Families on the Move: Exploring the Mobilities of Young People with Separated Parents

by

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Abstract

This thesis provides an in-depth study of the mobility patterns, practices and experiences of young people with separated parents. It focuses on young people who spend time in more than one parental home, representing one of the first studies to look specifically at the journeys they make between their multiple houses. Thus, this thesis makes an important contribution to understandings of post-separation childhoods within the UK and beyond. To explore these mobile experiences, I draw on qualitative research with 18 young people (aged 11-26), using a range of methods including interviews, photo and video-elicitation techniques, go-alongs and virtual tours. Through working across these age groups this thesis combines the experiences of children currently living in these multi-housed ways, with the memories of young adults looking back on their childhoods - offering innovative methodological techniques for using childhood memory as data.

Examining journeys diverse in their frequency and duration, I provide detailed and textured accounts of the doings of journeys at different points in childhood. In exploring such doings, I consider time spent on the move, alongside and interconnected with periods of organising, preparing, leaving and arriving. Taking a geographic and mobility-studies informed approach to the study of post-separation childhoods, I analyse young people's experiences through unpacking the temporalities, materialities and spatialities of their mobilities.

I consider what practices, skills and habits families have collaboratively developed to help navigate mobility in their everyday lives – considering not only the mobilities of people but also the mobilities of a range of materialities necessary to sustain life across multiple households. Furthermore, utilising a biographic approach to thinking about my participants and their families, I show how mobilities change and adapt across different temporal scales. I explore the various forces structuring and shaping mobilities and examine how young people's agency emerges and is expressed in these processes. In doing so, I contribute to literatures on time and conceptualisations of children's interdependent agency within children's geographies.

In thinking through these topics, I centre the emotions, affects, intimacies and distances produced through journeying. Through doing so, I provide complex emotional accounts of the ways in which family relationships are lived, built, sustained and damaged through mobility. Thus, I develop and evidence a conceptualisation of mobilities as significant sites, practices and processes for the doing and *undoing* of family in post-separation. I present family undoing as a novel concept, able to more fully capture the dynamics of change, disruption and adaptation within families - thus contributing to literatures within family geographies and family studies more widely.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Setting Off

On the 23rd of March 2020, the UK government announced the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown. The population was ordered to stay home with people only able to leave their houses for a limited number of reasons and a ban on household mixing was put in place. The following day, in response to queries and confusion from parents and organisations across the country, the government was forced to clarify this statement. They confirmed that the children of separated parents would be permitted to move between their parent's houses to sustain existing and adapted living arrangements.

Although not focused on experiences during the pandemic, this moment shines an important spotlight on the central concern of this thesis – that mobility is fundamental to the everyday lives of young people with separated parents. It highlights that their family and domestic lives are often not contained by a singular household. Rather, after separation, young people regularly become part of multiple domestic environments, inhabited in diverse rhythms and routines. As such, mobility becomes central to managing this changed family geography, with movements between houses a fundamental part of young people's everyday routines and the ways in which they spend time with their parents. As the COVID-19 lockdown highlighted, there are significant numbers of young people across the UK making such journeys on a regular basis.

More than simply illuminating the empirical fact of young people's movements, this moment in time also gets to the more conceptual concerns of this thesis. The fact that these movements remained when so many others stopped gives an indication of the significance of mobility to family life in post-separation. It highlights that, as this thesis argues, mobility is central to how family relationships are lived, built and broken down following parental separation. This suggests that these periods of movement and transition are more significant to the lives of young people with separated parents than has been previously appreciated in the academic literature. For despite mobilities centrality to post-separation childhoods, this is a topic that has received little academic attention.

This thesis addresses this absence, providing an in-depth exploration of young people's mobility patterns, practices and experiences in post-separation. It focuses specifically on the journeys children make between their parental homes, looking at movements diverse in their length and frequency and taking journeying to encompass moments of preparing, leaving, travelling and arriving. To explore these mobile experiences, it draws on qualitative research

with 18 young people (aged 11-26), using a range of methods including interviews, photo and video-elicitation techniques, go-alongs and innovative virtual tours. Taking a distinctly geographical approach to the study of this topic, it unpacks young people's experiences through analysing the temporalities, materialities and spatialities of their mobilities and argues that through attention to these dimensions of everyday life, richer and more complex accounts of post-separation can be found.

This introductory chapter begins by establishing the research context, outlining the limited existing quantitative and qualitative research about separated families and their mobilities in the UK and internationally. I then move on to explore three key bodies of geographic literature that frame thesis' approach to studying post-separation mobilities; geographies of childhood and youth; family geographies and mobility studies. In briefly discussing these literatures, I suggest ways in which they orientate this thesis to address gaps in current understandings of and perspectives on this topic. I then establish the research aims and outline the research questions. Finally, I talk through the structure of the thesis, providing a summary of each subsequent chapter.

1.2 Research Context

1.2.1 Quantitative Data

There are currently estimated to be around 2.4 million separated families in Great Britain, including 3.6 million children (DWP 2020). Here a 'separated family' refers to divorced couples, those that were cohabiting and have now separated, as well as parents who have never lived together, who have dependent children. This thesis takes a similar approach to terminology, using post-separation as a catch-all term for parents who are no longer together and no longer cohabiting.

Within the UK, children's living arrangements after separation are usually negotiated and decided privately, outside of the court system (Haux et al. 2017; Harding and Newnham 2015). Government policy views the family court as a last resort for separating families, pushing families towards services like mediation those who cannot reach agreements without support (Gov.uk n.d.) Given this, drawing well-informed conclusions about the patterns of post-separation living arrangements in the UK is challenging (Haux et al. 2017). However, studies show that there remains a strongly gendered dimension to living arrangements, with patterns of living primarily with mothers and seeing fathers on weekends still the predominant arrangement in the UK (Haux, McKay and Cain 2017). Although, as this thesis shows, often

such generalisations of living arrangements mask complexity in the everyday of how routines are lived (see chapter four).

Studying the contact between non-resident fathers and their children, Poole et al. (2016) found that 13% of non-resident fathers reported having no contact, whilst 46% reported seeing their child at least weekly, 13% at least monthly, and 3% reported sharing-care of their children. Similar statistics were reported by Bryson and McKay (2018), as 10% of non-resident fathers in their study reported never having contact with their children. These studies, therefore, suggest that the majority of children with separated parents have some form of contact with both of their parents – where it is likely that mobility will be a key factor in facilitating this contact. However, there exists extremely limited quantitative data about the mobility practices of young people in separated families, particularly in a UK context.

Looking at the distance between non-resident fathers and their children in the UK, Poole et al. (2016) found that those who had at least weekly contact tended to live within 15 minutes of their child's mother, whilst those who saw them at least once a month (but not weekly) tended to live within an hour away. Many of those who saw their children more infrequently lived at distances greater than this, including a subset whose children did not live in the UK. However, this was not universal, suggesting that proximity is not a guarantee of regular contact. Whilst limited, these statistics suggest that, for those children who have contact with both of their parents, there is a great deal of variety in the frequency and duration of mobilities after separation.

1.2.2 Qualitative Research

This lack of data also extends to qualitative understandings of *mobility* in post-separation. Since the early 2000s, there has been a growing body of work within the social sciences dedicated to qualitatively exploring children and young people's lived experiences of divorce and separation (e.g. Butler et al. 2003; Smart et al. 2001; Moxnes 2003). This has included detailed accounts of children and young people's experiences of various living arrangements, familial relationships and domestic spaces (Bakker et al. 2015; Marschall 2017; Berman 2015; Kay-Flowers 2019; Pallundan and Winther 2019; Campo et al. 2020). However, mobility has largely been an overlooked dynamic in the study of everyday life after parental separation.

Significant international exceptions to this include Berman's (2019) study into how the lives of Swedish children in equal-time arrangements are shaped by regular mobility, and Schier's (2015) mixed-method research into the 'multi-local' everyday lives of German children across a range of residential arrangements. These studies have laid important groundwork in understandings of children's experiences of mobility after separation, drawing attention to the

various ways in which they move, some of the emotional and practical challenges and opportunities journeys bring and how these are affected by distance and frequency.

1.3 A Geographic Approach to Post-Separation Mobility

This thesis builds on these foundations, bringing empirical, conceptual and methodological depth and breadth to understandings of post-separation mobility within a UK context. To do so, this thesis brings a distinctly geographic approach to the topic. As I argued in previous research, geographers have been curiously absent from the literatures on post-separation thus far (Walker 2022). As I will show, such an approach sharpens analysis on the spatial, temporal and material dimensions of everyday life – dimensions that are central to apprehending emotions, relationships and practices in post-separation. Thus, this thesis contends that in taking a geographical perspective, richer, more textured, and more nuanced accounts of post-separation can be found. To unpack these dimensions of everyday experience, this thesis draws on, and contributes to, literatures from the geographies of children, youth and families, and mobility studies. In the following paragraphs, I will briefly discuss these literatures, outlining how they underpin my approach and how this thesis speaks back to them. This provides a preface to the more detailed discussion of these literatures in chapter two.

Geographic work on the lives of children and young people has proliferated since its beginnings as a distinct sub-discipline in the late 1990s (Holloway and Valentine 2000a;b). This body of work is diverse and multifarious, crossing geographic themes, spaces and scales. What this thesis takes most inspiration from, is research that has concerned itself with the scale of the 'everyday', not only documenting children's experiences of the spaces and places in their day-to-day lives but seeking to evoke the 'everydayness' of such encounters (Horton and Kraftl 2006b). Attuned to the practiced and performative, such approaches have drawn attention to the role of bodies, emotions, affects, sensations, habits, routines, rhythms and materials in the ways children and young people experience and move through spaces (Harker 2005; Hackett 2015; Wilson et al. 2012a; Merewether 2019; Kullman and Palludan 2011).

This thesis, however, departs somewhat from methodological convention in children's geographies, which has tended to focus exclusively on the 'present moment of childhood experience' (Kraftl 2017: 25). Rather this thesis, in part, uses the childhood memories of young adults (18-26), whilst also asking the children (11-18) in my study to reflect back on their younger lives. Thus, this thesis engages with past debates about the role of memory within the subdiscipline of children's geographies (Jones 2003; Philo 2003), and offers innovative methodological techniques for using memory as data. I talk about this in more detail in chapter three.

Working in conversation with the literatures described above (and those found below), this methodological approach has enabled me to look at changing experiences of the 'everydayness' of mobilities at different points across young people's lifecourse. In particular, looking over these long durations enabled me to draw out the dynamic temporal qualities of mobile experiences as they shift, change and continue throughout childhood, alongside the day-to-day temporal variance in routines. Through exploring the complex temporalities of mobility in post-separation, this thesis adds to dynamic approaches to time and temporality in children's geographies. Significantly, I take this work outside of a focus on youth transitions, where much of this work has occurred previously, to instead focus on time as it relates to experiences of the family (Worth 2009; Ansell et al. 2014; Horton and Kraftl 2006b).

This thesis is also situated within the emerging field of family geographies (Tarrant and Hall 2019; Harker and Martin 2012). As many geographers have also done, I draw upon Morgan's (1996; 2011) notion of family practices as a starting point in thinking about the socio-spatialities of the family. This is an approach which moves family from a noun to a verb. It focuses attention on the activities that family members do in relation to each other, arguing that 'in carrying out these practices, they affirmed, reproduced and sometimes redefined those relationships' (Morgan 2019a: 2). It is, therefore, less about family form and more about how family is continually 'done' in a diversity of ways – therefore proving particularly useful in understanding the ways in which families adapt and endure following parental separation (Smart et al., 2001; Marschall, 2013; Bakker, Karsten and Mulder 2015; Jamieson and Highet 2013).

To sharpen focus on these processes, this thesis offers the concept of family 'undoing' in addition to the 'doing' of family that has most often been used in the family practices literature. Inspired by conceptions of home unmaking (Baxter and Brickell 2014), undoing refers to the processes by which family is intentionally or inadvertently, temporarily or persistently, damaged, distanced, disturbed, diminished or detached from. Thus, in using the language of undoing, this thesis captures some of the 'everyday processes of family conflict, trouble and disrupture [that] currently occupy a marginal space in the geographic literature about family' (Tarrant and Hall 2019: 4).

This thesis also draws heavily from mobility studies, which provided much of the original inspiration for this project's focus on movement. In the early 2000s the social sciences witnessed a coalescing of scholarly interest in mobility, often termed the 'new mobilities paradigm' (Sheller and Urry 2006) or the 'mobility turn' (Hannam et al. 2006) – a body of work to which geographers have been key contributors (Cresswell and Merriman 2011). This 'turn' permitted a re-visioning of society *through* mobility, establishing that 'mobility and immobility

are fundamentally important practices that underpin many of the material, social, political, economic and cultural processes operating in the world today and past' (Adey, 2017:20).

In particular, this thesis draws upon research which unpacks the 'experience of moving by filling time spent on the move with significance' (Cresswell 2010: 554). Connecting back to practice and performative approaches discussed above, such studies have explored the embodied experiences of diverse acts of mobility – relating mobile experiences with how identities, relations and places are built (Merriman 2009; Cook and Edensor 2014; Spinney 2006; Jain 2009; Bissell 2009b; Middleton 2010). This thesis uses this work to take seriously young people's embodied experiences of mobility in post-separation. Diverting somewhat from existing research in mobility studies, this thesis thinks of mobility practices as not only occurring in the act of movement. Rather it looks at acts of planning, preparing and packing which work to extend the times and spaces of mobility. These are practices which have received little interest in mobility studies thus far, despite the fact that, as I show, they are central to apprehending the challenges and opportunities that movement presents (Wind 2014; Vannini 2011b; Hui 2015).

Finally, this thesis is inspired by, and adds to, work which has sought to view the family through the lens of mobility, thinking through the ways in which mobilities 'create, sustain, modify and bring to a close familial and intimate relations' (Holdsworth 2013: 10; Murray et al. 2019). This includes work which has connected mobile and family practices, exploring family's embodied experiences of moving together in different modes and collectives (Waitt and Harada 2016; Clement and Waitt 2018; Eyer and Ferria 2015; Boyer and Spinney 2016). I similarly connect family and mobile practices, using this work to examine participants experiences of time on-the-move. In doing so, I think about the ways in which embodied experiences of travelling with family members contributes to both the doing and undoing of family.

These various literatures, and the connections between them have therefore provided the bedrock of why and how this thesis has approached the topic of mobility in post-separation, steering the direction of the central research questions which I outline below. I will explain further how these literatures connect and frame my study in chapter two.

1.4 Research Aims and Questions

In drawing upon, and contributing to, these literatures the central aim of this thesis is to provide an in-depth account of the mobilities of young people with separated parents, with a particular focus on the journeys that they make between their parent's houses. It looks at young people's experiences of these periods of transition at different points in childhood, considers what it

takes to perform these repetitive movements and explores how relationships are lived through mobility. In doing so, this thesis does not attempt to answer questions about the best ways for mobilities to be done and resists drawing generalisations about children's experiences that this would require. Rather, it takes an approach which seeks to explore the specificities of how mobility is performed and experienced within the particular spatial, temporal, emotional and material conditions of each family's life. Furthermore, it asks how these conditions shape, and are shaped by, the emotions, affects, moods, intimacies and distances produced through journeying.

To unpack the mobile experiences of young people in separated families, this thesis asks four sets of research questions:

1. How are mobilities structured and coordinated? How and why have they become configured in these ways? How does this change over childhood?
2. What practices, skills, competencies and habits have young people and parents established to help navigate periods of transition and change in their lives?
3. What understandings can be developed of how young people exert agency over how mobilities are made and experienced?
4. How can mobilities be conceptualised as significant sites, practices and processes of doing family in post-separation?

Cutting across these questions is a concern for examining the emotional dimensions of mobility. In doing so, this thesis questions how emotions shape how journeys are structured and coordinated; how and what practices, skills, competencies and habits are established, how agency is exerted and expressed and how family is (un)done. Thus, emotion is a theme that runs throughout all the analysis chapters.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter two reviews the relevant academic literature related to four areas of work in order to situate and contextualise the research. These areas are: geographies of children and youth, geographic work on the family, mobility studies and research on children and young people's experiences of divorce and separation. In this chapter, I draw out gaps in current understandings around children and young people's mobilities in post-separation and suggest ways in which the literatures reviewed may orientate towards rectifying these absences.

In chapter three, I discuss the project's research design and methodology. I outline how the COVID-19 pandemic created a shift in the original plan to work solely with children (aged 11-18) and their parents, to also include young adults (aged 18-26) in the research. I outline the

various data collection methods in the project, examining the rationale for their choice and discussing how they were used in practice. In particular, I spend time unpacking the contested role of childhood memory within children's geographies, outline the methods I used to access the memories of my older participants and examine the consequences of retrospectivity for this data. I then finish by reflecting on the ethical considerations and challenges of the project, before discussing the process of analysis and writing with the data.

The first of my empirical chapters, chapter four, begins by providing a detailed introduction to my participants and their families. To do so, I present 'mobility biographies' for each participant, charting their changing mobility practices from the time of their parent's separation throughout their childhoods. Starting my analysis with these biographies is central to the approach of this thesis, as it gives the reader the context necessary with which to read the following chapters. I then draw these biographies together in a discussion which employs a temporal lens to examine the forces shaping and structuring young people's changing mobilities. This discussion draws out the (in)harmonious ways that mobilities are embedded in the rhythms of everyday life and the labours involved in choreographing movements. It also explores the temporalities through which mobilities changed and continued throughout childhoods and examines how young people's agency emerges and is expressed in these processes. This chapter's central concern is, therefore, the temporalities of mobility in post-separation. Given that it includes the biographies and their discussion, this chapter is lengthier than the following analysis chapters.

Chapters five and six then move on to focus more concretely on the embodied practices of mobility. Chapter five takes materiality as its structuring concept. Firstly, it establishes the fact that mobilities in post-separation include not only the movement of bodies between houses but also the movement of a range of materialities. It does so by exploring the types of objects that accompany young people as they travel at different points in childhood. I then move on to focus specifically on the practice of packing as an activity central to how my participants narrated their mobile lives. I explore how this practice is trained and performed in conjunction with people, spaces and times. In doing so, I argue that the young people in my study are skillful mobile subjects who artfully perform practices through drawing on a range of embodied habits, capabilities and skills. Finally, the chapter moves on to focus more explicitly on the connections between materialities and emotions, examining the ways in which objects affect how spaces, relationships and transitions are experienced by the families in my study.

Moving on from the practices that largely prefigure movement, chapter six focuses on families' embodied experiences of moving. In particular, it focuses on the spatiality of the car, as a

technology that facilitated most of participants' movements between houses. The central argument of this chapter is that car journeys are significant spaces for the doing and undoing of family, presenting opportunities for relations of care, love, fun, conflict and alienation to be (re)established after separation. This chapter, therefore, most explicitly explores the concept of family undoing, picking up on threads of undoing that have been woven through chapters four and five. Split into two sections, the chapter first explores what family members do together in the car. The second section then focuses on care as an important dimension of family connection, examining the ways in which cars enable mobile routines to be performed in more or less care-full ways. Thus, it connects care in its presence and absence to the (un)doing of family.

Finally, by way of conclusion, chapter 7 returns to the central research questions outlined in this chapter to address the cross-cutting themes that run throughout this thesis. I discuss the findings of the research as they relate to each question and outline how the thesis contributes to literatures across a range of topics and sub-disciplines. Lastly, the chapter closes with a discussion of the implications of the research for new research avenues and agendas both inside and outside of geography.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review brings together four interconnected bodies of research which this thesis sits at the intersection of: geographies of children and youth, geographic work on the family, mobilities literatures, and research on children's experiences of parental separation. These literatures shape the direction of this thesis, guiding the focus of the research questions, how the research was approached and how the data was analysed. This chapter explores how these bodies of work highlight several critical absences in current understandings of young people's mobilities in post-separation, whilst also orientating focus on how rectifying these absences may be approached. These literatures also frame the major contributions of this research, which I will begin to draw out in this chapter and discuss in more depth as this thesis continues.

In section 2.2., I situate this research within the subfield of children's and youth geographies, highlighting three key themes from this body of work which my research draws from and builds upon – the everyday, affect and emotion, and agency. These themes underpin my theoretical and empirical orientation toward understanding the lives of the young people in my research. In section 2.3. I chart the recent growth of geographical interest in the family and discuss how geographers have engaged with Morgan's (1996; 2011) concept of family practices. I argue that through an engagement with geographic work on children, care and the material, geographers have begun to develop and expand understandings of family practices, placing this thesis within these recent moves.

In section 2.4. I discuss research that has explored family and children's mobilities. I first situate increasing interest in family mobilities within the 'new mobilities paradigm' and explore how this has influenced approaches to this topic. I then discuss how recent approaches to children's 'interdependent' mobilities have brought into conversation longer lineages of work on children's 'independent mobility' with newer strands of mobilities research and children's geographies literatures – locating my own research within such approaches to mobility.

Finally, in section 2.5. I discuss the interdisciplinary literature on children's experiences of parental separation. I first chart the history of the field before discussing some of its key themes and findings. In doing so, I develop a critique which argues that engagement with the geographies, spatialities, and mobilities of post-separation has been critically absent from this field. To conclude, I, therefore, emphasise how this thesis addresses this absence through drawing on the literatures discussed in the preceding sections of this review.

2.2 Geographies of Children and Youth

Over the past two and a half decades children's geographies has grown from a marginal area of scholarship into a vibrant and well-established sub-field of geographic research. Influenced by post-structuralism's attention to power, exclusion and difference, a mounting recognition of children's rights within the global political landscape (UN 1989), and the growth of the 'new social studies of childhood' (NSSC) (James et al. 1990), from the late 1990s geographers increasingly saw it necessary to address children's absence within geographic scholarship and uncover their 'missing geographies' (James 1990).

Emanating largely from sociology, the NSSC represented an epistemological and methodological break from previous social science research which tended to treat children as 'adults in the making rather than children in the state of being' (Brannen and O'Brien 1995: 70). Countering such tendencies, the NSSC was based on three interconnected tenets; that childhood is socially constructed; that the diversity of childhoods should be recognised; and that children should be viewed as competent social actors with valuable perspectives, knowledges and experiences (James et al. 1998; James and Prout 1990).

The influence of the NSSC in children's geographies is reflected in the widespread adoption of this theoretical and methodological 'scaffold', imbuing such foundations with a 'sense of spatiality' (Holloway and Plimcott-Wilson 2011: 13; Aitken et al. 2006). Thus, early children's geographers drew attention to the discursive co-construction of childhood and space; highlighted the importance of place in constructions and experiences of childhood; and examined children's lived different experiences of spaces and places (Holloway and Valentine 2000a;b).

Whilst such principles continue to shape the direction of children's geographies, the field has evolved and expanded since these beginnings. Responding to Horton and Kraftl's (2006a) call for a more theoretically engaged children's geographies, research has recently been enlivened through an engagement with non-representational theory, material turns and post-feminist theories (Nairn and Kraftl 2016). Consequently, the role of (non)human bodies, emotions, sensations, rhythms, affects, habits, routines, materials and practices have increasingly been recognised as significant to how children and young people encounter and create spaces (e.g Harker 2007; Hackett 2015; Wilson et al. 2012a; Merewether 2019; Kullman and Palludan 2011).

The following review will largely draw on this body of work, focusing on three key and interconnected themes central to the empirical and theoretical focus of this thesis and its

approach to thinking about the post-separation family – the everyday, emotion and affect, and agency. There is debate over whether 'youth' geographies is a distinct subdiscipline, with much less research being done with this age group and murky boundaries between research on 'youth', 'young people' and 'children'. Thus, given that the topics in question cut across the geographic literatures on children, youth and young people, and that the ages of my participants span these categories, in this review I will be collectively drawing on research from across these age groups (Evans 2008; Aitken 2001).

2.2.1 Children and Young People's Everyday Geographies

Horton et al. (2008: 339) state that children's geographies 'can be conceived as a dense cataloguing of multifarious ways in which spatialities matter in/for children and young people's everyday lives'. In looking to the everyday, geographers have not only been concerned with documenting the spaces that children encounter in their daily lives, but drawing out the *'everydayness'* of experiences in such spaces (Horton and Kraftl 2006b). Thus, researchers have taken seriously the practiced, performative and non-cognitive registers of children's banal knowledges and experience. In doing so, capturing the complexity, messiness and ongoingness of day-to-day life (Horton and Kraftl 2006b; Duff 2016; Hackett et al. 2018; Harker 2005; Leder-Mackley et al. 2015). This matters for my research as this thesis seeks to explore how post-separation is lived in the everyday. I am interested in exploring young people's day-to-day routines, what it takes to make them work, and how these banal experiences interconnect with more exceptional moments in young people's lives. As I explore in section 2.5, whilst there has been some research that has similarly examined day-to-day experiences of post-separation, this work has often not drawn on notions of the 'everyday'. Thus, the registers and textures of 'everydayness' discussed above have rarely been considered in the context of post-separation.

The notion of embodiment is central to such an appreciation of the mundane as sensed, experienced and performed through the body (Woodyer 2008). Researchers producing embodied accounts of children's lives have moved beyond previous research which tended to look at how children's bodies are represented, imagined and deployed (Evans 2010a; Wells 2010; Alexander 2010), to instead look at what bodies can 'do', 'acknowledging the fleshy materialities and affective capacities of bodies' (Colls and Hörschelmann 2010: 2). Within many of these accounts, the body is not perceived as a discrete entity, but is regarded as 'thoroughly intertwined with, nestling in and depending on other bodies, textures, materials and objects' (Colls and Horschelmann 2010: 9).

Thus research has focused on how children's embodied senses, practices, capacities and relationships are shaped through encounters with various everyday objects, artefacts and technologies (Woodyer 2008; Rautio 2013; Malone 2016; Blazek 2016; Anggard 2016; Kraftl and Horton 2018). In addition, work has also looked at how emotions and affects are located within encounters between children's bodies, spaces and materialities (Harker 2005; Procter 2015). This is a topic highly relevant to this thesis, as it examines how the materialities that accompany young people as they travel, and the material environments which they travel through, shape and are shaped by their emotional and affectual experiences of journeying. It is to this literature on emotion and affect that I now turn.

2.2.2 Children's and Young People's Emotional and Affectual Geographies

Research exploring the emotional and affectual geographies of children and young people's lives has been a key area of recent scholarship (Blazek and Windram-Geddes 2013; Blazek and Kraftl 2015), connecting with a wider geographic 'turn' towards emotion and affect over the past two decades (Davidson et al. 2005; Pile 2010; Bondi et al. 2005; Davidson and Bondi 2004: 373; Anderson 2009; Pile 2010; Little 2019). There is much debate as to the specific differences between emotion and affect (and definitions of affect in general) (Kenway and Youdell 2011). Some scholars advocate for a clear analytic distinction between the two terms (Pile 2010; Anderson 2006), whilst others use them without clear empirical demarcation, recognising that in practice they are difficult to separate (Toila-Kelly 2006; Clement and Waitt 2018).

Generally, however, it's understood that emotion connotes specific nameable states of feeling whilst affect is something far less tangible, operating at the level of the pre-or-non-cognitive (Dewsbury 2009), as a kind of 'push' (Thrift 2004), 'atmosphere' (Anderson 2009) or 'intensity' (Dewsbury 2009). Connecting these concepts is a shared ontology that views both affect and emotion as 'intrinsically, fluid, embodied and relational', circulating and connecting bodies and their environments (Bondi 2005: 437; Pile 2010; Davidson et al. 2005; Anderson 2009).

Working with such ideas, geographers have produced accounts of children and young people's emotional and, to a lesser extent, affectual experiences of a diverse array of spaces, practices and events (Kenway and Youdell 2011; Hemming 2007; Harden 2012; Hadfield-Hill and Horton 2014; Jupp Kina 2012; Gaskell 2008; Wood 2013; Pain et al. 2010). Connecting with the section above, this work has shown that emotions matter not only to extraordinary events but to children's everyday spaces and the banal practices they perform within them (Horton et al. 2013). This literature, however, has been criticised for its persistent focus on 'locatedness' (Horschelmann 2017a). That is, whilst the relationality of emotions has been conceptualised

in terms of the connections between people and place, 'how emotions, and with them, people and places, *travel* and thus coproduce entangled time-spaces is rarely discussed' (Horschelmann 2017a: 34, emphasis added).

This is problematic given that emotions are leaky, filtering through to other spaces and times, unfolding through and resonating in different contexts - as Horchelmann (2017a) demonstrates in her research with young people in Leipzig (also see Murray and Mand 2013; Dickens and Lonie 2013). These studies, therefore, suggest that there is more productive engagement to be had with the literature on emotion and affect, and on children and young people's mobilities (see section 2.4.4.). Moving forward such insights, my research investigates how emotions and affects move through mobilities, exploring how this movement is affected by the modality of mobility, alongside how such movements are controlled and contained.

2.2.3 Children's Agency

Esser et al. (2016: 1) state that "agency is, without question, one of the key concepts, possibly the key concept of childhood studies", a statement that is equally as true for children's geographies. However, scholars have recently argued that despite the 'mantra' that children have agency being so often stated, little work has been done to define, theorise or critically examine the concept (Holloway et al. 2018; Kraftl 2013; Esser et al. 2016; Oswell 2013; Prout 2005). Without such critical interrogation, children's geographers have tended to fall back on understandings of agency as an innate, 'pre-social' capacity, as such reproducing 'narrow, dominant, modernist concepts of agency, as self-cohesive and independent' (Holt 2011: 3).

In light of such critiques, scholars have begun to think about children's agency through broader theoretical moves to decentre rational agents and coherent subjects (Haraway 1991; Braidotti 1994; Thrift 2008; Latour 1993). This work thinks of agency as 'the effect of the relations, the connections and the circulation made between a heterogeneous array of materials including bodies, representations, objects and technologies' (Turmel 2008: 4). Agency, thus, 'becomes less a labelling of possession' and a straightforwardly personal capacity, but rather a distributed resource located in relations of interdependency to people and things (Oswell 2013: 7). Although many of these discussions have been largely theoretical, there has been some research that has produced situated accounts of the 'heterogeneous resources, practices and contexts that establish the variability of children's agency' (Bollig and Kelle 2016: 35).

For example, Blazek (2016: 8) explores how children's everyday practices in a post-socialist estate in Slovakia, 'depend on the capacities of their bodies and minds, but also on the presence of and relations with other people, objects and environments'. He thus provides detailed accounts of how the particular conditions of deprivation work to both extend and

restrict children's capacities for action. Similarly concerned with situated conceptions of agency, Durham (2008: 175) explores the ways in which Botswanan young people's 'ability to act effectively and to grow in their own power…. manifests in ties of interdependence with other people'.

