. And she was spending a lot of time with counsellors and things like that. And I get so angry with her and I just start an argument... " (pp. 22-23).

Protection by parents was also a significant limitation for the girls in Waal's (1993) study. One point of consensus amongst these girls was that they had less freedom than boys because they had to be protected more than boys. There were four areas in which they experienced limitation by and protection from their parents: geographic, time, activities, and social contacts. Similar to Ruth's experiences regarding the party, girls in Waal's study were not allowed to go to certain places, or had to be accompanied by a trustworthy person. Nor were these girls allowed to go out with people who were several years older, something that Karlene experienced

with her older male friend. A significant area of protection in the current study that was not mentioned specifically by Waal related to male friends.

The discourse of 'parents protecting daughters' has also been found in other New Zealand studies. Drummond (1991) mentions the objection teenagers have toward differential treatment of girls and boys in families, with girls having less freedom outside the home than their brothers. In 1995, 850 adults in the North Island completed a questionnaire about their perceptions of adolescence in New Zealand, particularly the ways in which they thought male and female adolescents were treated differently (Payne, in Bird & Drewery, 2000). A very clear message in this study was that girls were protected by their parents to a greater extent than boys were. This meant that girls were not allowed to stay at home alone or go out by themselves at night, and, as found in many narratives in the current study, boyfriends could not be trusted. Payne questions the double standards within this discourse of protecting girls, arguing that differences between the sexes are socially constructed, and that there are dangers within and outside of the home for both female and male adolescents. (Payne, in Bird & Drewery, 2000).

Girls' comments about their mother's protectiveness in the current study supports Donovan's (1998) contention that mothers' protectiveness in adolescence is often experienced by daughters as inhibiting their independence and sexuality. Pipher (1996) argues that daughters become angry when their mothers warn them of dangers that they understand better than their mothers. It would be an exaggeration to describe the girls' attitude about protectiveness in the current study as anger – irritation certainly, and frustration at mothers' inconsistencies. Their criticism is most similar to Apter's (1990) participants, who complained about mothers' control through intrusion, not through authority or strictness.

As in Apter's (1990) study, it was accuracy of perception, rather than restriction of activities, that the girls in the current study were concerned about. They seemed to be irritated about their mother's interference, because this showed a lack of faith in them. Rich (1990) also found this in her study,

> At the same time that daughters want mothers to be there for them, daughters also want their mothers to recognise their ability to care for themselves and trust that ability. They often become frustrated when they feel their mothers fail to see them as responsible people (p. 260).

Adolescent girls in Konopka's (1976) study also resented arbitrary authority, being treated like children, and distrust towards them due to their mother's fear of possible pregnancy. Strictness in itself was appreciated, if combined with respect.

Although protectiveness was the main source of disagreements for the girls in the current study, other problems arose out of rules relating to daughters' behaviour both within and outside the house (responsibility and freedom). Youniss and Smollar (1985) noted a similar trend, adding that the issue of respect was at the heart of most conflict in the mother-daughter relationship. Daughters failed to show respect by disobeying their mothers, and mothers failed to show respect by attempting to control their behaviour and thus not treating their daughters as equals. Gray (1988) found that many conflicts in her sample centred on the amount of freedom adolescents should be given. The teenagers in her study preferred independence that was negotiated with their parents, as did the girls in the current study (see page 134 "She trusts me – Changes in trust and respect").

Resolution of disagreements

There are several ways the girls in this study resolved their disagreements with their mothers. One was to avoid the subject and not attempt further discussion. Nicky did not feel it was worth persisting in her attempts to be allowed to do something, in this case going on an AFS scholarship,

> *"One of us gets over it, kind of. Well I mean most of the time I'm happy to just leave it, 'cos like if we're ever arguing, it's about something that I don't really want to do, or it's too hard... I would still like to do it but you know. But if I'm going to be doing it by myself and have to get all organised and stuff and I couldn't really be bothered 'cos I've got other things to do, so just leave it"* (p. 20).

There appeared to be no active resolution of arguments by either mother or daughter in this relationship. It appeared that Nicky gave up fighting, even though she said *"one of us gets over it"* (p. 20). By not persisting in getting her opinion heard, by not resolving the argument, Nicky was missing the opportunity to renegotiate her relationship with her mother. This was also true of several other girls, who simply avoided their mother for a while until the argument was forgotten, or at least not mentioned again,

"I can just ignore her for the rest of the day, and everything's happy the next day. Or I would go to school, I would have an argument in the morning, I'd come back from school all happy so, and, you know, get over it" (Robin, p. 28).

There was often some stubbornness on both sides, with neither mother nor daughter willing to apologise,

"We tend to avoid each other for a bit, and I'll go off somewhere to a friend's place and sulk, and she'll mope round here and sulk... Neither of us will apologise, we just ignore it and after a while everything comes right" (Miriam, p. 18).

"we just carry on... 'cos neither of us like saying sorry or anything" (Ruth, p. 18).

Ruth and her mother could tell when their arguments were over when they were speaking politely to each other again,

"And then we've kind of got this little thing that we know when everything's okay 'cos we start like you know having civil conversations and things like that. [....] [When] I'm not like snapping and she's not like getting all grumpy" (p. 18).

Kate also avoided her mother to prevent the argument from becoming more heated, even leaving the house on one occasion,

"I'd storm off into my room and she'd come in and I'd leave the room, I'd just avoid her to stop it like growing bigger. Um I don't know, sometimes I sit outside... Only one time I've actually left the house and that was 'cos Mum and I had a big fight and I go 'Oh I'm leaving,' and went and packed my bags. And they locked all the doors, and told me to go out my window (laugh). So I went out my window and went round to my mate's place" (p. 21).

However this argument was also resolved after some time apart, and by apologising to each other, *"So [I] went and stayed there, came back in the morning and just go 'Oh sorry, for getting shitty' and she goes 'Oh I'm sorry too.' Usually it's fine by the morning"* (p. 21). Jane also resolved arguments with her mother by apologising, and insisted that she was sincere in her apologies,

"I generally say I'm sorry, although she feels that we say sorry too much and we don't mean it. And if I can tell she feels I don't mean it I turn round and

say 'And I do mean it. I do mean I'm sorry.' [....] Because I am sorry and I
know that I've upset her, and I care a great lot about my Mum" (p. 23).

Karlene felt she and her mother did not really argue because she found it difficult
to remain angry with her when she could see that her mother was concerned about
her safety, *"it's not really argue, it pisses me off, because I can't get angry with her"*
(p. 40). Because Karlene couldn't stay angry with her mother for long, their
arguments often resolved very quickly, *"I'll like walk away and she's like 'Will you*
forgive me?', I'll be like 'Yes. Fine.' (laugh)" (p. 41). Karlene explained that there
was not usually compromise in the resolution of her disagreements with her mother.
Often her mother 'gave in' and let her do what she wanted. This led to the
opportunity for increased freedom if Karlene could prove that she was responsible
and able to look after herself. However sometimes Karlene realised that her request
was not safe and that her mother did actually have a valid argument,

> *"Usually with me and Mum it just sorts itself out, usually she'll... give in to*
> *me, and if I want to do something she'll let me do it, because even though*
> *she's worried she'll let me do it and then when I do it I will be super careful*
> *not to do anything and she'll see it and she'll be like oh, it turned out okay,*
> *nothing happened, and it kind of, her worries start to go when she, like she'll*
> *give me a bit of leash and as long as I don't screw it up, she'll just give me a*
> *bit more... And so...either she'll start to realise that I'm not full of crap and I*
> *can handle the situation, or I'll realise that what she's saying is actually*
> *really true and that it isn't a good idea for me to be doing that or going or...*
> *So one of us... the opinions change, usually. There's not usually a*
> *compromise, it's usually the best like fact or theory comes through, it makes*
> *itself known... and once we both agree on something we're like fine"*

(p. 41).

Karlene explained that her mother still has the authority to prevent her from doing
something, but it is not simply arbitrary authority; there is discussion about the reason
for her mother's view,

> *"I mean there are times when she has to say 'Look, no' or 'Yeah, do that'*
> *kind of thing. But most of the time if I want to do something we talk about it,*
> *when I can usually win her round, but yeah we can talk about it and... we'll*
> *usually come to an agreement... usually if she says no, it'll be something*

we've talked about and I'll understand why she's saying no, it won't be just a
'No you can't do that'" (pp. 38-39).

There was some evidence that Karlene and her mother were able to negotiate limits to freedom, rather than the mother simply dictating to the daughter.

Ania used to find it difficult to resolve arguments with her mother because her mother would 'sulk' and refuse to talk to Ania. Ania told her mother how hard it was for her to have issues unresolved, which led to improved communication between mother and daughter,

> *"We were going through a really good patch, I said 'We've started to talk'*
> *(laugh). And she goes like 'Ay?' And I explained what was happening, and*
> *she said 'Yeah I know, I'm really bad at that' and so I mean now, we don't*
> *argue as much, because I just won't (laugh). Now we talk more than argue,*
> *because if there's something I want or I need or there's something she doesn't*
> *feel happy with we can talk more without... you know, more than argue"* (p.
> 21).

Rich (1990) reported that the daughters in her study dealt with conflict with their mothers by avoidance, resolution or stalemate. The most common way of dealing with disagreements in the current study was avoidance or stalemate; resolution through active discussion only appeared in two narratives. It seems that like Emma Willard girls (Rich, 1990), these daughters have learned to sustain relationships with their mother despite unresolved conflicts.

Yet some daughters and mothers in the current study have begun to move away from unilateral authority towards greater cooperation. At the same time, mothers still clearly asserted their authority, as Youniss and Smollar (1985) also discovered. "Authority and cooperation are not mutually exclusive functions, especially when they are distributed across domains of interest and emanate from a common source of interest in adolescents' well-being" (1985, p. 81). Gray (1988) found that teenagers were more willing to accept their parents' guidelines if they were negotiated rather than imposed. As Gray (1988, p. 17) explained, "The fine lines between caring, overprotection and control are difficult to define." However, the teenagers in her study made one point clear: if they had proved they could be trusted and responsible once, they wanted to be trusted again. Daughters in the current study also wanted

this; this desire is most clearly expressed in Karlene's narrative (also see *1. Protectiveness* earlier in this chapter).

Daughters' perceptions of disagreements

Although all the girls admitted that they argued with their mother, they did not necessarily see these disagreements significant, either in frequency or intensity. When asked how much they argued with their mothers, three girls had similar replies:

"Not much, me and Mum, 'cos we never have anything to argue about... ...I never want to do anything stupid" (Nicky, p. 20).

"Well not a lot, but they're just not really anything major or anything like that, not stuff that result in tears or anything" (Ruth, p. 17).

"we don't really have arguments, she's never hit me. [....] We have a pretty good relationship I think" (Kate, p. 21).

Ania admitted that she often argued with her mother. She had an interesting explanation for the intensity of their disagreements,

"Like I said Mum argues with emotion, and so whatever we do, it's either love/hate (laugh). But there's never anything without emotion in it... It's just that I feel more emotional attachment to her, probably than my Dad. Because she's always been so emotional, like, so loving" (p. 19).

Ania perceived that her relationship with her mother was highly emotionally charged, and could change quickly,

"she likes to make me mad if she feels strong emotion, like especially when we're arguing. Because I mean if we argue, then I can feel so strongly against her, but then if we stop arguing, you know five minutes later I'm so sorry for saying what I did. I really am (laugh). But it's just it can change so quickly, and it seems to change more so with my Mum" (p. 19).

Contrary to much research on the mother-daughter relationship in adolescence, conflict through disagreements did not dominate the daughters' perceptions of their relationship with their mother in the current study. Like the teenagers in Gray's (1988) study, the girls accepted that there would be conflict over some issues, but did not take this personally or consider it a problem in their relationship. This supports Gray's (1988) contention that conflict and criticism did not necessarily get in the way

of a good relationship with parents, and her finding that teenagers reported more minor conflict with their mothers than their fathers, but also felt they got on better with them. While all the girls in the current study said they had minor disagreements with their mothers, six of them also said they felt closer to their mothers than their fathers.

Rich (1990) also argues that arguments between mothers and daughters do not always disrupt closeness between them, but arise from the need to acknowledge and discuss differences. "In realising that they disagree with their mothers, daughters come to differentiate between conventional views of relationships – as nonconflicted – and realistic views of relationships – mother and daughter acknowledging, confronting, and working through differences" (Rich, 1990, p. 266). However, in the current study it appears that some girls are still trying to portray their relationships as 'conventional' in that they do not have 'major' arguments with their mothers.

Rogers, Brown and Tappan (1994) also noted this idealisation of relationships in their research with girls aged 15 to 18. Their participants engaged in "false relationships (relationships in which people pretend or play a role rather than risk rejection or disapproval)" (1994, p. 20) to protect themselves from the danger of real disagreement. The girls in Rogers et al.'s study spontaneously stated they did not want to be in conflict, which was obvious in their narratives. Although they 'glossed over' conflict and difficulties, these girls wanted to express themselves more freely and honestly. It seemed that many of the participants in the current study also wanted to gloss over conflict in their relationship with their mother, but some appeared more honest in their portrayal of differences expressed in their relationship.

"She trusts me" – Changes in trust and respect

A significant change between the childhood and adolescent relationship with mothers perceived by daughters in this study was greater trust, illustrated in many ways, but most commonly in the amount of freedom allowed by mothers. The girls were able to participate in more activities outside the family home and had fewer limitations and rules to adhere to, but they had to earn their mother's trust and prove they were responsible. This was achieved by informing their mother about their whereabouts, telling her the truth about their activities and keeping themselves out of trouble.

"Mum likes to know where I am, what I'm doing but, otherwise she's fine as long as there's an adult around or, you know, wherever I'm going, you know, depending on what it is" (Robin, p. 21).

"She trusts me, 'cos if I tell her that I'm going to be at this place or I'm going to stay the night here she knows that I am, and that I won't lie to her 'cos if I lie to her I won't go to parties and I won't be able to go out sort of thing. And I trust her just to believe me" (Claire, p. 15).

"...they sort of, I don't know, learned... well Mum knows I've got responsibility. I'm probably more responsible than most of my friends. And I'm not like [brother] and I don't know, that I can be trusted and that. So I've got, you know, my curfew was 11 and then it became 11:30..." (Kate, p. 16).

"even when she knows what I'm going to be up to she still lets me go, which is I suppose quite good" (Ruth, p. 16).

"she trusts me completely. She does, Dad doesn't. ...like I'll go off to a party or whatever and she'll go 'Oh so are you drinking?' I'm like 'Yeah' and she goes 'Oh well just... don't get drunk' kind of thing (laugh). And like they're letting me go down to C. in the holidays to see [boyfriend] but letting me go down by myself... and then I'll be tiki-touring round to see family and stuff, but I mean six months ago they wouldn't have let me, because I mean Dad just wouldn't have, but Mum completely trusts me, ...she knows that if I screw up, I screw up. And... she knows that I've got a head on my shoulders, kind of thing and she's begun to actually believe me that I do know how the world works, kind of thing, and how people think, and what to do to keep myself out of trouble" (Karlene, p. 38).

Because their parents trusted and respected them and they had not apparently done anything to betray their trust, these daughters had earned more freedom, which was associated with more responsibility.

There were other examples of greater trust in these mother-daughter relationships. Ruth's mother trusted her to study and perform well at school,

"just with school and stuff like that, she trusts me to know that... I'll carry on and do my best or whatever, and get on with my work. Like my sister she's not so good, so she's always bugging her about achieving, well not achieving, but

you know, actually doing it. So yeah, I think she trusts me quite a bit in that area" (p. 16).

There was also evidence of greater respect from mothers, even if they did not specifically tell their daughters this, *"It's just, yeah how she acts and just things she says that I know that she respects me, but she hasn't done anything to say like 'Oh I respect you'"* (Claire, p. 15). Greater respect and trust also went both ways in the mother-daughter relationship. Karlene trusted her mother not to read her poems and to be honest with her,

> *"she doesn't go through my stuff any more"* (p. 37).

> *"she respects my privacy more now, and I mean, I kind have always respected her privacy but at the same time I trust her that if she's... going through anything like that [nervous breakdown] again then she'll come and tell me, and that she won't just shut herself off"* (p. 38).

> *"It's like there's that whole like thing of trust, so that if I do stuff up and I don't tell her and she finds out she's got to tell me she knows, she can't just start giving me consequences without me knowing and stuff. So yeah, I trust her a lot more and she trusts me like completely"* (p. 38).

However, not all the girls perceived such changes in their relationship with their mother. There was not much evidence in Nicky's narrative of any renegotiation of their relationship in adolescence; Nicky herself perceived that her relationship with mother hadn't changed a lot since childhood. This could have been because mother and daughter did not have a very close relationship, in that they did not communicate with each other in enough depth to actually work out new ways of relating to each other. Or it could be that their relationship will begin to change as Nicky gets older, into late adolescence and early adulthood.

"She's got her own life" – Perceptions of mother: Social role versus person

Another change in some mother-daughter relationships in this study was in girls' perceptions of their mother. Some girls still had difficulty perceiving situations from their mother's point of view, and acknowledging that mothers had their own lives too. Robin's mother still comes to horse shows to watch her compete, even though she is allergic to horses. Robin did not appear to realise how this must be difficult for her mother; she only mentioned that she felt *"really stink"* (p. 5) when she first found

out and did not mention it again. Robin's mother also can't drive because she has epilepsy, so has to get Robin's father or a friend to drive her to pick Robin up from school and take her to all her activities. Robin did not seem to have thought about the difficulties this would cause for her mother. She was focused on her own achievements, but she was pleased that her mother was there to see them. *"But the dressage she was there for and I was pleased with that"* (p. 26).