These notions of interdependence spark interesting questions regarding children and young people's agency within the family. Working with these reconceptualised notions of agency would mean looking outside of simplistic notions of dependence and parental power, to instead analyse the dense webs of interdependencies through which children's, young people's and adults' capacities to act within situated familial contexts are constituted. I will come back to thinking about agency within the family later in this chapter (section 2.5.4.) and explore more thoroughly how this ties into my thesis. For now, I turn to the geographic literature on the family. In talking through this literature, I carry through many of the themes introduced in this section. I recognise that young people are agentic subjects, who relate to their family members, and the material world, in embodied ways, generating emotions and affects through which relationships with family members are built and understood.

2.3 Geographies of the Family

Geographic work on the family has been gaining traction over the last decade, remedying a relative absence of critical engagement with the concept and practice of family in the decades prior (Valentine 2008; Harker 2010; Harker and Martin 2012). Such absence can be traced back to rejections of structural notions of the family by feminist geographers in the 1980s, on grounds of its hetero-normative and patriarchal model. This led Valentine (2008: 2010) to argue that the family had become a 'peculiar absent presence in the discipline of geography', 'haunting' existing geographic literatures on gender, sexuality, home, social reproduction and capitalism (Harker 2010). Since Valentine's (2008) provocation to establish a space for 'family studies' within geography researchers have begun to engage with the geographies and spatialities of families in diverse circumstances (Hall 2016; 2018; Harker 2011; Price-Robinson and Duff 2019; Waitt and Harada 2016; Tarrant and Hall 2019; Murray et al. 2019).

The inclusion of the family within children's geographies has followed a similar trajectory. Whilst there is a rich lineage of interest in parenting (Holloway 1999; Aitken 2000; 2016), work acknowledging 'the ways in which families are collective subjects that children coproduce' was minimal early in the subfield (Harker and Martin 2012: 770; although see Hallden 2003; Christensen et al. 2000; Punch 2007). This was part of a conscious effort to distance research from previous work that tended to absorb children within the family (Brannen and O'Brien 1995). Recently, however, the family has begun to be more fully incorporated as a key socio-

spatial context of childhood and youth (Punch and Vanderbeck 2018; Harden et al. 2013; Holt 2011). This work overlaps and interconnects with the growing study of the family in geography more widely, as well as literatures on intimacy, care and home, forming the basis for the following review (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Milligan and Wiles 2010; Oswin and Olund 2010). I begin by exploring significant conceptual approaches to the family, before discussing geographers' contributions to this literature. I then look at work which has focused on children and young people's experiences of and perspectives on everyday family life, before moving on to discuss the family and care, and ending with an exploration of recent literature which has sought to move forward the family practice literature through a focus on the material.

2.3.1 Doing Family and its Geographies

Given the historic lack of engagement with the family, geographers have largely turned outside the discipline for theoretical resources to help conceptualise family geographies, creating 'fuzzy boundaries' between the geography and sociology of the family (Tarrant and Hall 2019). This has largely been through an engagement with Morgan's (1996; 2011) notion of 'family practices'. This approach moves away from traditional readings of the family focused on structure, purpose and function, to instead look at the diverse, active and everyday ways that family is 'done'. Moving from a noun to a verb, family is seen as a 'dynamic location' of activities, experiences, routines and exchanges, through which family itself is (re)constituted (Holdsworth 2013; Punch and Vanderbeck 2018; Lahad et al. 2017).

Such practices, however, do not start from a blank slate but are influenced (although not determined) by individual and collective biographies; legal, economic and cultural discourses (including resistance to these); the particularities of families' material, social and economic circumstances; and imaginations and aspirations for family life (Valentine et al. 2012; Hall 2016; Harker 2010). A family practices approach therefore debunks any unitary basis of the family whilst also accounting for modes of stability in family form and practice.

Such an approach provides a counter to detraditionalisation theses (Giddens 1992), and subsequent challenges to the relevance of the family by concepts such as "intimacies" (Jamieson 1998); personal life (Smart 2007) and Kinship (Mason 2008). Although recognising the value of these concepts for expanding the importance of close relationships, Morgan (2011) asserts that family remains a meaningful description and must be retained as a distinct concept, albeit seen as 'done' in increasingly diverse ways. To dispense with the notion would ignore the fact that family remains a stubbornly pervasive concept in political and social life, 'routinely applied in people's daily lives to signify a range of different relationships, practices and emotions' (Hall 2016: 310; Edwards et al. 2012). Such alternative concepts also do little

to recognise the distinct qualities of family relationships, particularly as they are experienced as constraining, unequal, painful, and harmful alongside caring, loving and close (Ribbens McCarthy et al. 2013).

This conceptual approach has proved useful for geographers' framings of family as a spatial project, recognising that 'people 'do family' and they do it *somewhere'* (Luzia 2010: 360). Building on Morgan's ideas, researchers have explored how family is done in varied spatial and temporal configurations; the recursive shaping of familial relations and everyday time-spaces and how 'space [and time] is a dynamic resource in the "doing" of family' (Valentine and Hughes 2012: 253; Hall 2018; 2019; Jamieson and Milne 2012; Hallman 2010; Moran et al. 2017; Ronka and Korvela; Mayes 2018; Harden et al. 2015; Meah 2017).

However, whilst acknowledging this diversity of topics, Wilkinson (2014: 2454) suggests that 'geographers have yet to fully engage with the vast body of literature on the changing norms and practices of intimate life and family formation', including limited work on changing socio-spatial articulations of the family (although see work on transnational families discussed in section 2.4.2.).

One significant exception to this lack of engagement is Murray et al.'s (2019) recent edited collection. Bringing together researchers working on a diverse range of family 'disruptions', they seek to emphasise the ways in which 'family is an ongoing process of change, adjustment and re-routing' (Murray et al. 2019: 2). Using the essence of a family practices approach as a starting point, they highlight how families are always in processes of becoming, never fixed or finished (Murray et al. 2019). They, therefore, argue that families do not break or disintegrate following such disruptions but rather undergo continual transformations in spatial, temporal, relational and emotional realms (Murray et al. 2019).

This thesis both draws upon and continues the work started in this collection, as it similarly thinks about the socio-spatial and emotional ways in which families continually change and adapt over time. In thinking through these processes, this thesis introduces the concept of family 'undoing', as an addition to the 'doing' of family – used often in practice-based approaches to thinking about the family. I argue that this concept provides a way of thinking about the processes through which families morph and change in ways that can sometimes lead to a distancing or detachment from feelings of family. I argue that these kinds of processes are difficult to capture in the language of 'doing' family, which orientates towards a view of collective reinforcement and re-building which might not always be what is happening when families interact.

In developing this concept, my intention is not to support narratives of 'broken' families, in turn suggesting that they can ever be 'complete', or to support frictionless notions of reflexivity and choice in family relationships (Murray et al. 2019; Wilson et al. 2012b). Undoing does not mean that family members do not remain connected. As I will show throughout this thesis, family endures through processes of doing and undoing, remaining connected through continued obligations, emotions, memories and desires. Rather, I argue that focusing on family doings and undoings provides a way to more fully capture experiences and dynamics of change, disruption and adaptation in families, whilst centring the complex emotions and affects that accompany such processes.

Capturing this full range of experiences is important given that the family practices literature has been critiqued for focusing on the more 'positive' aspects of family life (Wilson et al. 2012b, although see Ribbens McCarthy et al. 2013). This critique is also extended to geographic literature, as Tarrant and Hall (2019: 4) argue that 'everyday processes of family conflict, trouble and disrupture currently occupy a marginal space in the geographic literature about family' (although see Evans et al. 2019; Hall 2019; Wilson et al. 2012a). Through working with notions of doing *and* undoing this thesis seeks to find ways to capture the vast emotional gamut of family practices, as I witness the families in my research sustain, adjust, and transform in post-separation.

2.3.2 Children and Young People in the Family

Burgeoning geographic research into the family overlaps and intersects with growing attention to the diverse ways in which children and, to a lesser extent, young people practice, negotiate and shape family life, both by children's geographers and academics outside of geography with an interest in the spatial (Wilson et al. 2012a; Punch 2008; Seymour 2015; Punch and Vanderbeck 2018; Holt 2011).

This work has suggested that the notion of family practices is one that 'resonates with the ways in which children make sense of and define families', as children have inclusive, diverse and accepting views of who counts as family (Fairbrother and Ellis 2018; 157). Research has continually suggested that practices and feelings of love, care, respect and the provision of material and emotional support are central to children's understandings of what matters in family life (Mason and Tipper 2014; Fairbrother and Ellis 2018; Davies 2015b). These are aspirations that are not always met, however, as McCarthy et al. (2013) and Notko and Sevon (2018: 61) argue, trouble, conflict and painful experience are a common feature of all children and young people's family lives albeit differing in "severity, duration and their effects on daily life and actions and in emotions experienced by the children".

Researchers such as Gabb (2008) have drawn attention to the spatiality of such complex emotional experiences, as she uses a literal mapping of emotions to show how intimate and emotional interactions are influenced by the household spaces in which they take place (also see Harden et al. 2013; Seymour 2007; Gottzén and Sandberg 2019). Such understandings are carried through into Wilson et al.'s (2012a) research which explores the spatial and sensory means through which children make sense of their parent's substance misuse and through which they construct safe and secure places for themselves in the context of domestic disorder. Such studies, therefore, highlight the importance of the embodied, sensory, tactile and spatial in children's understandings and experiences of their familial relationships – connecting with children's geographies literatures discussed at the beginning of this chapter (Mason and Tipper 2014: 8; Davies 2015b; Christensen and Davies 2018; Mason 2018; Davies 2011).

Such understandings have been at the heart of a small number of studies that have explored how space is significant in the production and mediation of sibling relationships (Bacon 2018; Punch 2008; Davies 2015; Barker 2009). Included in this is Davies' (2015b) research which explores how children's bodies are significant sites through which sibling relations are performed, as she describes how interactions between siblings are characterised by high levels of inter-physicality, incorporating shouting, hugs, hits, tickling, catchphrases, funny voices and laughing (Christensen and Davies 2018; Harden et al. 2013; Evans 2010b; Evans 2012).

From these literatures about children and the family, I take forward an appreciation for the complex and varied emotional experiences of children's familial relationships, understanding how these are spatially and temporally modulated, and the embodied ways in which they are felt and expressed. Such understandings are particularly important when thinking about how care operates and is expressed in families. As I discuss in chapter six, care (in both its presence and absence) is central to how my participants narrated their experiences of family. For this reason, I now turn to the literature on care and the family.

2.3.4 Geographies of Care and the Family

Care, in its multidimensionality, is a thread running throughout geographic literature surrounding the family, including early feminist research on social reproduction (WGSG 1984); parenting (England 1996; Holloway 1998, 1999; McKie et al. 1999, 2001) and transnational care chains (Pratt 1997; Hochschild 2000). This work has shown that family is a central site of care, where care is fundamental to the ways in which family is felt, practised, conceptualised and intervened in (Hall 2019; Morgan 2019). Significantly, geographers have been central in

drawing out the time-space dimensions of care, thinking through the material and imaginative temporalities and spatialities of caring for and about family members.

In particular, Mckie, Gregory and Bowlby's (2002) framework of caringscapes/carescapes has been an influential approach within the discipline. Originally devised as a way to capture the complexity of mothers combining paid work with caring responsibilities, a caringscape refers to the temporal-spatial patterning of caring practices and relations - 'reflecting interactions between individuals' memories, hopes and plans concerning care' (Bowlby et al. 2021: 5). A carescape, on the other hand, refers to the wider landscape of resources and services that shape the 'caringscape terrain', including transport, housing, health and education (Bowlby 2012: 2112; Bowlby et al. 2010). Thus the framework of caringscapes/carescapes considers the range of activities, feelings, expectations, possibilities, desires and barriers that shape people's routes through their 'caringscape terrain' – routes that shift and evolve throughout the lifecourse.

Originally, this framework provided an adult-centred way of apprehending care (Bowby 2017). However, Evans (2012: 825) has shown that young people have their own caringscape/carescapes, by using the approach to examine the 'spatial and temporal patterning of sibling care in youth-headed households in Tanzania and Uganda'. Her research explores how young people 'negotiate the emotional geographies and temporalities of caring in amongst the rhythms of bodies, schooling, work, seasonal agriculture' (Evans 2012: 825). In doing so, Evans makes clear that young people's caring practices are thoroughly embedded within the wider circumstances of their familial, domestic, educational, political and socio-cultural lives.

Evans' work thus forms part of recent moves within geography to recognise how children and young people care both outside (Borsch et al. 2020; Bartos 2012; Kullman 2014; Kallio and Bartos 2017) and inside of the family (Bowlby et al. 2021; Day and Evans 2015; Millar and Ridge 2013; Day 2017). Previously, 'an overwhelming presumption that children and young people are to be cared-for has effectively marginalised their agencies and responsibilities as carers, in relation to practices and spaces of care' (Horton and Pyer 2017: 2). However, more recent work has shown that children care for and take care of their family members through times of trouble and crisis, and more mundane circumstances, through acts such as comforting upset siblings, accompanying parents to medical appointments and helping siblings with homework (Davies 2015b; Turner and Almack 2019; Weller 2013; Haugen 2007). This work has also shown that in the context of some troubling family situations, distance may be crucial

for emotional wellbeing, where young people caring for themselves may mean stepping back from family relationships (Wilson 2013; Evans et al. 2019).

This work on children's caring practices has emphasised a deeply relational notion of care, where children's care in the family encompasses a complex mix of interdependencies, reciprocities and obligations. Thinking geographically about this emphasises relationality as not only being between people but also between people and places, considering how care takes place in and through particular material-affective spaces. This is important in my research as I think about how care is performed in and through mobile technologies, particularly thinking about the spatiality of the car. In thinking of care as performed through material-affective spaces, this connects with thinking about how care is made possible in conjunction with material objects.

This significance of materiality to the shaping of family relationships is increasingly being recognised within geographic literature on the family and is a topic which my research continues to develop. In particular, in chapter five, I use material cultural literatures in conversation with work on mobilities, to explore how materialities move between young people's houses participate in the emotional ways in which family members relate and connect. It is to this work on families and material culture that I now turn.

2.3.5 Families and Material Culture

Influenced by the 'material turn' witnessed across the social sciences in the early 2000s (Jackson 2000; Lees 2002; Anderson and Toila-Kelly 2004), geographers are increasingly recognising that in the course of everyday life family members interact with various material objects, technologies, animals and architectures - interactions which have the capacity to mediate, transform and alter family life (Price-Robertson and Duff 2019; Luzia 2011; Whittle 2018; Power 2008; Mason 2018).

Whilst some of this research has moved away from practice-based approaches to the family, instead using new materialist and assemblage theories (Schadler 2016; Price-Robinson and Duff 2019; Price and Epp 2016), others have kept within Morgan's tradition by drawing attention to the material dynamics of doing family – an approach which this thesis also takes. Resting on a vague sense of 'doing' rather than 'being', the conceptual openness of the approach allows for the addition of such material dynamics. As Morgan (2011) acknowledges, the approach does not have a strict theoretical lineage, rather drawing on varied theories of practice that seemed to be 'in the air' at the time of writing.

Much of this work has been done within the context of the home, connecting with more established material culture research in the domestic sphere (Miller 2010; Miller 2001; Buchili 2002; Appadurai 1998). Such material culture approaches open up ways of thinking through the mutually constitutive relations between people and things, exploring the 'socialness' of objects and the 'intimacies of subject-object relations' (Gorman-Murray 2008: 284; Riggins 1994; Toila-Kelly 2004). This research has often found connections between material homemaking and family practices, drawing attention to how materialities such as family photographs (Rose 2003), children's drawings (Tarrant 2016), postcards (Owen and Boyer 2022) and saucepans (Holmes 2019) can act as embodiments of meaningful connections working to create and communicate the character of familial relationships.

Such findings are at the heart of my past research, examining materiality and homemaking in post-separation families (Walker 2022). Within this paper I argued that 'children's family relationships are produced, communicated and undermined through the 'stuff' within their homes, creating feelings of inclusion and exclusion from their domestic environments'. I thus concluded that 'domestic materialities are a significant means through which the (re)-and-(un)making of familial relationships in post-separation is performed' (Walker 2022: 210). This study, however, focused largely on static materialities. Rather, in this thesis, I focus on materialities that move between young people's houses. I argue that a key way of understanding and theorising young people's mobilities in post-separation is to focus on the materialities of those mobilities. This, in part, is enabled by bringing into conversation the work referenced above with mobilities literatures. However, the use of mobilities literatures within this thesis extends beyond just a focus on materialities. Rather, as I highlighted in the introduction to this thesis, mobilities studies underlined the choice of topic for this thesis and much of the approach taken to collecting and analysing my data. It is to this body of work on mobilities that this review now turns.

2.4 Family and Children's Mobilities

The previous sections examined bodies of geographic work on children, youth and the family. Not only sharing a focus of the empirics of this thesis, through examining these literatures I have also begun to draw out the conceptual approach of this thesis. I have shown that this thesis is concerned with the 'everydayness' of experiences, focusing on the practiced and performed, and the embodied, material, emotional and affectual dimensions of these practices. These are themes shared with the literatures discussed in the following section, which explores research concerning family and children's mobilities. Before delving into this topic I first want

to frame this research within a wider turn towards mobilities as a topic of study often termed the ’new mobilities paradigm’.

2.4.1 The New Mobilities Paradigm

Born out of the perceived ’sedentary’ nature of social science inquiry, over the past decade and a half there has been an upsurge of research interest in mobility. This research interest is both inspired by and contributes to a burgeoning field of inquiry termed the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ (Hannam et al. 2006) or the ‘mobilities turn’ (Sheller and Urry 2006) – to which geographers have been key contributors (Cresswell and Merriman 2011). Such researchers sought to establish ‘a movement-driven social science’, suggesting a set of questions, orientations and approaches attuned to the study and significance of (im)mobility (Sheller and Urry 2006).

This review will explore the small section of this wider field concerned with the mobilities of children, young people and families, embedding within this a more general discussion of key debates and themes from mobilities literatures. I will first discuss research which has emphasised the centrality of mobility to the family, then talk about how mobility is organised within the family, before exploring how family is done ‘on the move’. I will then discuss work on children’s everyday mobilities, exploring how this literature both diverges and connects with work within the new mobilities paradigm.

2.4.2 Family Mobilities

The importance of mobility to social relations has been a key narrative in mobilities research (Urry 2007; Manderschied 2013; Urry 2003; Larsen et al. 2006). As part of this work, scholars have increasingly sought to understand the vitality of mobility to family life. In particular Holdsworth’s (2013: 10) book ‘family and intimate mobilities’, provides a detailed account of the varied ways in which mobilities ‘create, sustain, modify and bring to a close familial and intimate relations’.

The significance of mobility is perhaps most obvious in research on spatially dispersed forms of family, such as those that operate transnationally (Bryceson and Vuorela 2003; Long 2014; Skrbis 2008; Cooke 2008), live-apart-together (Duncan et al. 2013; Levin 2004; Stoilova et al. 2014) or where members spend periods away for work (Mayes 2018; Aure 2018; Bissell and Gorman-Murray 2019). However, other studies have sought to map the intrinsic importance of mobility to less spatially dispersed forms of family, foregrounding mobility’s role in the flux and flow of everyday family life (Whittle 2018; Jensen et al. 2015), whilst also thinking through how

these are entangled with more infrequent mobile events such as moving house (Holdsworth 2013) or going on holiday (Hall and Holdsworth 2016).

In particular, there have been a number of studies which have sought to understand how everyday family travel is coordinated, negotiated and organised (Pooley et al. 2011; Rau and Sattlegeer 2018; Wind 2014; Jensen et al. 2015). Understandings of the relationality and interdependence of family mobilities has been at the heart of this work, as studies have emphasised the complex 'choreographies' of movement that sustain daily life across the lifecourse (Nansen et al. 2014; Rau and Sattlegeer 2018). They suggest that everyday patterns of mobility are formed around affect, care and familial bonding, alongside the rhythms of everyday life, as families make room for co-presence, togetherness and quality time in their journeys (Jensen et al. 2015; Wind 2014). This, therefore, draws attention to how emotions and affect shape the organisation of mobility, whilst also highlighting how the doing of family is produced not only by mobility (being transported to school, grandparents, leisure centres etc.) but also how family is *done within* such moments of travelling – as I will explore in the following sub-section.

Before doing so, however, I want to note several limitations within these studies, relevant to my own research. The first is that they tend to uncritically equate the family with the household, meaning a lack of attention has been paid to the ways in which family mobilities may be coordinated and negotiated across multiple households and the practical, emotional and relational dynamics at play in this. Furthermore, this research has tended to be undertaken with adults giving their perspectives on how their children are involved in mobility decisions. Thus, in critically paying attention to how children are involved in negotiations around their everyday mobilities, this thesis addresses a need for investigations into the role that children play in the coordination of family mobilities – drawing on geographic work on children and their agency discussed previously to do so.

2.4.3 Families Moving Together

Whilst the section above argued for the centrality of mobility to families, it said little about the embodied experiences of family members moving together. Understanding these experiences is at the heart of a small, but growing, body of research examining how families interact when engaged in various mobility practices, including driving (Waitt and Harada 2016), walking (Clement and Waitt 2018), cycling (Eyer and Ferrira 2015) and travelling on public transport (Boyer and Spinney 2016). This work sits within, and takes inspiration from, a larger body of mobilities research which has worked with practice, performance and processual based

approaches to the world, to focus on the doing of mobility and its felt characteristics (McCormack 2013; Cresswell and Merriman 2011).

Starting from the central premise of mobility as enacted and experienced through the body such studies have drawn attention to the embodied, affective, sensory, emotional, relational and material qualities of diverse acts of mobility (Waitt and Lane 2007; Merriman 2009; Cook and Edensor 2014; Spinney 2006; Jain 2009; Bissell 2009b; Lund 2012; Middleton 2010). These studies, therefore, fill mobile time and space with significance, enlivening what was previously conceptualised as 'dead time' and 'non-places' (Cresswell and Merriman 2011; Adey 2017). Through taking the perspective that 'people 'do' family, and they in part do it somewhere-on-the-move', research interested in the experience of families on the move brings into conversation this strand of mobilities literature and work on family practices (Waitt and Harada 2016; 1082).

A key strand of this research has explored families inhabiting cars (Noy 2012; Waitt and Harada 2016; Laurier et al. 2008; Barker 2009). This work takes inspiration from wider studies of 'automobility' within mobilities literatures, which conceptualises the car as a 'socially inhabited' quasi-private space, which possesses cultural value, permits multiple socialities and generates embodied emotional and affectual responses (Urry 2004; Sheller 2004; Merriman 2009). For example, drawing on Sheller's (2004) notion of 'automotive emotions', Waitt and Harada (2016) position the emotions generated by families moving together within a material-relational context, arguing that kinaesthetic sensations, arrangements of bodies and the sonic dimensions of cars open up possibilities for the performance of intimacy and care.

Such studies make clear that journeys are not just about getting from A to B, rather they are socially rich experiences (Jain and Lyons 2008; Featherstone 2004; Bissell 2009a;b; Binne et al. 2007; Jain 2009). This is the starting point for Laurier et al.'s (2008) study, as they explore the diverse social activities that happen within cars. They found that, amongst other things, the car is a significant space for family interaction and communication. Parents and children, tightly assembled, have each other as a 'captive audience' and thus use this time to ask questions, talk through troubles, recollect events, argue and play games - in other words to 'do family' (Holdsworth 2013; Barker 2008; Noy 2012). My research builds upon these studies, using them to explore how these affordances of car travel shape and are shaped by the particular context of journeys in post-separation. However, through these explorations, I also focus on cars as spaces of anger, claustrophobia and uncomfortableness – experiences that have been rarely acknowledged in the literature previously. In doing so, I similarly explore how family is done, but also *undone* through the space of the car.

Another key strand of family mobilities literature has focused on the day-to-day journey-making of parents and infants (Boyer and Spinney 2016; Clement and Waitt 2018; Cortés-Morales and Christensen 2014; Whittle 2018). Within this research, mobility is emphasised as a 'mundane accomplishment' (Vannini 2011a), achieved through the coming together of particular skills, knowledges, practical competencies, bodily dispositions, technologies, habits and routines (Jain 2009; Bissell 2009a; Hughes and Mee 2018; Binnie et al. 2007; Middleton 2010; Watts 2008; Bissell 2018). Such researchers draw attention to how bodies, materialities and urban landscapes dynamically interact to produce particular emotional and affectual experiences of travelling with infants.

Importantly, this work counters tendencies of mobilities research to emphasise the ways in which objects extend mobile capabilities, creating affective states characterised by exhilaration, joy and liberation rather than capturing journeys characterised by discomfort, arduousness, frustration and encumbrance (Barratt 2012; Jones 2005). This draws attention to how family mobilities highlights the experience of differently mobile subjects and the 'politics of mobility', moving mobilities literature away from the perpetuation of a 'universal' mobile subject which is white, male, middle-class and able-bodied that it could have once have been accused (Cresswell 2006; 2010; Crang 2002; Skeggs 2004; Toila-Kelly 2007; Middleton and Byles 2019; Hanson 2010). Family elucidates how mobility shapes and is shaped by power hierarchies, age differences, obligations of care, gender differences and economic resources, which affect the degree, style, regulation and feel of mobility (Jensen et al. 2015; Ni Laiore and White 2017; Holdsworth 2013; Cresswell 2010).

Acknowledging these contributions, much of the work referenced above only gives a limited picture of the ways that families move together. These studies have tended to equate family interaction with parent-child interaction, foregoing emphasis on the ways in which children journey with other family members including siblings. Studies have also often used the term 'everyday mobilities' without differentiation, therefore lacking attention to how intention, purpose and destination shape emotional and affectual experiences and the familial interactions and activities that happen when mobile.

Furthermore, whilst the literature on family mobilities has drawn attention to the relations and materials through which mobility is achieved, less attention has been paid to the processes and practices of assembly and disassembly of these relations. For instance, practices involved in getting reading for a journey, such as packing bags or examining timetables are rarely discussed, something that others have pointed out about the mobilities literature more widely (Watts 2008; Vannini 2011a; Wind 2014). By taking a view of mobilities which incorporates

preparing, leaving, travelling and arriving, this thesis works to differentiate mobilities whilst also highlighting how mobility is an experience shaped, enacted and anticipated not only in acts of physical movement (also see Jain 2009).

2.4.4 Children's Everyday Mobilities

It may seem odd to now introduce a section on children's everyday mobility, given that children have figured in the accounts of everyday family mobilities discussed previously. However, it is important to note that there is a large body of research on children's everyday mobility which precedes the 'new mobilities paradigm'. This work particularly coalesces around the concept of 'independent mobility', broadly understood as 'children's freedom to move around their neighbourhoods and cities without the company or supervision of adults' (Christensen and Cortes-Morales 2017: 19). Interest in this subject followed foundational research by Hillman et al. (1990), which identified a significant decline in British children's opportunities for 'independent mobility'. This study has since been replicated across different countries and contexts, where researchers have sought to measure and account for declines in independent mobility largely from a perspective which views it as a lost common good (Carver et al. 2013: Tranter and Whitelegg 1994; Zuberick et al. 2010; Brown et al. 2008; Schoeppe et al. 2013; Page et al. 2010).

However, the notion of 'independent mobility' has more recently been subject to critical examination, with researchers arguing that it is ambiguously defined and 'used without clarifying or questioning its theoretical underpinning' (Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009: 39). These studies have emphasised that children's mobility is rarely wholly 'independent'. By widening the range of actors involved in mobility to include other children, animals, technological devices and strangers sharing public space, studies have found that 'companionship pervades every aspect of the activity' (Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009: 37; Nansen et al. 2015; Kullman 2010). Such studies also highlight the possibility of control and influence beyond physical co-presence, with parents shaping the style, organisation and experience of mobility through rules, boundaries, arrangements and mobile phones (Strandell 2014; Nansen et al. 2015). Therefore, rather than mobility being dichotomously defined as either dependent or independent, it is understood through a continuum of inter-dependence (Nansen et al. 2015; Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009; Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019; Middleton and Byles 2019; Worth 2013).

This is the explicit focus of Kullman's (2010) study, as he captures the relational collaborations between adults, children, environments and objects that families enact to facilitate children's expanding mobilities. He argues that, in moving to and from school without their parents,

children ‘are not moving from dependency to pure separateness, but into another bundle of relations enabling travel without parents’ (Kullman 2010: 836). ‘Independence’ is, therefore, ‘a highly relational outcome’, sustained by dynamic socio-material assemblages and trained embodied knowledges – thus connecting with ideas of relational and distributed agency as discussed in section 2.2.3. (Kullman 2010: 834; also see Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019).

Furthermore, by focusing on collaboration between parents and children, Kullman’s study reconfigures hierarchical and oppositional assumptions of the relations between these groups – a point also emphasised in Horton et al. (2013) and Benwell’s (2013) research. This move to recognise interdependence has therefore increased interest in the ways in which the family shapes children’s practices and experiences of mobility, following similar trajectories of the re-inclusion of the family within children’s geographies more widely.

Further work by Kullman, alongside Palludan, explores children’s interdependent agencies during their journeys to school by taking a ‘rhythmanalytical approach’ - drawing on the work of Lefebvre (1992 [2004]) (Kullman and Palludan 2011). Lefebvre’s contention is that societies are shaped by a multitude of rhythms, ranging from the rhythms of bodily circulation to the rhythms of people moving through a city, to the planetary rhythms of the earth’s orbit. Each of these rhythms is continuous shaped through interactions with other rhythms. Through analysing the ways in which these rhythms (in)harmoniously interact, Lefebvre offers a way to critically analyse how societies organise and structure everyday life as well as how people express agency through challenging such temporal structures.

Thus, Kullman and Palludan (2011; 348) draw on Lefebvre’s work, using rhythm as a way of exploring how ‘children’s agencies are shaped by the intersecting rhythms of schools, homes and cities, and, moreover, where children exercise their agencies by responding to these rhythms in diverse ways’. In this paper they explore how these intersecting rhythms both restrict and enable action during journeys to school, using rhythmanalysis to highlight the ‘interplay between the “habitual” repetitions of daily life and the “eventual” variations that emerge from and often reconfigure such repetitions’ (Kullman and Palludan 2011; 351). This connects with other work in mobilities which have also used Lefebvre’s work to think through the rhythms of commuting (Edensor 2011), walking (Edensor 2010; Wunderlich 2008) and ferry travel (Vannini 2012). In this thesis, I similarly think about mobilities through a rhythmic lens to focus attention on the forces structuring and shaping young people’s mobilities and to think about the ways in which agency is expressed through the creative interplay between rhythmic order and variation.

It is within these studies on children's interdependent mobility, that clear connection and conversation with the mobilities literature can be seen, particularly as they coalesce around notions of mobility as an accomplishment entailing diverse relations, producing particular emotional and affectual experiences and forms of sociality (Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019; Kullman and Paulludan 2011; Murray and Mand 2013). In some studies, these connections are explicitly noted (Vannini et al. 2009; Symes 2007; Barker et al. 2009; Nansen et al. 2015), whilst in others, it relates more to a shared theoretical approach, which has also influenced the study of children's geographies.