Ruth was annoyed when her mother was not always available to help her, *"I get angry when she's tired and I'm like 'Help me with this now' and she's like 'No, I've got to do this'"* (p. 18). It seemed Ruth sometimes had difficulty recognising that her mother has her own life and was not always available to respond to Ruth's demands. Similarly Kate didn't like her mother going out socialising,

> *"I suppose when she goes out, I get annoyed with her, like to the pub and that. I suppose in her free time I go out but yeah it annoys me sometimes, especially when she brings home people. And making lots of noise, and 'cos I don't like some of her friends. And like I told her and she still brings them round. It really annoys me"* (p. 20).

Kate was also irritated when her mother was drunk when she wanted to talk to her. Kate seemed to see her mother in her social role only, and appeared to be reluctant to accept that her mother had her own life and made mistakes. However she understood why her mother had to work long hours, and acknowledged that she was provided for as a result,

> *"[Interviewer: So does it bother you that she's not there?] Oh sometimes it can get annoying, but it doesn't really bother me that much 'cos I know that she's doing it for the money. And she's providing me with stuff so..."* (p. 19).

In contrast, there was evidence in the narratives of Michelle, Karlene and Jane that these girls were beginning to see their mothers as people, with their own inadequacies, problems and interests, rather than seeing them as simply their mothers who played that particular social role only.

> *"So she's like got her own life and her boyfriend and, I've got my own life, so we just go off and do our separate things"* (Michelle, p. 18).

> *"She's going under a lot of stress at the moment because the school wants to expel my brother, and she's having to find correspondence and things like that"* (Jane, p. 25).

"she went through another breakdown when I was in third and fourth form, when I was going through my whole rebel [phase]... [....] And I just love her to bits and one day, I can kind of understand why like when I was going through that she would go through my stuff and read what I was writing and stuff because I mean I hate to admit it, 'cos she had to keep a journal for the psychiatrist that wanted to know. And one day I just, I was so worried about her, she wasn't talking, she was in her room, she was just crying for like days, and the journal... was sitting there and so I opened it to my birthday which had just gone, and it all started on my birthday, she started going like this and it was my... fourteenth or fifteenth, one or the other, birthday. And I just read it, and I read that day, just no other day, and... I couldn't even finish reading that day. 'Cos she was talking about like... 'cos on my birthday I had gone up town with my friends, and it was the first time I hadn't spent the day at home, and she'd stayed at home, and all day she'd made this magnificent birthday cake... and she was going on about how she didn't feel like I needed her any more, and she was going on about suicide and everything, and I'm like, this is on my birthday and...I was like oh my God, it just totally hit me" (Karlene, p. 31).

Rich's (1990) interviews with adolescent girls were filled with descriptions of mothers' mistakes and instances of being wrong. While there were also complaints about mothers from the girls in the current study, they described more positive aspects of their relationship than negative ones. Several girls were beginning to perceive that problems with their mother were related to circumstances beyond her control and that she was not always going to conform to their image of an 'ideal' mother. These perceptions contrast with those of girls in Bryant and Johnson's (1990) study, who considered influential mothers as those who have "a positive outlook on life and always appear to be happy. Indeed they are fun to be with. Even when they come home tired after a long day at work. They hardly ever complain" (p. 96).

Rich (1990) argues that recognising that mothers are not perfect is part of a transition for daughters from simply being aware of the differences between themselves and their mothers and actually voicing their own viewpoints in the relationship. Stern (1990) argues that daughters' ability to recognise their mother as a

person in her own right is developed through their increased independence. By decreasing the extent to which they depend on their mother to meet their needs, adolescent daughters are able to perceive their mothers (and others) as people rather than caregivers. Rich (1990) and Stern (1990) both see this as an opportunity for daughters to improve the relationship and enhance the connection through more accurate perception of their mother. Several of the mother-daughter relationships in the current study had not yet reached this level however, as the daughters were still dependent on their mothers to meet many of their needs and still viewed her as simply fulfilling the social role of provider.

Youniss and Smollar (1985) argue that this awareness of 'role' serves as a step towards an appreciation of mothers as personalities rather than simply figures. Adolescents' feelings of obligation and provision of reciprocal support towards their mothers are also part of this shift, according to Youniss and Smollar. These themes were also found in the narratives in the current study and will be discussed in the following section, "Communal Themes". The girls in the current study have therefore begun the transition of perception of their mothers, and each of them are at a different point upon this path. However, the findings support Youniss and Smollar's contention that "it would be excessive to conclude that mothers are fully understood as persons apart from their position as mothers" (1985, p. 75).

COMMUNAL THEMES

"Doing stuff together"

Eight out of ten daughters in this study mentioned spending time with their mothers in shared activities. Robin enjoyed going out for lunch with her mother. Claire enjoyed going to soccer tournaments with her mother. Some girls spent more time with their mothers than others. Miriam had a long list of things she and her mother did together, including going out (shopping, going out for lunch, going to the movies and the theatre) and staying at home (baking, reading, watching TV). In comparison, Ruth and her mother did not do much together, except go shopping. Five of the girls included shopping as one of their shared activities. As well as talking, Karlene said she and her mother have a lot of fun together, sharing jokes and playfighting, *"we just joke around a lot and it's quite cool"* (p. 36).

For seven of the girls, just being with their mother, just the two of them by themselves, was treasured. This was also a way of retaining closeness,

> *"Like going shopping with her and, like, even if it means just going to the grocery shop or something, just sometimes good to, like, just go out and do those things by ourselves, or like just be at home"* (Michelle, p. 18).

> *"we're not close like we used to be but when we're by ourselves and go out for the day we do have that closeness still there. Like when we went over to get my ball dress material last year we were, had that closeness"* (Jane, p. 22).

Participating in planned activities is not the only way closeness was retained in mother-daughter relationships,

> *"if we're home by ourselves we just sit and talk. I mean sometimes all it takes is for us to both just be sitting there watching Ricki Lake or something. There's still that closeness there"* (Jane, p. 22).

> *"it's just the little things, you know that I can come home and talk and just do stuff together. I mean yeah, she's usually out in the garden, in summer. We had a neat summer 'cos we could sit out the back and just talk"* (Ania, p. 22).

Karlene particularly appreciated the time she spends with her mother because they are not able to be together as much as they used to,

> *"Well she's been really busy... 'cos she's just started uni again this year. So she doesn't have a lot of time now... when she does have time we'll do something or we'll just go out and we'll just sit down and have a cup of tea or something, we'll just talk and just basically spend time together. But it's been happening less and less because I'm busier and she's busier. So it means that when we do get the chance to do it it's really good and we really appreciate it a lot more"* (p. 36).

It appears that in almost 25 years, not much has changed in relation to this aspect of mother-daughter relationships in adolescence. In 1976 Konopka also noted that the girls she interviewed appreciated doing things with their mothers. Many of the activities the girls in this study described were centred around the home, where they could talk to their mothers, and were everyday activities. Similarly, girls in the current study often mentioned spending time together in activities that involved just

the two of them that would give them opportunities to talk. Jane, Ania and Karlene specifically included talking with their mother as part of their shared activities.

Youniss and Smollar (1985) found that unlike characteristic parent-daughter interactions, daughters' most enjoyed activities with their parents were always 'symmetrical', involving "an equality of the participants with regard to a specific event" (p. 29). In both father- and mother-daughter relationships, the common 'most enjoyed activities' were "going places together, talking together, and performing an activity together. In the mother-daughter relationship, 37 of the 40 'going places together' activities involved shopping" (1985, p. 31). The girls in the current study appeared to value the same 'most enjoyed activities' as Youniss and Smollar's participants. In particular, five out of ten of the girls in the current study also mentioned shopping as one of the main activities they did with their mother.

"Being there"

All the girls in this study talked about their mothers 'being there' for them. There were many ways mothers were 'there' for, or supported, their daughters.

Physically

The first was the most literal meaning of 'being there', actually being physically present to watch daughters in their activities.

> *"she likes, like, you know, going to horse shows and watching what I'm doing, she just, not necessarily there for long, because of all her allergies, but she is there"* (Robin, p. 25).

> *"she comes and watches my school productions. [Interviewer: This is plays you do, you mean, for school?] Yeah, that was like fourth form, third form, fourth form. And comes, in third form prize giving, she came, took time off work"* (Nicky, p. 19).

Practically and financially

Mothers also supported their daughters by providing practical help or advice, and financial assistance. Sometimes it was simply making something, *"she sewed my ball dress for me"* (Nicky, p. 21). Other times it was just providing transport,

"I got a new job at [fast food outlet] and so... she's supportive in that and drives me there and back and makes it easier on me. I think that's relatively supportive (laugh)" (Ruth, p. 17).

"she's just there. She drives me to school, and – oh to her work, where I bike from and picks me up when I need her to" (Nicky, p. 18).

Practical support for Nicky also included being cared for when she got her wisdom teeth taken out, *"she came and picked me up, and she bought me custard, 'cos that's all I could eat"* (Nicky, p. 19). Nicky said her mother also drove her to the doctor when she was sick and stayed with her once they got there,

"Takes me to the doctor when I need to go, when I... Oh, I had this bad asthma attack a while ago and she took me then, and I was on the ventilator, the nebuliser, she looked after me then. She was there when I was doing that" (Nicky, p. 19).

Another form of support was encouragement and practical help with schoolwork,

"I'm doing School C this year, she's real helpful because, like, she makes me go do my homework, and that actually helps me, and she helps me study if I can't do something, and she always just helps me, gets someone to help me" (Robin, p. 25).

"just with like school and stuff, if I ever don't get anything then she'll explain it to me" (Ruth, p. 17).

"She helps me with my school work because now I have it, you know, when I was younger I didn't. Because she works in a library so she can help... 'cos all the other people, you go to the public library and there's none, none of the books are left, but she works at [tertiary institution] where no-one else can go, so I get the information, which is good most of the time" (Nicky, p. 16).

For Robin and Nicky, this practical assistance changed from help with schoolwork to their mothers actually doing work or organising their schedule *for* them,

"she's looking for my artist at the moment, I have to study an artist for art, and that's what she's doing, soon, when she's on the desk, she's going to help me. She goes and finds me, helps me find information" (Nicky, p. 18).

"I've got a big busy schedule, so she really helps me try and keep it not so busy so I can do some homework" (Robin, p. 26).

Robin said her mother also organised things for her that she was not able or used to doing herself, like Robin's gymnastics coaching, *"She gets transport for me to get there, and... she rings up 'cos I'm actually underage"* (Robin, p. 25) and her upcoming overseas exchange trip (in contrast to her father's lack of involvement),

> *"she's been really organised about this [exchange] thing, she's gone out and she's got, you know, got tickets and everything. And she's trying to get a better bargain for me so I can stay in [country] longer... She really wants me to stay in [country]. Dad doesn't really know anything about it, he's not listening"* (Robin, p. 27).

When Karlene's boyfriend had an accident and had to stay in hospital in another city, Karlene said her mother supported her in practical ways even though Karlene had been seeing him without permission,

> *"she's been really supportive about this ay... They didn't know I was going out with him 'cos they actually told me I wasn't allowed to go out with him... but I told them and they were not very impressed but... They were really good, she's been really good... she's been doing all kinds of things like if I write a letter she'll go post it for me straight away... she offered to take me down to [city] to see him but then she couldn't, but then organised a way for me to do it anyway"* (Karlene, p. 37).

Robin also received practical support from her mother in the form of suggestions and ideas,

> *"I also need to get transport... some mornings and she used to suggest who I should ring up and stuff, she was real helpful"* (Robin, p. 27).

> *"I'm doing this, throwing my friend's surprise birthday party, and she's trying to be real helpful, she's trying 'Why don't you have a dinner and bring (inaudible) and stuff?' I'm like, 'No mother.' We're like, you know, she tries, she tries real hard for you, but she's agreed with what I'm going to do anyway... she gives her ideas and stuff. And she's always trying for us, you know, she always tries to be helpful, she always tries to be there, she always tries to be there. She can't do everything but she tries, you know. She wants to do everything for you"* (Robin, p. 27).

Robin didn't seem to mind her mother being so involved. *"She organises everything for me which is good. I'm usually very unorganised"* (p. 25). Robin seemed happy to

remain dependent on her mother for organising her life; she showed no apparent irritation at this or any desire to be more independent.

Two girls also mentioned that their mothers supported them by providing financial assistance,

> "she pays for [gymnastics coaching] for me and stuff, 'cos it's quite expensive" (Robin, p. 25)

> "If she has [money], she'll give it. ...she's saving up for me to go to the mountain with my brother. ...she can't really afford it and I know that but [brother] wants me to go... [....] And my ball dress" (Kate, p. 19).

Emotionally

One particular aspect of emotional support in the current study involved mothers standing up for their daughters when the girls had been emotionally hurt or threatened. There were two ways mothers did this: actively and passively. Actively standing up for their daughters involved a movement from mothers simply providing emotional support to physical action, actually confronting the people that have hurt their daughter, and defending their daughter's character. Miriam called her mother her *"big protector"* (p. 17), explaining that it was mainly in situations involving boyfriends; for example:

> "I was sort of attacked sort of, and [my boyfriend] basically told me it was my own fault because I was female and I had to come to expect that sort of unwanted attention. [....] And when we... broke up, understandably... Mum sort of went mental at him and told him exactly what she thought of him and where he could go stick his stupid little life basically. Which is really sweet having your Mum blast this guy, quite cool. And she's like that all the time, she'll stand up for me" (p. 17).

Kate told of her mother standing up for her when peers were spreading rumours about her in the small town where she lived, *"Like if I'm having problems with people and that. Like some girls in this town think I want their boyfriends but I don't, and she'll go and yell at them for me"* (pp. 18-19).

On other occasions mothers defended their daughter's character and helped them feel better when they had been hurt emotionally, yet did not go as far as to actually confront the perpetrators. For example, when Karlene broke up with a boyfriend and

was very upset, "*she just said things like 'Oh you deserve better than him' you know, things that make you feel real good about yourself*" (p. 35) and when Kate had had a disagreement with a friend, who had then spread rumours about Kate around town,

> "*Like if um I've had a fight with my friend, I can tell her about it and she's like 'Oh they're just being mean, don't worry about that.' Like my best friend, oh ex-best friend now, we had another fight. She wrote this stuff about me round [town] and I told Mum and Mum's like 'Oh the stupid cow, she shouldn't have done that,' just you know, basically told me I was in the right and she was in the wrong*" (p. 18).

There were many other aspects of emotional support from mothers expressed by daughters in this study. Ania captured the feeling of most of the girls in her explanation of 'stability' in her relationship with her mother,

> "*when I need to be strong but I can't, she does it for me. And... that's basically how I feel, you know if something bad happens to me then I don't need to be strong because I've got someone to lean on. So I mean it's just that stability thing again. So the fact that I don't have to be you know, strong all the time and I can rely on someone, to be there for me*" (p. 20).

Ania was particularly grateful for her mother's belief in her ability when she felt she had not achieved to a particular standard that she had set herself,

> "*just knock-backs, I mean because I have a very high achieving standard, because of that. And just when I haven't done as well as I wanted to, or when I haven't done, when I haven't felt I've done something well, mostly at school, sometimes out of school or whatever, then you know she's never been worried. Because she knows that I'm more hard on myself than she can be (laugh). But yeah, it's just those sort of things*" (p. 20).

Miriam was able to recover from an eating disorder because of her mother's perseverance and praise, and also because she could see how worried her mother was,

> "*I've got another good example of like she's always been there for me... Third and fourth form – typical – I went through this little weight crisis that most girls go through and I got really sick and really thin, not that you can tell now! But yeah, they were going to put me in hospital and sort of force feed me for a while there and Mum sort of said that she'd do it herself. And so she sort of took me on and said 'Right, you're going to get better' and I went*

'I don't want to' and she said 'Yeah you do'. And she kind of got me out of it, which was quite good 'cos I was very very thin. [Interviewer: How did she do that?] She just, she was always like kind of on my case to eat, but in a nice way. She was like 'Come on, you're going to eat.' 'No I'm not.' 'Yeah you are, come on.' And just sort of cajole me into it really, and then just you know, giving me heaps of praise and telling me how special I was. 'Cos she's never been a big 'Oh I love you' kind of person, you just know it. But during that time she was always like 'You know I love you and you know I don't want to see you like this, so eat!' And I sort of did it for her in a way, 'cos I knew that I was making her really unhappy" (pp. 18-19).

Ruth was also comforted by her mother's reassurance,

"If I'm upset she tells me that she loves me and that it'll be okay" (p. 17).

Miriam's mother was the first person she went to when something distressing had happened; for example when Miriam was told her friend had committed suicide,

"just like, 'Have you heard, A. died.' I'm like, 'What?' 'A. killed herself!' 'What?' and this person was fairly bouncy about it and I'm like 'Okay, shattered'. And I got home from school and no one was home, like it was really unusual 'cos Mum was always home when I got home from school. And so I had to bawl in the house by myself, and then Mum arrived home and she took one look at me and knew something was up but I couldn't tell her for a while. And then I sort of told her" (p. 13).

When Ania had 'broken up' with her best friend, she turned to her mother for support because only her mother would understand why she was so upset. Ania found comfort in her mother simply 'being there'; she did not need her to find solutions or give advice,

"I had a really big falling-out with [my best friend] and to this day I'm not friends with her. ...I was just really upset through that time and everything. And I remember the only person I could talk to was my Mum, because she'd seen us together... [....] And yeah it was just that closeness that, you know meant she was really the only person I could talk to about it. Because she was the only person I wanted to talk to about it, if you know what I mean. [Interviewer: How did she help you get through that?] By just being there I suppose. I mean it wasn't really that I wanted answers, it was just that I

wanted to talk about it. And I mean by having you know, a home basically that I can come home to and... not worry about anything, it was just, you know an escape basically from what was happening" (p. 20).