Further work remains to be done to expand work on children's mobilities, however. There remains an overwhelming focus on children's journeys to and from school and movement around their neighbourhoods, meaning that the study of children's journeys outside of these categories has been far more limited. This includes movements between the houses of separated parents. As I explore in the following section, by bringing into conversation this literature on the embodied, relational and interdependent nature of children and family mobilities and work on divorce and separation, a picture of young people's experiences of these mobile events may start to emerge.

2.5 The Interdisciplinary Study of Children, Divorce and Separation

2.5.1 Tracing the History of Divorce Research

In the latter half of the 20th century, divorce rates in many minority world countries began to significantly increase, rising to their peak in the early 2000s (Wang and Schofer 2018). Understanding the social, economic and psychological effects of this rise, on both an individual and societal level, has been a source of considerable research interest across a number of disciplines (e.g. Lorenz et al. 2006; Bruce and Kim 1992; Espenshade 1979). Whilst much of this research has focused on adults (e.g. Amato and Keith 1991; Feijten and van Ham 2010; Peterson 1996), understanding the effects of divorce and separation on children has also provoked substantive academic attention.

Operating within the context of, and contributing to, popular discourses of divorce as a source of societal harm, early research was overwhelmingly concerned with identifying the negative consequences of divorce for children (Wallerstein and Kelly 1980; Kulka and Weingarten 1979; Heathering 1979; Sororsky 1977; Amato 1994; Wallerstein 1979; Cockett and Tripp 1994). Whilst there's still research that continues this trend, in response to numerous critiques of the methodological and analytical rigour of these earlier studies (e.g. Amato 2014, Moxnes 2003; Janning et al. 2010), more recent research has emphasised the diversity and complexity in

post-separation trajectories - acknowledging there is a multitude of interactive factors which shape reactions to parental separation (Amato 2014; Heatherington 2003; Kelly 2006; Kelly and Emergy 2003). Such studies however continue to rely on quantitative measurements often based on parental reports, only considering parental separation as significant in terms of its effects on children's long-term outcomes.

Representing both an epistemological and methodological shift from this previous work, in the early 2000s a number of researchers within sociology, social work and social policy sought to address these concerns (Bulter et al. 2003; Smart et al. 2001; Moxnes 2003; Smart et al. 1999). Influenced by the NSSC (see section 2.2), researchers were driven to understand and validate children's lived experiences of divorce and separation, seeing post-separation family life 'not as a potential "risk factor", but as a way of living in childhood' (Marschall 2017: 342). The following review details some of this work, particularly focusing on research which looks beyond children's immediate experiences of separation, or engagements with social and legal services, to focus on their experience of and involvement in everyday post-separation family life.

This literature has been dominated by a small number of key topics, particularly focusing on children's living arrangements, their relationships with parents and their agency within the family. The following discussion will review literature on these topics, whilst developing a critique which argues that this work is theoretically and empirically limited as it's neglectful of important issues around spatiality, embodiment, materiality and mobility.

2.5.2 Children's Living Arrangements

The most prolific topic of research in this area has been exploring children's perspectives on their post-separation living arrangements. Motivations behind this abundance rest on a drive to understand to what extent adults' understandings of children's 'best interests' are shared by children themselves and to bring children's potentially contradicting understandings into policy and academic debates (Haugen 2010; Smart 2004). Amid increasing calls for shared-parenting, studies of this type of living arrangement are particularly overrepresented within this literature (Davies 2015a; Haugen 2010; Birnbaum and Saini 2015; Marschall 2017; Campo et al. 2013; Sadowski and McIntosh 2015).

These studies show that there's a wide range of different ways to structure and organise post-separation family life, to which children have a wide range of responses. No single arrangement works best in all contexts and most children's experiences are a mixture of positives and negatives (Berman 2015; Neale and Flowerdrew 2007, Smart et al. 2001; Fehlberg et al. 2011). Having said this, it has been consistently reported that children value

arrangements which operate with flexible principles that are able to take account of their changing needs and priorities within and outside of the family and domestic sphere, both day-to-day and in the longer term (Haugen 2010; Neale and Flowerdrew 2007).

However, there has been little research which has explored how arrangements shift and change over these different temporal scales. Changes have generally only been examined in specific spheres or for specific reasons, such as residential moves (Thomas, Mulder and Cooke 2017) or the creation of step-families (Allan, Crow and Hawker 2014). Rather, this thesis examines the changes, and continuities, that occur throughout the childhoods of the young people involved in the research. It explores the temporalities through which these changes occur, particularly focusing on changes in mobility patterns but necessarily examining these within broader shifts and stasis in their lives.

It's important to note that these studies have been conducted across different cultural contexts which frame children's living arrangements and their experiences of these. Much of the research looking at shared care arrangements stems from Scandinavian countries owing to a policy landscape encouraging shared care and a resulting increased prevalence of this arrangement in these countries (Marschall 2017; Blomqvist and Heimer 2015; Haugen 2007). Similarly, a policy-change in Australia towards a presumption of shared care provoked increased research on this topic in this context – demonstrating the significance of national policy in shaping children's experience of post-separation (Smyth 2014; McIntosh and Chisholm 2008). The influence of cultural context on post-separation life is also clearly demonstrated in studies examining experiences of divorce and separation in transnational families, although it must be noted that few of these studies research with children (Fresnoza-Flot and de Hart 2022; Qureshi 2020; Constable 2010; Quah 2020). Such studies demonstrate both the influence of cultural context on institutional and legal processes, alongside the intersecting cultural norms and practices of kinship and divorce which interconnect to shape post-separation trajectories.

Whilst children's views on their living arrangements may frame much of the research discussed in this section, they also give some more general insight into the various conflicts, negotiations, and opportunities involved in post-separation life – adding to research explicitly focused on these various topics. One such area has been exploring children's experiences of their relationships with their parents and the ways in which care within these relations is transformed after separation.

2.5.3 Parent-Child Relationships and Care

Driven by findings suggesting that parents are the most important actors in determining children's development and adjustment following separation, there have been many studies seeking to understand children's perspectives on the quality and dynamics of their parental relationships (Marschall 2016; Berman 2015; Ridge 2017; Dunn et al. 2011; Janning et al. 2010; Menning 2008; Smart et al. 2001; Butler et al. 2003). These studies emphasise that the maintenance of parental relationships is a key concern for children, as post-separation brings both the perception and experience of instability in their familial relationships, unsteadying the 'taken-for-grantedness' of family life (Smart 2006). This perceived uncertainty causes children to often be more reflexive in their relationships, becoming more watchful of practices that underpin intimacy and care in parent-child relationships 'such as spending time together, talking and updating their knowledge of each other and being financially supported' (Jamieson and Highet 2013: 140). Conflict between parents was also found as a particular source of tension and resentment, especially when it forced children to take sides or become actively involved in the emotional work of conflict management (Maes et al. 2011; Hogan et al. 2003; Sigurdardottir et al. 2018; Butler et al. 2003; Neale 2002)

Multiple studies have found that for some children this reflexivity leads to a questioning or outright rejection of poor-quality, unreliable or abusive relationships, although the anguish and pain of such confrontations must not be underestimated (Berman 2015; Nielsen 2014; Moxnes 2003). However, many other children reported closer and more profound connections with their parents as the perceived instability strengthens children's desires to give time and commitment to relationships (Hogan et al. 2003; Butler et al. 2013; Moxnes 2003; Berman 2015).

Often by definition having separated parents entails spending time away from one parent. Therefore, the dynamics of absence and presence become fundamental framings of parental relationships and the emotion of 'missing' becomes a naturalised part of post-separation family life (Marschall 2016; Schier et al. 2015). This often becomes productive of novel caring practices and ways of being together, as children reported creating little 'pockets of everyday intensity' (Marschall 2013: 526), or 'intensified togetherness' (Moxnes 2003: 13). These practices are not only performed by parents, as children also find ways to care and be cared for (Smart et al. 2001; Butler et al. 2003; Smart et al. 1999; Haugen 2007).

Whilst such interdependencies and reciprocities of care may be true of most families (as I discussed in section 2.3.4.), researchers have argued that these dynamics are particularly intensified under conditions of post-separation. These studies have found that the challenges that parents face after separation intensify children's desires to provide them with emotional

and practical support (Smart et al. 2001; Haugen 2007; Marschall 2013). This research, thus, connects with much of the literature discussed in section 2.3.4. of this review. This thesis continues this discussion, further examining the transformed dynamics of care in post-separation families. Building on the work discussed above which examines how caring practices respond to the changing geographies and temporalities of familial relationships, it explores the ways in which care's absence and presence occurs *through*, rather than despite mobility as has often been framed in previous work.

2.5.4 Children and Young People's Agency

These findings point toward children in post-separation families being involved in complex webs of familial relations. Within these webs, the emotional and practical needs and demands of each member must be balanced and negotiated within the complex and ongoing processes of familial re-organisation following separation. The issue of children's agency within these processes has been a key concern for many researchers, particularly in regard to making decisions about their living arrangements (Neale and Flowerdrew 2007; Haugen 2010; Berman 2015; Campo et al. 2013). This has been driven by a political standpoint that children should be recognised as active agents who are capable of making decisions about their lives, rather than passive victims as they have previously been treated in policy and legal practice (Smart et al. 1999).

However, mirroring critiques of early children's geographies research discussed in section 2.2.3., few studies of post-separation have critically engaged with the concept of agency. Thus, agency has most often been viewed within this literature as an individual property, which is held by either parents or children (Haugen 2010; Smart et al. 2001; Smart et al. 1999; Butler et al. 2003; Smart 2004). Whilst children's reflexive accounts often reveal sophisticated considerations and management of the multiple needs and capabilities of all family members, as agency is problematically understood as a finite and contested resource, research often suggests that by taking into account their parents' needs and feelings children do not have agency (Smart et al. 1999; Haugen 2010; Smart 2004). This, however, positions parents and children as part of an abstract context within which their possibilities and constraints are not entangled. This dismisses the connected reality within which their emotional relatedness is not a hindrance but a fundamental part of being an active member of the family.

As section 2.2.3. explored, more recent literatures within children's geographies and childhood studies would challenge this liberal conceptualisation, arguing that agency is produced through one's changing relations with bodies, objects, emotions, spaces and knowledges (Prout 2005; Esser et al. 2016; Kraftl 2013). Through considering children and young people as embodied

subjects situated within a material context, a more shifting, contingent, interdependent and less antagonistic picture of children's agency to navigate and negotiate their post-separation lives may emerge. This would mean engaging with literatures on space, embodiment and materiality – themes that have rarely appeared in studies of separation. This may be explained, in part, by the fact that geographers have been largely absent from this body of work – something I talk about in more detail below.

2.5.5 The Geographies and Spatialities of Post-Separation Families

Research exploring the geographies and spatialities of post-separation family life has been limited. Despite increasing sensitivity toward space and spatiality within the social sciences, this may be explained by the fact that there has been little engagement from geographers in the everyday lives of post-separation families. This is surprising given that separation brings distinctly spatial changes in family life around which many of the challenges and complexities discussed previously are formed, suggesting an important contribution that geographers could make to the literature on post-separation.

There are a number of exceptions to this lack of engagement that are important to discuss. One is Palludan and Winther's (2016; 2015) article and related book chapter, which explicitly situates itself within the 'material turn' – as introduced in section 2.3.5. They explore how being a child within a post-separation family occurs 'by way of interactions with materiality' (Palludan and Winther 2016: 35). They particularly explore how under the condition of periodic absence from households, children's bedrooms become 'territorial markers, which afford them positioning and recognition within sibling relations' (Palludan and Winther 2016: 36). Similarly, in their study of how children define and construct home following separation, Merla and Nobles (2019: 86) explore how children 'mobilise space as a resource to establish connections within the various family spaces and with the members they leave/reunite with'. This also connects with my own work on materiality and homemaking for young people in post-separation, as I argued that 'domestic materialities are a significant means through which the (re)-and-(un)making of familial relationships is performed' (Walker 2022: 210).

Attention to the interaction between the dynamics of space and time is also emphasised by Schier et al. (2015a; b) who call for research on post-separation families through the lens of multi-locality, defined as 'active everyday life in multiple places' (Merla and Nobles 2019: 82). Through conceptualising multi-locality as a specific socio-spatial-temporal strategy for organising everyday life, focus is sharpened on the spatial co-ordination of post-separation families and the practices and processes established to manage these complex geographies (Schier et al. 2015b). Although not approached through the particular concept of multi-locality,

through drawing on the notion of carescapes (discussed in section 2.3.4.), Haugen (2007) also draws attention to the ways in which children in post-separation families interpret and respond to their parent's spatio-temporal caring demands, creating their own routes through this terrain to care and be cared for.

2.5.6 Children and Young People's Mobility Within Post-Separation Families

Considering the distinctive geographies of post-separation families necessarily draws attention to children and young people's mobility as a practice intrinsic to living in more than one household. As I explored in chapter one, limited quantitative research has shown that there is great variety in children's post-separation mobility, both in terms of the length and frequency of travel. However, such statistics tell us little about children's experiences of these periods of mobility and their practical organisation. Minimal research exists into this aspect of children's post-separation lives, figuring implicitly in wider studies or raised as an issue without being empirically investigated (Holdsworth 2013). Important exceptions include Berman's (2019) study in which she interviewed children in Sweden, living in equal-time dual residence arrangements, aiming to understand how their everyday lives are shaped by regular mobility. Schier's (2015) book chapter also presents an analysis of ethnographic research into experiences of post-separation mobility in the 'multi-local' lives of German families who had residential arrangements diverse in their frequency and distance.

Information gained from Berman and Schier's research, alongside more implicit discussions in other studies, suggests that periods of mobility are differently experienced. They can often be emotionally and practically challenging times, where many of the issues discussed in the previous sections become particularly pronounced. Children and young people in numerous studies described their exasperation with the repetitive cycle of packing and unpacking, and the organisational skills that this required (Berman 2019; Schier and Proske 2010; Johnsen et al. 2018). Transitioning also brings into sharp focus the reality of having to leave one parent, and one family, in order to be with the other – sometimes triggering feelings of sadness, irritation or, at times, excitement (Marschall 2016; Costa 2014; Smart and Wade 2004). Sadowski and McIntosh (2015) highlight that this may be particularly true for children in high-conflict families, as handover periods become particular sources of anxiety and vigilance over parental interaction and behaviour. Children also reported that adjusting to the different people, practices and environments of each household was another challenge of leaving and arriving (Berman 2019; Johnson et al. 2019; Schier and Proske 2010). This was particularly pronounced if they felt as though they were moving between different and disconnected

emotional zones and lifestyles; a difference which some experienced as enriching, whilst others found the contradictions troublesome (Berman 2019; Marschall 2017).

A number of studies reported strategies or tactics implemented to make transitions less challenging. These involved having changeovers at a 'neutral territory' such as school, grandparents or child contact centres, interposing diversionary activities between leaving one home and arriving at another and welcome routines such as ringing the doorbell or sharing a meal (Smart et al. 2001; Davies 2015a; Costa 2014; Schier 2015; Winther et al. 2015; Merla and Nobles 2019). Schier (2015) also found that some parents who lived far away from their children routinely relieved children from the burden of travelling by undertaking the journey themselves and staying in a hotel or with friends. As reported in both Smart (2004) and Jensen's (2009) study of children's satisfaction with their living arrangements, children who lived within walking distance were less likely to suggest that moving between their houses was a burden as they had more control and independence over their mobility.

However, even in situations where mobility may be experienced as challenging and burdensome, studies have reported that children often reported feeling that it was a necessary and unavoidable strain to enable them to have relationships with both of their parents (Berman 2019; Hogan et al. 2003; Winther et al. 2015; Schier and Proske 2010). They acknowledged that sacrifices had to be made on all sides, often counterbalancing the challenges with the positive things they felt they had gained including more independence and better organisational skills (Holdsworth 2013). As Schier (2015: 219) states, 'all in all the children tended to normalise such mobility requirements as being "just the way it is"'. Therefore, suggesting that this is a topic within which insights into the relational and contingent nature of children's agency may be particularly useful.

There has also begun to be some research into the unique mobilities of young people with separated parents during the Covid-19 pandemic. As stated in the introduction, these were one of the only groups granted access to move between different households during the lockdowns that the pandemic created. These studies have highlighted some of the unique challenges that moving during this time formed, including lack of agreement or communication regarding shared strategies for risk mitigation, disagreement about timing and length of visits and different approaches to home-schooling (Goldberg, Allen and Smith 2021). Such challenges often reflected or exacerbated existing challenges within families. There has also been some reflections on the difficulties of parents who wished to separate during that time, but who were forced together by the immobilities of the lockdown – with resulting challenges

for children (Allen and Goldberg 2021) However, there has been little research working directly with children and young people, asking about their experiences.

These findings begin to give some insight into children and young people's experiences of periods of transitioning between parental homes, and the routines and practices developed to navigate them. However, these insights are fragmented and insubstantial; leaving more questions raised than answered. Interesting questions, therefore, arise about the ways in which children and young people's mobility shapes, and is shaped by, their intimate relationships with people, places and objects, generating new (dis)connections, capabilities and expressions of agency. This encompasses not only the moments of leaving and arriving, which have largely occupied previous research but also times and spaces *on the move.* Connecting the literatures on post-separation with scholarship from mobility studies, this thesis provides tentative answers to these questions, looking at a UK context. This chapter, therefore, argues that we can advance understandings of post-separation mobility by integrating scholarship from across children's geographies, geographies of the family and mobility studies, with studies of post-separation.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has critically examined literatures central to this thesis in four interconnected areas: geographies of children and youth, geographies of the family, mobilities research on family and children; and children and young people's experiences of divorce and separation. In reviewing these bodies of work I have highlighted a number of critical gaps in current understandings of young people's mobilities in separation that have shaped the direction and central research questions of this thesis, as laid out in chapter one.

Firstly, I have highlighted that we know little about **how mobilities are structured and coordinated, how and why they have become configured in these ways and how this changes over childhood.** To understand this would mean drawing on the family mobilities literatures discussed in section 2.4.2. This literature focuses attention on the complex relationalities of young people's movements, asking us to situate their mobilities within the wider geographic, social, economic and emotional circumstances of their lives and the lives of those around them. In exploring the organisation of mobilities questions thus arise concerning young people's differing positions in these negotiations.

Considering the issues with how agency has often been apprehended in the literature on post-separation, orientates towards questioning **what understandings can be developed of how young people exert agency over how mobilities are made and experienced?** In drawing

upon recent understandings of agency, as detailed in section 2.2.3., more distributed and relational understandings of young people's agency might start to emerge. Not only would this drive forward understandings of agency in the literature surrounding separation, but would contribute further to empirical explorations of agency in the literature on geography and youth - particularly as it emerges within the understudied socio-spatial context of the family.

As explored in section 2.4.3., the new mobilities paradigm orientates toward thinking of young people's mobilities as 'mundane accomplishments' – also connecting with work on the 'everyday' discussed in section 2.2.1. This means paying attention to seemingly unremarkable processes and events that shape the experience of being and becoming mobile. These are shaped by the coming together of bodies, spaces, times and materials in the performance of actions. This leads us to consider **what practices, skills, competencies and habits have young people and parents established to help navigate these periods of transition and change in their lives?** In the case of young people's movements in post-separation, this forces us to think more expansively about journeys than has often been the case within the mobilities literature given that the practices of packing and preparing seem central to their experiences of movement, as suggested by initial studies of their mobilities (2.5.6). Furthermore, the literature about family and material culture discussed in section 2.3.5 suggests that such materialities, and the practices that surround them, might be important in the doing of family, as they give rise to a range of emotions, affects and attachments.

Finally, connecting Morgan's notion of family practices with research on embodied mobilities, section 2.4.3. drew attention to the importance of mobile family practices in the creation and maintenance of family relationships, where relations of love, care, conflict, and fun might emerge between family members travelling together. This suggests that there may be value in considering **how can mobilities be conceptualised as significant sites, practices and processes of doing family in post-separation?** Before moving on to my analysis, I will first explore how I went about trying to answer these research questions, outlining the project's research design and methodology.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Developing a Methodological Approach

The methodology, detailed in this chapter, was shaped through interactions between my theoretical approach, research questions and the research context. Thus, I developed a methodological design which enabled me to focus on the detailed doings of young people's journeys, whilst also inviting discussion of participants' broader experiences of these periods. In doing so, I aimed to move the research away from previous research's focus on generalised discussions of young people's custody arrangements (Birnbaum and Sani 2012; Davies 2015; Haugen 2010). Rather, I aimed to evoke something of how these arrangements are lived in the everyday and the embodied routines, emotional states, sensorial environments, creative improvisations and taken-for-granted habits it takes to sustain them (Vannini 2015; Waitt and Harada 2016; Pink 2012). To do so, I took inspiration from the methodological creativity of children's geographers 'child-friendly' methods (Barker and Weller 2003; Evans and Holt 2017) and mobilities scholars pioneering 'mobile methods', to find ways to 'capture, track, simulate, mimic, parallel and "go along with"' moving subjects (Büscher et al. 2011: 7; Fincham et al. 2010).

Developing an appreciation for the complexity of families' everyday lives also demanded an in-depth approach, helping to develop detailed understandings of families' histories, relationships and sensibilities. Working with young people over time to build trust and rapport was also essential given the potentially sensitive, emotional and intimate nature of the topic of my research. Inspired in part by Woodyer's (2008) 'domestic ethnography', I aimed to create an emerging, evolving and flexible design, giving young people and their families the ongoing choice of when, how and to what extent to participate in the research (Darbyshire et al. 2005; Punch and Graham 2017; Ellington 2017). This allowed me to be responsive to both the complex and varying particularities of each family's structure and journeying practices, and the specific interests, capabilities and desires of individual young people.

Therefore, my research design involved working with young people aged 11-16, over several months - researching using multiple semi-structured interviews, in combination with activities such as drawing, photo and video-elicitation, diary writing, and opportunities for participant observation during 'go-alongs'. I also invited parents to take part in an interview, although this was optional and not contingent on young people's participation.

Whilst the methods described above formed part of how the research was conducted, my design was forced to change due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in me also inviting

young adults (aged 18-26) to participate. In the following section, I discuss these changes and the experience of researching during a pandemic. I then move on to talk about the recruitment of participants and outline my sample. The subsequent section then discusses my various data collection methods, touching on how and why they were used. I then reflect on the ethical considerations and challenges of the project before discussing the process of analysis and writing with the data.

As a note on terminology, for clarity, throughout this chapter, I use 'children' to refer to participants under 16 and 'young adults' to refer to those 18-26. During the rest of the thesis, I use the term young people to refer collectively to both groups of participants. I do so both because I am speaking about the childhood memories of the young adults in my study and because it allows me to speak to the experiences of these two groups of participants collectively.

3.1.1 Researching in a Pandemic

It would be impossible to write this methods chapter without discussing the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic began five months into my year of fieldwork. Never has the comment that research involves compromises, false starts and failures been made more apparent (Hickey-Moody 2019; Horton 2008). In late March 2020, the UK went into a nation-wide lockdown meaning the population was only able to leave their houses for a limited number of essential reasons (e.g. shopping, medical treatment, essential work). At the time there was little clarity over how long this lockdown would last, and in the end the UK remained in a semi-locked down state for at least the next year and a half. This diverted the research from my intended approach in several ways.

Firstly, it disrupted research with families already taking part in fieldwork. Whilst I was able to move one child and two parent interviews virtually, I decided against moving more of the research with existing participants online. I was acutely aware of the varying pressures families may have been facing during that difficult time and I didn't want to add to these (Faircloth et al. 2022). I also felt it would be challenging to ethically conduct the research online with children, not least because of the practical considerations of access to private space, video technologies and stable internet connections. Furthermore, the methods planned involved creative, interactive and observational techniques which would have been challenging to do virtually.

Secondly, the pandemic meant I was unable to continue with the recruitment of children to be part of the research. Most of the recruitment channels (schools, youth groups, family-support charities) I had planned to use were closed or had different, and far more pressing, priorities.

Furthermore, alongside the issues discussed above, I felt the affinity and trust needed to conduct the research would not be so easily established online.

Therefore, I decided to invite young adults, aged 18-26, to be part of the research looking back on their childhood experiences. This age-group was easier to access during the pandemic and I anticipated that some of the concerns around access to technology, private space and time may not be as pressing for this group. I also felt they may be more able to cope with having sensitive conversations virtually. This is not to say that I did not continue to be conscious of the need to act with care and awareness that many of my participants were in challenging, often hidden, and changing circumstances.

These changes affected the research in ways beyond the purely practical. It challenged many of my hopes for the focus of the research, and the connection between theory and method. However, it also introduced unanticipated concepts of memory into the methodology and data, opening longer-term perspectives on post-separation childhoods. A discussion of the specifics of these changes will be peppered throughout the following chapter. It's also important to acknowledge that working within the 'private' sphere of the home and family, across challenging familial dynamics, with young people discussing sensitive topics, created particular challenges beyond COVID-19, explorations of which are considered throughout this chapter. I will begin with one of the major challenges of the research, recruitment.

3.2 Recruitment and Participants

3.2.1 Recruitment Methods

I employed four successful strategies to recruit participants to my research, the first two reaching children and the second two young adults:

1. Asking personal contacts (friends, family and colleagues) to approach families they knew who may be interested in the research. Four children, from three families, were recruited via this means, with a further two children, from one family, recruited via snowballing from these families.
2. Posting recruitment advertisements on Twitter, asking to be retweeted by organisations supporting separated families and pages connected to local areas - resulting in the recruitment of one child.
3. Posting advertisements on my professional social media channels and pages associated with my University, which resulted in the recruitment of eight young people.

4. Inviting participants who took part in my master's research, where I similarly worked with young adults who had experienced parental separation (Walker 2022), four of whom agreed to take part.

Inspired by recent reflections on 'failure' within geography (Harrowell, Davies and Disney 2018; Davies, Disney and Harrowell 2021; Horton 2008), I think it's important to acknowledge and reflect upon several other strategies I employed that were ultimately unsuccessful in recruiting participants.

From Sep. 2019-Feb. 2020 I worked with three organisations across the Midlands supporting families and young people affected by separation. Whilst the organisation's directors agreed to pass on details of the research to staff working directly with young people, to invite them to be part of the research, due to the dispersed nature of the workforce and the time-pressures they faced I was unable to talk to these staff directly. Thus, I had little control over whether and how staff were informed and few direct ways of following up with staff to develop the trust and buy-in that is essential in recruiting in these contexts, on sensitive issues in often time-starved organisations (Powell et al. 2019; Munro 2008; Campbell 2008). This may explain the lack of referrals through these means.

I also approached several secondary schools about taking part in the research. The challenges of gaining access to schools are well documented and I faced many of the same difficulties of working against time-pressures, navigating complex hierarchies and gaining buy-in from multiple gatekeepers (Spratt 2011; Oates and Riaz 2016; Plummer et al. 2014). However, in the winter term of 2019 I made a successful connection with a school in the Midlands. One staff member, responsible for pastoral care, who particularly bought into the research, took the lead with communication and organisation, selectively inviting pupils to take part in the research and then sending out information to their parents. Whilst I was critical of this strategy, because of the potential for coercion and the reliance on this teacher's perceptions of who should take part, I did not feel in a position to propose alternative, more time-intensive, strategies. Whilst invitations were sent out to parents, none agreed to take part. The staff member followed up with parents on the phone, who gave multiple reasons for their non-participation:

- *We only live a short distance from each other.*
- *We have been split for years and the kids are used to it and don't mind.*

- *They are just on their phone in between houses and that's it.*
- *It's a bit personal at moment as we are going through court so don't really want my son having to go through more discussions about our split.*

(Excerpt from fieldnotes, 16th December 2019)

Aside from the comment about being involved in a court case, these responses were disappointing. It appeared that many parents had misunderstood the nature of the research and what I was interested in. However, due to time pressures, the staff member was unable to respond to those parents. Therefore, I continued contacting other secondary schools about involvement. In early February 2020 I was in preliminary discussions with one school who were keen to support the research, however this was interrupted by the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reflecting upon these failures there are several lessons that went on to inform the conduct of the rest of the research. I learnt the importance of building and nurturing relationships with stakeholders early in the research and making my research interests clear in all conversations and materials to avoid miscommunication about the research aims and conditions of participation. Furthermore, I realised the importance of balancing the needs and resources of organisations and gatekeepers with needs of the research. In the interactions described above, I feel I was overly accepting of suggestions from stakeholders for how the research should be conducted, rather than attempting to collaboratively find a solution that worked better for both parties.

Whilst I was able to recruit 22 participants through the strategies described above (see figure one for a list of participants, see appendix A for family trees of each participant), it is important to acknowledge some of their shortcomings. Whilst the sample has a range of genders, ages and locations of young people, recruiting largely through personal online and offline networks meant I largely attracted a demographic of families similar to my own – white, middle class, university educated - creating certain exclusions (Browne 2005). Given that I have engaged with critiques of the lack of diversity in divorce research, it is important to acknowledge that this study continues in this trend – particularly as research has made clear that economic resources and cultural background have a significant effect on experiences of divorce and separation (Ridge 2017; Demir-Dagdas 2017). This is not to discredit or invalidate my data, but it is to acknowledge its situatedness, highlighting that it comes from a specific, limited and relatively privileged group of participants.

Outside of asking for participants who lived in the UK, there were no geographical conditions set on participation. Furthermore, I was not too prescriptive about the type of arrangements involved, simply asking for 'young people who spend time moving between their parents' homes or travelling to spend time with their parents elsewhere because they don't live together anymore' and emphasising that I was interested 'even if your journey is very short or if you don't do it very often'. Therefore, there are a wide range of arrangements and experiences represented in the research – as I explore in chapter four.

Figure 1 Table of participants (all characteristics are self-reported)

Name (pseudonym)	Age	Relationship to other participants	Gender	Ethnicity	Age at parent's separation
Emily	14	Daughter of Pete	Female	White British	4/5
Jemima	15	Sister of Noah, Daughter of Rachel	Female	White British	7
Noah	11	Brother of Jemima, Son of Rachel	Male	White British	3
Ryan	14	Brother of Nina	Male	White British	5
Nina	12	Sister of Ryan	Female	White British	2
Abi	13	Daughter of Matt	Female	White British	9
Lucy	16	Daughter of Kate	Female	White British	14
Parents					
Pete	-	Father of Emily	Male	White British	-
Rachel	-	Mother of Jemima and Noah	Female	White British	-
Matt	-	Father of Abi	Male	White British	-
Kate	-	Mother of Lucy	Female	White British	-
Young Adults					
Tamsin	24	-	Female	White British	4/5
Laura	23	-	Female	White British	7
Isabel	20	-	Female	White British	11
Orla	23	-	Female	White Irish	15
Sophia	21	-	Female	White British	4/5
Louise	25	-	Female	White British	Before birth
Mia	25	-	Female	White British	10
Josh	25	-	Male	White British	2/3
James	25	-	Male	White British	6
George	26	-	Male	White British	4
Gabby	22	-	Female	Mixed Race	6

3.3 Methods

I will first detail the various methods used with my younger participants, focusing on the initial interview, then subsequent interviews involving elicitation activities, and go-alongs. I will then briefly touch on the interviews I conducted with parents, before moving on to a discussion of data collection with young adults. I spend time placing my research with young adults within literature on memory in children's geographies and explore the consequences of retrospectivity on the data. Figure 2. provides an overview of the different methods that the children in my research took part in, parents and young adults aren't included in the table as they all carried out the same research activities.