Two girls also appreciated their mothers letting them have time off from school or responsibilities when they were sick or upset and just staying with them. For Miriam this was after her friend had committed suicide and when her friends deserted her,

"just like when I, like um... really upset about A. and stuff last year, and Mum just knew what it was all like and stuff and she just let me have time off school which is great, and sat with me and she'd bring me chocolate to eat, which is always good (laugh). She does that a lot when I'm sick 'cos I'm, I get sick all the time and they still don't know what's wrong with me. And she knows how I get really sort of upset at the same time because all my friends just sort of forget about me, just so used to, like 'Oh, she's sick again. '" (p. 16).

For Karlene it was after her boyfriend had had his accident,

"especially during that time, when I first found out I was absolutely devastated... I was like this happens in movies, it doesn't happen in real life, kind of thing. She was really good, like... she would just come and give me a hug, and she wouldn't say anything or anything and she wouldn't expect me to... like normally they'd have extra expectations of things to do, and if I didn't feel like doing study or like I just said – Dad was away for a day or so when I found out – and I'm like 'I just can't be bothered, I'm just not getting anywhere,' she's like 'Don't go then.'" (p. 37).

Two girls also mentioned receiving advice from their mothers that seemed to be aimed at preventing them from being disappointed or embarrassed,

"Like um she wants me to do well in School C. but... like doesn't want to push me... 'cos I don't think I can get maths, so she said "If you don't think you can do it, don't..." (Kate, p. 20).

"she's very honest as well, like she'll say things that at the time may have a sharp sting but at the same time it's only 'cos she loves me, and she's doing it to try and help me. Like if I'm going ball dress shopping or something or looking for clothes and I try something which I think's really cool but it just does not look good on me she'll say 'Nah' (laugh) and it's not because she

doesn't want me to have it, it's 'cos like she doesn't want me to get embarrassed" (Karlene, p. 35).

There was also an emphasis on encouragement and sharing in positive and negative experiences in daughters' lives.

> *"in anything I do she's always been encouraging"* (Ruth, p. 17).
>
> *"she's still you know, she's always there... So she's... basically my support crew (laugh). And I mean she's always encouraging, both my parents are really encouraging"* (Ania, pp. 16-17).
>
> *"whatever I've done, she's always been there to support me. Whatever successes I've had, she's always been there you know, to celebrate with me"* (Ania, p. 18).

In the current study, the word participants most frequently used to describe their relationship with their mother was *there*. This word came up again and again in the interview transcripts: in the ten interviews in this study, it was said 87 times in total, used in various ways as described above. Josselson (1992) also found *there* to be the most frequently used word in her interviews with adults about their significant relationships. In both studies, this consistently appeared to be what was most important. Josselson discovered that her participants could rarely explain exactly what 'thereness' is.

> *"There* seems to be a word that describes a fundamental psychological experience that cannot be further broken down. As best as I can understand it, the 'thereness' of someone speaks to holding. It is an expression of what can be taken for granted, it is all-important background" (Josselson, 1992, p. 31).

As Josselson points out, although we can be held in infancy only by someone who is physically 'there', holding includes emotional support as well. "Later in life, we still need that support from people – a sense of people's 'thereness' that seems to prevent us from falling (Josselson, 1992, p. 32). Ania best illustrates this metaphor when she said *"I've got someone to lean on"* (p. 20). Her mother, like many in the current study, was a support that she held onto to stop herself from falling.

Other studies of adolescent daughters, from both overseas and New Zealand, have also noted consistent perceptions of their mothers' support and 'thereness'. Daughters in Rich's (1990) study highly valued their mothers 'being there' for them,

both physically and emotionally. Like the girls in the current study, Emma Willard girls depended on their mothers for material comfort, emotional support, approval and guidance. One of the qualities of their mothers admired by high school girls in Bryant and Johnson's (1990) study was "They are always there when you need them" (p. 96). This appeared to include aspects of support similar to those found in the current study, such as physically being there, "They get involved [with sport] and they watch their daughters play sport" (p. 96) and practical advice and encouragement, "Admired Mums are encouragers. They help with homework" (pp. 96-97). Paterson (1993) discovered that there was a marked difference between male and female late adolescents' utilisation of their mothers for support and proximity. Unlike adolescent sons, "daughters increased their utilisation of their mothers for support and proximity and continued to rate them as highly responsive and important to them" (1993, p. 128).

"I'm there for her as well" – Reciprocal support

In addition to receiving support *from* their mothers, some daughters also mentioned giving support *to* their mothers in return. In Michelle and Karlene's narratives, the mother-daughter roles appeared to have been reversed; these two girls told of their mother being dependent on their support. Michelle remembers this role-reversal occurring after her father's death, when her mother was having difficulty adjusting to running the household on her own,

> *"my Mum really loved him so, she really really missed him. I, like, helped out heaps. She needed to like get back on her feet again... 'cos Dad did all the stuff around the house, usually, so... oh she needed to be like the mother of the household, I mean like be the boss of it, like take control of everything, so she needed help to do that. So I helped her out heaps"* (p. 12)

Michelle said she also provided support *to* her mother that most of the other girls usually received *from* their mothers,

> *"she wants to know my opinion on something. Like I got home... last night, and she wanted me to read over some letters for her and just knowing my opinion sometimes helps her, and just general talking like, 'cos if she needs me to help her out with any of her problems I try to do that – I'm usually everyone's counsellor, so Mum's just another person"* (p. 18).

Karlene felt she had to protect her mother from stress because she was particularly vulnerable emotionally, *"she had a nervous breakdown then and that's just made me get even more protective of her"* (p. 31) and she wanted her mother to know that she was available to talk to, even if this was all she was able to do,

> *"I mean I'm there for her as well, she's there for me now, 'cos she knows that if she needs to talk she can come and talk to me, and I'm quite happy to listen and I'll, as a daughter I'll try and help her but I can't really do a lot"* (p. 32).

Karlene described how she and her mother took turns to support each other, with mother and daughter each having an equal amount of influence over the other,

> *"She's just been there, which is really good, which is what, like over the years we've built up, and it's like whenever she's in a time where all she needs is just someone who she knows is there to help her if whatever, and I'm there. And if like she goes through like problems with Dad or with my brothers and sisters or whatever, then I'm there to like give her a nudge along if she needs it or, kind of thing. And at the moment... she's helping me...[....] So, yeah it's quite good, it like keeps you in line a bit (laugh) but at the same time it means that when you do screw up, like I can go and tell her, and if I just face up about it she'll be like 'Sweet as, don't do it again' and if she screws up I'll be like 'Oh unacceptable young lady!' (laugh) kind of thing. So I mean yeah, it's just really supportive"* (p. 37).

Other girls wanted to support their mother because their mother had always been there for them. When her mother was upset Robin helped out around the house for this reason, but also out of concern for her mother's health,

> *"she gets upset and stuff, like, if she has an argument with, or something can't go right, and ... I try to be there for her because she's there for me, so usually it's all happy. [Interviewer: So when she gets down, what do you do?] I just like help out with tea and stuff"* (pp. 29-30).

> *"Because if like no one does it, it's never going to be done, and otherwise Mum will sit there until... and she can't stay up late too much because like she gets headaches and she'll get sick"* (p. 30).

Ania was pleased that she could now give support to her mother in return, shown for example in special gifts for her mother,

"it's just basically that through the mixture of good and bad, that no matter what, you know we've always been there, for each other. And now it's... more of a mutual closeness. Because I've been able to do things for her, as well. The thing that springs to mind is when she went into hospital a little while ago, for her heart, down in [hospital] and I made her a tape that she could listen to before she went into theatre. With lots of like quotes and poems and stuff that I got out of mother books and stuff like that. So I mean it's just... been you know that we do stuff for each other. It's been pretty good" (pp. 18-19).

Youniss and Smollar (1985) discovered a difference in reciprocity between father-daughter and mother-daughter relationships. If fathers provided material or emotional support, daughters did not do the same for him, but rather obeyed him or thanked him. In contrast, daughters were more likely to provide reciprocal support to their mothers. The main obligation daughters in Youniss and Smollar's study felt towards their mothers was to help them out. The girls in the current study also appeared to feel a need to help their mothers, and as Youniss and Smollar found, this was done to make their mothers feel good and to repay them for their personal support.

Daughters in Rich's (1990) study also described 'being there' for their mothers: helping them with and protecting them from problems in their mothers' lives, their own lives and their relationship. The girls in Rich's study found it unsettling when their mother's dependence on them was greater than their dependence on their mothers. In contrast, Apter (1990) argued that although adolescent girls do not like being reminded of their dependence upon their mothers, they never complain when their mother is dependent on them for support. In Michelle and Karlene's relationships the mother-daughter roles were reversed; at times their mothers were definitely more dependent on them than they were on their mothers. Neither of these girls complained about this situation; Michelle had been supporting her mother for many years and appeared to have accepted this as her role in the relationship, and Karlene seemed to enjoy being able to provide this kind of support to her mother. These girls seem to support Youniss and Smollar's (1985) suggestion that daughters

perceive mothers as having needs and perceive themselves as able to meet these needs, or at least attempt to.

"She knows me probably better than Dad" – Differences between mother-daughter and father-daughter relationships

Although this study did not aim to examine daughters' perceptions of their relationship with their father, this relationship illustrates the nature of mother-daughter relationships in greater detail by highlighting the differences between them. There were many differences between mother-daughter and father-daughter relationships in this study. Six of the girls said they felt closer to their mothers in adolescence because their fathers were not at home as much as their mothers; their fathers simply did not know them as well. Often this had been the case since childhood, as Miriam explained,

> *"Dad was sort of always busy working on the farm so we never saw much of him, just mucked around with Mum, playing in her pots and pans... She was the one who sort of looked after us when we were little, bought us games. She was, she still buys all our Christmas presents 'cos Dad doesn't have a clue"*
> (p. 2).

Ania felt that her relationship with her mother was more relaxed and she could 'be herself' with her mother because her mother had been with her through many different experiences and situations,

> *"[Mum's] there more, and I mean with her I think it's probably more relaxed, because I don't have to try so hard, because she knows me, she knows me probably better than Dad. ...because she's spent more time with me and because she's seen me in lots of ways just like after school is different and everything. Yeah I think it's just probably a bit more relaxed with Mum"* (p. 17).

Because their father was more likely to be absent due to work outside the home, mothers participated in a greater number of girls' activities and were more available for support.

> *"My Mum, I felt closest with my Mum. Because she was always around and we had that friendship, open relationship and we just get along so well. And I think the reason I'm not as close with Dad is because he's very rarely here.*

[....] And as the time's gone on, his hours are getting longer and things like that so we very rarely see him" (Jane, p. 8).

"Mum, I feel the closest to her, 'cos Dad's not here. Yeah, basically that, and because Mum's always there for you, and if she's not there, well then you pick one of your brothers or sisters, but Dad's not usually there" (Robin, p. 10).

"... 'cos Dad works on a farm we don't have any time off for holidays. And so if we did go on holidays it's normally just me and Mum and [sister]... Or when I had soccer Mum used to come and take us everywhere, and Dad's always working, even though he tries to get out and come and watch... Mum was always there and Mum used to take me to school in the car, and things like that. I normally do most things with Mum but yeah, whenever I do things with Dad it's pretty good fun" (Claire, p. 7).

Because fathers were not home as often, the time they did spend with their daughters was particularly important and made an impression on the girls. Ania perceived that her relationship with her father had not changed in the way she behaved around him, and was different to her relationship with her mother in the topics of conversation. Ania particularly appreciated the time her father was able to spend with her because she realised how busy he was,

"I still try and do things to impress him, and still try to you know, make him proud of me. So... when I talk to him and stuff it's often to tell him stuff that I've done. And... we don't spend that much time like together still, so I mean in that respect it's still probably the same. Because when I'm around him I'm trying to you know, do things that'll make him proud of me. So if he's there, you know if he's there for something I'm doing, then it's got to be important, because he doesn't have that much time. But then again in that respect, no matter how busy he is, he always finds time for me if I want him. So if I need help with anything, he'll drop everything. And I mean in that respect he's brilliant, (laugh) because you know he's so busy and yet I always come before everything. I mean he's always made me feel special that way" (p. 16).

However for Jane, time with her father was often a negative experience, which led to avoidance and fewer opportunities to develop a closer father-daughter relationship,

"when he comes home, something's gone wrong at school for the boys or something and he gets angry and you just don't want to be around when he's like that. And when you see him like that constantly it puts up a negative barrier. So I think that's why I don't have that closeness with him because I'm constantly seeing him uptight and angry, that I don't want to be part of it" (p. 8).

Kate felt closer to her mother in childhood and adolescence because she did not take responsibility for discipline in the household,

"she was the one that didn't make the rules and was the one that let me get away with everything. The carefree one that let me get away... the nice one I suppose you'd say, well from my terms. [My stepfather] was the one that you know, the one that took responsibility and made the rules and like enforced the rules" (p. 8).

Karlene and her sister preferred to go to her mother to talk about problems because her father's approach was not helpful,

"I know that I can talk to her and she won't try to help a lot of the time, she'll just listen, which is what we need, whereas with Dad, he has to find a solution. You tell him anything and there has to be a solution. And he'll give you a solution and if you don't accept it then well you're... I don't know you're an idiot or something, I don't know. There, you have to, everything is a problem and everything has to be solved. So neither of us can really go to him 'cos a lot of things you're just are going through them, and they're just there, there's no reason, you don't want a solution, they're just there, and you just want someone to listen" (p. 32).

While all the girls identified both positive and negative differences between their relationships with their parents, Miriam and Karlene portrayed a greater contrast in their relationship with their parents: they were very close to their mother but had a very strained relationship with their father. Miriam was very aware of this contrast, *"Really odd I think that we have like, my Dad who I can barely talk to and my Mum who I'm like right there with"* (p. 17) and strongly identified with her mother as a reaction against her relationship with her father, *"I don't know if it's a conscious or unconscious thing but I've tried to model myself a lot like my Mum. And... I think because I so don't want to be like my Dad I'm totally the other way"* (p. 10).

There were girls who did identify with their fathers, and Michelle and Ruth actually felt closer to their father than their mother. Ruth felt a greater understanding and connection with her father because they were more alike. She contrasted her relationship with her mother with how her sister got along with her mother,

> *"my sister's more my Mum's... and they always seem to get along a lot better, and my Dad and I sort of have an understanding. [....] We like have the same frustrations with people and stuff like that. [....] We're very much alike I think"* (p. 7).

Ania was beginning to identify more with her father as she got older, and explained this in terms of how she was different from her mother,

> *"I'd say I'm pretty close to my Dad. ...I don't see more of him or anything, 'cos he's still busy, but as I get older I relate more to him. Because he's more like me, because when I argue – this is when Mum and I fall into problems – when I argue, I argue with logic. And that's what Dad does, but Mum argues with emotion. And I can't handle that, (laugh) because there's no logic to it. (laugh) So in that way I relate more to my Dad, because you know he just, he basically lays everything out on the table. And I know with Dad that if I do so and so then I have no problems with him and that I can basically do what I want within those, within reason"* (p. 16).

Michelle's father died when she was nine so she could not compare her relationship with him and her mother in adolescence. However she still identified with her father now, and also portrayed this as difference between her mother and herself, *"I'm still hooked on my father's stuff that me and Dad liked and she never liked that anyway. So, like, I appreciate more, like, naturey stuff and she's just like 'Oh yeah (laugh), trees are there, ra de ra.'"* (p. 18).

Paterson (1993) found several reasons why adolescents differentiated between their mothers and fathers on dimensions of attachment. As in the current study, a high proportion of Paterson's participants described their mothers as emotionally supportive, empathic or instrumentally helpful. In contrast, fathers were perceived as less emotionally involved and therefore not as able to provide such support or advice. Daughters' perceptions in the current study support previous studies that have

suggested that adolescents' relationships with mothers are more reciprocal and intimate than those with fathers (Paterson, 1993; Youniss & Smollar, 1985).

As in Paterson's (1993) and Youniss and Ketterlinus's (1987) samples, the girls in the current study appeared to feel that their mother knew them better than their father. As Paterson (1993) points out,

> For most New Zealand adolescents it is likely that their mothers have been their primary caregiver throughout their lives. The extra time a woman traditionally has had with her children gives her the contextual knowledge to understand and explain their behaviour (p. 132).

Teenagers in Gray's (1988) study had similar reasons to the girls for why they got on better with their mothers – their fathers were not at home as often, were busy, or did not listen to what they were saying.

Waal, (1993) and Youniss and Smollar (1985) found that adolescents talked to their fathers about objective 'business' matters – school performance, rules at home, future plans – and reserved discussion of feelings or personal matters for their mothers. Teenagers in Gray's (1988) study talked to their fathers about 'serious' matters and to their mothers about everyday issues. Unfortunately, the serious matters did not occur often enough for them to be as comfortable as they were when talking with their mothers. Ania illustrated this in that she often talked to her father to tell him of her progress at school, whereas she talked about personal issues with her mother. As Youniss and Smollar (1985, pp. 30-31) found, although both parents usually share activities with daughters, "mothers and daughters, unlike fathers and daughters, 'discuss problems with each other,' 'have close personal talks,' and 'tell each other everything.'" This was also the case in many of the mother-daughter relationships in the current study, as discussed in the following section.