Figure 2 Overview of research activities with participants under 18

	First Interview	Second Interview	Christmas Interview	Go-along	Media Produced
Emily	x	X	X	x	20 Videos
Jemima	x	X	X	-	-
Noah	x	X	X	-	4 photos
Abi	x	X	-	-	4 photos
Lucy	x	X	-	-	13 photos, 1 video
Nina	x	-	-	-	-
Ryan	x	-	-	-	-

3.3.1 Initial Interview

The first research activity to take place with all children was a short semi-structured interview in which we discussed their family structure and basic patterns of their living arrangements and mobility practices, including how these had changed over time. Lasting around half an hour and focusing on the more practical aspects of their everyday lives, these interviews provided a relatively relaxed way for children to be introduced to the research and the interview scenario.

The interview began with participants drawing an abstract map of the houses and journey(s), before adding additional information as they wished. Rather than being data, these maps were used as a tool to help disrupt the potential awkwardness and intensity of a regular interview scenario (Barker and Weller 2003). Drawing maps on large sheets of paper often forced us onto the floor and created a shared visual focus (Kraftl et al. 2019). As we spoke, maps were

coloured in and doodled on, whilst pens were tapped and fiddled with. Thus, this activity, and the materials involved in it, created more informal bodily placements and ways of relating to each other than standard interview formats, working to reduce power imbalances (Phelan and Kinsella 2013; Bushin 2007). Therefore, these interviews performed an important function in rapport building, helping to build the trust necessary to facilitate the more in-depth and emotional conversations that the following interview entailed (Dempsey et al. 2016; Elmir et al. 2011).

Four children decided they would be more comfortable being interviewed with their siblings. Although I was concerned that one sibling may dominate the conversation or there may be conflict, this did not materialise (Punch 2007). Whilst siblings talked over, disagreed and challenged each other, these clarifications and jogging of memories often led to fruitful discussions about their shared and differing experiences that may have been missed in solo interviews. Furthermore, given that we were focusing on the more practical aspects of journeys, I was also not overly concerned about self-censorship because of the presence of siblings (Punch and Graham 2017).

The young adults in my research similarly took part in a short initial interview, where they gave a biography of their family and living arrangements during their childhoods. This allowed me to introduce myself and build rapport, whilst also giving me time to internalise their biographies in preparation for the next interview. This proved particularly useful as many participants had complex family structures, changing living arrangements and journeying patterns throughout their childhood - as I discuss in chapter four.

3.3.2 Elicitation Interviews

At the end of the first interview, each of the seven children were presented with several options for the next research activity - including taking videos, pictures or sound recordings to be discussed in an interview or creating a video/audio/written diary. Together we talked through what they may enjoy, how best they thought they could represent their experiences and what would be most appropriate for the conduct of their journeys. In practice, all participants chose to take videos/photos, as they thought the diary was too labour intensive and they may forget to do it.

Ahead of the next interview, I asked participants to take photos, short videos or sound recordings over the course of at least two of their journeys, including the preparing, leaving, travelling and arriving (see instruction sheet in appendix B). I emphasised that participants were able to approach the task in whatever way they wished, knowing that the various spaces they move through and the modes in which they travel may lend themselves to different

mediums of capture - alongside children's personal preferences and interests. Most participants used their own phones for the task, apart from one to whom I leant a digital camera. Following the activity participants then took part in an interview where we spoke around the pieces of media collected. This provided a way into discussing children's experiences of journeys, the challenges and opportunities involved, their relationships with others on the move, their experiences of past journeys and their hopes for the future.

Photo-elicitation, and to a lesser extent video-elicitation (Middleton and Bytes 2019), has become an increasingly popular method in research with children and young people, including research into experiences of mobility (Benwell 2013; Ross 2007) and family life (Zartler and Richter 2014; Hatfield 2010). Researchers argue that it gives young people a level of control over the research processes, allowing them to consider what they feel comfortable recording of their lives in their own time. Others have argued that it's an enjoyable method for 'teenagers and children, who may be more comfortable in the visual mode of representation' (O'Connell 2013: 32; Barker and Weller 2003; Bartos 2013).

When I first explained the activity, participants spoke excitedly about the creative possibilities for the task, such as making 'stop-motion' videos or approaching them as 'vlogs', reflecting the findings discussed above. In practice, however, participants engaged to varying extents in the activity. My first participant, Emily, took ten videos over the course of six different journeys each about one-three minutes in length. Emily used videos as an opportunity to showcase the different ways in which she journeyed, documenting car journeys with her dad, walking from school with her friends and by herself, and cycling with her dad.

When asked about the experience of taking the videos, Emily stated: '*yeh it was interesting choosing what to take for the video, it made me sort of think that there are a lot of different ways that I get to my dad's'.* This highlights that the performative act of taking photos/videos is an important element of this method, having the potential to 'bring forth new associations and surprising thoughts' (Pyyry 2016: 106). Taking the videos enables reflexivity, encouraging participants to consider aspects of their experience prior to the interview. This is particularly significant in this thesis, given it is interested in the 'mundane, taken for granted or difficult to articulate' (Wills et al. 2016: 472). Emily's videos proved especially helpful in this respect, evoking much of the embodied, kinaesthetic, habitual and practiced dimensions of family life and mobility (Harada and Waitt 2013; Jones and Evans 2010). Thus, these videos were useful both as data, whilst also helping to facilitate discussion.

Different to Emily, who focused her videos on moments of mobility, Lucy took 13 photos and one video concentrated around her packing and unpacking. Talking about this, Lucy stated

that she didn't feel comfortable taking photographs of her family members. Thus, Lucy's account highlights that the researcher remains an absent present in such visual methods, complicating accounts which have emphasised their ability to access personal/private worlds that the researcher may not physically be able to (Young and Barrett 2001; Manney et al. 2018). Lucy also mentioned that she found it challenging to know what to photograph on the journey, finding it easier to focus on the material aspects of packing, reflecting comments about the difficulty of capturing practices in static visual form (Hatfield 2010). That being said, like Hatfield (2010: 248), I found that 'photos of material objects provide a way of accessing the often taken-for-granted practices of everyday life'. Thus, the interview served as a way of 'thinking with' the photographs, able to stimulate feelings and memories related to what was shown in the photographs but also what was absent (Clark-Ibanez 2004; Lenard and McKnight 2014; Zartler and Richter 2014; Hadfield-Hill and Zara 2018).

Other participants engaged far less in the activities. Both Noah and Abi took only four photographs, whilst Jemima took none – all saying they'd forgotten to take them or been too busy to do so. This highlights that adult assumptions about what will be 'fun', 'enjoyable' or manageable in children's lives are not always accurate (Punch and Graham 2017). With homework, extracurricular activities and moving between parents, the children in my study were incredibly busy and it's unsurprising that they didn't have the time to conduct extra tasks. Unfortunately, for two of my participants, Ryan and Nina, these various pressures meant that they were not able to find the time to continue with the research and they dropped out after the first interview.

Emily, Noah and Jemima also took part in an additional interview focused around their experiences of mobility over Christmas, and more generally over holiday periods. Whilst I hadn't planned to do these at the outset, because their previous interview took place just before Christmas all three participants were keen to discuss their experiences over the holidays in our next research activity. Emily took another ten videos over Christmas that we discussed during this interview.

These visual methods acted as a temporal extension into areas of Emily's life that may have been too personal or private for direct observation (Manney et al. 2018). However, Noah and Jemima decided they didn't want to have to think about taking videos/photos over the holidays. Instead, we based the interview around an activity where we mapped out how they divided their time over the holidays on a large calendar. I had initially envisaged that this may take the form of a storyboard, but neither were keen on drawing and were happy to focus on talking in the interview. As their involvement in the project took place after Christmas neither Lucy nor

Abi took part in a separate interview about the holidays, but questions relating to this were asked in their elicitation interviews.

3.3.3 Go-along

A third component of my multi-method approach was the 'go-along', involving accompanying and observing children during a period of journeying, a method that has been utilised extensively by mobilities researchers (Kusenbach 2003; Laurier 2004; Harada and Waitt 2013) and children's geographers (Horton et al. 2013; Trell and Van Hoven 2010). Whilst I hoped to conduct at least one go-along towards the end of my time with each family, this was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and I was only able to conduct one 'go-along' with Emily.

I arrived half an hour before Emily left the house and joined her in her bedroom as she packed her things, before accompanying her and her dad in the car as they travelled the 20-minute journey to her mum's. I did not join Emily in her mum's house, as her mum was not there. I used this 'go-along' as an opportunity for both participant observation and an informal interview (Ross et al. 2009). Often this amounted to more of a narration of experiences, as I asked Emily to talk through what she was doing as she was doing it. I recorded answers and observations in a field diary, adding to the diary I kept throughout the fieldwork. Conducting the go-along was helpful in animating and giving more context to what we had discussed in the interviews. I was able to grasp a fuller picture of Emily's journeying experiences, witnessing the embodied and unconscious ways in which Emily interacted with her surroundings during them (Merriman 2014; Spinney 2015).

Alongside further go-alongs, I had also hoped to complete more in-person activities with my existing participants which were halted due to the pandemic and led to more reliance on interview data than I had anticipated. This somewhat changed the qualities of the data, losing some of the detail, context, complexity and animation that may have been gained through conducting more go-alongs and spending a longer time with participants and their families. This focus on 'everydayness' is also somewhat missing from the accounts as young adults, although the google maps technique (discussed later in this chapter) encouraged insight into these textures. However, including young adults also added different perspectives, temporalities and emotions into the data. Through engaging with memory, I gained insight into the longer-term changes in participants' lives, adding detail into the complex temporalities of change and continuity in post-separation families – as I discuss in chapter four. Before discussing my research with young adults, I will briefly touch on interviews with parents.

3.3.3 Parent Interviews

I also conducted interviews with four parents. I first asked the children if they were happy for me to talk to their parents, emphasising the confidentiality of everything they had told me. This was an interesting role-reversal given that typically parents act as gatekeepers of children's consent. By extending this power to children I hoped to emphasise that this was a project where their comfortability and opinions were centred. All children agreed that their parents could participate.

Whilst all parents were invited, only one parent of each child wanted to take part – apart from Ryan and Nina where I interviewed neither parent. Interviews lasted around an hour, during which we discussed how they experienced periods of mobility, their perspectives on their children's experiences, how journeys were organised and how routines were established. These interviews were not conducted to confirm, clarify or cross-check children's accounts. Rather I viewed them as an additional means through which to understand how parents' and children's experiences are entangled and affect each other alongside providing more of the history of children's mobility practices.

3.3.4 Interviews with Young Adults

3.3.4.1 Children's Geographies and Memory

Underpinned by fundamental principles of recognising children as social actors, the majority of children's geographies research has focused 'on the present moment of childhood experience' (Kraftl 2017: 25). As such, research engaging empirically with *past* childhoods has been notably absent (Mills 2012; Klocker 2012; Kraftl 2017). Childhood memory holds a contentious place within the subdiscipline and has been at the centre of lively debate, largely framed by questions of the extent to which children should be viewed as 'other' (Jones 2003; Philo 2003). Conceptualising children as such calls into question whether our childhood experiences are reachable through memory and to what extent these memories are faithful recollections of what it is like to be a child.

Jones (2001: 177) argues that we should be cautious, both empirically and ethically, about claims to know the worlds of children, warning that memories of childhood may be an 'illusion that in fact makes the other even more inaccessible' – thus contending that the space between adulthood and childhood is one of unbridgeable distance. Philo (2003: 10) takes a less pessimistic view, arguing that memories have the potential to offer 'fragments of connection' between adults and children, that can 'bring into play a sense of common lives, worlds and spaces that is nonetheless fully aware of its own precariousness'. Others have intervened in

these debates in less overt ways through concepts which seek to disrupt the linearity of time as it relates to age (Horton and Kraftl 2006; Worth 2009). Like Philo these researchers explore the ways in which traces of our childhood selves are carried with us as we grow, making themselves known in unexpected, embodied, and imaginative ways.

Through these debates, various methodological techniques have been offered as ways to help represent and witness past childhoods, whilst acknowledging that 'any *straightforward* transportation back to previous states of being seems very unlikely' (Jones 2003: 27). Philo (2003) advocates for the use of reveries, whilst Kraftl (2017) explores the possibilities of autoethnographic methods (also see Horton and Kraft 2006). However, using these techniques raises obvious problems when conducting planned research engaging with other people's childhood memories.

Therefore, I turned to wider geographical literature about memory and its connection to place for methodological inspiration (Jones 2011). This work has shown how everyday spaces and materialities store and evoke memories - highlighting that the ordering of memories is not only temporal but spatial (Morrisey 2012). This has translated methodologically into research tools such as walking interviews, object interviews and guided tours to explore 'the complex and fractured relationships between past, present, material traces and place' (Jones 2011; 881; Toila-Kelly 2004; Barron 2021).

3.3.4.2 Google Maps as a Research Tool

Thus, I developed interview techniques that engaged with the power of place to evoke memories, whilst working within the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic where I was unable to meet participants in-person. Following the initial interview, I conducted a second, more in-depth virtual interview, structured around participants giving me a tour of their childhood journeys using google maps software and the share screen feature. I have found one other study using google maps within interviews. However, here it was used to help participants 'spatially identify and discuss points of spatial significance' in a community planning project, rather than as a memory tool (Wise 2015: 141). This is therefore a novel technique, contributing methodologically to children's geographies and memory studies.

Each tour began at one of the houses participants lived in immediately following their parents' separation. Where possible the street view function was used, giving an up-close picture of the front of the house. Stopping here we discussed the house itself, particularly focusing on their space within it, before talking through their routines for preparing and leaving. Zooming out from street view, participants then talked me through their journey to their other house. Arriving at this house we discussed what this house was like, their routines for arriving here and how

the journey back differed from the journey there. This was then repeated for subsequent house moves and changes to journeying practices.

For many this meant returning to houses they hadn't seen for years. Participants remarked excitedly when images of these houses first appeared on their screens. As Tamsin said when we revisited the house she'd left at 11: *'oh my god! Look at it, they've changed it. It used to have like a little bush here and my dad would come flying round the corner in his ralph 4 and park here behind the bush'.* As Tamsin's quote highlights, often without any prompt from me, re-visiting these places sparked unexpected recollections. The value of the maps as a memory tool became especially apparent when participants struggled to remember the addresses of past houses. In these instances finding the right place became an interesting form of detective work where they would follow distant memories of landmarks, moving around on the maps until something sparked a trace of a thought.

Participants often fiddled with the maps as we spoke, sparking memories which often interrupted conversations. For example, as we discussed being dropped off at school by her dad, Laura nonchalantly moved her mouse around the aerial map of Manchester quickly interrupting our conversation with '*…wait…there was another place that we stayed as well actually… my step-mum had a friend who lived nearby so we used to stay with him'*. As she remarked at the end of the interview, '*I think having the maps definitely helped, I wouldn't have remembered staying with my dad's friend otherwise'*. Google maps thus acted as a tool of elicitation, in a similar sense as the photos/videos in interviews with children, helping to prompt memories and emotions that may have otherwise not been recalled. Whilst this differs significantly from the multi-sensuality of being in place, in the context of a global pandemic, where travel was not possible, google maps offered an easy, not time-intensive way to engage with place as a stimulus for memory.

3.3.4.3 Memory as Data

Memory doesn't like an archive, where memories are stored and accessed at will. Rather memory is recreated fresh in each moment of recall. Thus, 'the past never remains 'one and the same', but is constantly selected, filtered and restructured in terms set by the questions and necessities of the present' (Jedlowski 2001: 30). In each remembering we introduce further changes and re-framings into a memory, 'as some neglected details fade into the background while others become emphasised through rehearsal' (Fawns 2016). In particular, this means that our memories of what it was like to be a child 'are inevitably processed through adultness' (Jones 2001: 177; Harris and Valentine 2017). Childhood memories are filtered through subsequent relationships, experiences, cultural constructions, personal narratives and desires

for our childhoods. Thus, memories need to be approached as dynamic, malleable, fragmentary, projected, jumbled, partial and contradictory (Kneightly 2008).

Interestingly many participants, either implicitly or explicitly, demonstrated they were conscious of these qualities of memory. Recollections were often accompanied by qualifying statements, where participants were keen to highlight their potential fallibility. For example, when asked about the frequency of a particular routine, Gabby remarked, '*I don't remember…I think it was every time but I could be wrong. I wouldn't hold me to that'*. Others reflected this representation by emphasising that they may be misremembering the emotions of particular situations, using phrases such as *'…I'm probably looking at it through sort of rose tinted glasses'* (Laura). In other instances, participants looked back on the actions of parents, reinterpreting them as signs of emotional states or intentions that they didn't remember understanding at the time.

Other participants made it clear that their answers were informed both by their recollections alongside (informed) presumptions as to what their experiences might have been. In looking at these instances it is clear that these answers were often filtered through 'popular mythologies of childhood' which helped form parts of their narrative (Millei, Silova and Gannon 2019: 6). As Josh stated when talking about seeing his dad during the holidays:

> *'not being able to see my friends for three, four days got harder…I think it particularly peaks when you're sort of 15, 16 when you really are too cool to spend time with your dad. That's what normally happens isn't it?' (Josh, 25)*

Others demonstrated the social nature of memories, making clear how memories had circulated through families. In this way memories are subject to 'negotiation, cross-referencing and borrowing', they become rehearsed as they are retold with certain emissions and exaggerations which support particular narratives of our families (Roberts 2012: 101). This ongoing negotiation of memory made itself most clear when participants stated they had subsequently been told things they weren't aware of as children, or that their changing relationships had re-framed their perception of events. For example, James spoke about how he knew that his dad wasn't allowed into his mums house *'..I think it's something I've pieced together urm over time.. looking back on things and things my mum's told me'*. This highlights how memory 'is always a point of view based on past experiences, present positionings and future expectations' (Klocker 2012: 900).

This is not to say that this data is not valid or useful, but rather it is about acknowledging its particular qualities, limits and partialities. Throughout the above writing I have been wary of

using terms such as ‘real’ or ‘true’, careful to not create a binary between ‘accurate’ data based in the present and ‘inaccurate’ data based on memory. Rather all interview data should be in some ways approached as reconstructions rather than objective reflections of experience, which are similarly ‘fragmentary, subjective and selective’ (Ursin 2011: 226). Thus, the limitations mentioned above are not necessarily unique to memory, although are particularly heightened for such data. This is not to render all data meaningless, but it is to say that ‘it is not the researchers role to vet what people say for its ‘accuracy’, ‘reliability’ or ‘validity’…but to remain alert to the partiality, ambiguity or constructedness and complexity of all research encounters’ (Klocker 2012: 901).

3.4 Ethics

Discussion of the ethical design and conduct of the research has been woven throughout this chapter, highlighting that ethics are embedded within all decisions and doings of the research process. As I was involving children in my research, ensuring the research was conducted according to best ethical practice in researching with children was at the forefront of planning and conducting the research (NSPCC 2023; Laws and Mann 2004; ERIC 2023; Morrow 2008; 2009; Alderson and Morrow 2011). The following section delves into several particular issues and decisions key to my particular research. The first two sub-sections focus predominantly on my research with children – first discussing the processes of gaining informed consent, before moving on to issues surrounding confidentiality. I then talk about how I managed the sensitive nature of the interview topics and how this was handled virtually - focusing more on my interviews with parents and young adults. I end with a reflection on my positionality.

Throughout the discussion, I weave together a focus on how the research was designed, according to institutional processes of ethical review, and ethics-in-practice, ‘the day-to-day ethical issues that arise in the doing of research’ (Guillemin and Gillam 2004: 264). Such ethics-in-practice are often messy and unforeseen, often unsettling a straightforward implementation of ethical guidelines (Cutting and Peacock 2021; Horton 2008; Robson et al. 2001; Ellingson 2017; Horton 2008). I reflect upon this in the following discussion.

3.4.1 Informed Consent

All initial contact with families happened through parents in the form of an email or phone call, where I outlined the research and what participation would entail. With their agreement, I then sent the research information sheet (see appendix C), for them to share with their children to see if they wanted to talk to me about the research. As others have noted, relying on parents to communicate details of research creates multiple challenges as it rests on parents

understanding the research, their perceptions of how fully their children are considered capable decision makers, and raises issues of whether children may be pressured or coerced into participation (Lauwers and Van Hove 2010; Lewis 2009; Hill 2019).

To mitigate some of these risks I centred children in the writing of the information sheet and emphasised their powers to decide in my communications with parents. Furthermore, prior to starting the research, I met with each child and one of their parents to talk through the information sheet and consent forms. This meeting also gave me an opportunity to build rapport before data collection started. All children agreed to take part following these meetings, although I emphasised their ability to take time to consider their decision and their freedom to change their minds at any time.

Throughout the research, consent was approached as 'a continual dialogue, rather than a discrete event, which begins from the very first point of contact and throughout all future arrangements' (Lewis 2009; 406). Before each research activity a separate consent form, written in age-appropriate language, was signed by children and by one of their parents (see appendix D). At the end of each research activity we discussed what, if anything, they might like to do next. Often weeks or months went by in-between research visits. Therefore, I always made sure to check back in with children that they were still happy to take part. I was also conscious throughout to be attentive to signs that participants may want to stop, continue another day or withdraw from the research – both within the interviews and in their actions surrounding them, such as cancelling interviews or delaying communications.

In my initial communication with parents, I also made clear that I would need to obtain consent from their child's other parent. In all cases, parents chose to talk to their former partners about the research prior to me contacting them, and former partners then contacted me directly via email. All former partners consented to their child's participation, however, none expressed a desire to be directly involved in the research.

For the young adults in my study, all initial contact happened via email. Prior to interviewing, I emailed the information sheet and consent form to be signed digitally (see appendix E). At the beginning of our initial interview, I also talked through key elements of the information sheet and consent form, to ensure that participants had fully read and understood what they were consenting to.

3.4.2 Visual Methods and Ethical Anxieties

Using visual methods brought up several dilemmas surrounding informed consent. In the activity information sheets and in my conversations, I asked children to be 'careful not to take

close-up pictures of recordings of people that you don't know' and to 'always ask people you know if they are happy for you to record them'. In practice, this was difficult to control. Whilst most participants chose to not take pictures of people, Emily's videos included friends and family members. In these videos, it was difficult to ascertain how much those she was recording understood about the research and in what context the video would be used.

This was exemplified in a video that Emily took of herself walking back from school with a friend. The video opens with Emily explaining to her friend why she's taking a video. Her friend says, 'ok' and the conversation quickly switches to what happened at school that day. A couple of minutes later her friend asks Emily for the time, to which Emily replies she is still recording so can't check. After a short pause, her friend asks if she's recorded her whole conversation. Emily reassures her that it's just going to 'someone doing a PhD' and that I wouldn't 'release it'. The friend seems satisfied and carries on the conversation.

Whilst Emily had done exactly as instructed, informing her friend about the video, I didn't feel completely at ease that this entailed consent to be included in the data. Negotiating this was further complicated by the fact that when Emily and I watched the videos, Emily requested that the sound be turned off. Although Emily said that she was happy for me to listen to the videos later, I was left feeling unsure about what constituted best ethical practice. In listening back, I felt I was eavesdropping on a private conversation. However, excluding this data also felt somewhat unethical, given it would be dismissing part of Emily's experiences. In the end, I decided to not quote directly from the video, rather just noting the themes of the conversation.

This felt like an imperfect solution and, like many of the ethical dilemmas discussed in this chapter, still sits anxiously with me. In documenting these anxieties and uncertainties, I want to go some way to highlighting the 'forever imperfect realities' of research practice, acknowledging that ''research ethics' should acknowledge the likelihood that research happens in a non-ideal way; that frequently, research is constituted out of messy, often uneasy and discomfiting, situations, scenarios and experiences' (Horton 2008: 377-8). The following section continues this work, talking through some of the messy realities of maintaining confidentiality when using home as a research site.

3.4.3 Confidentiality and Home as a Research Site

Maintaining the confidentiality of research participants is another key principle of ethical research. All names of participants are pseudonyms (usually chosen by the participant), and placenames and other personal details have been omitted. The conduct of the interviews was also key to maintaining confidentiality. Children were given the option of having a parent with them during interviews, but none took this option. All parents agreed to this and seemed to

understand the principle of confidentiality. With Ryan, Nina and Abi, the interviews took place in cafes – because of the difficulty of finding private space within their houses – but for all other participants, interviews took place within the home. Parents were always at home for interviews, but, usually, within a different room out of earshot. However, there was often 'a socio-spatial fluidity and environmental chaos' that characterised homes, meaning that spaces didn't always stay private (Nilsen and Rogers 2005; Bushin 2007; Byer and Campbell 2012).

For example, in two separate interviews with Noah and Jemima, their mum entered the room whilst we were interviewing and asked if she could sit on the sofa at the end of a long day (in Noah's interview) and do some work at the computer (in Jemima's interview). Whilst I was concerned about maintaining the confidentiality of the interview, I didn't feel in a position to dictate how space was used within the house, so I paused to let the kids respond. Both tentatively said ok, but I sensed that both felt similarly unable to say no and afterwards I wondered whether I should have stepped in to move the interview elsewhere. Whilst Rachel assured us she 'wouldn't be listening in', in both interviews she began to react and, particularly in Jemima's interview, to participate. I attempted to counteract this by focusing questions back to Noah and Jemima, and Jemima herself told her mum '*you're not allowed an input in what I'm talking about!'*. In both cases I ended the interview earlier than I had planned, conscious that I didn't want Jemima or Noah to be asked something they were uncomfortable talking about in front of their mum or that her reactions might affect their contributions (see also Punch 2002).

Furthermore, although I'm sure Rachel did want to relax in the living room, I suspect she was also intrigued by what her kids were saying – despite agreeing to the principle of confidentiality. This suspicion was supported by an encounter with Rachel following her children's first interview, where she asked: '*so will I be able to know what they have said, because you know it would be really helpful*'. In response, I gently reiterated the importance of confidentiality but explained that at the end of the research I would make sure that I shared the findings of the research. Although Rachel seemed satisfied with my clumsy-feeling answer, this was another encounter which left me feeling uneasy – was Rachel really comfortable with me talking to the kids? Would Rachel question them after I had left?

Interestingly, in some cases, these roles were reversed, where parents were unsure what to disclose to me about their children. As Pete, deliberated in his interview;

> *the complications for Emily at the moment are, it's… urm... ... this is, this is tricky just in terms of the confidentiality of it actually and I'm just*

thinking about how, what to say that's ok or not ok but urm… (Pete, Emily's Dad)

In doing so, Pete highlights the messy and complex nature of negotiating ethical codes in practice. Privacy and confidentiality, like informed consent, are situated and contextually dependent, particularly when negotiated within webs of family and domestic life. As Pete's quote shows, this could be particularly difficult to manage as the interviews touched upon potentially sensitive topics – something I explore in the following section.

3.4.4 Interviewing About Sensitive Topics

Central to conducting the research ethically was understanding that I was asking young people, and their parents, to talk about potentially emotionally challenging experiences. Attempting to mitigate harm that may stem from these conversations necessitated several ethical decisions and practices. Firstly, I required that children's parents be separated for at least two years before participating. I hoped that would give children and their parents some distance from what may have been a challenging period, in the knowledge that the first few years following separation can often be particularly disruptive, unstable and conflictual (Kay-flowers 2019). I also asked that parents have a stable and agreed contact arrangement and required that both parents consented to their child's participation. In doing so, I attempt to avoid the inclusion of families where there were very high levels of conflict between parents, where there was the risk that the research may cause further conflict.

It is, therefore, important to acknowledge that there is a certain type of relatively stable and non-conflictual post-separation arrangement represented among the children in my study. However, given that the young adults didn't have the same conditions of participation, through their inclusion I was able to have more complicated, conflictual and challenging experiences represented in the research. Given the further distance from the events of childhood and the reduced chance of the research causing aggravation of conflict within families, I felt that researching such circumstances with young adults was less likely to cause harm to participants.

Nevertheless, I was aware that these conditions would not negate the risk of emotional distress to either my younger or older participants. As this thesis demonstrates, the difficulties stemming from separation are dynamic and ongoing and often not temporally linear. Furthermore, difficult memories or emotions may be triggered by circumstances impossible to know beforehand. As Aitken (2001: 74) points out when researching with families the researcher is 'positioned…at the margins of unfathomable sets of interpersonal politics'. Therefore, I made sure to practice empathetic listening and to be comfortable with silences in

interviews - giving participants time to think and process (Dempsey et al. 2016). I was also attentive to signs that participants may not be comfortable talking about a particular topic. In these circumstances, I always checked with my interviewees that they were happy to continue and offered to move the conversation on, whilst also reminding them that they were free to take a break, stop the interview or withdraw from the research. Conducting the interviews online, however, made reading many of these signs of distress difficult, as I discuss below.

3.4.5 Conducting Sensitive Interviews Virtually

The COVID-19 pandemic has ushered in a flurry of reflection on the practice and ethics of conducting virtual interviews (e.g. Roberts, Pavlakis and Richards 2021; Dodds and Hess 2021; Salam, Nouvet and Schwartz 2021). The following section adds to this literature, reflecting particularly on the challenges of reading and reacting to participants' emotional states during virtual interviews. This was particularly apparent in my interviews with young adults where, when using the share-screen feature, their videos became smaller on my screen meaning I became far more reliant on reading and reacting to audio. This meant that silences often became hard to read; had the audio dropped momentarily? Had they finished talking? Or were they pausing to think? In my first few virtual interviews, on occasion, I accidentally talked over participants and often felt I couldn't quite get the rhythms of the conversation right (see also Adam-Hutcheson and Longhurst 2016). However, as I got more practised, I learned to better read these differences and grew more comfortable in letting silences happen.

This became particularly challenging, however, in an interview with one parent, Kate. Kate's separation had been incredibly emotionally challenging, something that I knew ahead of interviewing Kate. At first, when talking through the more practical aspects of her kid's routine, Kate gave quite lengthy answers. However, when we got into talking about how she and the kids experienced periods of mobility, Kate's answers became shorter and shorter and her tone more withdrawn.

Conducting the interview virtually, I found it very challenging to read and respond to Kate's changing emotional state. The network connection was unstable meaning Kate's video was often pixelated and there was frequently a lag in the video. Not only did this introduce further stunted flow into the interview, but meant that much of the subtleties of Kate's facial expressions and body language was lost – making it difficult to get the 'feel' for Kate's emotional state (as Seitz 2016; Petralia 2011 and Lo Icano et al. 2016 have also discussed). I also found it difficult to respond in embodied and affective ways that may have made Kate feel more comfortable and display my empathy for her situation. Although the interview moved on from talking through these more emotional challenges, back to the more practical aspects of

their routine, regaining a comfortable rhythm in the conversation was difficult and I ended the interview with an uncomfortable sense of what had passed.

3.4.6 Positionality

Recognising and reflecting on researchers' own positionalities and their effects upon the research process has been central to moving past ideas of researchers as detached observers and the objectivity of knowledge produced in research encounters (Haraway 1998; Rose 1997; McDowell 1992). Such attention to the geography of position has been central to the work of children's geographers, who have paid particular attention to the differential power dynamics between child participants and adult researchers - offering various techniques and methods in attempts to disrupt these hierarchies (O'Kane 2008; Code and Evans 2008; Jupp Kina 2012). In the sections above, I have reflected on some of the strategies I employed to lessen these differential power relations, discussing the processes of gaining informed consent, the methods used, and how and where interviews were conducted. Geographers' discussions, however, have shown that power and age are not inherent and stable qualities, rather they are socio-spatially shifting and performed and negotiated through bodies positioned in space (Anderson et al. 2010; Woodyer 2008).

It is, therefore, interesting to think through how my embodiment affected how I was positioned by my research participants. At the time of the research, I was 25, but looked much younger. In fact, I was once mistaken for a school friend of one of my participants, by a family friend visiting the house. This perception of my age was also probably heightened by the fact that I tried not to dress too formally on research visits. I suspect that these things, in combination with the fact that the research did not take place in a school environment, helped to lessen the perception that I was in a formal position of authority and helped participants feel more comfortable with my presence in their homes.

As Holt (2004) has argued, adult-child categories are also cross-cut and destabilised by dynamics such as race, class, gender and other socio-spatial identities and experiences – creating complex and shifting (dis)connections between participants and researchers. In many of these ways I was similar to most of my young participants. I was of a similar race and class and, particularly for the older children in my study, plans to go to university were often points of connection. Furthermore, participants and their parents were often also keen to ask me whether my parents were separated. I was open and honest in these situations, disclosing that my parents separated when I was 18 and that they now live in different parts of the country. So, although I did not spend my childhood moving between their houses, I have some experience of what it is to have a spatially dispersed family.

Whilst positionality is much more complex and contingent than simply having shared experiences with participants, I did feel that this commonality helped to make young people feel more at ease in talking openly as I understood in some small way. Often participants asked me about how I managed visiting my parents while at University. I was always happy to let interviews run in these different directions, hoping that opportunities for participants to ask me questions might help the interview to feel more like a shared exchange of knowledges (Dickenson-Swift et al. 2007). In reflecting back on my positionality, however, I must acknowledge the limits of my own understanding. As Rose (1997) argues, it is impossible to fully articulate our own situatedness or how we are positioned by others. Therefore, although I have explored some of the ways in which I felt my positionality was important, this account is inevitably partial.

3.5 Analysing the Data

Analysing the data took place in several stages. First, whilst transcribing the interviews, I kept regular notes on emerging themes or points of interest. Transcribing also enabled me to become immersed within the data and familiar with participants' narratives. Furthermore, when writing the chapters I often went back to recordings to get a better understanding of the nuanced meanings of the narratives presented.

Next, I used NVivo to assign codes to sections of text, from transcripts and fieldnotes, and images, from photographs and videos. These codes were based around a number of different themes, such as practices (e.g. ‘packing’), and spaces (e.g. ‘cars’), relationships (e.g. ‘siblings’), emotions (e.g. ‘excitement’) or concepts from the literature (e.g. ‘agency’). Passages were often coded with multiple themes which interacted and overlapped, leaving me with many potential directions in which to write with the data. Rather than going back into another round of condensing codes, I left the data organised in this way to retain the creative possibility of having multiple connections across and between codes when writing up.

Alongside this coding process, I also drew diagrams for each participant, noting their immediate family members, different houses throughout childhoods and how they moved between them. I was concerned that the process of thematic analysis can often fragment and decontextualise data and thus in producing these diagrams I was able to retain a sense of context throughout the writing process. In writing my first empirical chapter, I drew upon these diagrams and went back to the data to construct biographies of each participant’s family and mobile lives and then analysed these biographies to understand collective and unique themes within them – which forms the basis of the discussion in chapter four. Therefore, far more than in other chapters that are more thematically linked, the writing and analysis went hand in hand.

In drawing attention to the processes through which I not only analysed but began writing up the data, I want to highlight that, as researchers, we do not just find data 'out there' and objectively write it up, 'as if it were a mechanical exercise, or as if the written text were a transparently neutral medium of communication' (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 255). Often researchers talk of how themes 'emerged' from the data and this presents passive and detached accounts of the analysis process. Rather, 'researchers produce one possible, partial and situated account' (Barker 2006: 91). For it is the researcher who 'decided what was significant, how it was significant, and how it should be discussed' (Pizarro, 1998: 59).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research design and methodology employed within this thesis. I began by tracing the connections between the literature, my research questions and the methodological approach, before exploring how these were partially disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. I then discussed my recruitment methods and outlined my sample. I then presented the methods used with different participant groups, indicating how these were designed and used to get at some of the key conceptual concerns of this thesis - focusing attention on how mobilities were practised, and the socio-spatial, emotional, embodied and material dimensions of these practices. In particular, I spent time considering the consequences of using memory as both method and data within my innovative research with young adults.

I then talked through the ethical decisions and dilemmas of this research, before finishing by discussing how the data was analysed. The following chapter provides a bridge between this methodology and the subsequent analysis chapters, as it introduces my participants and their families – thereby aiding the reader as they travel through this thesis. To do so, it presents short 'mobility biographies' for each participant charting their changing mobility practices throughout their childhoods, before drawing these together in a discussion.

Chapter Four: Family Biographies and the Temporalities of Post-Separation Mobility

4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces my participants and their families. It outlines their living arrangements and mobility patterns throughout their childhoods, and analyses what this biographic approach can show about change and continuity in post-separation families and young people's agency in these processes. To do so, I first present portraits of each family which chart their changing mobility practices from the time of their parents' separation through their childhoods – examining how journeys between their houses were structured, shaped and coordinated in terms of people, places and times. In doing so, this chapter addresses research questions one and three:

1. How are mobilities structured and coordinated? How and why have they become configured in these ways? How does this change over childhood?

3. What understandings can be developed of how young people exert agency over how mobilities are made and experienced?

These portraits, therefore, form 'mobility biographies', taking inspiration from Chatterjee and Scheiner (2015), that can be read in conjunction with the family trees in appendix A. The biographies situate mobility practices within the wider context of participants' lives, showing how mobilities both instigate and respond to changes and continuities in family relationships, domestic geographies, schooling and working practices, relationships with friends and more.

I constructed these biographies from multiple interviews with each participant, building linear narratives from data that was not always presented in this way. The biographies are therefore my own summaries of participants' descriptions, with quotes used where I felt the participants' own dialogue was expressive of the point being made. Whilst each biography shares common elements and structure, some are longer than others. This is partly due to the differing levels of data obtained for each participant, the amount of changes in participants' lives, the use of quotes in some biographies and that I focus on some themes in more depth in particular biographies. Some themes are unique to individual families, and others were discussed by all participants, such as Christmas, but I touch upon them only in a few biographies for the sake of space and repetition. I draw out these repeated themes in the discussion that follows the biographies.

Starting my analysis with these biographies is an intentional choice, central to the approach that runs throughout the rest of the empirical chapters. As I have emphasised previously, this thesis seeks to explore the specificities of how families perform mobility under the particular conditions in which they find themselves, rather than dealing in generalisations about post-separation life. Therefore, beginning with these complex biographies provides the reader with the context needed to carry through the following chapters where I focus on how the specific temporalities and spatialities of participants' mobilities are key to understanding family's experiences, emotions and relations. Thus, looking through the lens of mobility, these biographies begin to outline the doing and undoing of family that weaves throughout participants' childhoods, which will be explored in more detail in the following chapters.

This chapter also goes beyond an introduction to my participants as I draw the biographies together in a discussion which employs a temporal lens to examine the forces shaping and structuring young people's changing mobilities. Time is apprehended in several ways as it flows through the biographies, thought about in terms of rhythms, tempos, duration and life course. Using this lens, I show that the practicalities of life after parental separation are temporally diverse and complex, and so too are the interconnected emotional afterlives of parental separation. I explore how these emotional afterlives involve repeated patterns of behaviour, accumulated tolls, undercurrents of feelings that rupture in future moments, re-evaluations of past experiences and slow rebuildings of emotional closeness. Thus, I demonstrate that post-separation is a process existing across and through varying temporalities.

Therefore, this chapter contributes toward the use of dynamic approaches to time within children's geographies, moving beyond the usual focus on youth transitions and being/becoming debates (Worth 2009; Ansell et al. 2014). Doing so is, in part, enabled by the biographic approach taken to the research. This is an approach rare within children's geographies and wider childhood studies which have both overlooked retrospective accounts of childhood from adults (as highlighted in chapter three), and from young people, as they are rarely asked to look back on their own childhoods (as Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019 have also pointed out). Thus, in using this biographic approach I demonstrate the value of this underused approach to children's geographies and childhood studies.

In this discussion, I first draw out the rhythmic quality of young people's mobilities in post-separation. Moving further than previous research which has similarly highlighted this fact (Steinbach and Augustijn 2021; Costa 2014; Schier et al. 2015), I draw upon Lefebvre ([1992] 2004), and subsequent thinking about rhythm (Edensor 2010; Lyon 2018; Chen 2017; Murray

and Doughty 2016), to explore how these recurring mobilities form part of the polyrhythmic mosaic of families everyday lives. In doing so, I examine how mobilities take shape through interacting with the rhythms of institutions, infrastructures, bodies, seasons and calendars – contributing to the small body of work which has similarly used rhythm as a way of capturing how children's mobilities are repetitive yet varied; stable, yet precarious; ordered, yet improvised; and controlled, yet agentic (Kullman and Palludan 2011; Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019; Balldin and Harju 2021).

Secondly, I explore how these rhythms are frequently disrupted, modified and adapted, and examine young people's agencies in these processes, highlighting the practical and emotional 'mobility labour' that goes into planning, adapting and sustaining mobilities (Wind 2014). This kind of work has rarely been captured in studies of post-separation, which have tended to use temporal categorisations of living arrangements based on simple divisions or percentages of time (e.g Steinbach and Augustijn 2021). Whilst such categorisations have value, for example, in studies capturing the prevalence of various arrangements (e.g. Haux, McKay and Cain 2017) or comparative studies on young people's outcomes (Nielsen 2014), they often simplify the dynamism apparent in routines which can give the appearance that arrangements happen without effort and labour involved in making it so. This kind of work has also largely been missing from mobilities literatures, which has tended to think about labour in the physical act of movement (Watts 2008; Vannini 2012). This chapter, therefore, makes contributions to both these literatures.

Thirdly, I move out in temporal scale, to examine how mobilities changed over participants' childhoods. Evident across all the biographies is that post-separation is not a static state, as all families in my research instead are in dynamic processes of continual change, where intersecting forms of mobility play a key role in instigating and responding to changes. This section is therefore key in developing my argument about the doing and undoing of family as it explores shifts in familial relationships as they are lived over time.

In the discussion, I break these changes down into sections characterised by different temporal dynamics and qualities. Therefore, examining how they occur through: repeated patterns of disruption; desires for the future; unexpected ruptures; accumulated tolls on exhausted bodies; and changing temporal orientations to friends and school as children grew older. As I stated in chapter 2, such empirical investigations of changes in post-separation childhoods have been largely missing from the literature thus far.

In amongst this discussion, I continue to explore young people's agencies in these processes of change and continuity. In these discussions and those in the section before, I work with and

contribute towards, understandings of agency as contextual, relational and interdependent, examining 'what kind of agency they have, how they obtain and exercise it, how context shapes it, and how their agency relates to others' (Abebe 2019: 6; Robson, Stephen and Natascha 2007; Holloway, Holt and Mills 2019). As explored in section 2.5.4. of my literature review, this challenges conventional approaches to agency in studies of post-separation where agency has largely been understood as a finite and contested resource, possessed by autonomous and rational agents. It also makes a broader contribution to understandings of children and young people's agencies and how these shift and change throughout childhood, adding to the small number of studies which have begun to use similar understandings to theorise agencies within the family (Abebe 2019; Day 2017; Punch 2015). Although the young people in my study are navigating rather unique domestic circumstances, the broader themes of obligation, connection, constraint, care and support through which their agencies emerge exist within all familial contexts. Finally, I will conclude by exploring how the chapter has introduced and set up themes continued in the following analysis chapters.

4.2 Mobility Biographies

Noah (11) and Jemima (15)

Noah and Jemima's parents separated when they were three and seven respectively. Their mum, Rachel, stayed in the same house, where she still lives now. Their dad lived in a few different places, all within a 10-minute walk from their mum's. Following the separation, the children quickly settled into a routine of alternating weeks between their parents – swapping houses on a Friday after school, before dinner. Although each Thursday Noah returns to his mum's to participate in a music group she runs, whilst Eva often meets friends at her mum's even on her dad's week. On a Friday, Noah gets dropped at school by one parent and picked up by the other. He often walks to/from his mum's (although he only enjoys walking with friends), but, because of the busy road he normally drives to/from his dad's. I talk more about these journeys in chapter six, section 6.3.1.).

Noah's belongings travel separately. Whichever parent he's been with packs and drops them off on a Friday evening or Saturday morning (I talk more about in chapter five, section 5.3.1.). Jemima had a similar routine in primary school, but now walks back to whichever parents she's been at, packs and gets driven over – or will walk, leaving her bags to be dropped off the next day.

Whilst this bi-weekly oscillation was their norm, this was frequently disrupted by events such as work trips, evening meetings or family visits. As Rachel described:

Their dad has a meeting on Thursday somewhere down South so he wants to drop Noah off on Wednesday. But... I've got yoga and I only get to go every other week, if that and I just bloody need it. But also I've remembered that Noah has his guitar lesson tomorrow evening in town. So actually after you've left I'm going to try and sort that one out. [laughter]. 'Cause I hate going to bed knowing it's not sorted.

Managing the children's crowded schedules, alongside her work as a music teacher whilst caring for the children and the household meant that time always seemed in short supply for Rachel, and changes added stresses to an already-difficult routine. However, Rachel accepted that things needed to run with flexibility.

Organising the children's time during the holidays was a particularly stressful and time-consuming task, which relied on a continued relationship and goodwill with her ex-partner. Whilst they attempted to keep an equal split of time, in reality, this was complicated. Rachel and their dad would email back and forth trying to sort out the calendar, often disagreeing, then not talking for a while before restarting negotiations. Rachel describes it as something that *'really hangs over'* her until it's sorted.

Rachel tries to include the kids in these deliberations. Conversations while cooking, over the dinner table or in the car often revolved around their schedules. Whilst Noah said he was '*happy to go along with whatever'*, checking in with Jemima had become particularly important as she started her GCSEs. Jemima was a dedicated student and wanted to spend as much time as possible revising. I witnessed one of these conversations in an interview with Jemima that, as I mentioned in chapter three, her mum also began participating in:

A: Could we talk a bit about what you and your mum were talking about earlier, about what you're going to do over half term?

R: [in background]. It's just a nightmare. I don't feel like it's resolved at all.

J: I do think it's resolved

R: Well you do but I, I'm just getting crap from your dad!

J: Urm... so...[speaking to me] I've got mocks after half term but... for me... but for me I can't really revise when I go on holiday so I kind of wanted to stay at home, but then my mum planned to go to away...

R: Which I've not withdrawn from...

J: Have you!?

R: Well we'll go for a couple of days. We're not going necessarily for the whole time.

J: Anyway! .... is it ok if you don't...

R: I'm not... Well excuse me I need to just chill out. Ok I'll shut up! I'm going on the computer anyway.

J: Ok fine. Urm... and then my dad's also booked, well my dad's girlfriend did that, she booked a house in Scotland. … So that's a whole day taken up driving and I can't revise... and it kind of feels like I'm just, I'm just going to be really unprepared and stressed.

A: Yeh I can appreciate that. So have you come to any resolution with what you're going do?

J: Urm... well my auntie offered to look after me in London. Urm... so i'd get the train down. 'Cause it would just be my auntie who is working and then she said I can just use the kitchen like table and spread out and that would be good… I'm a really indecisive person, I just don't know what I want. But... so I revised quite hard for the first set and I did do pretty well. So I'm quite happy. But I kind of want to feel the same thing when I get the results back after the second mocks but I feel like that won't happen because I'm going up to Scotland and my dad doesn't want me to go down to London.

R: I suppose 'cause it's time with, technically it's his time. Ahhh that's why I feel a bit uncomfortable about, even though it would be lovely for you to go and stay with your aunt...

J: Yeh. But then obviously I don't want to go if it's really expensive and then I feel bad for my dad's girlfriend.

R: You shouldn't feel, I don't think she's going to want you to feel bad.

J: Yeh I know but I do feel bad.

R: Really she's too lovely for that. It's dad that just has a habit of trying to make us feel bad about things... Don't feel that...

J: Mum you're not allowed an input in what I'm talking about!

It may also be that Jemima felt particularly 'bad' about the idea of not going to Scotland because she'd recently switched to spending weekdays at her mum's and alternate weekends at her dad's. Talking about why she had made this change Jemima described:

> *It's just kind of getting a bit like too much, I kind of never felt like I was really much in one place. I think for kids who, like, their parents are together, they can just kind of go home and chill out and they don't have to think about moving. Urm... I just... I'd just kind of I'd rather come home on the Friday and not have to move. That sounds kind of lazy. I mean it like I don't want to have to like pick up a bag, like pack all my stuff, take the bag, go all the way down the stairs, like get in the car, take it all the way up to my bedroom, with my violin and my school stuff, which there is way more of now! … This what I mean about like wasting an evening, I guess it's like a Friday so it's ok to chill out but I'd rather kind of get all my stuff done on the Friday but it's a lot harder when you're moving between two places because it's kind of all a bit more like cut up, like your times a bit more like... and you kind of waste quite a bit of time like waiting around or like unpacking which you don't need to be doing.*

It was not until Jemima entered her final GCSE year, when she was 15, that she really began considering changing her routine. As the weeks went by at the start of term, she found herself becoming increasingly anxious, tired and stressed and therefore, Jemima approached her dad with the idea of testing a new routine, just to '*see how it goes'*. Although this routine did seem to be working better for her, Jemima worried about finding the '*right balance of things*'. She felt the need to make the effort to spend dedicated time with Noah and her dad, doing things like watching films instead of doing revision or seeing her friends – but this got hard when she worked weekend shifts at a Café or when her friends were seeing each other.

Jemima expected that in the summer she'd revert to sharing her time more equally. However, she also anticipated that sixth form would bring even more schoolwork and associated folders and textbooks to carry – meaning she might have to go back to how it is now. Noah's moving into secondary school next year. He anticipates that moving between his parents might get

easier as his dad's is '*the closest house in the world'* to his new school and he'll be able to walk back to his mum's - but he doesn't think he'd ever change it to a schedule like Jemima's.

Nina (12) and Ryan (14)

Nina and Ryan's parents separated when they were two and five respectively and at first, their parents both remained in the same town. They both struggled to remember their routine over this time but said they definitely lived mainly with their mum and saw their dad at least every other weekend plus another night in the week. When Nina was eight, and Ryan ten, their mum moved in with their step-dad in a small village about an hour's drive from where their dad remained living. Over this period, their dad would collect them on a Friday evening and they'd drive back to his – either returning on a Saturday morning or staying until Monday every second weekend. Sometimes their dad would also come to visit them, staying in a bed and breakfast nearby. In the holidays they'd try and split their time equally.

About three years later, growing tired of driving, wanting to see the kids more and having a remote job, their dad moved to be closer to them. Unfortunately, the small and expensive rental market, in combination with a well-paid job opportunity falling through, meant their dad was only able to afford a small one-bedroomed flat. This was less than ideal, but the flat was a short walk away from school and the bus to their mum's ran from right outside. Therefore, most changeovers happened through school, travelling on the school or public bus from one house to school and back to the other – whilst at the weekend their parents drove them the 20 minutes between.

When I spoke to them, Ryan spent Monday and Wednesday with his mum, Tuesday and Thursday at his dad's and alternated weekends (from Friday after school to Monday morning). Nina spent Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday with her mum and Thursday with her dad and, like Ryan, alternated weekends. Over the seven months since their dad's move, there had been a shifting process of trying to get these weekly routines right, which seemed to largely revolve around how to best fit around the many extra-curricular activities the pair participated in – with their parents often checking in with them to see if they were happy. This morphing process was illuminated when I asked why Ryan spend Tuesdays at his dad's, without Nina:

> *R: That's 'cause i've got to do first aid after school for DofE [Duke of Edinburgh] skills so urm… but it it's really awkward timing so it's like an hour and a half, no an hour and three quarters-*
>
> *N: And I've got something on so we decided-*

R: But I can't catch the late [school] bus because that goes after an hour, so I'd have to catch the public bus and it was just way easier to walk back to my dad's.

N: .. but it's also with the gymnastics. It's like a freestyle thing but you get back quite late and it's nicer if I don't have to get back that late-

R: Oh yeh cause mum used to take me and you'd have to come with us 'cause there wouldn't be somebody at home.

N: Cause if our step-dad got back late or something I'd have to go and then I'd get a late night and it's not the end of the world but it's nice to not. So we came up with the idea of dad doing that whilst I stay at mum's.

Whilst this routine seemed to be working now, I'd anticipate that it has and will continue to go through processes of adjustment and change as they both get older and move in and out of different activities, priorities and geographies.

Abi (13)

Abi lives in the suburbs of a large English city. In the four years since their separation Abi's parents have moved in and out of rental properties, always staying within the same 10-mile radius. Abi and her younger sister's (aged 6) routines have never been stable due to their mum's irregular shift patterns. When I first meet Abi, her mum has been off work for a few months, making things a bit less complicated. Over this time, they've tended to spend one week with each parent – although Abi sees her dad, Matt, most days as she gets dropped off and picked up for school from his house which is a few minutes walk from the school gates. On changeover days she'll go back to whoever's house she's been at, pack up and get driven the five minutes to her other house (I talk more about these car journeys in chapter 6, sections 6.2.1.2. and 6.3.3.). Abi never walks between them as she doesn't like walking alone and her sister's too young to go with her, plus her bags make it difficult. During the past few months, 'handovers', as Matt calls them, have tended to happen on a Thursday, as it's the only evening without activities. It normally happens just before dinner, giving them time to eat together and readjust to the new house before bed. This is only temporary stability, however, as Abi's mum will soon be returning to work.

Matt has mostly been responsible for organising the kid's schedule. Every six weeks, their mum sends through her work shifts and, using an online calendar, Matt works out their

schedule, considering how it fits with his and his partner's job, the kid's social events and their mum's activities. Matt tries to ensure the split of time is roughly equal, with minimum blocks of three days at each place – else '*there's just too much uncertainty for them and too much back and forth'.* If possible, weekends are alternating so everyone has '*downtime in the house as well as just after school'*. Their routine stays much the same in the holidays, although whilst their mum's at work they often spend time at their nan's, who lives just down the road from their mum.

Abi didn't get much input in the schedule, as she says, '*we normally just get told where we're going on the day and then we just go there'.* When I ask Matt about her involvement he planning he reflects that:

> *I wonder if inviting her into that process would of put her in a difficult position. So it's always been for me about providing that certainty for the kids so they know where they're going to be and making sure that things like brownies and guides happen.*

When they first separated, Matt describes that their mum didn't really understand or agree with his desire for a more equal share, meaning the kids spent more time with her. Although they've (narrowly according to Matt) managed to avoid mediation or the family courts, it's been a slow process to get to where they are now – happening in incremental nudges. Abi's been quite aware of these disputes, as she says:

> *mum just likes to have us more than my dad… I just think it should be equal because otherwise they're just going to argue all the time.. sometimes they try and drag us in and say whose do you want to be at, and that's when I hate it. I don't want to decide but my mum sometimes she pushes us a little bit to decide. Dad doesn't normally ask me, he's done it once or twice, but my mum does it quite regularly. She says like, do you want to stay here or do you want to go to your dad's and I'm sometimes I'm just like I don't know. My mum thinks of it as a competition as to who we think is the best.*

This, however, doesn't mean that Abi wants no part in decisions. As she continues:

> *I think that they should, with some things, they should ask me and my sister if we want to do it cause normally they don't consult us, they just do it… it's little things like meals and all that, but sometimes it's other things like whose taking us to whose house, how much we get to see*

> *of people and stuff like that. 'Cause it also affects other parts of the family like aunts and uncles so that we can't see.*

Looking into the future, Matt would love to live in the countryside but whilst the kids are at home he wants to stay close to their mum. He also speculates that Abi might increasingly *'talk with her feet'* – choosing whose house to be at based on who she's *'pissed off at'*. When I asked Abi about the future her speculations revolve around changes in school – like starting her GCSEs. She thinks she'd like to spend more at her dad's, as he's better at forcing her to do her schoolwork and she thinks she'll need the pressure to do well.

Emily (14)

Emily's parents separated when she was four or five. Following this, Emily's mum stayed in the same house, where she still lives, whilst her dad, Pete, lodged in friends' houses for a couple of years before moving into his new partner's house, in a village just outside the small city where her mum lives. At this time Emily, and her siblings, would spend every other weekend there – alongside Thursday evenings when her mum went to choir. Just before Emily moved to secondary school, her dad and step-mum moved into a much smaller new-build house in an eco-co-housing community in another village on the outskirts of the city. At first, Emily and her brother shared a room that doubled up as Pete's office, whilst her step-sisters had the other bedroom. By this point, her older sister stopped coming to her dad's, because she felt like she needed to be with her mum. Her brother had also dropped his Thursday evening trips and weekend visits were becoming more infrequent as he became sick of travelling and being far away from his friends.

Doing the opposite, at 12 Emily decided she wanted to spend more time at her dad's – now also spending Tuesdays and Wednesdays there. Emily's mum had recently got a new partner that Emily, and her siblings, didn't get on with. His introduction into their lives had happened very quickly and, although their mum insisted he didn't live with them, he stayed most nights and his stuff rapidly began taking over the house. However, whenever Emily tried to talk to her mum about these difficulties, her mum become defensive and upset. Therefore, talking about asking her mum about the change, Emily said:

> *I didn't want to hurt, like, 'cause I knew my mum likes him so I didn't want to say and hurt her so I just sort of said I want to see dad more, 'cause she knew I wanted to see him more anyway*

In the summer before I met Emily, tensions with her mum's partner had reached a breaking point. After an 'unpleasant event' Emily and her brother temporarily moved into their dad's for

a couple of months, only spending time with their mum in cafés or parks. Emily's brother chose not to return to his mum's, instead moving in with his paternal grandma as he wanted to be closer to his friends in town and their dad's house was too small to accommodate him and his developing talent for singing.

Emily, however, went back to her mum's, spending Sunday, Monday and Tuesday nights at her mum's, Wednesday and Thursday at her dad's, and then alternating weekends (I talk more about how this dispersed family life is managed in chapter six, section 6.3.2.). However, this routine was frequently disrupted or, temporarily, modified because of events like work trips, sleepovers or birthdays. On all but one of my six visits to see Emily and her dad, the routine on the preceding weeks had been different.

Emily made the journey between her house in several ways, and there was an improvised quality to how it was organised. On school day changeover days, Emily walked the five minutes from school to her mum's, packed up her stuff and went to her dad's. Or if she's been at her dad's, she'd drop her stuff in the morning and walk to school from there.

When he could, Pete would drive Emily, taking about 20 minutes. However, as he ran his own business and often had to work late when Pete couldn't take her, she would get the bus, taking about 45 minutes. Emily hates getting the bus, especially on changeover days. It's a bit of a walk from the bus stop to her dad's house and her bags often hurt her shoulders. Plus, it's crowded and full of *'old people'* or *'sweaty and gross and smelly'* kids from the other school in town. Occasionally, Pete will skilfully ride his own bike to town whilst also pushing Emily's and they'll ride back together. Pete wishes Emily would cycle more, but she hates getting sweaty on the way to school and is too tired afterwards. Occasionally someone from the coop housing will be driving the same way, so she'll get a lift (I talk more about how these journeys are organised in chapter six, section 6.2.1.1.).

In talking through her routine, Emily very much positioned it as something she had very much crafted for herself:

> *Sunday I just do it because my school is closer to my mum's so it's easier on, like, a Monday morning when I'm really tired…then it's just easier to have like two days there, two days here kind of thing.*

This crafting was particularly apparent during the Christmas holidays. Since her siblings had decided on their own ways of spending time, giving Emily more space to '*forge*', as Pete termed it, her own routine. Therefore, Emily split her Christmas day in half - waking up and eating dinner with her mum and spending the evening with her dad, then spending the surrounding

days travelling around the country to see family. However, her sibling's choices had also left her in a difficult position of feeling responsible for balancing her parent's feelings:

> *E: I don't have to go but I want to go [to my dad's]. I sort of feel like 'oh but my mum' 'cause my brother doesn't live there and neither does my sister so it's like I'm leaving her and I'm a bit like I don't really want to do that cause I'm worried about her. Like obviously I probably shouldn't because she's all like you don't have to worry about me but I still worry about her being like lonely or whatever... But then if I stayed at my mum's I'd probably miss my dad. So it's kind of like just have to get on with it but it's still difficult.*
>
> *A: Do you think you're the only one that has that pressure?*
>
> *E: Yeh definitely… I dunno, I reckon they did when they were younger but I reckon that I care more. My dad just kind of says you can come to mine if you want but I won't be hurt if you don't but then I'm like yeh but still I'm still going to worry.*

Whilst Emily is talking about Christmas, Pete suggested these feelings existed beyond this period, saying that Emily was not always happy at her mum's but felt she was the 'last one standing' and needed to stay to 'keep the peace'.