"This massive long conversation" – Intimacy and change in communication

Each mother and daughter relationship in this study had its own level of intimacy in communication, that is, how much the daughters told their mothers. In some relationships this had not really changed since the girls were younger, but in others there had been a definite change in communication during adolescence. Four of the girls said they felt comfortable talking to their mothers about most things.

"I can tell her practically anything" (Miriam, p. 16).

"I just talk to her about anything" (Ruth, p. 16).

Miriam likened her conversations with her mother with those of close peer relationships in their intimacy. She and her mother talked about

> *"the first days at [place of study], the first guy that approached me at [place of study], it's like finally, no stupid little teeny boppers spotty boys from [boys' secondary school] (laugh) you know, decent guys. I was just telling Mum all about it, sitting down eating chocolate chip cookies and talking about it"* (p. 16).

Other girls also discussed personal issues with their mothers and appreciated being listened to and taken seriously,

> *"Like I was just... oh recently... just talked to her about Dad 'cos he was really being annoying with, I don't know, money or something. She's quite understanding with that, lets me just talk about it, rather than get all angry"* (Ruth, p. 16)

even when initially they had not been willing to tell their mother about these issues,

> *"We still have an open relationship... We can still talk about sexual things and stuff like that, like Mum knew when I lost my virginity, I don't know how the hell she knew (laugh). [Interviewer: You didn't tell her obviously! (laugh)] No! (laugh) But she came home one day and she goes 'Did it hurt?' I went 'I beg your pardon?' She goes 'Did it hurt?' and I said 'Well not really' and then we just got into this massive long conversation... [....] So, but we can still talk about things like that, like if I've got any concerns or anything"* (Jane, p. 24).

Kate also told her mother about her sex life, but only to avoid getting in trouble later,

> *"Like if I come home with like hickies on my neck, 'Who are they from?' I tell her. And she just likes to know... if like I've got a boyfriend, tell her who, and oh don't want to go with them any more, tell her (laugh) 'They're boring.' If I'm sleeping with them, you know those sorts of things. [Interviewer: [....] So you're quite happy talking about it, that sort of stuff, with her?] Yeah. 'Cos otherwise she just finds out and gets angry. 'Cos I didn't tell her"* (p. 18).

This was also the reason Kate has had to be more honest with her mother about what she is doing in general. She has realised if she tells the truth, her mother lets her go anyway and she does not have to face the consequences of being 'caught out.'

"I've learned like not to lie about where I'm going and just tell her where I'm going now. Like I used to say 'I'm going to stay at my friend's place in [town]' but I'd always get caught out 'cos I'd be going to [city] to stay at one of my brother's mate's place or something like that. Told her like about a weekend ago I wanted to stay at my mate's boyfriend's place, I just told her that and she lets me go. [....] It's better telling the truth" (pp. 17-18).

Kate insists that she does not feel forced to tell her mother everything however, and says she does keep some things to herself. *"Oh I don't have to, I mean some things I don't tell her, but yeah usually I tell her most things"* (p. 18). It seemed however that Kate only told her mother enough so she wouldn't get caught out, and it is highly likely that she did keep some things to herself.

There have been changes in communication in these relationships. Karlene and Kate said they actually talk to their mothers more now, in adolescence, than they did in childhood.

"like I can talk to her now and I talk to her quite a lot, and we just sit" (Karlene, p. 32).

"[I] get on better with Mum. 'Cos I don't know, now that she's only got to like sort of, focus on one child, in a way, we can just talk more and [brother]'s not around to butt in" (Kate, p. 18).

Michelle, Claire and Ania perceived that they do not confide in their mother as much as they used to.

"the talking stuff has changed a bit, not as much as when I was younger" (Michelle, p. 14).

"I suppose I'm still pretty close to her, but yeah it's different now I'm older, definitely different. [Interviewer: How is it different?] ...it's hard to explain (laugh). Mum I mean I don't tell her as much any more" (Ania, p. 16).

"I don't tell Mum much like as in personal things" (Claire, p. 16).

"we don't talk as much, so she doesn't as much know what's going on in my life as I know what's going on in hers" (Michelle, pp. 16-17).

Michelle's 'stuff' includes experiences with boyfriends, *"I just got a new boyfriend and I didn't tell her about it, and she just figured it out for herself, I didn't want to go to her for some reason"* (p. 17).

Girls' reluctance to talk to their mothers was sometimes not related to their need to keep their private lives to themselves. Since her father's death Michelle has gradually stopped talking about him to avoid upsetting her mother (and herself),

> *"I don't talk... about Dad any more. ...we'd bring it up sometimes, like on anniversaries or something, but any other time if I've remembered something, I won't go to her 'cos it makes her sad as well and I don't like doing that. And it just brings up too many emotions sometimes... I just don't talk about all that emotional stuff any more. We've done that a lot around, since Dad died"*
> (p. 17).

Michelle was trying to protect her mother from pain, but not going to her when she was thinking about her father meant that she missed another chance to connect with her mother through sharing memories about her father.

The narratives in the current study support Apter's (1993) contention that for adolescent girls, a mother's company is valued through what she says. The daughters Apter spoke to usually felt they could talk to their mothers, considered them reassuring and supportive in conversations, and older adolescent girls praised her as an adviser. Daughters in Rich's (1990) study also said they felt close to their mothers particularly through talking and sharing.

Other New Zealand research also supports these findings. In her interviews with teenagers, Gray (1988) reported that they considered good communication to be most important in family relationships. "Teenagers who could talk easily to their parents, and be listened to, valued this facility enormously, while those who had difficulty were often angry and resentful" (1988, p. 10). Bryant and Johnson (1990) also found that New Zealand adolescent girls admired mothers who provided "a listening ear" (p. 95) when their daughters were in trouble or needed to make difficult decisions. Like some daughters in the current study, these girls often said they could talk to their mothers about anything (Bryant & Johnson, 1990). While some girls in the current study discussed very personal issues like boyfriends and sex with their mothers, other girls preferred to keep such private information to themselves and noticed a change in the level of intimacy in conversations with their mother since childhood.

In contrast to their interactions with their fathers, daughters in Youniss and Smollar's (1985) study described interactions with their mothers as intimate

exchanges. Daughters talked to their mothers about personal issues as well as other issues, unlike with their fathers. Apter (1993) noted a similar pattern, "Just as Mary and Louise went to their mother – and definitely not their father – to discuss a boyfriend or any query relating to their bodies, Emma and Elizabeth "saved things like that for Mum" and "talked to her a lot," either during their weekly visits or during telephone calls" (p. 181-182). Gray (1988) also found that teenagers talked more to mothers than to fathers, and sons talked and were talked to less than daughters. Teenage girls preferred to talk about personal issues and what their feelings were about these issues. Gray (1988) commented that these findings also reflected what happens in New Zealand; in this country, as in other Western societies, it is mothers who are mainly responsible for maintaining communication within families.

Youniss and Smollar (1985) noted that the intimacy between mothers and daughters usually remained predominantly asymmetrical because it was daughters who were sharing personal information or getting advice, not mothers. Apter (1990) also challenged the misconception that adolescents want to be treated as equals. They were not looking for the reciprocal conversations that characterised friendship, but rather wanted these one-sided discussions, "a relationship of confidence and response" (1990, p. 101). This appeared to be the case for the girls in the current study, with the exception of Michelle and Karlene, who listened to their mother's problems and offered help or advice.

"I can't talk to her" – Barriers to communication and closeness

There were several things that prevented open communication and greater closeness and connection between mothers and daughters. Most of these barriers related to the way mothers and daughters talked to each other. Sometimes mothers were not available to talk to at all, because they were not at home,

> *"she takes [brother] to counselling and stuff like that, and when she's doing stuff like that I hardly see her"* (Jane, p. 21)

> *"it seemed like every time I had something to say she was never there, but when she was I didn't have things to say"* (Jane, p. 23)

or were at home but not able to have a meaningful discussion,

> *"[Interviewer: Have you ever had any times that you wanted to talk to her about something and she wasn't...?] Oh when she's gone to the pub and come home drunk. And I'd want to talk to her"* (Kate, p. 20)

or were not willing to have a discussion at all,

> *"I think we've kind of sorted out the only thing that really bugged me, and it was, it was the arguments, the arguing. [....] Because she used to sulk. I mean this in the nicest possible way but (laugh) if we'd argue, then she wouldn't speak to me, for a few days. [....] And I found this really really difficult. But now we talk more, because she knows that it really bugs me, because I can't talk to her"* (Ania, p. 21).

Sometimes girls found it frustrating talking to their mothers because they felt their mothers were not listening to them, or letting them express their point of view,

> *"Oh just sometimes she'll... she zones out a lot, she'll be reading and you'll go 'Mum' and you'll tell her a whole story and she wasn't listening at all. Yeah, but you know, she doesn't sort of deliberately annoy you, she just... sort of is concentrating"* (Nicky, p. 20).

> *"the way she talks about things makes you feel, makes me feel just weird talking about it with her, just like she thinks that if she says something, it's her word final. Like I can't argue... or talk back to her about my feelings about it, it's like she wants her input in it and she has to have it, but I won't always let her have the final say in something, but I argue with her about anything"* (Michelle, p. 19).

Michelle didn't talk to her mother as much in adolescence because her mother compared Michelle's experiences to her own adolescence, which Michelle did not find helpful,

> *"now it's different than what it was when she was younger so, she doesn't know as much about how teenagers are growing up now. Like, you know, she knows the basics but, you know, 'Things are different than back then', she would always say (laugh)."*

> *"she'd just... returns back to her childhood, to try and link it up with mine, to try and split it up in her mind what's going on. [Interviewer: And you don't really like that or...?] Well, she always refers back to her life so, it's completely different, but I know she used to do that to try and sort out stuff, so*

I don't go to her much as often any more. She's just hard to talk to that way now" (p. 17).

Michelle also avoided talking about particular topics with her mother because she felt that she asked too many personal questions.

> *"I wouldn't tell her about my new boyfriend. I just didn't want to go through the same stuff over and over again. [Interviewer: What do you think she would have said if you'd told her?] Oh she would've been like... first of all she's like 'Oh, who's this and who's this, ra de ra,' but then, like she'll try and get personal about it... [Interviewer: What do you mean by 'get personal'? Try and get all the details?] Yeah (laugh). All the details"* (p. 17).

Relationships with other people also had an impact on closeness and communication between mothers and daughters,

> *"you'd try and talk to her about something personal and he'd [brother] like be right there, he'd hover everywhere"* (Kate, p. 15).

> *"I'm not as close with Mum as I was. ...because I've got my boyfriend, I seem to tell him more and more... see if I didn't have him I would tell Mum these things and I think we would be closer still if I didn't have him"* (Jane, p. 20).

Factors outside the mother-daughter relationship also made communication more difficult. For example, mother's employment,

> *"she works for [cleaning company], so she has to go round and clean their houses, and she has to come home and clean this house and then make tea... And then she's got to go out and visit people and be sociable and then she cuts people's hair, 'cos she's a hairdresser by trade, but she can't like work in the salons any more 'cos she hurt her hand. So she's always doing something. [Interviewer: And how does that affect your relationship with her do you think?] Oh like sometimes she's not there. 'Cos she gets busy she gets grumpy. Doesn't like being disturbed"* (Kate, p. 19)

and trouble in the family,

> *"my older brother has been in a lot of trouble. [....] And they're [parents] spending a lot of time with that and they get stressed and uptight and things and you can't have a civil conversation with them like that because they take things the wrong way and you get upset and angry and things like that"* (Jane, p. 14).

Rich (1990) also found that mother-daughter relationships were harmed by mothers not being responsive to what daughters were saying. As in the current study, some mothers were not physically present, did not seem to have time, or were distracted. Daughters in Rich's (1990) study did not talk with their mothers in order to protect their own views and themselves. Some found that voicing their ideas was ineffective, as Michelle experienced when her mother had to have the last word in arguments. However, many of the reasons given in the current study for lack of communication between daughters and mothers were related to factors outside the relationship, rather than difficulties within it.

Michelle's reluctance to talk to her mother because of her comparison of Michelle's experiences with her own adolescence illustrates Apter's (1990) concept of permeability – the blurring of boundaries between mother and daughter. According to Apter, adolescents dislike permeability because it goes against their current aim of self-definition. Daughters in Apter's (1990) study also expressed impatience with the idea that their mother had once been an adolescent, with the same experiences and feelings as they had. "The mother's belief that she knows and understands seems to take the self from her, and away from her own control" (Apter, 1990, p. 123). To avoid such comparison, Apter argues, daughters may opt for counteridentification – just as Michelle has done in trying to prove how unlike or opposite she is to her mother. As Apter points out however, "identification with the mother remains the force behind her determination, her opposite identity. Even as she tries to prove she is 'completely different' she lives with her mother as a model" (1990, p. 107).

"Closer and closer" – Changes in intimacy and mutuality

Another significant change found in many of these mother-daughter relationships was how close their daughters felt to their mothers in adolescence. Four girls said they actually felt closer to their mothers now than they did in childhood,

> *"But Mum and I just kept getting closer and closer, I mean we have some wicked arguments as well, and I've threatened to move out several times, because I can now! But I don't really want to"* (Miriam, p. 14).

> *"Me and Mum have got a lot closer"* (Karlene, p. 32).

> *"it's been better this year than it has been for the last few years so that's good that we've grown more close"* (Ania, p. 22).

Ruth felt closer not only to her mother in adolescence, but to her whole family. *"We came together again, as much as one can. Yeah 'cos for a while there we were all kind of angry and bitter towards each other but now we're really good. [Interviewer: So you've got closer?] Yeah, much closer"* (p. 13). However, Ruth could see no other changes in her relationship with her parents since childhood, even when specifically asked.

Related to this greater connection and feeling of closeness was a movement towards a more mutual relationship, particularly evident in four girls' narratives. These relationships were similar to peer friendships in the way problems were solved, with an emphasis on communication rather than discipline;

> *"now it's turning into a more you know, friendly, if you know what I mean, and not mother-daughter. 'Cos the original mother-daughter thing is more disciplinary than friendship but now it's more, probably more friendship than disciplinary. And if we've got problems then they're easier to resolve now. ...because there's just better communication going on and everything"* (Ania, p. 22)

and in daughters and mothers choosing to confide in and spend time with each other.

> *"most of the time when I spend time with her it's just like being with a mate, it's like you can tell them stuff if you want to, they'll tell you stuff if they want to, there's no pressure there, you can spend time together if you want, you don't have to but it's not forced, you don't have to do anything, it's... because you want to, you want to spend time"* (Karlene, p. 38).

However there were differences between the relationships daughters had with their mothers and the relationships they had with their peers. Karlene explained it in terms of authority,

> *"It's different in the fact that we're friends but at the same time she does have that tiny bit of authority... I mean she has the ability to say "No you can't do this", my friends can't do that. And so there is that respect thing, where I've got to respect her as more than a friend as well, but most of the time we're just on equal, almost"* (p. 38).

Karlene also made it clear that her relationship with her mother could not replace the relationship she had with her friends, *"it's just like being with some friends, even*

though it's not the same as being with my friends which is why I do more with my friends" (p. 38).

Although not all the girls felt closer to their mothers in adolescence, there was only one who perceived a definite separation from her mother. Michelle felt she and her mother had grown apart,

> *"we've separated heaps, after like I grew up and got my own life, away from the family as much as it used to be. So we've like both gotten older, grown up more, so we're just being our own people, being independent from each other"* (p. 19).

One reason for this was that Michelle did not spend as much time with her mother as she used to. However she still returned home regularly to see her mother and maintain some connection with her, even if they did not have a very close relationship,

> *"I'm with my friends a lot now, I'm not usually at home, like I've barely been at home since this holidays started so I haven't seen her much, um... but like I always come home and do the family thing, and like, yeah, talk to her about general stuff, help her out with any problems she's got, and then go back out again, just the cycle goes round again and again"* (p. 18).

Even though Michelle admitted that she spent less time with her mother and did not feel as close to her as some of the other daughters in this study, she regretted this and wished she and her mother knew each other better.

The findings in the current study support Rich's (1990) suggestion that the move toward independence can enhance connection within the mother-daughter relationship during adolescence. Like Ania and Karlene in particular, the daughters in Rich's study described a movement towards interdependence with their mothers; for many of them, change and maturation strengthened, rather than weakened, their relationship.

Youniss and Smollar (1985) assert that in Western society today, there is movement towards peer-like mutuality or interdependence in parent-child relationships. They point out that this process is gradual and in most cases continues into adulthood; it is not usually accomplished during adolescence. However, as Rich (1990) cautions, there are limits in this process: total independence may be associated

with a lack of connection. The girls who appear, or have portrayed themselves as most independent from their mothers have similar reasons to Rich's participants for not being as close to their mothers: poor communication, major differences between them, lack of consistent care from their mothers. Yet, like Michelle, even girls who reported weak connections wanted to feel closer to their mother (Rich, 1990).

"I realise how lovely my Mum is"

Finally, there was a feeling of appreciation and gratitude for mothers throughout the interviews in this study. All the girls could see positive aspects of their relationship with their mother, and appreciated her availability for support. Nicky did not specifically say she was grateful for all this support, but she was happy that it was there. Three girls directly expressed their gratitude for what their mother had done for them. Robin came to realise this by comparing her relationship with her mother with those of her peers:

> *"[My friends] think she's real nice. You know, she's always there for me, she always helps me, and [they say] 'You're lucky to have a Mum like that,' you know (laugh)"* (p. 28)

> *"some of their parents are busy and they never see their... some of them are lawyers, just hate it. I think I've got the best part of the... bargain, yeah"* (p. 28)

and Miriam compared it to the relationship she had with her father,

> *"I'm really aware of like people who are in the situation that I was in with my Dad thumping me and stuff. Like friends who've got – in that situation or little brothers and stuff who are like that. So I guess it's made me a lot more aware... and I realise how lovely my Mum is (laugh)"* (p. 10).