In an ideal world Emily says she'd like not to have to move constantly and dreams of imaginative alternatives to her current way of living – although she knows these aren't possible:

> *I always say I really want to get my own flat and then they can come visit me so they can come see how it works, like, to have to move between houses… but that's never going to happen. Or I said I really wanted to have a caravan so that all my stuff's in the caravan… so then I just drive in between so then it's like I've got a portable room... 'Cause then you'd have, you'd never lose your stuff really. It would be brilliant!*

However, Emily was soon to have less mobility in her life, as towards the end of my research, her dad and step-mum decided to move closer to the town centre. Whilst this was partly due to their dwindling commitment to the eco-community, it was also to do with Emily, and her siblings, movements. Pete recognised that their current house didn't really work for their 'dispersed' family. Pete also wanted somewhere that Emily could walk to her mum's from, so

they could use the car less and so Emily '*could be doing her thing and I could be doing my thing without constantly having to plan'*. Emily was incredibly excited about this move, she couldn't wait to live closer to her friends. She plans to keep her routine like it is when she moves, but thinks it might change around her GCSEs, when she's going to have to be '*reallllyyy organised with like where my revision stuff is and it's going to be a hell of a lot more stressful if it's at two different places'* – but she'll '*figure it out when it comes to it'*.

Lucy (16)

Lucy's parents separated when she was 13. At first, Lucy's mum, Kate, stayed in the same house, whilst her dad moved into a rented place around the corner. At this point, Lucy and her sister spent Sunday, Wednesday and Friday nights at her dad's, and the rest at her mum's. In the school holidays, they tended to stick with the same routine as their dad worked long hours unless they were going away.

About six months before I met Lucy, her mum sold their house and moved to the next village – making moving between houses more complicated. Walking wasn't possible as it meant going down narrow country lanes, and there was no public transportation. Lucy can get a bus to college from both houses but taking all her things to school isn't practical. Therefore, Lucy would come back to whoever's she'd been at, pack up and get driven over by whichever parent was free – generally just before dinner (I discuss further these packing practices in chapter five, section 5.4.2.)

Also, around this time Lucy started attending a prestigious music college in London on Saturdays. Because of this, Lucy and her sister started alternating Friday and Saturday nights and switched to spending Tuesday and Wednesdays at her dad's. When I asked Lucy about these changes she replied:

> *L: Urm... I think, well I think that my dad was like checking... about how I was going to get down to London and then I kind of said well like… I wasn't going to get to see mum at the weekend very much. 'Cause like Saturday was her day and then Sunday was my dad's day really, but I'm in London all Saturday. So then I sort of said what if we did like, if we changed each week. And then it was, we kind of had to talk about the, like, different nights anyway and I just said to him yeh it makes more sense doing the nights together in the week and he was like, yeh fine. I was already having the conversation, it wasn't like ohhh I want this to change.*

A: So if there was anything else that you wanted to change would you feel able to?

L: I'm not sure. I think it was more that I was asked so I didn't really need to initiate the conversation... I'm not sure that I'd say that particularly comfortable like normally. Urm… this was like a very kind of fixed legitimate reason why it needed to be like that.

To keep track of their schedule, and the times he was away, her dad created a calendar everyone had on their phone. Although this was shared her dad was the only one who edited it and Lucy didn't '*get any say in the calendar'*, whilst Kate also had no editing power. The calendar dictated what was happening and both said there was little flexibility outside of this, even if one of them was ill or family were staying. Kate suspects this ridged dictation is due to his need to keep a record of his 'shared care' to lower his child maintenance payments whilst Lucy alluded to having some understanding of this.

Kate hoped that in the future Lucy '*could have a bit more say when she doesn't want to go there without having to come up with a big evidence',* but she's not optimistic it will change. Even looking to University, Kate suspects that she'll still have to not 'piss him off' because he'll be financially supporting her. When I ask Lucy about the future she also thinks of University. She speculates that the complications of having parents in two places won't end, as she's still going to have to '*figure out who to come back to and like how to split time in the holidays'*.

Isabel (20)

Isabel's parents separated when she was 11. Her mum remained in the same house they always lived in, with her paternal granny down the road, whilst her dad moved into a flat about a 10-minute drive away. Isabel can't quite remember the routine for seeing her dad at this time but thinks she'd stay at least one night every other weekend and sometimes just for the evening in the week. In many ways, life felt quite similar for Isabel after her parent's separation. Her dad moved to a place she knew well, they went to the same restaurants and café, she could get the bus to school from his flat and she was used to her dad being away for work.

About a year and a half after their separation, Isabel's father suddenly announced that he was engaged and moving over 100 miles away to live with his fiancée and her two children. This move drastically changed how Isabel felt about seeing her dad (as I discuss further in chapter six, section 6.3.6.). Staying at his now meant travelling over an hour, to a place she didn't know, to live with a family she felt like an outsider in. Isabel originally kept the routine of seeing him every other weekend, but now, she'd go for the whole weekend. On a Friday, during term

time her dad would leave work early to pick Emily up from choir practice after school, they'd go to McDonalds for dinner and then he'd take her to county youth orchestra from seven till nine, before driving back to his.

Over time, Isabel started going to her dad's less and less, slowing from every other weekend to every month, to every two months. Isabel found the constant driving exhausting, missed seeing her friends, continued to feel detached from her step-family and, as she started her GCSEs had a lot of school work to take with her. She found it difficult to openly talk to her dad about not wanting to go, as she didn't want to upset him. Instead, her mum would do the communicating explaining that Isabel had too much school work to come or she had a sleepover she had to go to. As Isabel got older, her dad became increasingly frustrated with communicating through her mum so Isabel and her dad would work it out themselves. As she got into sixth form her visits became even more infrequent. There was no longer a presumption that she would visit, but she went '*now and then'*, often when he came down to visit her granny.

In the holidays they tended to keep the same rhythm, apart from going abroad for two weeks in the summer with her step-family – which Isabel always hated. Christmases have always been trial and error. The very first Christmas after the separation, her dad came round to her mum's, but that never happened again. Isabel's middle sister doesn't get on with her step-mum so they never go to his house as a group. For a few years they'd go out for dinner on boxing day, but they always found it strange opening presents in a restaurant. So now they tend to go to her sister's, close to her mum's, for breakfast on boxing day. Isabel thinks that this probably works best for them and remarks that '*It's taken almost 10 years… but I think we've worked out what feels most comfortable to do!'.*

Sophia (21)

Sophia's parents separated when she was about ten. Sophia and her siblings then spent weekdays at their mum's and weekends at their dad's. On Friday evenings, their dad would ring them as he was leaving work, normally about six – signalling he'd be at their mum's about 45 minutes later. Sophia would get her bags together by the door, ready for her dad to pick them up and drive them the 20 minutes to his – taking them back on Sunday evening, just after they'd had roast dinner. Very occasionally, they stayed at their mum's for the weekend if their dad had work or was away, or their mum had family over. As Sophia's dad's job made it hard for him to look after them during the week, the routine generally stayed the same during the holidays – apart from the two-week summer holiday he'd take them on and the Christmases they'd alternate.

As Sophia got into her late teens, she stopped going to her dad's every weekend. She had a boyfriend who lived near her mum's and wanted to see other friends nearby. There was no public transport between her houses, meaning that going for a day was difficult. Sometimes her dad would drive her at different times, but often it was easier to stay at her mum's – which Sophia remembers her parents being fine with. Although her dad never said anything, Sophia would sometimes feel bad if she didn't go a couple of times in a row, so she'd make sure she went the next week. Sophia got a car and learnt to drive at 17, meaning that for the year before she moved to University she could drive herself and her brother over. This made fitting in seeing her dad around seeing friends and doing schoolwork much easier as she was able to go just for the afternoon or a night.

Gabby (22)

Gabby's parents separated when she was six. After their separation, her dad kept the house they'd been living in, whilst her mum moved into a small rented terrace about 30-minutes walk away on the opposite side of town. From early on, Gabby and her sister alternated weeks at their parents. On Monday morning they'd travel to school from one house, either walking the two minutes from her mum's or getting driven by her dad, and then travel back to their other house after school. Gabby says she always appreciated Monday as changeover day, as it meant she didn't have to think about it at the weekend but still started the week in a new place. In the summer holidays, they'd spend two weeks in each place, whilst Christmas remained split into two weeks, with her mum taking the first half (including Christmas) and her dad with the second (including new year).

Throughout her childhood, Gabby's dad remained in the same house, whilst their mum moved into a slightly bigger place when she was 12, about the same distance from her dad's, with her new partner and whilst there had two more kids. Gabby and her sister largely continued with the same routine until they left for University. As she entered her teenage years, Gabby was more able to walk between her houses, meaning she could '*come and go a bit more'.* This made it easier to see her siblings for the evening – although she never stayed over. This hadn't previously been a feature of their lives. As Gabby's parents didn't like seeing each other, she often didn't feel comfortable asking to be driven over. The only time that Gabby remembers disrupting the routine was if she went to a party closer to the other parent's house, but she tended to be able to see her friends wherever she was. Gabby's mum now lives in Germany, moving after her sister left for University. Gabby suspects that she would have moved earlier if it were not for her and her sisters' continued need to see their dad.

Laura (23)

Laura's parents separated when she was seven. Following this her mum moved to a new house on the other side of the city Laura grew up in, whilst her dad moved over 170 miles away to be closer to his parents. Initially, Laura spent every other weekend with her dad. On these weekends, her dad would get up extraordinarily early at around 4am on Saturday mornings to make it to Laura's mum's by 9am, often stopping for a short nap along the way. They would then either go to a hotel or a friend's house nearby for the weekend, or they'd drive back to his or Laura's grandparents, returning on a Sunday evening (I talk more about these journeys in chapter six, section 6.2.1.2.). They managed to sustain this routine for a couple of years, but over time routinely driving 8-16 hours every other weekend increasingly took a toll on Laura's dad.

Therefore, when Laura was about 13, she began getting the train to her dad's and his trips up to the hotel became more infrequent. On these weekends, Laura's mum would drive her the 20 minutes to the train station, where Laura would get a train to Birmingham (about halfway), then change to another train, before changing again to reach the seaside town, slightly further away than where he had been living, where Laura's dad moved with his new partner. Whilst Laura much preferred the car journeys with her dad (as I talk about in chapter 6), she understood how exhausted the driving was making him. Initially, Laura was incredibly nervous about getting train, as she remembers:

> *Sometimes, I wouldn't go sit in the seat that was booked I'd go and sit actually sit in the luggage cart with my luggage because I was that scared of people taking my luggage from me. Urm... like it was not a fun experience, the first few times… . I think the first few times when I was there and I had the conductor person with me, it wasn't so bad. I had to get off the train and change which was quite nerve racking. But my dad would always made sure I had about half an hour in between my trains which made the journey longer but it meant that if I missed it I wouldn't get upset… Then I would have to change again which I didn't like because you had to go down into this subway below the train tracks. So I think I did that the first couple of times and then I was like look I don't want to do this anymore and they were like right ok so we'll change at a different station which was urm... a smaller train station. Usually when I got off it would be the same platform so that took out some of the stress of that… and I think this was, this was around about*

> *when I was given a phone. So it was a case of right so you now have a mobile phone, call me if you get, if you're concerned. I'd always have to make sure I have credit on my phone for these journeys urm so it was a case of like when I got to Birmingham I would call him and he'd look on the computer and tell me what platform the train was going to come in at and stuff like that 'cause to be honest, when you're on the train, the actual sitting on the train is not the issue it's the getting off bit. So urm.. and so you know my tickets initially were delivered to the door, so they'd come in the post, we'd plan it a week in advance.*

Over time, Laura got more used to these journeys, however, as she did, they also became very tiring and meeting the costs of regular trips became difficult for her dad. So gradually, over the course of about a year, Laura went from seeing her dad every other weekend to once every three weeks, to once every month, to just seeing her dad in the holidays. This meant that she'd spend every half term with him and any school holidays that were longer would be halved with her mum. Laura doesn't remember a big conversation where they made this decision, rather it morphed into this pattern where weekends were 'phased out', as Laura termed it. Laura was quite content with this. She found visiting in the holidays far more relaxing as they weren't rushing around to do things together. This routine carried on until well into Laura's early 20s as she continued to split her holidays at University between her parent's – before moving in with her dad after she graduated.

Orla (23)

Orla's parents separated when she was 15. After their separation, Orla's dad moved in with his parents, whilst her mum and Orla and her siblings stayed in the home they'd been living in. At this time there wasn't a routine to the ways they saw their dad, as he was caring for his elderly parents and couldn't have the kids to stay. Orla grew up in California, however, her mum was from Northern Ireland – where her family still lived. Her mum had always wanted to move back, but her dad had been resistant. Therefore, a few months after dad moved out, Orla and her siblings moved with their mum to Northern Ireland. Although Orla missed her friends, she was excited to move. Their new house was across the street from her grandparents and close to cousins who were around the same age. At this time Orla states that she '*didn't really have a relationship with my dad'*, and part of Orla welcomed the opportunity to put distance between herself and her dad.

Orla's father never came to visit them in Northern Ireland (something I discuss further in chapter six, section 6.3.6.). Instead, Orla, and her mum and siblings, travelled back to

California for a month in the following summer break. This was in part to see their dad but also friends and family. Although Orla's mum and siblings stayed with her dad, Orla chose to spend the summer living with her girlfriend. She saw her dad a couple of times a week for purposefully short periods – doing things like going for dinner or walking the dog with her siblings there too. Orla also went back on her own the following easter. Although she spent most of the two weeks staying with her friends, she spent the first and last nights with her dad. Without the rest of her family there, Orla remembers feeling more relaxed as he cooked her dinner and they watched movies together.

The following August, Orla started University in England, whilst her mum and siblings moved back to California. Orla thinks that the decision was, in part, because her dad was adamant they'd agreed they'd only stay for two years. Upon their return, her younger siblings spent a lot more time with their dad, in an attempt to make up for the time he'd missed, but after a couple of months, they settled into a shared care arrangement – spending two weeks at each house. Looking back Orla admits that her strained relationship with her dad was challenging, but it's her siblings who she really feels for. She wishes their lives hadn't been so disrupted at an early age, and that either they'd stayed in California or they'd been able to finish school in Northern Ireland – although she admits that both situations would have been difficult in their own ways and there was no perfect solution.

Tamsin (24)

Tamsin's parents separated when she was four or five. At the time the family were living in Germany and it wasn't until a few years later that Tamsin saw her dad again when he moved back to England to a town about a 40-minute drive away from Tamsin's grandparents, where she was living with her mum and siblings. Tamsin hasn't been told much about this time but as she remembers it there was a court case regarding custody, where her dad wanted her brother to live with him and Tamsin and her sister to remain with their mum. Instead, it was decided that Tamsin and her two siblings would spend every other weekend with their dad, alongside a two-week holiday in the summer.

On Friday evenings, Tamsin's dad would pick them up from their mum's and drive them over to his '*bachelor pad*', bringing them back at about 7pm on a Sunday evening (I talk more about these journeys in chapter six). After a few years of living with their grandparents, when Tamsin was nine or ten, her mum bought a house on a new build estate nearby whilst around the same time her dad also moved about a 15-minute drive away from her mum's new place.

Since he was living closer, Tamsin's mum suggested they start spending Sunday evenings at their dad's so he could take them to school on Monday. Although Tamsin didn't know this at

the time, her mum thought this might give them more structure at their dad's – something Tamsin often described as lacking. In reality, it did the opposite, making her more anxious as they frequently turned up late, without hair or uniform washed, and it meant another night at her dad's where she rarely enjoyed being. Luckily, this extra Sunday night only lasted for a couple of months.

On Friday evenings Tamsin remembers her and her siblings messing around, being naughty so they might not have to leave, and they'd frequently phone from their dad's asking to be picked up. However, despite often telling her mum she didn't want to go they would always have to. They had the court order and their dad would argue with their mum at any suggestion the kids didn't want to be there and often accused her mum of '*poisoning'* the kids against him.

When Tamsin was 12 her mum moved to a small village about an hour away from where they'd been. She'd originally wanted to move to France, but her dad blocked this in the courts. Initially, the routine carried on as before. However, over time they started seeing their dad less and less until it was about once every six weeks, as Tamsin described:

> *It wasn't really a decision. Well it certainly wasn't my mum's decision. It was usually because my dad was on a salsa weekend or going on fishing trips and he was like 'ah can we swap weekends' and my mum would be like no. So we'd go a few weekends without seeing him… We'd get to like Thursday or the Friday and we would mention it and then my mum would be like oh yeh you're not going. I was always quite happy.*

After a couple of years like this, her dad moved again to a town about half an hour's drive away. At first, they went back to seeing each other every other weekend but slowly this decreased again, until it was more like once every three months. Talking about this process Tamsin stated:

> *I purposely never said anything about it because I didn't want to go. So it wasn't like 'Tamsin do you want to go to your dads this weekend'. It was just like nothing was said and I did nothing…*

When Tamsin finished her GCSEs she made the decision to apply to a prestigious school her dad had mentioned, closer to his house. She worked extremely hard to get in, thinking she was '*going to make [her] dad proud'.* She planned to live at her dad's during the week and spend weekends and holidays at her mum's. However, a few weeks before the start of term, her dad announced he was leaving to live with his new partner over 100 miles away. Tamsin

was incredibly hurt, angry and resentful. She remained in the school but now had to travel over an hour and a half to get there. Every now and then her dad would call and ask her to come and visit. Tamsin would make a vague comment about coming soon but he never followed it up and neither did Tamsin. She's visited him about twice in the eight years since he moved and now Tamsin rarely has any kind of contact with him.

James (25)

James' parents separated when he was six. After their separation, James lived primarily with his mum and stayed with his dad every other weekend, from Friday to Sunday, in the house he moved to in the next town over, about 20 minutes away from his mum's. Their dad also changed his work schedule so he could see them on Wednesday evenings, taking them swimming, followed by a game of pool with a lemonade and a packet of crisps. Although it felt odd to be looked after by their dad on his own, James remembers enjoying these weekends at first. However, this changed when James was nine and his dad got remarried and moved in with his wife and her kids. James describes his dad's wife as '*horrible*' and '*narcissistic*' and there often being a '*weird tension'* in the house as she and her kids would frequently get into arguments. It was also around this time that James began to spend a lot of his time outside of school with his friends going to the skatepark near his mum's house or biking around the local area. However, James couldn't see these friends from his dad's and didn't have any friends where he lived.

These things in combination meant that James began to dread visits to his dad's (as I also talk about in chapter six, section 6.3.5.), and thus he started coming up with strategies for how to evade them:

> *I'd always ask, say like midweek, my friend "oh do you want to sleepover this weekend?". Then I'd always ask my mum, full well that I knew that I was going to my dad's but hoping that she would be like yeh yeh yeh... urm... never worked.*

James remembers it getting to the point where he '*really did protest to mum about not liking my dad's wife and not wanting to go'*. However, his dad was very forceful about them coming and would give their mum a hard time if they refused to go. This meant James rarely told his dad how he felt, as he '*was not an easy person to say no to... You know he's 6 foot 2, and he's quite scary when he's angry'.* James does have one particular memory where:

> *I just didn't want to go into that house. So I just stood here. Just refusing to go in, that was probably the most I ever really resisted.*

> *Eventually after I went inside my mum and dad were talking urm… outside for a bit. Urm… which later transpired that he said you've got to make him come.*

Thus, it was becoming increasingly clear to their dad that they were unhappy on these visits. Through some persuasion by their mum, their dad reduced the frequency of their visits to staying every third weekend and getting rid of the Wednesday evening swims – also partly because James got a paper round on that day.

When James' dad sat him down to tell him he was divorcing his wife, James remembers struggling to contain his delight. Once he'd moved out of her house, seeing his dad became much more enjoyable again. By this point, both James and his sister had part-time jobs, near to his mum's, so they didn't have a pattern to seeing their dad. Rather they just organised it amongst themselves for when they were free, with James and his sister often going at different times. Despite this, James thinks he probably saw his dad more over this period. He would often just go to his for the day or the evening after school, rather than staying the whole weekend, or they'd go for a walk somewhere or get the train for a day out in London together. This got even easier after James passed his driving test shortly after his 17th birthday and didn't have to rely on his dad picking him up anymore.

Josh (25)

Josh's parents separated when he was about two or three. After their separation, Josh's mum and dad initially stayed living in the same town, about a 10-minute drive away from each other. Josh lived primarily with his mum and his dad every other weekend. His dad would pick him up on a Friday evening at about 4pm and take him back to his, returning just before tea on Sunday evening. On Wednesday's he'd also have tea at his parental grandparents with his dad.

When Josh was about seven, his mum moved to a town about 90 miles away. As he remembers it, she never told him they were moving. Josh just recalls driving to a Pizza Hut, asking why they were there and being told it was because they'd moved – at which point Josh started crying. It meant leaving his friends and his school to be in a town he'd only been to once. Josh remembers being very vocal about wanting to move in with his dad at this time and has vague recollections about a court case over whether this could happen, where it was decided he would remain with his mum. He continued to spend alternate weekends at his dad's, but they lost the Wednesday dinners because it was too far to drive. Now, after school on Friday, his mum would drive him to a Tesco's about halfway to his dad's where his dad

would greet him with '*one of those cracking hugs where he picks me up'* and they'd drive to his house – doing the reverse on Sunday evenings.

Josh remembered often trying, and failing, to hold back tears on these journeys. Losing the Wednesday made it feel like a long time until he would see his dad and be in a place he felt comfortable again. But slowly, over time, Josh settled into life in the new town, making friends at school and playing in a local football team – although he still really enjoyed visiting his dad. That's why it came as such a shock when his dad suggested, unprompted, that they stop the weekend visits and just see each other during the school holidays. Josh remembers this conversation clearly:

> *it was the easter holiday in year seven, I was in the car with my dad and he just sort of brought it up and I didn't really know where it was coming from. I think he assumed, well yeh he said that, it gives me time to see my friends and things like that urm… but at that point it wasn't really something that I was like asking for, it was completely his suggestion … He positioned it as he was thinking of that as opposed to saying is that something that you would want to do… that language is quite subtle but probably did urm led to me, not not being ah no I'm happy with that. I don't think that that was intentional, that he was sick of seeing me every two weeks. I think he generally thought that's what, I would want or what would be good for me. But perhaps, probably the language of sort of being more of a statement as opposed to asking is that something that you would want probably led to me not saying anything about it.*

This change was then immediate. Holidays had always been roughly split between his parents and this continued. The way that Josh travelled also changed as he got older as, when he was about 13, he started to get the train. Josh had a cousin, a couple of months younger, whose parents were also separated and who travelled on the train between them. This prompted Josh and his dad to consider the possibility of Josh doing the same, to save the driving. At first, Josh remembers being nervous about these journeys, especially as he had to change trains in the middle. However, over time, Josh got used to it and actually preferred the control it gave him over leaving and arriving when suited him.

Louise (25)

Louise's parents separated before she was born. Thus, for as long as she could remember, Louise lived primarily with her mum on the outskirts of London and stayed with her dad every other weekend. On those weekends, her dad would pick her up at about 4pm on Friday, often joining her mum for a cup of tea before they left. They would then drive the 30 minutes to his house, returning on a Sunday evening just before tea. When Louise was in primary school her dad would also come round to her mum's for a couple of nights in the week and they would play games or do jigsaws together. However, as Louise got into secondary school these stopped as two weeks didn't seem like such a long time to wait to see him. If Louise had anything on near her mum's, like a birthday party, her dad would do his best to make sure she made it, either driving her back or switching to a different weekend.

During the holidays, they mostly kept the same routine as her mum worked in a school whilst her dad worked long hours as a police officer. Her dad also had a holiday home on the south coast, so sometimes they would travel there for the weekend. On these occasions, Louise's step-mum would also be in the car meaning that her dad would park round the corner and text her that he had arrived, as her mum didn't want her step-mum seeing her house.

When she was 11 her dad moved to a bigger house further into the countryside – about 40 minutes away from her mum's. On a couple of occasions, one of her friends from school came to stay for the weekend, but mostly it was Louise hanging out with her dad, step-mum and their dog. Louise's brother stopped regularly going to his dad's when he was about 12 or 13 (when Louise was three or four), as Louise explained:

> *I think for him his whole life had been his mum and his dad, like you know, nice little happy unit or whatever and then when he was 9 his dad just said I'm moving out kind of thing... so for my brother, he thought that his dad just basically abandoned him urm so his feelings towards going to his dad's for the weekend wouldn't of been the same as mine… he doesn't have the same relationship with my step mum as I do... he also played rugby on a Sunday morning so logistically I think it was a bit tricky because we'd have to drive all the way back for him to play rugby.*

Given that Louise was so young when this happened, she doesn't remember it feeling upsetting or unusual to not have her brother there. She only recalls him being around on special occasions like birthdays or Christmas – although they never went to their dad's on the

25th. Instead, they'd do an alternative Christmas on boxing day, a tradition which still continues now Louise is 25. This kind of stability characterised Louise's routine more broadly, as she continued to go to her dad's every second weekend until she left for University at 18.

Mia (25)

Mia's parents separated when she was ten. For about six months, they all stayed living in the same house whilst waiting for it to be sold, a period which Mia remembers as weird and tense. Subsequently, her dad moved to a town an hour's drive away whilst her mum moved to a small place, just down the road from their old house. As Mia understands it, her dad moved to be closer to the private secondary school they were planning on Mia and her brother attending – with the idea of splitting time equally between parents. However, after the divorce, they could no longer afford the school so Mia attended the local comprehensive close to her mum's, where her mum also taught. Given the distance, Mia and her brother spent every other weekend at their dad's.

On her dad's weekends, Mia would pack a bag on a Friday morning, leave it in her mum's classroom till the end of the day and then be picked up by her dad. Her dad would usually drive her back to school on Monday morning, or sometimes to her mum's on Sunday evening (I also discuss these journeys in chapter six, section 6.2.4.). Transitioning through school meant Mia's dad rarely had to see her mum – something that often made him upset, especially near the beginning of their separation.

Initially, Mia remembers looking forward to seeing her dad and she enjoyed that not every weekend was the same. However, as she got into her teenage years, she felt less enthusiastic about going as she resented missing out on hanging out with her friends at her mum's. Despite this, Mia could rarely get out of going. Her mum would say that seeing her dad was more important than friends and her dad got upset at the thought that Mia didn't want to see him and would try and convince her they'd have fun together. Sometimes she'd try and get her friends to meet in places accessible from her dad's, but this rarely happened. At 16, Mia got a part-time job near to her mum's which she remembers her dad being upset about, commenting that she '*was prioritising working over visiting him and that you know I should try and take every other weekend off work or something',* but of course this was impossible.

In an effort to have more control over these weekends, Mia started travelling to/from her dad's on public transport if she was going outside of 'normal' times when her dad was driving her brother. Although it took at least an hour and a half and involved two trains and a bus, Mia appreciated not having to stay the whole weekend - meaning she could work, see her friends and her dad. After a while, her dad asked her and her brother to start doing all journeys by

public transport – although he'd often pay for a taxi instead of making them get the bus. Although at the time she thought this was a lazy choice by her dad, looking back she understands why he was sick of driving.

George (26)

George's parents separated when he was four. Following this, his mum remained in the house, whilst his dad moved to a small flat above a takeaway in the next village, 10 minutes drive away. George and his brother saw their dad every weekend, either staying over on Friday or Saturday night and going back the following evening. George only really remembers being in his dad's flat to eat and sleep, the rest of the time they'd be doing things like going to karate club on Saturday mornings, going swimming or walking in the local countryside. They might also see their dad during the week if they had clubs they needed taking to, as their mum didn't drive.

When George was about eight his dad met his current wife. Visits to her house, about a 30-minute drive away, then also became a regular fixture of weekends, although George never remembers sleeping at her house. Instead, they'd go back to his dad's, or just go for the day once their dad had moved in with his wife. When George started secondary school his dad moved again, buying a wreck of a house in the middle of the countryside about 90 minutes from his mum's. Given that they were doing up the house, George doesn't remember staying over at first. Rather, his dad would pick them up early on a Saturday or Sunday and take them back at the end of the day. To escape the long drive, sometimes their dad and his partner would take them walking near to his mum's or they'd do something like go to the cinema. As George got older, when he saw his dad started to depend more on his dad's shift patterns. Whilst he had always done shift work, when they were younger, he would always make sure that they got to see him – even if it meant staying up after a night shift. His dad was less inclined to do this when they were older, feeling that it didn't matter as much if they went a weekend without seeing each other – which George agreed with.

When George was about 16 he started getting the train to his dad's, as his dad's household went down to one car – which his step-mum often needed for work. Although George was used to getting trains, he didn't appreciate the change. It meant getting three trains and then cycling from the station or getting picked up by his dad, which took a couple of hours and therefore George only ever did if he was staying over. By this point, his brother had moved to University and George had less of a defined routine to seeing his dad. Rather, they would just call each other to organise seeing each other '*as and when'* – often just meeting for lunch or for a walk.

4.3 Discussion

In this discussion I draw together these 16 ‘mobility biographies’, exploring the commonalities and differences in the forces structuring and shaping how mobilities are performed. I first examine how mobilities rhythmically take shape, intertwining with various rhythmic pulses in participant’s everyday lives. Secondly, I explore and make visible the work that goes into choreographing movements and holding these rhythms together. Finally, I unpack how mobility practices change over childhood – examining changes that are more permanent than explored in the preceding discussion sections. This section is divided into seven subsections, each drawing out a different temporal quality of change. I do so not to argue that these are the only temporalities through which change occurs in families, but rather that these are those observed in the biographies. In doing so, I highlight that change occurs at different speeds, across different temporal registers, at different points in young people’s lifecourses.

I first want to highlight several initial observations based on the biographies. It is abundantly clear that there is a great deal of variety in the ways participants moved between their multiple houses. Some walked up the road, others spent hours in cars, whilst one crossed continents. Some moved nearly every day, others’ movements were limited to the school holidays, whilst travel was an annual occasion for Orla. Sometimes, as was the case for Laura, Louise, Ryan and Nina, it was their parent who moved whilst they stayed put. For most, movements were performed in cars. This may be in part because of the income levels of families involved and that many lived in towns, suburbs and rural locations without access to reliable and widespread public transport. Although, as I will explore in this chapter and beyond, there are other factors relating to care, timing and materialities that may have influenced this choice. Movements didn’t always entail travelling only between parental houses, or between houses at all, but also encompassed grandparents’ houses, hotels, swimming pools, dog walks and schools. Some also spent time at one of their parents' houses, even when it was their other parent’s day or week – such as Noah returning to his mum’s for music group.

Consistent with wider patterns within the UK (Haux, McKay and Cain 2017), the majority of participants spent more time living with their mothers than their fathers, and patterns of seeing fathers tended to revolve around weekends – although there was also a number of participants who experienced routines more alike to ‘shared care’. Those who experienced shared care had a variety of ways of dividing their time, with some splitting up their weeks and others alternating them. The findings reflected those of other studies which have found that such ‘shared care’ arrangements are dependent on parents living relatively close to each other and

to children's schools, where geographic distance had an impact upon how often participants saw their parents – although this was not a simple linear relationship (Poole et al. 2016).

4.3.1 Rhythms

The rhythmic qualities united all my participants' mobilities. Time spent with their parents was consistently organised into repetitive and cyclical patterns in time and space of various durations. Whilst I am not the first to point out these qualities of young people's domestic lives after separation (Schier 2015; Marschall 2013), few have taken this further to think about how these recurring mobilities form part of the polyrhythmic mosaic of families' everyday lives. I approach these mobilities through the work of Lefebvre ([1992] 2004) and subsequent scholarship about rhythm (Edensor 2010; Lyon 2018; Chen 2017; Murray and Doughty 2016), as a way of thinking through the temporal interdependencies of mobilities with other spheres of daily life, whilst also expressing something of their structure, governance and predictable future orientation (Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019; Adam 1995; Murray and Doughty 2016). By using a rhythmic lens we can see how young people's mobilities both produce rhythms and develop by embedding themselves within and interacting with the rhythms of institutions, mobility infrastructures, bodies, seasons, days and special occasions (Roy, Tubbs and Burton 2005; Mayes 2020; Holdsworth 2019).

The rhythms of the school day and week were those most clearly 'staging' young people's mobilities – exerting the most powerful force in determining rhythmic orders (Jensen 2013). Many participants did not stay with their fathers on term-time weekdays, often because of the combination of challenges of getting to school, father's working hours, space within their houses and desires for stability during the school week. School was often part of journeys from one parent's house to another, such as for Ryan and Gabby. Although this was often driven by practicality, for some, like Mia and Gabby, it also provided ways to separate parents where proximity may cause emotional distress – thereby also demonstrating the role emotions play in 'staging' mobilities (Jensen 2013).

Journeys that weren't made from school were often still conditioned by their temporalities. Movements were often slotted between the end of school and before dinner, leaving young people time to settle before winding down to bedtime – therefore participating in the bodily circadian rhythms and domestic practices that surround these (Chen 2017; Kraftl and Horton 2008). The different temporal qualities of particular days also influenced movements, with Gabby and Noah switching on Monday and Friday respectively – marking the start and end of the school week.

The temporal interdependencies of school and movements between houses were perhaps made clearest during holiday periods. As periods where the 'rhythms of the everydayness take on a different frequency', holidays brought a different set of temporalities and possibilities for movement (Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019: 165). For some, like Josh and Laura, this meant switching to routines more akin to 'shared care', for others, like Gabby and Noah, the summer holidays created elongations of existing rhythms, whilst for others, like James, Isabel and Tamsin, routines largely stayed the same.

Christmas brought its own set of rhythms and qualities to how time was spent and divided – with recognition of the cultural and emotional importance of this period to the performance of family (Mason and Muir 2013; Hauri 2011). There has been surprisingly little research on children's experiences of Christmas in post-separation families, or other major cultural festivals. Participants tended to be split into three categories, those who alternated Christmas day year by year, those who spent Christmas eve, boxing day or another period close to the 25th with their dad (often repeating the traditions of Christmas dinner, opening presents etc.) and those who split Christmas day between both parents. Interestingly, in contrast to the change in flux found among young people's standard rhythms of movement, these routines tended to stay the same throughout childhood (and beyond) becoming part of the ritualistic traditions of family life over the Christmas period (Hauri 2011).

Journeys also fitted around, and manipulated, the rhythms of working and commuting, where gendered patterns of work and expectations around combining care and work often led to weekend patterns of domestic arrangements. Abi's experience of shifting her routine to fit around her mum's shift work demonstrates the difficulty of creating a stable rhythm when a parent works in irregular and changing patterns. This has rarely been acknowledged in the literature, outside of Ridge's (2017) study of parent-child relationships in low-income separated families – which does not expand on consequences for mobilities. As I argued in chapter two, this could be a consequence of an underrepresentation of lower-income families in this literature, where families are more likely to be engaged in shift work, working outside of the 9-to-5, and be on zero-hours contracts. As Mia and James' biographies show, the discordant rhythms of post-separation and work were also apparent for young people as they entered employment, where rhythms of alternating weekends often proved unsustainable for retaining weekend jobs.

The rhythms of arrangements were also often structured by court orders, child maintenance arrangements and other institutional policies. This was clearly shown in Lucy's biography as her mum suspected policies around discounted child maintenance payments, in part,

motivated the frequency and duration of when Lucy's dad wanted her to live at his (also see introduction, section 1.2. for a discussion of the most common living arrangements in the UK). These worlds were often opaque or vaguely understood by young people, especially in their memories, but came more forcefully into view when they were broken, causing conflict between parents. This was particularly the case as young people grew up and developed a stronger sense of their parents' obligations – such as with Tamsin (Ridge 2017).

Apprehending young people's mobilities through the lens of rhythm, seeing them as one set of rhythmic pulses in the overlapping polythmia of the everyday, has allowed me to sharpen focus on the forces shaping and structuring mobilities. However, as I will discuss below, these rhythms were never strict repetitions of the same. As Lefebvre ([1992] 2004: 16) notes 'there is no absolute repetition indefinitely…there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference'. Changing circumstances meant rhythms frequently had to be adapted and changed – requiring energy and effort to hold rhythms together, a theme explored in the following section.

4.3.2 Choreographing Movement and Mobility Labour

Returning to Chris' description of organising Abi's schedule around her mum's working patterns, we see the amount of work involved in choreographing mobility across households. However, as the narratives of my younger participants particularly show, this kind of work was not unique to Chris and was apparent in families with schedules that on the surface seemed more stable. Although movements were rhythmic, schedules provided a kind of baseline socio-temporal order that was often, temporarily, modified and diverted from, due to disruptions such as work trips, illness or parties. These interruptions often threw rhythms out of sync, requiring choreographic work to rearrange and stabilise routines. The use of the word choreography is purposeful here as a way of capturing the temporal and spatial dimensions of managing intersecting and interdependent movements, as well as the amount of creativity, ingenuity and proficiency required (Symes 2012; Bingham-Hall and Cosgrave 2019).

As Wind (2014: 12) argues such practices of 'mobility labour', 'the planning, coordinating, negotiating and preparatory effort in making everyday mobility', have largely been missing from the mobilities literatures, which has tended to focus on labour in the act of moving (although see Vannini 2012 and Watts 2008). Wind's paper, which focuses on the everyday mobilities of families in Copenhagen, captures many similar negotiations of mobility around complex work schedules, school, sports clubs and after-school groups as the biographies do. However, the biographies also show that separated families contend with additional layers of interrelated practical and emotional complexity.

The excerpt of Jemima and her mum's deliberations over half term provides a useful demonstration of these layers of complexity, making clear the complex interdependencies and protracted negotiations involved in organising mobility. Rachel is negotiating desires for time for herself, whilst also wanting to meet Jemima's needs over time (and space) to revise, whilst having to manage Jemima's dad's demands in the context of a continued relationship in which she felt he was overly controlling and at times manipulative. Jemima is similarly placed in a difficult position wanting to spend time revising, whilst also feeling 'bad' for the potential disruption to her parents' plans and finding it difficult to be placed within the conflict between her parents.

In attempts to navigate through these challenging dimensions there emerged a sense of deliberation with no perfect solution, but rather ambiguous, constrained, conceded and compromised choices. Jemima plays an important role in these negotiations, offering solutions, compromises and alternatives which enfolded in them past actions, present choices and aspirations for the future (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Her agency in these decisions, therefore, emerges not out of a desire to act in her own self-interest, but instead through her connections with others – with her concerns interconnecting with those of her family as they all manage individual and collective concerns (Abebe 2019; Edmonds 2019). This becomes less of an individualised decision and more of a negotiation together, 'filled with dialogic overtones' (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Wyness 2013).

This kind of elasticity in routines and role in discussions was different to that experienced by some participants such as Lucy. Both Lucy and her mum, Kate, described how the rhythms of Lucy's movement encoded the technology of the shared calendar her dad created, and they followed. As May and Thrift (2001: 4) argue our 'sense of time emerges from our relationship with a variety of instruments and devises', with power being a central facet to this relationship, shaping access to such technologies and the purposes for their use (Birth 2012). Her dad's power to determine where Lucy's time is spent works through the calendar, determining whose circumstances could cause disruptions in the routine (her dad's) and whose weren't (Lucy's and her mum's).

As Kate describes, she feels that this need to dictate and document time is linked to Lucy's dad's desires to lower his child maintenance payments. Therefore, showing the challenges that institutional and legal processes can impose onto everyday life, causing conflict with the messiness and unpredictability of life when things like getting ill happened. However, although this kind of rigid dictation characterised Lucy's everyday, her biography also shows how pockets of agency could emerge under particular contexts. For example, attending music

college demanded a reconfiguration of Lucy's routine, giving her the opportunity to shift and make more convenient when she saw her dad in the week. Thus, this 'fixed legitimate reason' for spatial and temporal change, gave Lucy the potential to exercise agency where she did not usually feel able under her constrained circumstances. This adds weight to understandings of agency, not as a fixed property, but rather as an emergent effect of changing relations (Bollig and Kelle 2016; Oswell 2013; Holloway et al. 2018).

This is not to say that negotiating routines always involved contests laden with friction. Rather, as my interview with Ryan and Nina showed, sometimes decisions over arrangements and mobilities were far more instrumental and collaborative – based more on the practicalities of movement - with routines often changing and morphing over time, adjusting to shifting circumstances and situations – as I explore in the following section.

4.3.3 Change and Continuity through Childhood

Another central theme emanating from the biographies is the dynamism in participant's mobility patterns over their childhoods. Very few remained stable and unchanged over time. As I have argued above, mobilities are relationally interlinked with many other aspects of families lives and therefore as these shift and transform, so to do mobilities – adapting around changing rhythms, relationships, economics, emotions, moods, timings, geographies and bodies. Thus, rhythms that once worked may fall in and out of synchronicity, causing changes in frequency, duration or regularity – whilst others may be more fundamentally disrupted or broken. In particular, the biographies give credence to Holdsworth's (2013) argument that families are continually shaped through (im)mobilities as they show how people are continually moving (and staying put) in order to sustain, end, reinvigorate and forge new relationships with those close to them – in ways that have consequences for movements between houses.

As I highlighted in the introduction, this idea of flux has been somewhat acknowledged in the literature on separation – but rarely empirically explored, particularly in the context of young people's evolving life situations (Chatterjee and Scheiner 2015). Continuing this chapter's focus on time, I will use temporality as a lens through which to apprehend and unpack these changes. I will examine how they occur through and are apprehended at various speeds – encompassing complex relations with past, present, and future.

I have split the following discussion into seven sections, focused around different temporal qualities of change observed in my participants' narratives. Differing from the sections above, I talk about changes that more fundamentally shifted the rhythms and routines of mobility over childhoods, rather than momentary deviations. Some of these temporalities were shared across my participants, although often for different reasons and with different emotional

consequences. Furthermore, whilst I have separated them out in the discussion, multiple temporalities often flowed through participants' experiences.

In this section, I will also continue to – examine how young people's agency emerges as they react to, accept, negotiate, instigate and resist changes in how mobilities are made and experienced. I will continue to argue for a concept of agency that is interdependent, relational and situated, whilst thinking of agency as having different textures, qualities and dimensions that shift and change over childhood emerging through and within the varying temporalities explored below (Abebe 2019).

4.3.3.1 Repeated Disruptions

In section 4.3.2., I highlighted the tendency for deviations from anticipated rhythms of young people's mobilities within the day-to-day lives of families. In the examples explored, these were usually momentary digressions where mobilities then slipped back into expected patterns. However, in several biographies when such deviations were repeated over time they coalesced into new patterns. This could be seen in, for example, the incremental increase in days Abi spent with her dad, or in the decreasing weekends Tamsin spent with her father.

In Tamsin's biography, I described how aged 12 her dad increasingly started to cancel their expected weekends, over time slowing the frequency of their visits. These changes were not temporally linear however, rather appearing as more of a cyclical pattern of decreasing visits, returning to standard rhythms and then decreasing again – until even the expectation of a rhythm broke down.

If I were to follow in the vein of how previous studies of post-separation have approached agency, I may interpret Tamsin's description of her having little choice over whether she went to her dad's as having no agency. However, if we take a view of agency not as something that one has or does not have, but as having different qualities, an alternative picture emerges (Holloway et al. 2018 , Esser et al. 2016; Oswell 2013; Abebe 2019). Tamsin's narrative showed many ways that she, and her siblings found, to alter and contest their circumstances – showing small, everyday acts of resistance (Scott 1985). Particularly in the ways they found to manipulate and affect time, using spaces, objects and technologies to build, extend and express their agency (Flaherty, Meinert and Dalsgard 2020; Prout 2005; Lee 2001; Wyness 2013). For example, Tamsin described how she would add friction into her Friday evening transitions as a young child, finding ways to '*be as naughty as possible'* by pulling toys out of boxes and hiding in an effort to slow time down, or when she'd call her mum from her dad's in an effort to speed time up.

As Tamsin got older, and the disruptions increased, there appeared a complex aligning of her dad's actions and Tamsin's desires not to go to his. This allowed for a kind of quiet complicity in Tamsin's response, as she recalls '*nothing was said and I did nothing*'. This is not to say this was her desired relationship or how she wanted to be treated. But rather, in her forms of non-action Tamsin made use of the situation to stay put at her mum's (Scott 2019). These kinds of actions might not be typically associated with children's agency, which has often be equated with resistance and action, however, agency can also be about continuing and going along with, rather than, transforming life (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Thus, this section has demonstrated how repeated disruptions often solidified into more fundamental changes in routines, that were, in Tamsin's instance, changes encouraged by her non-action.

4.3.3.2 Imagined Futures

This kind of quiet acceptance did not sustain throughout her childhood, for Tamsin sought to change her routine as she moved to a new school nearby to her dad's to begin her A-levels. Tamsin utilised this moment of transition to attempt to bring into effect new possibilities for, not only her educational journey, but also her relationship with her father – where there would be more temporal harmony between their everyday routines creating a future where they would be physically and emotionally closer. Viewed through the lens of family practices, this act of attempted repair can be seen as an act of doing family in response to actions of family undoing. For enveloped in Tamsin's work to get into the prestigious school, is the reworking of the histories of her relationship with her father and an imaginative engagement with the future of this relationship (Emirbayer and Mische 1998).

In doing so, Tamsin demonstrates how young people's agency has important temporal dimensions as it is situated within the flow of time (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Worth 2009; Holloway, Holt and Mills 2019). Similar orientations towards futurity can be seen throughout the biographies as young people looked towards changes in school, transitions to University and shifts in relationships with family members – as young people negotiate in imaginative ways how these might necessitate changes in current mobile routines.

Such imaginative engagements did not always entail mobilities that were entirely possible. For instance, Emily shared how she creatively dreams of having her own flat, or a caravan that travels between her parent's houses, demonstrating Murray and Cortés-Morales' (2019) argument that, children are agentic in their imagined mobilities . In such imaginations Emily dreams of manipulating time to 'disturb the linear path of childhood that determines what children can and cannot do' (Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019: 2). However, Emily is aware of

the constraints of the 'real' world, where what emerges from her imaginative agency are situated within the bounds of what is possible.

4.3.3.3 Fast Changes and Unexpected Ruptures

To return to Tamsin's biography, we saw how this imagined future quickly dissolved as her dad unexpectedly moved away to be with his new partner. This dramatic rupture in Tamsin's expectations builds upon an accumulated history of disappointment and lack of care. Becoming a clear tipping point in their relationship, where Tamsin returned to a more resolute inaction choosing to invest little time and effort into visiting him. This move can therefore be seen as an act of family undoing. It is an act which was felt through past histories of undoing which chipped away at Tamsin and her dad's relationship, as well as her attempted acts of repair discussed above, finally accumulating into a more fundamental rupture in Tasmin's care and connection towards her father.

This kind of fast change was less common among my participants, but not unique to Tamsin. Similar tempos could be seen in Isabel's dad's shock engagement and house move, and Emily's swift move out of her mum's house. Josh was another participant who experienced a quick, unexpected change to his mobility. His dad's suggestion of stopping weekend visits was a fast departure from a routine that Josh felt had been working well. Josh reflects on the sudden way it was introduced and the subtleties in language and tone that affected how he felt he could respond to his dad's suggestion – shutting down possibilities for opposition. In recalling this event, Josh further demonstrates the situated and contextual nature of agency, where his actions are intricately related to his dad's, the space they're in and the histories and power structures of their relationship (Plows 2012; Abebe 2019). As Josh speculates, the same idea introduced in a different manner, at a different time, with other people around, at a different pace may have changed the ways in which he felt able to react.

4.3.3.4 Changing Bodies

For other participants, whilst mobility routines seemed to remain unaltered, it was the bodies performing them which slowly changed over time. For example, Laura described how her dad became worn down by the accumulative toll of driving and its bodily demands. Similar bodily changes have been noted by Bissell (2014) in his work on commuting, a practice which in many ways mirrors the repetitive movements of Laura and her dad. Bissell (2014) describes how over time, subtle, slow creeping transformations in commuters' bodies occur which break down embodied habits and aptitudes for movement, building to 'tipping points' which force changes in practices. We can see a similar process happening with Laura's dad, where her change to move by train may be seen as one such 'tipping point'.

In talking about this, Laura positions it as a change she may not have chosen for herself, as she enjoyed those car rides (as I talk about in chapter six), but one that she accepts and makes work for her dad. She understands what her dad has endured to keep their relationship and now wants to do the same. Thus, Laura understands that she is not a bounded or separate self, but rather is interconnected with her dad – whom she cares deeply for. In taking the train Laura, therefore, exercises her 'caring agencies' (Kallio and Bartos 2016), demonstrating that ''children's agency is an integral part of and shaped by the familial notions of care, obligations and reciprocity' (Abebe 2019: 10; Serpell and Adamson-Holley 2017). These modes of exercising agency are obscured by perspectives used previously in post-separation, where agency is viewed as either granted by parents or fought for in acts of children's resistance. As Bartos (2012: 158) highlight this extends beyond the context of divorce research to wider childhood research, where studies of young people's agency also similarly focus 'on acts of building independence, increasing individualisation and freedom' from parents rather than considering the agency in acts seeking to cultivate and deepen interdependencies.

This is made clear particularly in Laura's descriptions of the changing socio-material practices that she and her dad collaborated to enable her to conduct journeys on the train. This included actions like extending gaps between train changes, getting a mobile phone and using this to direct Laura from afar. Such findings resonate with descriptions of children's mobilities as interdependent (as explored in section 2.4.4. of my literature review) (Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009; Kullman 2010). This research has tended to focus on school journeys or movements around neighbourhoods, where moving without parents physically co-present are presented through the lens of lifecourse stages. However, Laura's example presents it in a different context, whereby her changing mobilities are about continued connections with family, rather than movements away from this.

Despite her increasing comfort with taking the train, over time Laura began to see her Dad less and less before switching to only seeing him during the holidays. Like Tamsin, this seemed to be, at first, less of an overt decision and more of a series of disruptions that morphed into a pattern. However, Laura was differently placed emotionally in relation to these changes as her relationship with her dad was built on a history of sustained, frequent and trusted contact – allowing her to feel comfortable and confident with these elongated periods apart. Thus, these elongated times apart were not felt as acts of undoing, as they could be framed for Tamsin, but rather were part of changed temporalities of doing family.

Similar patterns emerged for many participants who started seeing their fathers less and less as they entered their mid-teenage years. Over time there often seemed a changing emotional

relationship to and perception of time where, for example, waiting six weeks to see their father may have seemed an eternity when younger which lessened as they got older and as the relationships built with parents after separation seemed on steadier ground. There were some common reasons for reductions in time spent with fathers as participants got older, particularly relating to friends and school – as I explore below.

4.3.3.5 Out of Sync with Friends

In the biographies we see clear evidence of the interconnectedness of the spheres of family and friendship in young people's lives – coming together in asynchronous ways for some in the study (Smart 2007; Davies 2015b). Many participants whose parents did not live within the same towns or neighbourhoods, who tended to see their fathers at the weekends, rarely had friends where their fathers lived (also described by Moore 2016). Furthermore, because of the condensed nature of their time together, weekends were often reserved for exclusively spending time with their dad's. The extent to which dads were willing, and able, to take their kids to events like birthday parties or sleepovers differed. For example, Louise remembers often being driven back to see her friends near her mum's, whilst Mia recalled her dad's reluctance to do the same. Frustrations with the difficulty of seeing friends often became increasingly apparent as participants entered their teenage years where, as a kind of reversal of temporal orientations towards seeing fathers described in the last section, every second weekend felt like a lot of time to miss out on seeing their friends. This did not necessarily mark a change in commitment to the importance of their family relationship but rather marks shifts in temporal orientations toward the balance of time spent in their day-to-day lives. Although this sentiment was not shared by everyone as both Laura and Louise described forgoing seeing friends so they could remain committed to the rhythms of seeing their dad's.

Even for those whose parents were willing to take them back for birthday parties or other events, seeing their friends in less organised and pre-planned ways was often difficult. For example, James described how from the age of around 11 he increasingly spent most of his time outside of school with his friends at the skatepark, BMX track or cycling around the local area – only going home '*when the streetlights came on*'. This was a change in the temporalities and spatialities through which James saw his friends outside of school, shifting from more organised events to a more loosely spatially and temporally contained 'hanging out' that was difficult to engage in from his dad's (Pyyry and Tani 2015). This left him feeling increasingly out of sync with his friends, feelings which only increased as he got older and, in part, explained why he decreased the frequency of visits with his dad.

This got easier for James after his dad divorced his then wife, an event which seemed to breakdown James' routine with his visits becoming less rhythmic in character and uncoupled from the space of his dad's house, allowing him to fit them around his own timetables – as was also the case for George and Isabel. This became even more manageable when he started driving at 17 as he could then be more in control of the times that he travelled to his dads – also mirrored in Sophia's biography. For others, solutions to similar issues often meant switching to travelling on public transport – meaning they could fit seeing family and friends into their weekends, as both Mia, Josh and George described. This was a trade-off, however, as it often meant longer and more arduous journeys.

4.3.3.6 Out of Sync with School

Another common trend in the biographies was the increasing difficulty of managing the changing demands of school with moving between houses; this was particularly common as participants entered GCSE years. Such events brought up a variety of issues such as the proliferation of school-related materialities, lack of space to study in both houses and the additional mental and physical toll it took to move in a period where time felt precious. For many participants, such issues contributed towards them being more sedentary in their domestic lives as they got older, with less time spent at their father's houses.

This changing experience of school was perhaps most apparent in my discussions with Jemima, where it became clear that as GCSE exams neared Jemima's relationship towards time started to shift. Time was increasingly experienced as a limited resource that needed to be used efficiently. Jemima described how she became increasingly frustrated with the staccato, 'cut up' pace of her Friday evening changeovers. With this fragmented flow, time was unproductively wasted as she could neither 'chill out' or get work done. Thus, while Kullman and Palludan (2011: 351) have highlighted that children's 'bodies adapt to temporal routines', Jemima's description shows how they can also fall out of step with them. Consequently, Jemima changed her routine to avoid some of these changeovers and to give herself more time at her mum's where she revised best. This decoupled Jemima's routine from her brothers, seen often throughout the biographies as well as in other studies of separation either because of siblings' different points in the lifecourse or siblings' different emotional reactions to familial events (Berman 2015; Abbey and Dallos 2016).

For Jemima, these changes caused disruptions to a view of time-based on equal division, which had in some ways been a proxy for her equal commitment to her parents – thrown off-balance by this change in rhythm. In response, Jemima attempted to realign this balance through efforts to more purposefully and intensely spend what might be termed 'family time'

with her dad and brother. This reflects other studies which have similarly discussed the ways in which children create 'pockets of everyday intensity' (Marschall 2013: 526), or 'intensified togetherness' (Moxnes 2003: 13) with parents after separation in response to conditions of temporal scarcity – further demonstrating the ways in which young people manage their family relationships through the manipulation of time.

These changes were not necessarily permanent for Jemima, but rather followed the rhythms of the school year – as she speculates she will revert back to her old routine during the summer holidays. This once again highlights that changes to mobile routines are not necessarily linear, instead often being experienced as cyclical, temporary, provisional or episodic. Although different in their motivation, other changes similar in their temporal qualities include the temporary addition of Sunday evenings into Tamsin's routine or the few months Emily spent not living at her mothers.

4.3.3.7 Continuity

Whilst the past six sections have emphasised the tempos through which young people's mobilities changed in their childhoods, it must also be noted that for some, such as Louise, Gabby and Sophie, their routines were characterised far more by continuity and stability rather than change. This is not to say that these participants did not experience change in other areas of their lives, but that their mobile routines were able to withstand much of this.

For example, Gabby experienced the introduction of her mum's new partner and the birth of their two half-siblings. Although Gabby described these events as changing her experience, the temporalities of her routines - such as the presence of her younger siblings changing her perception of how long a week felt - her biweekly visits persisted. In part, this was due to the actions of her parents, such as her mum's commitment to live close to their dad's whilst Gabby and her sister were in school and both of their flexibilities in allowing them to spend time with their siblings outside of their usual routine. These kinds of sacrifices and flexibilities allowed routines to withstand natural changes in families, schools and friends discussed above. Importantly, all three experienced much emotional stability in their relationships with their parents. These favourable circumstances often allowed young people to continue their routines with a kind of unreflexivity, as they all described never really considering a change in their routines.

4.3.3.8 Discussion Summary

This discussion provided an in-depth exploration of the biographies presented above, using a temporal lens to examine how young people's mobilities are structured and shaped and how

this changes throughout their lifecourse. Throughout this discussion time has been apprehended in several ways as it flows through the biographies. First I considered the rhythmic qualities of young people's movements, examining the harmonious and discordant ways these rhythms are embedded within the polyrhythmia of the everyday. Secondly, using Wind's (2014) concept of 'mobility labour', I explored the work, practices and energies that go into planning, adapting and holding mobilities together. I showed that young people were differently involved in these negotiations, creating various routes for young people's agency to emerge and be expressed.

This focus was continued in the following section. Through establishing the ways in which mobilities are entangled in their connections to school, friends, family, relationships and work, I examined how shifts in these spheres of life caused adaptations and changes in young people's mobilities. I broke this discussion into seven different temporal qualities and dynamics of change observed in the biographies. In exploring these temporalities, I demonstrated how young people's agencies emerged through these temporal processes – drawing out the different textures, qualities, and dimensions of agency felt throughout my participant's childhoods.

4.4 Conclusion

Through presenting 'mobility biographies', this chapter has introduced my participants and their families, outlining their living arrangements and mobility patterns throughout their childhoods and examining how journeys between houses were structured, shaped and coordinated in terms of people, places and times. This chapter allows the reader to place the experiences discussed in the chapters that follow in the lifecourses and lifeworlds of my participants, providing information on the histories that undergird them and the possible futures that follow. The reader could thus keep in mind and return to these biographies as they continue with the rest of this thesis.

However, this chapter has gone beyond a simple introduction to my participants. In drawing together the biographies, I explored the ways in which young people's mobilities are structured, organised, negotiated and constructed – using various approaches to time to do so. Through employing a rhythmic lens, I explored how young people's mobilities are interconnected with and interact with other rhythmic spheres of life. This provided a way to expand on how rhythms relationally break down, change and adapt and the everyday labours and agencies involved in this work. Doing so enabled a more detailed consideration of a series of temporalities through which mobilities change and continue over longer timescales. Breaking this discussion down

into seven themes, I explored the various temporal qualities of changes observed in the biographies and drew out the expressions of children's agency in these processes.

This chapter has therefore made several contributions to literatures around mobility, post-separation and children's geographies. Firstly, I have added to the very limited number of studies which have apprehended children's mobilities through the lens of rhythm - showing the value of rhythm to exploring the relational, governed, structured, repetitive and interconnected aspects of children's mobilities and their wider lifeworlds (Kullman and Pallundan 2011; Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019; Balldin and Harju 2021). Further contributing to mobilities studies, I have provided one of the only studies to take up Wind's (2014) analytical tool of 'mobility labour', drawing attention to the practices, energies and agency that go into planning, organising and preparing for mobility – stages of mobility that have tended to go under-explored in mobilities literatures thus far (Vannini 2011a; Wind 2014).

Secondly, I have made several significant contributions to the study of post-separation childhoods, demonstrating how this critical appreciation of time offers new insights into understandings of post-separation journeys and family changes. In investigating changes at different temporal scales, I complicated static and rigid portrayals of arrangements – showing that they have much more dynamism in both the everyday and over longer timescales. In doing so, this enabled me focus on how and why changes occur and to draw out many of the challenges and opportunities that flow from that dynamism.

Thirdly, I have made a contribution to literatures on time within children's geographies, recognising time as having dynamic and changing qualities, textures and flows. This speaks to, but also extends beyond, literature on transitions which has largely dominated writing about the temporalities of childhood and youth. Connecting with work on transition, it has emphasised the non-linearity and messiness of how change occurs and is apprehended in young people's lives – both disrupting and interacting with expected progressions of time in childhood (Worth 2009; Ansell et al. 2014; Horton and Kraftl 2006b).

However, this chapter has looked at changes occurring over a longer duration than those typically apprehend in the literature on transition. It has examined changes over months, years and even decades, alongside and interconnected with transitional moments, events and vital conjunctures. This provides further appreciation of the fact that children are temporal agents, using, manipulating and responding to these different qualities of time as it flows through their everyday to bring about change or continuity in their lives.

This leads to my fourth contribution, in drawing attention to the contextual, relational and interdependent nature of young people's agencies in these changes, I have challenged

conventional approaches to agency within the literatures on post-separation which have tended to rest on views of agency based on principles of autonomy and rationality. Rather I have shown how young people display their agencies through caring, sacrificing, resisting, mediating, compromising and agreeing - something also explored later on in chapters five and six. Although I explore the particular circumstances of separation, many of the broader themes will be relevant across various family formations. This discussion, therefore, adds to the limited number of studies which have used similar conceptualisations to explore young people's agency in the family more widely. In particular, through combining these conceptualisations of agency with a biographic approach I have shown how agency connects to changing rhythms and temporalities throughout children's lifecourse – adding to arguments that agency is a temporal phenomenon (Flaherty, Meinert and Dalsgård 2020; Holloway et al. 2018).

In the biographies and the discussions that followed, this chapter has also anticipated a number of important themes that will be explored across the following two analysis chapters which focus more on the lived, embodied experience of mobility and the emotions and affects which emanate from this. Although time appears less as a structuring concept throughout chapters five and six there remains a continued concern for the multiple temporalities woven into journeys. Stillness, waiting, anticipation, quickness and slowness, are all temporal modes encountered in the following discussions. Again, although not a structuring concept, the temporal modality of rhythm runs throughout the continuing chapters through their concern for the effects of repetition on the ways in which bodies are trained to perform practices and the ways these practices can break down as rhythms change and adapt.