Kate appreciated the freedom her mother gave her to do the things she wanted,

> *"makes you know, that I've got, I can basically do what I want within reason... instead of getting caught out for something. [....] I suppose my freedom that I've got. That I'm allowed out and can smoke"* (p. 22).

Ania was grateful for her mother's constant support and generosity,

> *"she's so generous with her time. I mean sometimes I can be ungrateful (laugh). But you know, she would never let me down because yeah she's just really giving. Because I mean with our relationship... sometimes she doesn't*

seem to take much at all, because sometimes I can't give her much. But she's never been wanting, you know been found wanting with giving. ...you know she's never let me down yet and I don't think she will, 'cos she can't (laugh). ...you know, it's just not her. ...it's just that I feel she's you know given me everything she can and given everything she can to this relationship. I mean I think that's why we turned out quite well, because she's put so much into us" (p. 20).

Because she felt that she did not give as much back to their relationship as her mother had, Ania felt obligated to repay her mother (and her father) for their support,

"I still do it now, I feel if my parents give me something, ...it's more now if they pay for something or if they do something for me, then I feel like I'll have to do well in that thing to repay them, or do something else for them" (pp. 4-5).

Overall, the girls appeared grateful for the stability and support of family in general, and their mothers in particular.

"It's good to have a family, you need them no matter what and you couldn't live without them, for bad and good reasons. You can't live without them, ...families like...it's life, you need them there with you throughout everything, and they always know you better than anybody else" (Michelle, p. 15).

"Well whatever happens, you know whatever happens in my life, Mum's still there. You know whatever happens with my friends, or whatever happens with my boyfriend or whatever, Mum's still there (laugh). And yeah it feels kind of untouchable, because nothing's changed it over all these years. But I mean I should hope that that's still going to happen in years to come. Because it's something that hasn't changed with, no matter what's happened in my life. But it's still there, and is stability, because it's... very constant, and it doesn't feel like anything could touch it, basically. And so yeah... she's my rock" (Ania, p. 19).

All the girls said they knew their mother was 'there' for them, even though they might not currently turn to their mother for support. There were varying degrees of utilisation of support and feelings of closeness in these interviews, from Nicky and Claire's unwillingness to confide in their mother to Miriam and Karlene's enjoyment of the intimacy and comfort within their relationships with their mothers:

"just that I can talk to her, 'cos some of my friends like won't talk to their mums and stuff. And I know that, I mean, you know like I never do, but if I really wanted to I could, I suppose" (Nicky, p. 21).

"just little things she does is... you just know, sort of thing, not doing the big caring thing. ...I don't tell Mum much like as in personal things, but if I need help I know she's there" (Claire, p. 16).

"Well I can probably always rely on her, if I ever need anything then... she'll get it for me or talk to me about it, whatever. She's very understanding at times, so that's really good" (Ruth, p. 18).

"I know that Mum will always be there for me, and I'm happy about that... I know that she'll always be there for me and if I ever need something, she'll be there straight away, so... Yeah, that's the main thing I'm happy about" (Jane, p. 26).

"she's like the best mummy in the world, she's always there for me" (Miriam, p. 18).

"I know that Mum and I now are like, I'd probably call her my best friend. We're just incredibly close. Like I call her Chicky, she calls me Ducky. The other day we were in town shopping and I don't know if you can see them, I'll grab them. We went into a toy store and bought Chicky and Ducky" [Miriam holds up two stuffed toys, a chicken and a duck] (Miriam, p. 14).

"Yeah, it's just everything, and like she'll just give me hugs and just stuff like that, and spend time together and it's real cool" (Karlene, p. 35).

The findings of this study are in line with Youniss and Smollar's (1985) conclusion that compared to fathers, "the typical actions of mothers would seem to work for cohesion and connectedness. Both sons and daughters express a deep debt to their mothers" (p. 78). Girls in Bryant and Johnson's (1990) study appreciated similar attributes in their mothers as the participants in the current study: "They [mothers] are kind, caring, generous and loving. They are understanding and consider their daughters' feelings" (p. 96). Admired mothers in this study also "do the best for their families" (1990, p. 96), similar to Ania's gratitude for the time and effort she perceived her mother had spent on her since childhood.

Youniss and Smollar (1985) elaborate further on the closeness that adolescents in their study felt toward their mothers. Youniss and Smollar identified that this unambiguous loyalty included gratitude, respect, awareness of the mother's role, and a desire to 'repay' this debt through reciprocal means. Ania's narrative most clearly illustrated this feeling of reciprocal debt in the way she tried to give something back to her parents to thank them for their support. Youniss and Smollar (1985) argue that these feelings of gratitude and reciprocal debt have implications for theories of adolescence: "Because this sense of debt is coupled with ongoing communications on a person-to-person basis, one can moderate the excessive meaning of autonomy in some psychological theories" (p. 86). This argument is discussed in relation to the current study in Chapter 5 (Discussion).

The girls' perceptions of closeness in their relationship with their mother in the current study support other authors' definitions of closeness in this relationship. The girls' comments seem to complement Apter's (1990) observation, taken from the mother's point of view: "'Closeness' does not mean, for these mothers, knowing everything about the daughter or being brought in to every decision, but believing that the daughter sees her as available" (p. 135). Daughters in the current study perceived closeness and connection with their mother, even though they did not share everything with her and were not always relying on her for support. As Rich (1990) also found, daughters were simply grateful that they could depend on their mother for support, even though they might not currently need that support. From the daughters' point of view, this seemed to be the most important aspect of these mother-daughter relationships.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study illustrate both the special uniqueness of each mother-daughter relationship and the similarities across these relationships. The themes of agency found within the narratives in the current study were related to disagreements between daughters and mothers, particularly associated with mothers' protectiveness, limitations to daughters' freedom, responsibility, and relationships with other family members. This theme included how girls resolved and perceived these disagreements. Other agentic themes were increased trust and respect in mother-daughter

relationships, and daughters' growing ability to perceive their mother as a person and understand her point of view.

The themes of communion found within the narratives in the current study included mothers and daughters spending time with each other, mothers supporting their daughters at several levels and daughters reciprocating, comparison of mother- and father-daughter relationships, the degree of intimacy in conversation and how this has changed since childhood, barriers to communication between mothers and daughters, changes in daughters' perception of closeness in their relationship, and daughters' appreciation and gratitude for all their mothers have done, and still do, for them.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

As this study used a social constructionist approach, it set out to examine the meanings within participants' perceptions of their relationships with their mothers. This approach assumed that the personal narratives told by the daughters in this study would illustrate the discourses inherent within society. In particular, how participants perceived their relationships with their mothers (and other family members) was considered as evidence to suggest which of the conflicting discourses of adolescence and the parent-adolescent relationship they subscribe to: the recent academic discourse (which emphasises that strong bonds between parents and adolescents continue to be important, particularly between mothers and daughters) or the popular culture discourse (which emphasises separation from and conflict with parents in adolescence, particularly between mothers and daughters). The central research objective was to investigate which of these discourses are found in adolescent daughters' descriptions of their relationships with their mothers and was presented as the first research question (see Chapter 2). However, in this chapter the other research questions posed in this study will be addressed first, as these questions form the evidence to support the answer to this central research objective.

These research questions were as follows: 1. The mother-daughter relationship during adolescence has often been associated with greater conflict than other dyads, particularly during early and mid-adolescence. Do participants' narratives support this contention? 2. How do these girls perceive their relationship with their mother has changed since childhood? Is the mother-daughter relationship being renegotiated/transformed in the participants' narratives? Is there evidence of a movement towards a more mutual relationship? 3. Are these girls developing a new definition of themselves (agency)? Are they retaining connection and/or closeness with their mothers at the same time (communion)? In what ways are these themes expressed in their narratives? 4. How do the following contexts influence these participants' perceptions of their relationship with their mother in adolescence: their

relationship with their mother in childhood, significant events in their lives, and their relationship with their father in childhood and adolescence? 5. How does this New Zealand data compare to overseas research findings, particularly other studies of mother-daughter relationships during adolescence? Following discussion of the answers to these questions, the limitations and strengths of this study are outlined, along with suggestions for further research.

CONFLICT IN MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS

When this research project was originally conceived, the reason for choosing participants aged between 15 and 17 years of age was to investigate the notion that the most change and conflict between mothers and daughters occurred during this period of adolescence. In a small study of adult women's perceptions of their past and present relationship with their mother undertaken by this researcher prior to the current study, mid-adolescence (specifically, between the ages of 15 and 17) was remembered as being the most difficult and conflicted phase of this relationship. Other research studies have also found that the most conflict and negative feelings between mothers and daughters occurred during mid-adolescence (Smetana, 1991; Kroger, 1982, 1985). However, the perceptions of continuing connection and closeness to mothers in the narratives of the girls in this study and the emphasis placed on disagreements between them do not support this contention. Conflict through disagreements did not dominate participants' perceptions of their relation-ship with their mother. There was a far greater emphasis on positive aspects of their relationship, what was valued and enjoyed, than on disagreements in these daughters' narratives. In fact, some daughters even felt they were closer to their mother now, at age 15 to 17, than they were in their childhood or early adolescence. These findings mirror Apter's (1990) discovery that girls in mid-adolescence seemed more attached to their mothers than girls in early adolescence:

> Here I was, speaking to girls in mid-adolescence, which is a time that is generally thought to be characteristic of the greatest conflict between parent and child, and most girls said the person they felt closest to, the person they felt most loved by, the person who offered them the greatest support, was their mother (p. 86).

These findings also raise the possibility that it is during early adolescence, not mid-adolescence, that daughters feel less close to and experience more conflict with their mothers, as other studies have suggested (Holmbeck, 1996; Laursen et al., 1998; Pipher, 1996).

The lack of emphasis on conflict in daughters' narratives in this study compared to other studies of mother-daughter relationships in adolescence could be due to differences in the methodological approaches used. Overseas research on mother-daughter relationships during adolescence (for example, Apter, 1990 and Rich, 1990) may have had an expectation that conflict and differences of opinion would be a significant theme in this dyad. This may have influenced the research questions that they asked their participants, although without this information being provided within these sources, this is speculative. As discussed in Chapter 3 (Methodology), the research interview used in this study (AAI) encouraged interviewees to describe their relationship with their mother in childhood and adolescence using their own choice of adjectives (see Appendix 5). The incidence of arguments between mothers and daughters was not directly addressed until the second set of interview questions, designed by the researcher, that followed the AAI (see Appendix 6). Thus it is significant that the daughters in this study did not spontaneously describe their relationship with their mother as being mainly characterised by conflict and arguments during the AAI, in which they had complete choice over how they described their relationship.

CHANGE, RENEGOTIATION AND MUTUALITY

Participants in the current study identified several distinct changes in their relationship with their mother that have occurred since their childhood. These changes were only those perceived by participants themselves, in response to a direct question in the AAI which asked them to do so (see Appendix 5). Thus this study was in effect a 'snapshot' of adolescent daughters' lives and perceptions of their relationships, rather than observation of change within mother-daughter relationships over a period of time. In this aspect, this study differs from Rich's (1990) longitudinal approach, in which she interviewed adolescent girls every year for three years in order to identify changes in how they perceived their relationship with their mother. The current study also went beyond Rich's study in that it interpreted

changes in mother-daughter relationships as evidence of the process of renegotiation /transformation outlined in more recent theories of adolescent development. These theories have emphasised continuing connection between parents and their adolescent children, within which the relationship is transformed, from one-sided parental authority to greater mutuality.

One aspect of Rich's study that was similar to this one was a change in the way in which daughters' perceived their mothers. Rich found that her participants' interview transcripts were dominated by complaints about mothers' mistakes and examples of times when they were wrong. Rich called this theme "realistic perceptions of mothers" (1990, p. 264) and interpreted daughters' ability to see their mothers as imperfect as part of the process of differentiation – daughters identifying differences between themselves and their mothers and coming to voice their own viewpoints in the relationship. Rich argues that this change in perception enables daughters to make new connections with their mothers in a more symmetrical and mutual relationship.

What Rich's study did not elaborate upon was the developmental impetus behind this change, and the possibility that not all girls may have the ability to hold 'realistic' perceptions of their mothers. It has been suggested that the renegotiation of the relationship between mother and daughter in adolescence from one-sided dependence to greater symmetry and mutuality is dependent on the adolescent's cognitive maturation (Apter, 1990). The move to formal operational thinking enables the young person to consider relationships in the abstract. This in turn allows them to recognise deficiencies in their relationship with their parents, but also to consider these relationships from their parents' perspective (Allen & Land, 1999). If the adolescent daughter achieves formal operational thinking, she is able to see her mother as a complex, independent person, rather than only understanding her mother in terms of her own needs and interests (Apter, 1990). Unlike Rich's study, the findings of this research indicated that there were differences in daughters' perceptions of their mothers: some girls seemed to have achieved this first level, while others' thinking was still of the latter view.

Of the ten participants, five girls (Nicky, Robin, Kate, Claire and Ruth) did not yet seem able to perceive situations from their mother's point of view, or see their mothers separately from their own concerns. Within their narratives, mothers were

perceived to be fulfilling a social role only, rather than being seen as people with their own interests and needs. The girls in this group emphasised their mother's role as their provider, and understood her behaviour only in terms of their own achievements or needs, what they got out of the relationship. They became irritated when their mother's behaviour was not supporting their own requirements. These girls seemed reluctant to accept anything less than what they considered to be the ideal relationship.

In contrast, there was evidence in Michelle, Karlene, Jane and Ania's narratives that these girls had the ability to perceive their mothers as people, who had their own interests and problems, and who made mistakes. Unlike the previous group, these girls' narratives were not primarily characterised by one-sided support from mothers to daughters. Role-reversal between mother and daughter was evident in Michelle and Karlene's stories, as both these girls perceived that their mothers were having difficulties with which they needed help. Other girls could also acknowledge mothers' inadequacies without blaming them for not meeting their own needs. Girls in this group also showed that they were beginning to understand situations from their mother's point of view.

Another indication of transformation occurring in mother-daughter relationships in this study was daughters' perceptions of greater trust by mothers, particularly regarding activities outside the home. Greater trust meant daughters had more freedom to do what they wanted when they went out, with fewer rules set down by their mothers. The girls had to prove they deserved to be trusted, however, by telling their mothers the truth and keeping themselves safe. By not betraying their mother's trust, daughters earned more freedom, which came with more responsibility. This theme illustrates that some daughters are beginning to negotiate boundaries with their mothers and discuss what is acceptable behaviour in their relationship. At the same time, this agentic theme of greater freedom and independence is balanced by the communal themes in this study, which emphasise daughters' reliance on and confidence of their mother's support and availability. These findings support Youniss and Smollar's (1985) assertion that transformation in parent-adolescent relationships is initiated by both parents and adolescents. Parents retain their authority at the same time as they give their teenagers more freedom. In turn, adolescents are able to go out on their own while still valuing their parents' guidance and advice.

Some daughters also perceived that there have been changes in how much they talked to their mothers. While Karlene and Kate said they actually talk to their mothers more now, in adolescence, than they did in childhood, Michelle, Claire and Ania perceived that they do not confide in their mother as much as they used to. The main reasons daughters did not talk as often or as openly to their mothers as they did in childhood were because mothers were not physically or emotionally available, or because they did not allow their daughters to express their point of view. Rather than indicating that daughters want to distance themselves from their mothers, these reasons suggest that daughters in this study wanted to continue talking to their mothers, and were frustrated when they were not able to.

The decrease in personal disclosure in some girls' narratives is tempered by the perception of continuing or greater closeness to mothers in adolescence. In this most surprising theme of change, four girls said they actually felt closer to their mothers now than they did in childhood. Parental relationships for these girls, and indeed for all the girls in this study, have not been discarded but rather transformed. As Youniss and Smollar (1985) found, this transformation often brings adolescents and their parents closer. Five other girls perceived that the level of closeness in their relation-ship with their mother, whether they were quite close or not, had not changed since childhood. Out of ten participants, there was only one who perceived a definite separation from her mother. Even this daughter felt regret at the lack of closeness between herself and her mother and expressed a desire for them to know each other better. These findings are in line with many other studies of the mother-daughter bond that have illustrated that closeness between mothers and daughters is often maintained during adolescence (Apter, 1990; Konopka, 1976; Newman, 1989; Paterson, 1993), and that distance in this relationship is associated with daughters' regret and unhappiness (Konopka, 1976; Rich, 1990).

Like Rich's study, this research project also investigated how conflict between mothers and daughters was resolved. However, this study went further in that the way in which disagreements were resolved was interpreted as evidence of the process of renegotiation in the relationship between mothers and daughters in adolescence. When daughters did not persist in expressing their point of view when it conflicted with their mothers', there was little opportunity for change or compromise. This was the case in most of the mother-daughter relationships in the current study. In two

girls' narratives, however, there was some evidence of the beginnings of more mutual discussion and negotiation. These girls acknowledged their mother's continued authority, but appeared more confident in expressing their own viewpoint and understanding that of their mother's. It has been argued that resolving conflicts is important in the development of mutuality between mother and daughter, (defined as the mutual expression of feelings and perceptions and the ability to influence each other) (Batgos & Leadbeater, 1994). However, the findings of the current study suggest that most of these mid-adolescent daughters have not yet begun to renegotiate their relationship in this way.

Youniss and Smollar (1985) have argued that the process of renegotiation in parent-adolescent relationships results in a more symmetric and mutual relationship, at least with mothers. Such transformations show that adolescents are starting to understand the interdependence between family members (Youniss, 1983; Youniss & Ketterlinus, 1987; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). The movement towards such understanding and mutuality between mother and daughter varied widely in the participants' narratives in the current study. Five of these narratives were characterised by one-sided support given to daughters by their mothers. This support mainly involved being physically present, either at home or to watch daughters' activities, and giving advice, along with practical and financial assistance. Of this group, only Robin mentioned reciprocating her mother's support by helping her out.

In contrast to this group, the other five girls' narratives contained many examples of reciprocal support between mothers and daughters. The motivation for reciprocating their mothers' support for these girls was often to repay their mothers for all the support they had given them throughout their lives, or through concern for their mothers' emotional or physical wellbeing. In two cases, there appeared to be some role-reversal between mother and daughter, caused by significant events in the family. There was evidence of more mutuality in this group of relationships, with more negotiation and discussion between mother and daughter, rather than parental dictation of rules and expectations. Karlene and Ania likened their relationships with their mothers to those between peers, in which problems were more often solved through discussion, rather than what they perceived to be the stereotypical mother-daughter relationship, in which there was parental dictation of authority and punishment of transgressions. These relationships were also perceived to be similar

to peer friendships in that mothers and daughters chose to spend time together and talk about personal issues. However, mothers still retained authority over their daughters if necessary and daughters chose to share particular activities with their friends.

AGENTIC AND COMMUNAL THEMES

The themes identified in the narratives of the adolescent girls interviewed in this research project indicate that they are beginning to develop a new definition of themselves, yet are also retaining connections and varying degrees of closeness with their mothers. These two main themes were named 'agency' and 'communion' respectively, borrowing from McAdams' (1993) work, which emphasises both these ideologies in people's life stories. Agentic themes found in this study were: disagreements between daughters and mothers, including what they were about (mothers' overprotectiveness, limitations to daughters' freedom, responsibility, and relationships with other family members), how they were resolved and how daughters perceived these disagreements, increased trust and respect in mother-daughter relationships, and changes in (some) daughters perceptions of their mother – from provider to person. Communal themes found in this study were: mothers and daughters spending time with each other, mothers supporting their daughters physically, practically, financially and emotionally, daughters providing reciprocal support, the differences and interdependence of mother- and father-daughter relationships, changes in the degree of intimacy in conversation between mothers and daughters, barriers to communication between mothers and daughters, changes in daughters' perception of closeness in their relationship, and daughters' appreciation and gratitude for their mothers.

Rich's (1990) study also contained the twin themes of self-development and continuing connection within daughters' perceptions of mother-daughter relationships. Instead of agency, Rich used the interrelated themes of differentiation (defined as daughters identifying differences and distinct viewpoints between themselves and their mothers) and independence (defined as daughters making their own choices and taking action on their own). The themes of agency in this study differed from Rich's focus on differentiation – daughters in this study did not seem preoccupied with searching for ways in which they were different from their mothers. Instead, the

themes of agency were more similar to Rich's definition of independence. The girls in this study were more concerned with developing a new sense of themselves as someone who could be trusted, who was responsible and could make decisions on their own and accept the consequences. Friction between mothers and daughters in this study was not caused by daughters wanting to express their distinct voices, but because they wanted their mothers to perceive them as capable of taking care of their own safety, as responsible, and able to be relied upon to do so. Although they complained about their mothers' protectiveness, girls also understood the reasons behind it, and all placed it within a context of their mothers' concern for their wellbeing.

Yet, like the girls in Rich's study, daughters in this study continued to strongly value their mothers' support and continued to depend on her in many ways. As discussed in the previous chapter, the word participants in this study most frequently used to describe their relationship with their mother was *there*. Throughout the ten interview transcripts, this word was said 87 times in total, and was the basis of almost all the communal themes found in this study. Mostly girls valued their mother being there for them, although there were also examples of reciprocal support being given to mothers by daughters. This finding corresponds closely with Rich's theme of 'attachment', in which her participants also appreciated their mothers 'being there' for them. While Rich did find that daughters in her study provided reciprocal support to their mothers, the current study went further in its identification of a movement between daughters just receiving support from mothers and daughters receiving *and* reciprocating this support. This shift corresponded with a change in daughters' perceptions of their mothers, from seeing them just in terms of their own needs to beginning to perceive them as people with their own needs and imperfections (see "Change, Renegotiation and Mutuality" section earlier in this chapter).

The communal themes identified here may also be interpreted in terms of attachment, but it is attachment theory's definition of this term that is used here, which goes beyond Rich's label. The findings of the current study are consistent with attachment theory, which holds that relationships with parents are beneficial because they provide the child with a secure base from which they can explore the world. Attachment fulfils an ethological and evolutionary need for protection and is expressed in behaviour designed to maintain closeness and accessibility of

attachment figures (Bowlby, 1969; 1988). Attachment theory argues that the need for a secure base also extends into adolescence and adulthood, and it is just as important for exploration and self-development as it was in childhood (Bowlby, 1979; Josselson, 1992). Attachment after childhood changes from seeking physical proximity for protection to psychological proximity for emotional wellbeing. Consistent with these aspects of attachment theory, the findings of the current study suggest that these girls most valued the availability, accessibility and responsiveness of their mother.

Mothers 'being there' for their daughters did not necessarily mean that their daughters were always dependent upon their support, however. Daughters in the current study perceived closeness and connection with their mother, even though they did not share everything with her and were not always relying on her for support. They were simply grateful that they could depend on their mother for support, even though they might not currently need that support. From the daughters' point of view, this seemed to be the most important aspect of these mother-daughter relationships.

This seems to be consistent with Bowlby's (1979) concept of a secure base, which involves the behavioural systems of attachment and exploration. Children and adolescents are more likely to explore their environment (both physically and psychologically) when they are confident that their parents are available and will respond if called upon. Thus, as girls in the current study demonstrate, adolescents may be secure in the knowledge that their parents will be available and supportive if needed but may not utilise this support all the time.

Attachment relationships also result in the formation of 'internal working models', mental representations of self and others that the child develops through early experiences with attachment figures (Bowlby, 1969). Attachment theory states that when the attachment figure has been consistently available and supportive, the child will construct an internal model of self as able to cope and worthy of help, and an internal model of others as trustworthy and responsive. The girls in this study may have constructed a consistent internal working model of their mothers as attachment figures based on experiences since their early childhood. These girls seemed to expect that their mothers will be there and will be able to offer appropriate support. Thus, an internal working model of their mother as someone they can turn to for support and comfort may have been built up over time. This conception of

attachment seems to better capture the nature of the participants' relationship with their mothers than using this term to mean 'closeness' or 'dependency' as in Rich's (1990) study.

CONTEXTS INFLUENCING PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS

Daughters' relationship with their mother in childhood

As a result of the influence of the psychoanalytic perspective of adolescence, which emphasises discontinuity between preadolescent and adolescent relationships with parents, there have been few studies that have taken into account the nature of the relationships young people have had with their parents before they reach adolescence (Steinberg, 1990). In particular, none of the mother-daughter studies outlined in Chapter 2 (see "Similar Research Studies" section, pp. 46-52) have included information about daughters' childhood relationship with their mother as a historical backdrop to their investigation of this relationship during adolescence. One of the most useful contributions of a narrative approach in research is the importance given to the context within which research participants' stories are told. This contrasts with other psychological research which often consists of participants' responses to standardised interview questions, without taking into account the rest of their lives, their stories as wholes (Mishler, 1986b).

As discussed in Chapter 3 (Methodology), the interview used in this study was chosen because it encouraged participants to construct narratives about their lives and their relationships with significant others. This interview, the AAI, allowed participants to describe their childhood experiences and relationships with both parents, which provided the context in which to interpret their current perceptions of their relationship with their mother, as well as illustrating how significant events that happened in childhood can influence these current perceptions. Therefore, this study allowed some insight into how characteristics of and events in relationships with mothers in childhood affect participants' present perceptions of their relationship with their mother. The findings of this study illustrate that the depth and complexity of mother-daughter relationships in adolescence cannot be appreciated without (ideally) also studying what this relationship was like in childhood. There were many examples in the participants' narratives of how their unique history with their mother has coloured their descriptions of their current relationship.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, most girls in this study perceived that there had been changes in their relationship with their mother since they were children. These changes can only be understood as part of the story of the mother-daughter relationship as a whole, from childhood to the present. As well as change, there was also remarkable continuity and similarity between childhood and adolescence in these girls' narratives. The unique relational themes within individual narratives had often been established since childhood and were very important in understanding daughters' adolescent relationship with their mother (and father). There was only one narrative in which there was a marked discontinuity between the childhood and adolescent mother-daughter relationship, with the current relationship being perceived as much more positive than it had been in childhood.

Significant events in participants' lives

As a narrative study, this research project investigated mother-daughter relationships within the larger context of participants' stories of their lives to date. As these individual narratives were analysed, it became clear that some girls had experienced significant events in their lives that had had an impact on their current perceptions of their relationship with their mother (and father). These contextual features, significant life events, in girls' stories, appear to have caused some daughters to think about the nature of their relationship with their mother in greater depth, compared with other girls in this study. In particular, Michelle, Jane, Miriam and Karlene show signs of having done this, whereas Nicky, Robin, Kate, Claire and Ruth, seemed to take their mothers for granted. The significant life events for the first group of girls included the death of a father (Michelle), abusive fathers (Miriam and Karlene), a mother's nervous breakdown (Karlene) and brothers with behavioural problems (Jane).

The differences between these two groups of girls could also be due to cognitive maturation. The formal operations stage of cognitive development also allows questioning of and reflection on reality and important issues in life (Bird & Drewery, 2000; McAdams, 1993). Young people at this level of cognitive maturation may begin to think about their close relationships with others in some depth, reevaluating past characteristics of these relationships and contrasting these memories with present perceptions and future possibilities (Allen & Land, 1999). There are signs of

this kind of reflection beginning in several girls' narratives in the current study, in comparison to those of other participants.

Out of ten participants, five (Nicky, Robin, Kate, Claire and Ruth) did not appear to have reached this level of thinking. There seemed to be little reflection on relationships with mothers in these narratives, compared with the individual narratives of the other five participants. Although there was an appreciation of what their mother did for them, these girls seemed to take their mother's support and presence for granted. The manner in which these girls told their story also illustrates their lack of detailed thought about the relationship. With the exception of Nicky, these narratives were the shortest of all the interviews undertaken. They were characterised by very brief answers to interview questions and lack of elaboration on these responses, as well as few biographical memories to illustrate their descriptions of relationships. As a result, the relationships these girls portrayed seemed rather superficial.

In contrast, the other five participants (Michelle, Jane, Miriam, Karlene and Ania) were generally more articulate in telling their stories, providing detailed memories to support each adjective they chose to describe their relationship with their mother. These girls seemed more open to sharing personal experiences and were more emotionally expressive in their telling. The impression given was that this group of girls had given more thought to their close relationships, their role in them and how they had changed since childhood. As mentioned above, this more detailed examination may have been prompted by significant events in girls' lives, outside of these relationships.

The father-daughter relationship in childhood and adolescence

Research on the parent-adolescent relationship have tended to study this bond in isolation, without taking into account the wider context within which it is situated (Josselson, 1992; Youniss & Smollar, 1985), for example, the influence of other familial relationships. Although the current study also focused its investigation upon a single dyad, the mother-daughter relationship, the interview that was used (the AAI) also asked for descriptions of interviewees' childhood and current relationship with their father. This information showed that in fact, the father-daughter relationship greatly influenced daughters' perception of their relationship with their mother, as well as highlighting the differences between these two relationships, both

in childhood and adolescence. Thus this study goes beyond other research on parent-adolescent relationships which have been limited to comparisons between mother- and father-daughter bonds (Apter, 1993; Gray, 1988; Paterson, 1993; Youniss & Smollar, 1985) rather than looking at the interdependence of these relationships.

Fathers' absence from the home had the most significant influence on daughters' perceptions of their relationship with their mother. Six of the girls said they felt closer to their mothers in adolescence because their fathers were not at home as much as their mothers; their fathers simply did not know them as well. Often this had been the case since childhood, as the parents of these girls fulfilled the traditional roles of working fathers and stay-at-home mothers. Because their father was more likely to be absent due to work outside the home, mothers participated in a greater number of girls' activities and were more available for support. Several girls felt more comfortable and able to be themselves with their mother because she had shared more experiences with them. These findings support the contention that each parent's relationship with their adolescent children are distinctive as a result of their history of interaction (Youniss, 1983). Many other studies have found that mothers, compared to fathers, have spent more time with their children by the time they reach adolescence, and have closer, more intimate relationships with them (Demo, 1991; Paterson, 1993; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Youniss & Ketterlinus, 1987). Like the adolescents in Paterson's (1993) study of attachment to parents, the girls in the current study appeared to feel closer to their mothers because they have consistently been more available to them than their fathers.

Negative experiences with fathers also affected girls' feelings towards their mothers. In two girls' narratives, their feelings of closeness with their mother appeared to be caused by their very strained relationship with their father. There were also girls who found fault with their mothers by comparing them to their fathers. For two participants, this led to them feeling closer to their fathers than their mothers in adolescence. The influence of the father-daughter relationship on perceptions of the mother-daughter relationship in the current study is consistent with the family systems perspective, which holds that the quality of one relationship influences and is influenced by other relationships within the family (Feldman & Gehring, 1988; Gjerde, 1986). These findings emphasise the importance of investigating the nature

of individual parent-adolescent relationships within the wider context of the family (Gjerde, 1986; Lapsley et al., 1990).

COMPARISON TO SIMILAR STUDIES

As well as making a contribution to the growing number of studies that are beginning to fill the gaps in research-based understandings of human development in New Zealand, this study also aimed to find out what similarities and differences there were between the perceptions of these ten New Zealand girls and other studies of mother-daughter relationships during adolescence, from both overseas and in New Zealand. Overall, there was remarkable similarity in terms of content between the perceptions of the daughters in this study and previous studies of mothers and daughters specifically and adolescents and parents generally. Chapter 4 (Findings and Analysis) analysed these similarities; a more detailed comparison is to be found in that chapter. Because Rich's (1990) themes were initially used as a basis for analysis of interview transcripts in this study, it was likely that there would be certain similarities between her study and this one. However, as discussed in this chapter, there were also themes found within daughters' narratives in this study that were different in content or in emphasis than those found in Rich's.

While the content of this study's findings were very similar to previous comparable studies, there were several aspects of this research project that had not been found before. These new insights were associated with the emphasis placed on particular themes, the identification of different levels of reflection and reciprocity within daughters' responses, and the methodology and theoretical framework used for this study. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there was a different emphasis placed on conflict by the participants in this study compared to previous research on mothers and daughters in adolescence. Girls in this study portrayed their relationship with their mother as relatively harmonious in that they did not perceive that arguments between them were significant, either in frequency or intensity. Unlike other studies, these participants generally talked most about the positive aspects of their relationship, rather than what they were dissatisfied about. Also in contrast with some other studies, several girls in this study were beginning to perceive that problems with their mother were caused by circumstances outside of their relationship, and that she did not always meet their expectations of what an 'ideal'

mother should be. In turn, there were some girls in this study who were not yet able to recognise their mother as a person in her own right. The identification of two groups of five each within the ten participants in this study that differed in their ability to reflect on their relationship, their perception of their mother, the amount of reciprocity in their relationship was something that no other similar studies have found. Thus, this study has brought up the possibility that this age group, 15 to 17, may be a 'cross-over' point during which daughters begin to make new connections with their mothers as they change how they perceive them and their relationship with them. It seems that the age of participants in research on parent-adolescent relationships may have a significant influence on their perceptions. This finding suggests that previous studies of adolescents that have used samples including multiple age groups or individual adolescents over several years may have obscured the effect of cognitive development on participants' perceptions of themselves in relationships.

Another difference in emphasis found in this study was that daughters generally focused on communal themes (illustrating continuing connection, support and varying degrees of closeness with their mother) in their descriptions of their relationships with their mother to a greater extent than agentic themes (illustrating movement towards a new definition of self as an individual able to make their own choices and take action on their own). The difference between these New Zealand perceptions and those of North American adolescents could be due to the samples used in these overseas studies. Many of these studies of parent-adolescent relationships have used boarding school students (as in the Emma Willard research) or university students, many of whom were living away from home for the first time. Leaving the parental home may have encouraged these participants to emphasise differentiation and independence from parents rather than connection and closeness to them. The participants in the current study were all living at home with their parents, which may explain why many of them still depended on their mother for practical support and guidance.

This study was also unique in that it used a narrative approach to investigate daughters' perceptions of their relationship with their mother. While other studies have identified many useful insights into this relationship using larger samples, this study has complemented their generalised statements with details of the individual

lives and unique stories of daughters in mid-adolescence. The use of a narrative methodology is considered to be a particular strength of this study (see "Strengths of this Study" section later in this chapter). Other studies of mothers and daughters in adolescence have often contrasted the psychoanalytic view of adolescence with the feminist view (for example, Apter, 1990 and Rich, 1990). This study has moved beyond this dichotomy to look at the way in which adolescence and the parent-adolescent relationship have been socially constructed and to contrast two discourses: the recent academic view and popular culture's view. The findings of this study are considered within this framework in the following section.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MOTHERHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Social constructionism views people's experiences, identities and relationships as products of discourses, or constructions of a particular time and place, rather than fixed, natural realities (Henwood & Coughlan, 1993; Parker, in Bird & Drewery, 2000). Daughters' perceptions of positive and negative qualities of their mothers in this study are considered as evidence of discourses of motherhood prevalent within New Zealand society. Within Western society generally, it has been argued that the nature of 'good' mothering changes from childhood to adolescence. During childhood, mothers are expected to stay at home when children are young and be their primary caregiver, to have strong feelings of attachment and be sensitive and responsive to their needs (Woollett & Phoenix, 1991). However, during adolescence, 'good' mothering means accepting distance and conflict and encouraging separation between themselves and their adolescent children (Weingarten, 1997, 1998). This study aimed to find out whether the perceptions of adolescent daughters corresponded to this social construction of motherhood through examination of what they considered to be 'good' and 'bad' qualities of their mothers.

The most valued quality of mothers in this study was 'being there' for their daughters. For eight out of ten girls, this meant spending time together in shared activities. Seven girls particularly appreciated their mothers spending time with them alone, just the two of them. Mothers did not necessarily have to be doing anything structured with their daughters – just talking was sometimes all it took for daughters to still feel close to their mothers. Daughters liked their mothers to be present when they participated in activities and to praise them for good performances. Mothers

were also valued for providing practical help or advice, transport and financial assistance, and for standing up for their daughters when they had been emotionally hurt or threatened.

Generally, there was an emphasis on mothers providing encouragement to their daughters and sharing in positive and negative experiences in their lives. The girls in this study appreciated their mothers knowing and understanding them better because they had stayed at home during their childhood, unlike their fathers. Mothers in this study were valued for being available to talk to about personal issues, not necessarily in order to give advice or solve problems, but simply to listen. Mothers were expected to keep their feelings to themselves, even when they may have been worried or angry about what their daughters were telling them. The ideal mother-daughter relationship seemed to be closer to a peer friendship, with an emphasis on discussion and negotiation rather than dictation and punishment. There was a feeling of appreciation and gratitude for mothers throughout the interviews in this study: for support, for freedom, for never letting them down. All the girls could see positive aspects of their relationship with their mother, and appreciated her being available even though they might not currently turn to their mother for this support. Consistency of support by mothers was so strongly valued that any disloyalty or inequality in attention was bitterly resented.

Negative qualities of mothers often related to their communication with daughters. The girls in this study did not like being unable to talk to their mother when they wanted to. Another recurrent complaint in daughters' transcripts was protectiveness by their mothers. It seemed there was a fine line between mothers being caring and being overprotective. Girls seemed to particularly resent being limited in what they could do and whom they could see outside the home when they thought they were being responsible for their own safety. It seemed mothers were being criticised for their protectiveness because this was not allowing their daughters to act independently, which meant being able to make their own mistakes. Although protectiveness was perceived to be a bad quality of mothers, daughters also interpreted it as being due to their mothers' support and concern, which was something they valued.

The emphasis on mothers' continuing support and availability in daughters' narratives in the current study challenges the conflict/separation discourse of

motherhood in adolescence. Mothers in the current study were not valued for encouraging separation from their daughters. Instead, they were appreciated for continuing to provide the kind of mothering considered to be 'good' in childhood. The girls in this study most strongly valued their mothers being there for them, which included their mothers staying at home during their childhood, fulfilling their emotional needs, and being available for support, even if this was not currently utilised. This study's findings support the image of mothers being the emotional caretakers of the family (Phillips, 1986; Pipher, 1996).

While daughters continued to feel close to their mothers and appreciated being able to depend on them for support, they also wanted to do more things for themselves. These findings support Weingarten's (1998) argument that continued relationship with mothers enables adolescents to develop independence and competence, because mothers are most likely to be able to help them with these skills. The girls' perceptions contribute to Weingarten's belief that adolescents want to maintain positive connections with their mothers, and mothers want to stay involved in their adolescents' lives out of appropriate concern, not interference or dependence. It has been stressed that the main task for parents during adolescence is 'letting go' of their children in order to allow them to achieve independence and individuality. While the daughters in this study did want their mothers to allow them to do more things for themselves, they still wanted their mothers involved in their lives. The good and bad qualities of mothers identified in this study illustrate the very specific needs of these adolescent girls, the very difficult balance that mothers must maintain:

> to watch and appreciate, but not misunderstand, to watch and see and understand, but not to intrude, to allow individuality, to be enthusiastic and confident about growth and maturity, yet not to let go, not to forget, and above all not to abandon (Apter, 1990, pp. 146-147).

Overall, the findings of this study challenge popular culture's emphasis on separation and conflict in parent-adolescent relationships, particularly in the mother-daughter bond. Yet there was some evidence of the influence of the popular culture discourse in participants' perceptions of conflict. As discussed earlier in this chapter, daughters in this study did not portray conflict with their mothers as a major focus of their relationship during the first set of interview questions, the AAI. Yet when they

were directly asked if they argued with their mother in the questions that followed the AAI, all the girls were quick to say that they did.

This contradiction in daughters' narratives could be interpreted as evidence of the influence of society's expectations regarding parent-adolescent relationships. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Literature review), the popular culture discourse emphasises adolescents' conflict with and rebellion against parents, particularly in the mother-daughter dyad. One daughter in this study even specifically said that the stereotypical view was that mothers and daughters were always arguing and fighting. Thus, daughters in this study may have felt pressured to conform to the stereotypical view that they are supposed to argue with their mothers. Yet their perceptions of disagreements and their relationship with their mother as a whole do not support this view. Although all the girls admitted that they argued with their mother, they did not usually perceive these disagreements as a significant part of their relationship. Overall, daughters appeared anxious to portray their relationship as opposite to the 'stereotypical view' in that they did not argue very often, and when they did, it was over trivial matters. Thus this study supports other research which has found that disagreements between mothers and daughters is often about minor topics, and does not prevent continuing connection and closeness between them (Apter, 1990; Gray, 1988).

Popular culture dictates that teenagers are supposed to be in conflict with their parents and rebel against their values in order to develop an adult identity. Parents are reassured that such behaviour is to be expected, and that it is a sign that teenagers are trying to gain emotional separation in order to develop this new sense of self. In Western society, daughters are encouraged to distance themselves from their mothers and downplay their connection to them (Pipher, 1996). This is certainly not what was happening in participants' narratives in the current study. Out of ten participants, only one perceived a definite separation and emotional distancing from her mother in adolescence, and a desire to portray herself as different from, even opposite to, her mother. However, even this daughter expressed regret about their present relationship and wished she and her mother knew each other better. The other girls in this study were all developing new identities as capable, trustworthy, responsible people able to make their own decisions, but at the same time they continued to feel some connection with their mothers and wanted them to recognise this changing self.

The continuing importance of mothers as attachment figures and the emphasis given to themes of communion in this study are in stark contrast to the picture painted in the popular culture discourse, in which adolescence is characterised by a painful severance of the bond between parents and their children. In this view, achieving independence from parents is considered antithetical to receiving support and validation from parents, and the need for continued comfort and reassurance from parents is a sign of immaturity. Daughters' perceptions in the current study are at odds with this construction of adolescence. In most girls' narratives, there was a feeling that they could go to their mothers to obtain emotional support or comfort. Daughters in this study continued to depend on their mothers in many ways. In addition to receiving support *from* their mothers, some daughters also mentioned giving support *to* their mothers in return.

The popular culture discourse portrays adolescence as the time when antisocial behaviour is displayed. This includes criticising parents' behaviour, rejecting information given by them and keeping significant information from them. In contrast, most girls in this study turned to their mother first for any practical advice or assistance. The emphasis on talking and sharing personal information with mothers as a source of comfort and support in the communal themes in this study is also at odds with the expectation that teenagers stop talking to their parents.

The dramatic and sudden nature of change between childhood tranquillity and adolescent turbulence and rebellion has also been emphasised in past portrayals of adolescence. This view does not take into account the nature of the relationships teenagers have had with their parents before they reach adolescence. Rather than an abrupt and negative change upon entering adolescence, this study found remarkable continuity and similarity between childhood and adolescent relationships in participants' narratives. In the most surprising theme of change, four girls said they actually felt closer to their mothers now than they did in childhood. This finding is in direct opposition to the excessive emphasis on emotional separation and autonomy in the popular culture discourse. Instead, it is more in line with overseas and New Zealand research, which has found that the family has a significant positive influence on the lives of the adolescents questioned.

Without exception, these girls perceived positive aspects of their relationship with their mother, and said they knew their mother was 'there' for them, even though

they might not currently turn to their mother for support. While some daughters felt it was sufficient to just be aware of these positive aspects of their relationship, others felt the need to repay their mothers for their support and generosity, usually by doing something for them in return. Many girls in this study thought it was appropriate that they express their feelings of appreciation and gratitude for their mothers and all they had done for them. The picture they paint of their relationship with their mother is very different to the portrayal of conflict, rebellion, moodiness and emotional detachment found in books giving advice to parents of adolescents (reviewed in Chapter 2, pp. 40-43). It seems that this construction of adolescence may not in fact reflect 'the norm' for all teenagers and parents in New Zealand.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Pipher (1996) has noted that "Adolescence is a border between adulthood and childhood, and as such it has a richness and diversity unmatched by any other life stage. It's impossible to capture the complexity and intensity of adolescent girls" (p. 52). This is a limitation of any study of adolescent girls (and of adolescents in general), particularly in the current study, which looks at only one aspect of the world of adolescent girls, from the perspective of only 10 participants. By only including Pakeha participants, and focusing on the age group from 15 to 17, this study is limited in its generalisability to other adolescent females in this country, particularly those from different age groups and ethnicities. In addition, all the participants were relatively intelligent and articulate, and from middle class homes. These similarities, and the fact that most theory and research about mother-daughter relationships, including this one, have been written by white, middle-class women (Nice, 1992) also limit this study's generalisability. On the other hand, focusing on the experiences of such a small group of people may in fact be an advantage (see following section, "Strengths of this Study").

Unlike many of the North American studies of mother-daughter relationships in adolescence, which often use samples of university students living away from the parental home, the girls in the current study were still living with their parents and attending secondary school. Even Miriam, the only participant who was going to a tertiary institution, still lived at home. Rich (1990) found that her participants, who were mostly boarders at secondary school, were more likely to have had to think

about issues of differentiation and connection in their relationship with their mothers as part of the process of leaving home and being away from their mothers. The girls in the current study may not have had this opportunity. This finding illustrates the influence of different contexts on data collection in research.

A disadvantage of many research studies involving qualitative interviews is that descriptions come from only one of the participants in a relationship, and it is not clear that the other participants hold a similar conception (Youniss & Smollar, 1985). This is particularly relevant to the current study, as it is only concerned with daughters' own perceptions of their current experiences of their relationship with their mother. The mothers have not had the opportunity to tell 'their side of the story,' and it is likely that their views would differ considerably from how their daughters portrayed the relationship. Researchers who have interviewed and/or observed both generations have noted that adolescents' descriptions of family members tended to be overexaggerated (Apter, 1990), while parents tend to describe parent-adolescent relationships more positively, and do not perceive conflicts to be as severe or as frequent as adolescents do (Demo, 1991).

There are other disadvantages in the qualitative research interview. First, participants control the findings and may provide descriptions or perceptions that are distorted or otherwise affected by social desirability (McAdams, 1993; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). For example, when participants feel sensitive or uncomfortable about topics raised in the interview, their answers, if provided at all, are likely to be affected (Brenner, Brown & Canter, 1985). In the current study, I was aware that the relationship between myself and the young women I wanted to study would be crucial to the depth of material gathered, and that the development of good relationships would require high levels of trust by the participants. However, their responses to the interview questions in the AAI have to be seen in light of a stranger asking about very personal experiences (Grossmann, Fremmer-Bombik, Rudolph & Grossmann, 1988). Some participants appeared to talk openly and honestly about these sensitive issues. However, other participants in the current study were less willing to talk about private or negative aspects of their relationships and may have constructed 'cover stories' instead. This could be because they were uncomfortable talking about these issues, or in order to make a favourable impression on me, to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear.

Runyan (1984) emphasises the power of narrative for expressing the subtleties of a relationship and the meaning of an experience. However, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) caution that this capacity is a "two-edged inquiry sword" (p. 10). Not only is it possible to 'fake the data' and write a fiction but one may also use the data to construct findings that do not represent what really happened. A particular danger in narrative is what Connelly and Clandinin (1990) call 'the Hollywood plot,' the plot where everything works out well in the end. In order to avoid this the researcher needs to be as alert to the stories not told as to those that are, and also needs to discuss the story selections made, the possible alternative stories, and other limitations of the research. No matter how successful the interview is and how intimate the rapport between interviewer and participant, there is always a great deal that will remain untold (McAdams, 1993).

Despite researchers' best efforts at re-creating, describing, and interpreting participants' reality in research reports, one can never be sure about the accuracy of these transformations (Gudmundsdottir, 1996). Researchers' representations of experience are limited reflections of reality. "Meaning is fluid and contextual, not fixed and universal. All we have is talk and texts that represent reality partially, selectively, and imperfectly" (Riessman, 1993, p. 15). It must also be remembered that research texts are created within, and for, particular traditions and audiences, and these are constantly changing – there is no 'master' narrative (Riessman, 1993). The lives of the participants are also constantly changing, and it should be acknowledged that this study captures the experiences of 10 adolescent girls at one point in their lives. Any study of human development must acknowledge that people change; taking such 'snapshots' of their lives is a limited method of research. However, this is sometimes the only way to capture and analyse people's experiences, given that the ideal solution, longitudinal research on the same participants, is often not practical.

STRENGTHS OF THIS STUDY

One of the main strengths of this study is its contribution to the limited research on adolescence and parent-adolescent relationships in New Zealand. The sparse amount of research in these areas has in the past encouraged assumptions and generalisations based on overseas research findings to be applied to people in this country. This study has specifically compared its findings with those of overseas

studies to highlight the similarities and differences between them. In addition, this study provides an insight into the experiences of adolescent girls and mother-daughter relationships in adolescence in New Zealand. No other research in New Zealand has focused solely on this subject or included extensive quotes from participants' interview transcripts to illustrate the nature of parent-adolescent relationships.

Beyond simply offering interesting information, this study looks at the meanings associated with adolescence, parenthood and the parent-adolescent relationship, as part of the social constructionist framework. This was one of the reasons for choosing a narrative approach. This perspective views people's stories as illustrating both what is important and unique to them and also what society considers acceptable (Gergen, 1994; Personal Narratives Group, 1989). Thus, participants' narratives about their lives and their relationships with their mothers (and fathers) in the current study illustrate the assumptions and beliefs about adolescence, motherhood, fatherhood and relationships between adolescents and parents in New Zealand. In particular, this study investigated whether participants' narratives supported the discourse of continuing connection found in the academic view of parent-adolescent relationships, or subscribed to popular culture's portrayal of separation and conflict between parents and their adolescent children prevalent in New Zealand and other Western countries.

There are other aspects of this study's methodology that contribute to its strengths. Characteristics such as holism and richness of data made the narrative approach particularly attractive when studying such a complex and personal subject as the mother-daughter relationship during adolescence. The particular interview used, the AAI, also proved to be effective in eliciting detailed, personal stories of participants' lives and relationships as they perceived them, even though it was not used to classify their state of mind regarding attachment. The AAI asks for participants' descriptions of their childhood relationships with their parents, which provided a context within which to discuss their perceptions of their current relationships with them. Thus this study is one of few that takes into account how characteristics of earlier family relationships influence family members' transition into adolescence. In capturing descriptions of both childhood and current relationships, the AAI also allowed for comparison between the two in order to

illustrate changes within these relationships. The AAI also enabled the effects of contextual influences (such as relationships with fathers and other family members and significant life events) on participants' perceptions of their relationship with their mother to be included.

As a narrative research study, this investigation did not aim to identify generalisations, but to illustrate personal stories in detail and thereby increase our knowledge and understanding of human experience (Bakan, 1996). As discussed above, this sample was limited in that there were only ten participants, who were all Pakeha, middle-class girls aged between 15 and 17. However, the sample in this study was never intended to be representative of all adolescent girls. This study's strength lies in its expression of the experiences and perceptions of a variety of participants, rather than the ability to make generalisations about all adolescent girls in New Zealand. The unique nature of each girl's story was just as important as the similarities between them, and between their experiences and those of other participants in comparable research studies. Indeed, by focusing solely on Pakeha, middle class, mid-adolescent participants, this study has been able to illustrate socially constructed discourses of motherhood and adolescence that are valued by this particular demographical and socioeconomic group.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Most importantly, there is a continuing need for more up-to-date research on adolescence and relationships between parents and adolescents in New Zealand. There also needs to be further research on adolescents of other ethnicities and their relationships with their parents. This is particularly relevant in New Zealand, as there are many different ethnic groups in this country and little is known about these areas in Maori, Pacific Island and other ethnicities because most research has been undertaken with Pakeha participants. In order to examine the effect of ethnicity on parent-adolescent relationships and the experiences of adolescents generally, researchers would need to be aware of the different cultural practices, priorities and preferably fluent in that culture's language. Thus, it would be important that researchers were either members of that culture themselves, or involved such people as advisers from the beginning of the research. In addition, much of what is known about parent-adolescent relationships has been based on research with two-parent,

middle-class families. More information is also needed on parent-adolescent relationships in families of different social classes and structures.

There has been a tendency in psychological research on adolescence, through use of surveys, questionnaires and interviews with single participants, to portray adolescents as dealing with issues of this period alone (Youniss, 1983). In contrast, this study is more in keeping with relationship-based theories (such as attachment theory) that hold the more realistic view that development includes adolescents *and* their significant others, including parents and friends. There needs to be more studies that investigate these relationships as resources for adolescents' development. An extension of this is the investigation of the development of both individuals involved in a relationship. Adolescent-parent relationships could be assessed from the perspective of both the adolescent and the parent to provide a more complete view of the issues raised in this study. Parents' voices need to be heard more; there is a need to better understand their continuing development, as this relates to their relationship with their children, throughout the life span.

This study has shown the distinctiveness of the mother-daughter bond and the differences between mother- and father-daughter relationships. Other research has produced mixed results about gender differences in attachment to parents (Kenny & Rice, 1995) and the importance of interpersonal relationships to females and males. More information is needed about the nature of particular parent-child dyads (e.g., mother-son, father-daughter) and how they differ. In particular, there is much to learn about fathers' relationships with their children, of all ages. Male and female adolescents' perceptions of parents and relationships with them should also be investigated to assess how the differences between them and the effect on their development.

The findings of this study have also illustrated the influence of other contexts within participants' lives upon their perceptions of their relationships, in particular relationships with fathers, the nature of the mother-daughter relationship in childhood, and significant life events. Future research would benefit from the principles of the narrative approach, which emphasises the holism and contextual background of people's experiences. Longitudinal investigations would of course be the ideal method of examining how the nature of childhood relationships with parents influences future relationships in adolescence and adulthood. In addition, there have

been few studies of parent-adolescent relationships that have taken into account the cognitive development of adolescent respondents. A more complete picture of adolescent development would also include the influence of other relational contexts, such as peer friendships.

This study has also shown how particular research methodologies can be very effective in studying topics such as interpersonal relationships. Qualitative research, particularly the narrative approach, has many advantages that provide special insight into adolescents' relationships with parents. Further research using such methodologies may help our understanding of adolescents' experiences, what they consider to be important in their close relationships, and what characteristics of these bonds contribute to their development and wellbeing. Using a narrative approach would also facilitate further research on the social construction of adolescence, motherhood and fatherhood, and relationships between parents and adolescents. Research is much needed on expectations and assumptions about these areas held by parents, adolescents, and the society in which they live.

CONCLUSION

This study's original aim was to explore the character of the relationship between adolescent girls and their mothers. In doing so, it has also provided much-needed insight into parent-adolescent relationships in New Zealand from the perspective of the teenagers themselves. The perceptions of ten adolescent daughters aged between 15 and 17 were interpreted using a qualitative design framework; specifically, using face-to-face interviews and a narrative analysis of themes and content. Their responses illustrated both the uniqueness of their individual relationship with their mother, as well as similar themes across their narratives. These themes were classified as agentic and communal, which suggested that both the development of a new sense of self and continuing interaction with and support from mothers were important to these adolescent daughters. The findings of this study were in accordance with other research, both national and international. In addition, they drew new attention to the importance of contextual influences on adolescents' perceptions of the relationships with their parents, including the nature of the relationship in childhood, significant life events, the interdependence of mother- and father-adolescent relationships, and cognitive development. The experiences of these

ten girls has contributed to the paucity of research on adolescent-parent relationships in New Zealand, and could indeed be the first study to focus solely on the mother-daughter relationship in adolescence. As well as locating its findings within the wider academic literature, this study has challenged the messages found in Western society – including New Zealand – about adolescents and their interpersonal relationships. Although this study consisted of only ten adolescent girls' experiences, the emphasis on mothers' continuing support and availability in daughters' narratives is clearly at odds with popular culture's emphasis on separation and conflict in parent-adolescent relationships, particularly between mothers and daughters.

Much is being written in the media that may be perpetuating this myth, a myth that helps to perpetuate a bad impression of young people that may have little basis in reality. If the popular press is to be believed, adolescence is something that parents must survive rather than enjoy. There has not been much written that has deconstructed or undermined this portrayal of adolescence and the negative view of young people as a collective group. This myth may be influencing family lives in less than positive ways. Moody, difficult teenagers may be conforming to what they think is 'normal' adolescent behaviour by exhibiting signs of alienation or confusion. Parents may believe they should be letting adolescents make their own mistakes and may be reneging on their responsibility to be protective and watchful as their adolescents take more responsibility for their own lives.

Instead, we should be supporting parents' efforts to keep adolescents safe and at the same time respecting adolescents' needs to grow and move into the larger world. This study has suggested that adolescent development needs to be looked at in terms of agency *and* communion. Daughters in this study have shown that independence does not necessitate separation and conflict with parents. They continued to value support from their mothers in many areas of their lives, support that enabled them to develop self-confidence and responsibility. This study echoes the sentiments of others who have studied relationships between parents and adolescents, captured eloquently by Apter:

> we need accounts of adolescence which accommodate this continuing bond, in which independence is not seen as rank autonomy, in which growth and development are not viewed as destructive of previous bonds, in which growth itself is not seen as something which we resist, in which development

is not always experienced as a mourning for the previous stage, and in which self-interest is not at odds with binding attachments, and rejection of parental values is not necessary to the discovery of what one values oneself (1990, p. 69).

In its examination of the unique and discursive ways ten adolescent girls perceived their close relationships, it is hoped that this study has challenged old myths and encouraged new ways of looking at and thinking about adolescence, motherhood and the mother-adolescent daughter relationship.

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APPENDIX 1

Advertisement for participants

WANTED

Young Pakeha women aged 15-17

as research participants
for Massey University Masterate thesis:

"Mother-daughter relationships in adolescence:
New Zealand Pakeha experiences"

Please phone Andrea on [phone number]
and leave name and phone number

APPENDIX 2

Daughters' information sheet

INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Andrea Nicholls. My research project on mother-daughter relationships in adolescence has been approved as part of the requirements for my Masterate degree, through Massey University College of Education. My supervisor for this research will be Sue Watson, a lecturer at Massey University College of Education.

The purpose of the study is to learn about the relationships women have with their parents during childhood and adolescence, with a particular focus on the character of the relationship a daughter has with her mother during adolescence. One view of adolescence emphasises the expectation that the adolescent must separate or gain autonomy from their parents in order to achieve an adult identity. Recent research suggests that this may not be the case, that in fact adolescents (girls in particular) may remain connected to their parents throughout adolescence, although there may be a renegotiation of this relationship. This is what I aim to investigate, through interviews with several young women.

I wish to invite you to be one of the young women to participate in this study.

Massey University has strict guidelines for how research should be undertaken, and my study is planned according to the Massey University Code of Ethics. Should you choose to participate in the study, the following outlines further details about confidentiality and protection of your privacy.

I expect the interview will last no longer than an hour and a half. I will ask you to talk about your memories of your childhood and adolescence in terms of the relationship you have with your parents, with special emphasis on the mother-daughter relationship during adolescence. You will be free to 'pass' on any question you do not feel comfortable with. I will tape the interview and you will have access to a transcript of what you say, so you can edit or delete any part of the transcript you do not wish to appear in my study. All interview tapes and transcripts will be held by me and will be destroyed at the completion of the research. Once you have 'okayed' the transcript, and given permission for me to use it, my supervisor will also read the transcript.

Your mother and I are the only people who will know that you have participated in the study. Your name will not be disclosed to my supervisor, or to others who participate. You will remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be used in place of real names throughout the study.

In order to protect the identity of others I can not tell you who else I will be interviewing, and you will not have access to others' interview transcripts. If you do decide to participate in the study, you are free to withdraw at any time. I will keep you informed about the progress of the research and a summary of the research findings will be available to you if you request it.

While you have control over what appears in your transcript, the interpretation and analysis of what you have said will be my responsibility. I hope that I will do justice to your story, but there is some chance that you will not agree with aspects of my final report. This is a possibility you need to consider when deciding whether to participate. Information given will be confidential to the research and any publications arising from it.

I hope you will consider participating in my study, which I think will provide a fascinating account of the experiences of daughters during adolescence. However, I would understand if you felt such issues are too personal to recount to someone else, and I expect that some people will decline to take part for that reason. There is also the possibility that thinking about the past or present relationships may bring up some unpleasant memories and experiences. This is another possibility that you need to take into consideration when deciding whether to take part in the interview. Counselling services available for participants are listed below.

If you are interested in participating, please sign and return one copy of the enclosed consent forms. Please keep the other copy for your reference. As this research looks at your relationship with your mother, she has also been sent an information sheet about the study.

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor if you have any questions about this project. Contact details are as follows:

Researcher:	Andrea Nicholls
Address:	[Address]
Phone:	[Phone number]
Supervisor:	Sue Watson
Address:	[Address]
Phone:	[Phone number]

[List of local counselling services also included]

APPENDIX 3

Daughters' consent form

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular question.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission. The information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project.

I agree to the interview being audio taped.

I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audiotape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed:...

Name: ....

Date:...

APPENDIX 4

Mothers' information sheet

INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Andrea Nicholls. My research project on mother-daughter relationships in adolescence has been approved as part of the requirements for my Masterate degree, through Massey University College of Education. My supervisor for this research will be Sue Watson, a lecturer at Massey University College of Education.

The purpose of the study is to learn about the relationships women have with their parents during childhood and adolescence, with a particular focus on the character of the relationship a daughter has with her mother during adolescence. One view of adolescence emphasises the expectation that the adolescent must separate or gain autonomy from their parents in order to achieve an adult identity. Recent research suggests that this may not be the case, that in fact adolescents (girls in particular) may remain connected to their parents throughout adolescence, although there may be a renegotiation of this relationship. This is what I aim to investigate, through interviews with several young women.

Your daughter has expressed interest in participating in this study.

Massey University has strict guidelines for how research should be undertaken, and my study is planned according to the Massey University Code of Ethics. Further details about confidentiality and protection of participants' privacy are outlined below.

I expect the interview will last no longer than an hour and a half. I will ask participants to talk about their memories of their childhood and adolescence in terms of the relationship they have with their parents, with special emphasis on the mother-daughter relationship during adolescence. Participants will be free to 'pass' on any question they do not feel comfortable with. I will tape the interview and participants will have access to a transcript of what they say, so they can edit or delete any part of the transcript they do not wish to appear in my study. All interview tapes and transcripts will be held by me and will be destroyed at the completion of the research. Once participants have 'okayed' their transcript, and given permission for me to use it, my supervisor will also read the transcript.

I am the only person who will know that your daughter has participated in the study. Your daughter's name will not be disclosed to my supervisor, or to others who participate. She will remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be used in place of real names throughout the study. Participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. Information given will be confidential to the research and any publications arising from it.

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor if you have any questions about this project. Contact details are as follows:

Researcher: Andrea Nicholls
Phone: [Phone number]

Supervisor: Sue Watson
Address: [Address]
Phone: [Phone number]

APPENDIX 5

Adult Attachment Interview

1.   Could you start by helping me get oriented to your early family situation, and where you lived and so on? If you could tell me where you were born, whether you moved around much, what your family did at various times for a living?
  Did you see much of your grandparents when you were little?
  Did you have brothers or sisters living in the house, or anybody besides your parents? Are they living nearby now or do they live elsewhere?

2.   I'd like you to try to describe your relationship with your parents as a young child...if you could start from as far back as you can remember?

3.   Now I'd like to ask you to choose five adjectives or words that reflect your relationship with your mother starting from as far back as you can remember in early childhood... as early as you can go, but say, age 5 to 12 is fine. I know this may take a bit of time, so go ahead and think for a minute... then I'd like to ask you why you chose them. I'll write each one down as you give them to me.

  Okay, now let me go through some more questions about your description of your childhood relationship with your mother. You say your relationship with her was (you used the phrase) _____.
  Are there any memories or incidents that come to mind with respect to (word) _____?

4.   Now I'd like to ask you to choose five adjectives or words that reflect your relationship with your father, again starting from as far back as you can remember in early childhood... as early as you can go, but again say, age 5 to 12 is fine. I know this may take a bit of time, so go ahead and think again for a minute... then I'd like to ask you why you chose them. I'll write each one down as you give them to me.

  Okay, now let me go through some more questions about your description of your childhood relationship with your father. You say your relationship with him was (you used the phrase) _____.
  Are there any memories or incidents that come to mind with respect to (word) _____?

5.   Now I wonder if you could tell me, to which parent did you feel the closest, and why? Why isn't there this feeling with the other parent?

6.   When you were upset as a child, what would you do?
  When you were upset emotionally when you were little, what would you do? Can you think of a specific time that happened?

Can you remember what would happen when you were hurt, physically? Again, do any specific incidents come to mind?

Were you ever ill when you were little? Do you remember what would happen?

I was just wondering, do you remember being held by either of your parents at any of these times – I mean, when you were upset, or hurt, or ill?

7. What is the first time you remember being separated from your parents?
    How did you respond? Do you remember how your parents responded?
    Are there any other separations that stand out in your mind?

8. Did you ever feel rejected as a young child? Of course, looking back on it now, you may realise it wasn't really rejection, but what I'm trying to ask about here is whether you remember ever having felt rejected in childhood.
    How old were you when you first felt this way, and what did you do?
    Why do you think your parent did those things... do you think he/she realised he/she was rejecting you?

8a. Were you ever frightened or worried as a child?

9. Were your parents ever threatening with you in any way, maybe for discipline, or even jokingly?
    Some people have told us for example that their parents would threaten to leave them or send them away from home.

9a. Some people have memories of threats of some kind of behaviour that was abusive. Did anything like this ever happen to you, or in your family?
    How old were you at the time? Did it happen frequently?
    Do you feel this experience affects you now as an adult?
    Where relevant. Does it influence your approach to your own child?
    Did you have any such experiences involving people outside your family?

10. In general, how do you think your overall experiences with your parents have affected your adult personality?
    Are there any aspects to your early experiences that you feel were a set-back in your development?

11. Why do you think your parents behaved as they did during your childhood?

12. Were there any other adults with whom you were close, like parents, as a child?
    Or any other adults who were especially important to you, even though not parental?

13. Did you experience the loss of a parent or other close loved one while you were a young child – for example, a sibling, or a close family member?
    Could you tell me about the circumstances, and how old you were at the time?
    How did you respond at the time?
    Was this death sudden or was it expected?

Can you recall your feelings at that time?

Have your feelings regarding this death changed much over time?

Did you attend the funeral, and what was this like for you?

If loss of a parent or sibling. What would you say was the effect on your (other parent) and on your household, and how did this change over the years?

Would you say this loss has had an effect on your adult personality?

Where relevant. How does it affect your approach to your own child?

13a.   Did you lose any other important persons during your childhood? (Same queries)

13b.   Have you lost other close persons, in adult years? (Same queries)

14.   Other than any difficult experiences you've already described, have you had any other experiences which you would regard as potentially traumatic?

15.   Now I'd like to ask you a few more questions about your relationship with your parents. Were there many changes in your relationship with your parents (or remaining parent) after childhood? We'll get to the present in a moment, but right now I mean changes occurring roughly between your childhood and your adulthood?

16.   Now I'd like to ask you, what is your relationship with your parents (or remaining parent) like for you now as an adult? Here I am asking about your current relationship.

Do you have much contact with your parents at present?

What would you say the relationship with your parents is like currently?

Could you tell me about any sources of dissatisfaction in your current relationship with your parents? Any special sources of special satisfaction?

17.   I'd like to move now to a different sort of question – it's not about your relationship with your parents, instead it's about an aspect of your current relationship with (specific child of interest to the researcher, or all the participant's children considered together). How do you respond now, in terms of feelings, when you separate from your child/children?

Do you ever feel worried about (child)?

For participants without children. Now I'd like you to imagine that you have a one-year-old child, and I wonder how you think you might respond, in terms of feelings, if you had to separate from this child? Do you think you would ever feel worried about this child?

18.   If you had three wishes for your child twenty years from now, what would they be? I'm thinking partly of the kind of future you would like to see for your child. I'll give you a minute or two to think about this one.

For participants without children. Now I'd like you to continue to imagine that you have a one-year-old child for just another minute. This time, I'd like to ask, if you had three wishes for your child twenty years from now, what would they be? I'm thinking partly of the kind of future you would like to see for your imagined child. I'll give you a minute or two to think about this one.

19.   Is there any particular thing which you feel you learned above all from your own childhood experiences? I'm thinking here of something you feel you might have gained from the kind of childhood you had.

20. We've been focusing a lot on the past in this interview, but I'd like to end up looking quite a way into the future. We've just talked about what you think you may have learned from your own childhood experiences. I'd like to end by asking you what would you hope your child (or, your imagined child) might have learned from his/her experiences of being parented by you?

APPENDIX 6

Additional interview questions

1. Now I'd like to ask you to choose five words or phrases that reflect your relationship with your mother at the moment.
   I know this may take a bit of time, so go ahead and think for a minute, then I'd like to ask you why you chose them. I'll write each one down as you give them to me.

   Okay, now let me go through some more questions about your description of your relationship with your mother. You say your relationship with her is (you used the phrase) _____.
      Are there any memories or incidents that come to mind with respect to (word) _____?

   Your next word (or phrase) was _____. Can you think of a memory or incident that would illustrate why you chose _____ to describe the relationship?

2. Could you tell me about any (or any other) sources of dissatisfaction in your current relationship with your mother, things you aren't happy about?

3. Do you have arguments with your mother? What do you argue about? What happens after you argue?

4. Could you tell me about any (or any other) sources of satisfaction in your current relationship with your mother, things you are happy about?

5. Are there any other memories or incidents that come to mind, or anything else about your relationship with your mother, that you would like to add?