There is also further evidence of the manipulation of time to produce particular experiences, although this is seen more through embodied apprehensions of these temporalities and how they are linked to the sensuous geographies of movement. Furthermore, the notion of transition reappears within chapter six. I similarly consider transition as a temporally complex and diverse phenomena, as I think about how the car facilitates transitions between houses as well as transitions across much longer timescales from one way of doing family to another. Although less explicitly analysed, throughout the following chapters there is also a continued concern for the agentic ways in which young people respond to, resist and support their changing circumstances as they are felt and experienced through mobility practices.

In the biographies I also demonstrated that often accompanying young people as they made their journeys were a host of belongings that similarly travelled between houses. This could be seen in, for example, the proliferation of Jemima's school books and work, or in Laura's account of her fear over the loss of her suitcase. Such mobile movements are the explicit

concern of the following chapter as it explores the types of objects that move between houses and the practices and emotions such movements create. In doing so, chapter five continues to explore the ways in which mobility requires practices, energies and preparation that prefigure physical acts of movement.

Chapter Five: Suitcases, Teddies and Textbooks: Mobile Materialities in Post-Separation

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I introduced the notion that the mobilities of young people in post-separation families include not only the corporeal movement of bodies between houses but also the movement of a range of materialities. This chapter explores such material movements and the practices, routines and emotions that surround them. Whilst acknowledging the heterogeneous and ambiguous nature of the concept of materiality, within this chapter I will largely be using it to refer to material objects. As I will show, various amounts and forms of such 'stuff' accompanied all participants as they journeyed. Discussion of this movement took up much of my interviews, particularly with my younger participants and it was clear that this was a central component of their experiences of mobility. This has already been highlighted in the previous chapter, particularly in Emily's comments, discussed in her biography, where she described wishing she could live in a caravan which moved between her parent's houses. This would be a creative solution to the issues of deciding which house to keep things in, the repetitive routines of packing and the annoyances of forgetting things. These are all themes discussed in the following chapter.

However, these are experiences rarely explored within the literature about post-separation childhoods, only being briefly referenced in the work of Berman (2019) and Schier and Proske (2010). This is surprising given the prominence of material mobilities within popular cultural depictions of divorce and separation (Walsh 2018). For example, Jacqueline Wilson's (1992) popular book *The Suitcase Kid,* tells the story of a ten-year-old, Andy, who alternates weekly between the houses of her recently divorced parents. In this book, it is the movement of things that defines the title character – with the suitcase as the emblem of her inherently mobile life. Whilst these depictions of mobile materialities have tended to be largely negative, this chapter will paint a more nuanced picture, exploring the complex range of meanings, emotions and affects such mobile movement generate.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the types of objects that move between young people's houses at different points in their childhoods and begins to explore what effects the movement of such materialities have for young people's relations to spaces and to family members. The discussion then moves on from focusing on 'things' as the topic of investigation to the material practices surrounding movements, specifically focusing on the practices of packing. In this exploration, I introduce the idea that the young people in my study are skilful

mobile subjects who artfully perform such mundane practices through drawing on a range of embodied habits, capabilities and rituals.

Running throughout these sections is a concern for the connections between emotions and materialities, as I demonstrate how emotional experiences of movement in post-separation are, in part, shaped by the materialities that accompany children as they move (alongside what objects are absent). In particular, I discuss how moving materialities both create and help cope with the emotional challenges of mobility. In doing so, I explore how the presence and absence of certain objects work together with people and spaces to produce particular flows of emotion. The final section focuses on the interconnectedness of material objects and emotions in more detail. In particular, it picks up on the idea that materialities play an important role in the emotional ways in which family members relate to each other – thus contributing to the doing and undoing of family. To do so it examines instances of forgetting objects and looks at the borders that some parents enacted around the movement of things in and out of the home.

5.2. What Moves and What Stays Put?

As stated above, materiality is a theme rarely explored within studies of post-separation childhoods. Where it has figured, it has tended to be in studies examining domestic materiality and how this interacts with children and young people's experiences of, and capacity to engage in, homemaking within their various houses (Palludan and Winther 2017; Merlan and Nobles 2019; Walker 2022). Across these studies, researchers have found that young people are often travelling between different material environments, particularly with respect to access to personal space and the presence of personal belongings. As I argued in previous research, such 'domestic materialities are a significant means through which the (re)-and-(un)making of familial relationships in post-separation is performed' (Walker 2022: 210). These findings were reflected in the data in this thesis.

However, my analysis takes a different approach to the studies mentioned above. Rather than focusing on the objects that exist with a relative permanence within young people's homes, I focus on the 'stuff' that *moves* between their domestic environments and their interconnections with these more static materials (Adey 2017; Sheller and Urry 2006). This is important given that I show that these moving objects both help to cope with, as well as exacerbate, the emotional and practical challenges of transitioning between houses. These are challenges that change over the course of childhood, as well as with the shifting doing and undoing of family as discussed in the biographies in chapter four. In order to explore these moving materialities, I will focus on the experiences of three of my older participants – Mia, Gabby and Laura.

Each of these participants captures a different experience of the movement of materialities between houses that is indicative of the wider experience of participants in the research. I will focus on the types of materialities that move and the capacities of such materialities as they relate to movement and reproduction. Focusing in detail on these three cases allows me to situate these elements within the wider context of participant's lives, as introduced in the biographies in chapter four. In doing so, I begin to draw out the ways that these materialities interact with and help co-create, the varying material, emotional, spatial and temporal dimensions of participant's everyday lives.

5.2.1 Mia

Following her separation, Mia's mum rented a house for a couple of years before buying the house that she still lives in with Mia's step-dad today. This house was a 'total wreck' and needed a lot of work doing to it, so Mia was essentially given a blank slate to decorate the room exactly how she wanted it. She decided this was going to be her 'grown up' room, with everything very clean, cream and 'minimal', and Mia described carefully curating everything on display.

This description of her room at her mum's was in complete opposition to her room at her dad's, in which she spent every other weekend. Mia recalled her dad asking how she wanted to decorate the room when they first moved in, to which she replied that she wanted to paint it white and flick multi-coloured paint on the walls. However, after her dad refused this she became disinterested in decorating and instead, some 'generic' IKEA furniture was brought. Alongside this impersonal decoration, Mia described having very few of her own things permanently within this room or in the wider space of the house:

> *I remember urm.. originally my dad wanted me to leave some of my things there. I remember trying to choose which clothes to leave at his, you know I didn't want to choose my nice clothes because I wanted to have them most of the time and I would always take clothes that were just sort of spare. Urm... and... yeh and so I mean to begin with he tried to encourage me to not even need to bring a bag but I mean it wasn't realistic there was, in the end you can't have two sets of belongings in two different places so. (Mia, 25)*

Hence, Mia would spend Thursday evenings carefully packing everything she needed for the weekend. Underwear, clothes, books, makeup, jewellery, school work, toys, toiletries and games were all thrown together in the big purple backpack brought for transporting her things.

Many participants, largely those who spent the majority of their time living with their mother, spoke of similar experiences of having very few of their belongings in their father's houses. (Walker 2022; Merla and Nobles 2019). For Mia, this experience of living within a materially impersonal space became even more pronounced when her dad moved houses again a few years later, buying a place with his new partner. Talking about this move, Mia described how:

> *once my step mum moved in urm like all the stuff that we liked about the house, so like the games console we used to play, urm you know and like my wardrobe, even though I wasn't really using my wardrobe, it got like taken over with her stuff. Urm and all of like mine and my brother's stuff basically got put into storage and then you know she said when we come we could get it out and then we had to put it away again before we left… So in the house that they then brought together, urm... I... had a room? Urm but they basically told me it was the spare room and that I was basically staying in it when I was there... yeh... it… was distinctly worse urm at the new house, like it's very much being a guest at someone else's place… I didn't have anything of my own at my dad's anymore and I was bringing a bigger bag with all of my stuff that I wanted in it. (Mia, 25).*

Previous research has highlighted how under conditions of periodic absence from the home, particular material objects can become anchors of stability for young people in post-separation families – helping to rebuild and reinforce feelings of belonging to homes and to families (Walker 2022). As Palludan and Winther (2017: 40) discuss, belongings are a means through which children can 'take up space, leave traces and obtain a certain weight' within the family. However, as Mia's experience highlights materialities moved in and out of the home, as well as those 'hidden' during young people's time away, rarely attract this sense of 'weight'.

Writing about the use of self-storage units to store possessions, Owen (2020) similarly acknowledges the weighty capacities of certain materialities – arguing that objects stored in units can provide anchors to home when people do not have permanent ones. She argues that the 'immobility of possessions, and the memories, emotions and relationships they stand in for, can be viewed as rooted or anchoring in place', where such materials can provide 'a stabilising weight when all around is in flux' (Owen 2020: 5). Whilst there are different temporalities to the flux in the lives of participants in Owen's research, as most were travelling or temporality moving abroad, similar processes can be seen to be occurring for Mia as her mobile materialities fail to provide an emotional anchor at her dad's house.

Instead, the mobile materialities worked to create and communicate her position as a 'guest' in this house. The figure of the guest is a telling one. As a transient figure, the guest is inherently mobile, moving, with their suitcase, in and out of someone else's home (Löfgren 2016). The guest may take up space within this home, but this claim is only ever temporary as the suitcase becomes the material distillation of their life in that house. The guest must be careful not to overstay their welcome or become too familiar, for the guest does not really belong. Connecting back to my previous research on homemaking in post-separation, such feelings of alienation from homes can in some cases chip away at feelings of belonging to the family that inhabits it. This suggests that in some cases, moving objects between houses can become actions of family undoing – particularly when combined with wider feelings of detachment in those familial relationships, as was the case for Mia.

This may suggest that Mia's dad was well placed in his attempts to encourage Mia to leave things at his house, to help mitigate against some of these feelings. However, as Mia's first quote suggests, this is not a simple task. For Mia, visiting her dad's house brought up complex emotions. On the one hand, she knew that her dad really valued their time together and Mia did too. However, all of Mia's friends, much of her family, her school and her 'proper' bedroom were in the town where her mum lived, and she described feeling like time at her dad's was time out of her 'normal life'. Therefore, Mia didn't want to take belongings from her mum's, where her 'normal life' existed, to be left at her dad's to be used so infrequently. Her belongings, embedded into her life at her mum's, didn't make sense in another context (Miller 2008). Rather than live without these belongings at her mum's, Mia sacrificed the feelings of stability that may have been gained through leaving them at her dad's. Not all participants had the same experience, however, for others were moving between environments in which they felt much more materially present (Walker 2022). I will now explore the movement of materialities in this context through the experience of Gabby.

5.2.2 Gabby

Unlike Mia, Gabby described a strong feeling of attachment to her room in both of her parent's houses – which she spent weeks alternating between. In part, this was because Gabby had her own belongings in each of the houses. Therefore, in principle, she would have little to take between her houses as she had 'two sets' of most things in each of her houses:

> *we you know packed our bags and stuff for urm.. school urm and everything that we needed while we were at mum's, but you know, not really clothes or anything like that cause we had two sets of everything*

> *like that and you know toothbrushes and stuff, we had the two sets. All the essentials we had at two houses (Gabby, 22)*

However, despite having all of the 'essentials' at each house 'stuff' continued to move between her parents' houses. In particular, school books, folders, essays and homework were things that did not have the capacity to be duplicated or reproduced and hence needed to be made mobile. These school-related materialities tended to expand year on year, growing from a small book wallet to multiple subject folders, separate textbooks, coursework, essays, artwork and musical instruments as Gabby completed her GCSEs. This growing mass of school-related materialities was also accompanied by the increasing mobility of clothes and toiletries as Gabby became more conscious of the need to have the right clothes or products in the right place at the right time. For example, when I asked Gabby to expand upon the things that she took between her houses she stated that:

> *Honestly, the most annoying thing was my hair because urm my sister and I have a lot of hair! You know and it's like you know black kind of hair so we had a lot of hair products and they were expensive so you know we didn't like to buy them all the time like you know we'd want to, if I was doing my hair I'd be annoyed because of this product at I wanted wasn't here you know… we'd got to know what kind of stuff we wanted specifically to work for it and then when it wasn't there I remember I'd get so annoyed 'cause I was like oh for heaven's sake I'm going to look ridiculous at school! (Gabby, 22).*

These products were too expensive to have two sets of and, therefore, they began to accompany Gabby as she travelled between her houses as a teenager - much to the puzzlement of her friends at school. Hence, despite the efforts of Gabby and her parents to minimise the stuff she would take, when Gabby entered high school she ended up lugging a 'ludicrous' amount of stuff with her on the school bus, causing her to always be in a 'bit of a mood' on a Monday. Extending the insights afforded by the analysis of Mia's experience, Gabby's circumstance highlights further that not all materialities have the same capacities for replication. The school work, because of each piece's uniqueness, and the hair products because they were too expensive to do so. In discussing this, it must be noted that what parents are able to replicate, both within and between families, will not be equal. For those families with limited economic resources, having two sets of belongings is likely to be unattainable (Ridge 2017). Gabby's experience also highlights that needs and demands for

various material belongings is not static throughout childhood but rather is varied and changing.

In focusing on Gabby's experience I have largely explored materialities that were significant for their use in the accomplishment of practices in Gabby's everyday life, but with little sentimental value attached to their specific materiality. In order to focus on such sentimental materialities, I will now turn to another participant, Laura, whose experience draws out further properties of materialities which close down opportunities for replication, in turn requiring their movement between houses.

5.2.3 Laura

Cuddly toys were a big part of Laura's childhood. Such a big part that at her mum's house she had a whole separate bedroom filled with them. There was the huge toy dog, an unexpected prize for a phone-in competition, the toy bear nightdress holder where she stored her pyjamas, but most important of all were paw and foxy. Paw and foxy went *everywhere* with Laura, including, on visits to see her dad - being constant companions across the varying spaces in which Laura spent time with her dad:

> *The most important thing that I had to take with me was my cuddly toy, his name was paw, he was a leopard cub that we'd picked up from, it was a gift from when we went to centre parcs when we were all together still. I'd take any homework that I had. Urm... several pairs of clothes.. but the main, key belonging was the cuddly toy... I had paw and then I had foxy, who was a cuddly toy fox who I still have urm and I just couldn't leave without them. (Laura, 23)*

Drawing on Winnicott's (1971) notion of 'transitional objects', Woodyer (2010: 131) argues that, for young children, cuddly toys stand as an extension of the parental relationship, functioning 'to mitigate a growing separation of child and mother by becoming a friendly and comforting companion that is able to accompany the child everywhere'. Whilst it may sound like a rather crude interpretation to state that the cuddly toy functioned as a transitional object as Laura quite literally transitioned between being with her mum to her dad, Winncott (1971) has noted that children may return to the use of transitional objects in periods of stress as a way of finding comfort in situations over which they feel little control. Laura adds credence to these understandings, as she describes why these toys were so important:

> *Cause urm it just meant that I had something that was constant there yeh the toys definitely helped. It's really weird how it's just a little bit of fluff and like some fake fur can just do that but yeh. (Laura, 23)*

Here Horton and Kraftl's (2006) notion of 'ongoingess' is also useful to draw on here, as they explore the ways in which childhood emotions continue to live on and through adulthood, in part, through engagement with materiality. There is a sense of the ongoingess of Laura's relationship to those toys, providing links to the affectivity felt when she was young. Writing further about cuddly toys, Woodyer (2010) draws particular attention to the textural and sensual properties of these objects as important in their functioning as transitional objects, arguing that the softness of the fluff and the fur prompts a close physical relationship with the body. In the course of this intimate relationship, fur is worn, smells become incorporated, ears are ripped and it is these imperfections which memorialise the interaction between person and thing (Jaffe 2006; Lupton 2013; Caldas-Coulthard and van Leeuwen 2003). As a consequence, it must be these *particular* toys, with the history of close companionship worn into their material form, that join Laura as she journeys between the various spaces in which she spent time with her dad - spaces that she described often finding scary and unfamiliar. These toys, therefore, had important spatial and temporal effects, becoming a way for Laura to 'extend the reach of home through time and space', transforming previously 'creepy' spaces with their comforting affectivity (Jacobs and Smith 2008: 515).

However, whilst Laura, gives such an emotive account of her relationship with cuddly toys, such 'evocative objects' were largely absent from other participant's accounts (Turkle 2007). This may be because Laura was one of the only participants moving through these transitions alone, where siblings may have fulfilled the role of transitional objects in other circumstances. Or it may be that such toys have been forgotten, both by my younger and older participants, as they were significant only in early childhood. Lending support to this suggestion is the fact that Rachel, Noah's mum, and Pete, Emily's dad, both recounted toys being part of the mass of mobile materialities when their children were younger. Therefore, whilst distinct among my participants, Laura's account provides an important insight into a further type of materiality moving between participant's houses that may be particularly significant for younger children.

Taken together, these three examples have explored the types of material objects that move between young people's houses. In this exploration, I have examined how these are interconnected with material objects, that stay put - alongside affecting, and being affected by, the various spatial, temporal and emotional circumstances of young people's family lives. I have shown that various attempts to mitigate against the movement of materials were

imperfect solutions, meaning that the everyday routines of young people in post-separation families are dependent on the regular movement of some amount of 'stuff' between the places where they spend time with their parents. This necessitates the fabrication of a host of repetitive practices and routines that surround this movement of materialities. It is to one such host of practices that I now turn.

5.3 Material Practices: Packing

A discussion of the practices of packing was touched upon by nearly every participant. In particular, it dominated many of the interviews with my younger participants. Through these interviews, it became clear that packing was a practice central to their experiences of living in multi-housed ways. In particular, it was central to the challenges and everyday annoyances of living in this way, often because of the repetitiveness of the practice. This section thus connects back to chapter four, as the fact that movements have rhythmic repeats is highly significant to the following discussion – particularly as I talk about the development of packing skills and habits.

Surprisingly, for practices so prominent in my interviews, there has been very little attention paid to packing in the literature on post-separation childhoods. If mentioned, this has tended to be in passing - with packing remarked as something that is done, but with little interrogation of how these practices are performed or felt (Schier and Proske 2010; Berman 2019; Haugen 2010; Costa 2014). As touched upon in the previous chapter, this paucity of research can also be felt in the mobilities literature, where packing, and the preceding phases of mobility more generally, have invited very little dedicated research (Wind 2014; Vannini 2011a).

The following discussion provides a detailed interrogation of the practices of packing. Through this discussion, I will demonstrate that packing becomes a habitual and routinised practice - becoming part of a host of skilled embodied competencies that sustain spatially extended ways of living and doing family. This connects with an important strand of mobilities literature, which has emphasised the ways in which much of mobility is a 'mundane accomplishment' consisting of practical skills, embedded and unreflexive modes of performance and repetitive encounters (Vannini 2011a: 1032; Binnie et al. 2007; Adey 2017). As Bissell discusses in the preface to his book 'transit life', an exploration of the experiences of commuting in contemporary Sydney:

> *The idea that commuting involves any skill at all might sound rather puzzling... Yet beneath the threshold of conscious attention lies a whole series of fine-grained experiential knowledges that commuters*

> *develop over time, enabling them to traverse urban transport systems with ease (Bissell, 2018: p.xx).*

In many ways, the young people in my study may also be approached as commuting subjects (Jensen 2009). As outlined in the previous chapter, they take part in journeys characterised by rhythmic travel, along repetitive routes, between two familiar places – creating many of the same effects described by Bissell (Edensor 2011; Adey et al. 2012). In making these journeys, young people draw upon experiential knowledges that allow them to navigate their two domestic environments, and the times and spaces between them, with skill and artistry.

As Bissell points out, these are skills that are not spontaneously achieved. In the same way that Bissell's figure of the commuter must develop the skills to 'traverse the urban transport system', the multi-sited body of the post-separation young person is similarly one that must be trained (Bissell 2018; Edensor 2011; Vannini 2011a). This notion of the cultivation of young people's mobility skills is one that has rarely been explored within the literature on children's mobilities. As Kullman (2010: 829) states, geographers have variously accounted for the mobile experiences of children and young people but 'less has been said about the practices of becoming mobile, including the acquisition of skills'. The following section accounts for this by first discussing how packing skills are developed through repetition and how the complex temporal skills of anticipation and forward-thinking are a challenging element of this. I will then examine the role of relations with parents in developing these skills, before moving on to discuss how practices of packing are variously performed by young people.

5.3.1 Learning to Pack

To initiate this I will turn to one of my young participants, Noah. Noah spends each week alternating between his parents' houses, ordinarily changing houses on a Friday after school. Rather than taking all of his things for the week to school, the parent with whom he has spent the week would pack up a bag for Noah and drop it off at the other's house on the Friday evening or Saturday morning. However, whilst involved in the research, Noah's changeover day switched to Sunday evening - disrupted because his dad was away for work for a few days. This change remained for a few months because of the difficulty of switching back without a parent missing out on a weekend with the kids.

Many academics have noted that disruptions to routines can be important instances in which to study the formation of habits, illuminating how they 'unravel and are braided back together again, capturing the work that is needed to keep them going and the elasticity of their practice' (Trentmann 2009: 69; Bissell 2013; Murray and Doughty 2016). Noah provides an interesting instance of this. Given that Noah and his belongings now travelled at the same time, Noah was

increasingly being encouraged, particularly by his mum, to begin to pack his own bag. Noah admits that at first, he found this change really challenging:

> *well I guess for a whole decade I've just being doing it that way,7 years, and urm… when it first started off I kept on forgetting to bring things and then we had to go through the trouble of texting dad who never responds to texts, so we don't know if he's coming or not and then like saying you need to bring his book over or something cause he needs to read 100 pages for Friday and it's yeh…annoying. (Noah, 11).*

Noah went on, however, to say that:

> *for about a month I've been doing it on Sundays on my own and I'm already getting a bit used to it. (Noah, 11).*

Here Noah demonstrates the notion that through repetition, practices slowly become habitual, transforming into activities that require less and less mental and physical energy to complete. Habit has been shown to be an important dimension of mobility, with researchers illustrating how habit is a force that helps to develop and refine practical competencies, where 'bodily movements increasingly removed from the realm of cognitive effort' (Bissell 2015: 131; Middleton 2010; Jain 2009; Murray and Doughty 2016). As Bissell describes:

> *what were once movements requiring effort and will to steer them become incipient tendencies that increasingly anticipate what is required of a situation, thereby freeing up energy for other things. Through their repetition, movements become expressed with greater ease, exactitude and finesse. (Bissell 2015: 131)*

Lucy was another participant who had a change in her living arrangements, which in turn changed her experience of packing. In the initial period after her parent's separation, Lucy described spending little time and effort considering what to bring from her mum's, where most of her belongings were, to her dad's – as she could easily walk back and pick up anything forgotten.

However, about a year and a half after the separation, Lucy's mum moved out of the village where her dad lived and into the neighbouring one. At this house the stakes were higher. A forgotten item meant an inconvenient drive for her parents and keen to avoid this Lucy was forced to consider more carefully what she was bringing to her dad's. When I asked about his change Lucy stated that:

> *it was harder at the beginning… it was harder to remember stuff at the start because urm, I didn't think of much in advance I guess. Cause it's easy to think about the next day but when you have to think about the days after that then it's a bit confusing… Urm but... yeh once you, yeh after a while when you get into like more of a routine of what we take so... yeh it did get... yeh easier. (Lucy, 16).*

Here Lucy picks up on the idea of repetition and the increasing ease with which packing practices can be performed. However, I want to concentrate on something else in Lucy's quote, that many participants spoke about in relation to the challenges of packing - the difficulty of thinking into the future to determine what they will need for days or weeks ahead. Discussing experiences of returning migrants to Hong Kong, but equally relevant in this context, Hui (2015: 542) makes the point that 'the preparations that people make before migration are imaginative projections of future practices'. In this quote, Hui demonstrates that acts of packing require the inhabitation of imagined future times and spaces, showing how such imaginative acts of mobility are always entangled in processes of corporeal movement (Watts 2008; Urry 2007). As Löfgren also argues:

> *'In a sense, packing became a micro-journey in itself. As things pile up in readiness, the whole journey is anticipated and there is a lot of mental travel going on…the needs and potentials of the upcoming journey or vacation are materialised in the sorting and handling of all sorts of stuff' (Löfgren 2016: 131).*

These imagined futures, however, are not fixed but rather filled with the possibilities of a host of tentative eventualities given shape in the packed materialities. For example; what if dad decides to drag us out for a walk and it's raining? What if I get set some homework for history and that book I need isn't here? These were all eventualities my participants spoke about considering. The skills of anticipation and planning, therefore, become important in practices of packing (Löfgren 2016). This adds further weight to my argument developed throughout this section that packing is a complex practice that involves the development of skills and habits, built through repetition.

5.3.2 The Role of Parents in the Developing Packing Practices

The previous section explored the development of young people's skills, dispositions and orientations in relation to the movement of materialities. In doing so, however, it has gone some way to, wrongly, presenting such propensities as attributes of an individual body, acting

in isolation from their socio-material worlds. The following sections disrupt this presentation, instead presenting young people's packing as a relational accomplishment, involving connections with both bodies, spaces and materials.

To do so I draw on two connected bodies of work. I turn first to writings on children's interdependent mobilities, which has sought to examine the multiple relations through which children become mobile (Kullman 2010; Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019; Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009), and then cultural geographic writing on habit which have shown it to be a more distributed force contingent on spatial and temporal cues (Bissell 2015; Lea, Cadman and Philo 2014; Schwanen, Banister and Anable 2012).

As I outlined in chapter two, research on children's 'independent' mobility has recently been challenged by work which has called for a shift in view from children's 'independent' to 'interdependent' mobilities (Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009; Nansen et al. 2014; Horton et a. 2013). As part of this re-thinking, parents' role as hierarchical forces over children's mobility has been re-cast, in particular by Kullman (2010), who has reframed children and parents as mutual collaborators in the development of children's expanding mobilities. However, these studies have tended to focus on a limited number of specific contexts such as the journey to school, or movement around local neighbourhoods. Working in a different empirical context, my research similarly found that supportive parent-child relations were key to the processes through which young people were trained to 'become mobile' in the context of moving between their houses, particularly in the processes through which they learned to pack.

In my interview with Matt, we spent some time discussing the ways in which he helped his daughter, Abi, as she started to do the journeys between his and her mum's every other week:

> *Well it really was about helping her understand, the thought process that she needs to go through so trying to go through day by day. So I'd go through, right what do you need Monday, what lessons have you got? Ok you've got P.E. So where's your P.E. kit, is it here? And get her to start thinking about it in that way. She does, she has her school timetable saved on her phone. Urm she has had printouts of it in the past. But then there's also the other social elements, so do you need your guides top, do you need your netball kit when she was going to netball, urm and other things like that. So try and encourage her to think through quite systematically (Matt, Abi's dad)*

This reflects Lucy's comments on the challenges of inhabiting future times and spaces to know what to pack. Here Matt also recognises this as one of the difficulties that his daughter faces and describes attempts to teach her how to enact these thought processes. These pedagogical relations are reminiscent of those described by Kullman (2010) who captures the fluid collaborations between adults, children, environments and objects that families construct to facilitate children's developing mobilities. A similar process is enacted by Matt and Abi. Not only is Matt involved in a collaborative space in which Abi's competencies and habits are increasingly being developed, but Matt enlists a host of objects in doing this, including the school timetable, the phone and the kit list (not described in the quote). Gradually Matt's active presence in these relations decreased, whilst Abi continued to rely on school timetables and kit lists to aid in her packing practices. Thus, in this process of skill development Abi is 'not moving from dependency to pure separateness, but into another bundle of relations' (Kullman 2010: 836).

It is interesting to think, therefore, about the ways in which such pedagogical relations enacted between parents, children and their environments sustain even when parents are physically absent. This was very clear in the comments of one of my older participants, Louise, as she fondly reminisced about being taught how to pack by her dad:

> *my dad taught me actually that when you're packing to go through like every item you might need to starting with your feet up to your head so like shoes, socks, you know trousers, pants, t-shirt. So urm that's how I always pack now so I guess he must of taught me that when I was quite young. (Louise, 25)*

Louise's dad was an enduring absent presence when she packed, existing through the habits he taught Louise when she was young. This adds depth to the notion packing is a practice consisting of complicated temporalities, performed in conjunction with both past, present and future bodies and spaces.

It is important to note, however, that the examples discussed in sections 5.3.1. and 5.3.2. stood out within my data. Most participants, both younger and older, found it hard to remember the ways in which they learned to pack. Many reminisced that it was hard at the beginning and got easier over time, but few could remember specifically *how* it got easier. This connects back to Bissell's (2018: p.xx) comments as he notes how 'the development of commuting skills might be more incremental, occurring below the threshold of conscious attention'. Similarly, this lack of clear memory may suggest that learning to pack, for most, was a process of slow evolution that through continual repetition became a habitual practice.

5.3.3 Performing Packing

As I have started to explore in the previous section, most participants spoke of having their own way of approaching the task of packing shaped by habit and routine. This sense of a very routinised way of performing the task came through most strongly in my interview with Mia. As Mia entered her teens she described slowly creating a very particular way in which she would pack to go to her dad's house on a Thursday evening:

> *I used to like basically clean and tidy and vacuum everything and make it really organised and pack all of my stuff and get it ready. I had this tiny like black and white tv in there that I used to watch this particular programme and I like really set up this strong ritual like I didn't want to talk to anyone and I just like packed slowly. I didn't like to feel like it was a rush and I liked it on a Sunday when I came home and it was clean and tidy. (Mia, 25)*

Mia's use of the word ritual is interesting. Her creation of a host of standardised behaviours could be argued to be a process of ritualisation through which these everyday actions gained symbolic meaning – marking her transition from her mum's to her dad's (Bakker et al. 2015). In these ritualised actions Mia used a host of objects, sounds, movements and rhythms to carefully craft a particular atmosphere of calm in which to enact her packing practices (Daniels 2015; Bille 2015; Bille, Bjerregaard and Sørensen 2015). In this sense, packing worked as a sort of rite of passage, helping Mia to cope with moving between her parents' houses.

This particular description of packing practices, characterised by an air of calm and purposefulness stood out in my data. More often than not, participant's packing routines tended to be typified by a more frantic pace, done just before they were about to leave. These participants tended to describe the activity of packing as an invasive annoyance disrupting the normal temporal flow of activities, reflecting Jemima's comments about the staccato pace of her Friday evening changeovers described in chapter four (section 4.3.3.6.). This annoyance with the activity of packing also reflects sentiments recorded in other studies of children in post-separation (Schier and Proske 2010; Berman 2019).

In this sense packing can be viewed as a practice which works to elongate the space and time of the journey, extending beyond what may be thought of the 'start' and 'end' points of leaving and arriving (Watts 2008). As Jain (2009: 94) discusses, 'conceptually, the journey usually conjures a single linear narrative: beginning, middle and end…[but] 'starts' and 'finishes' are performed in multiple locations'. Most participants in my study were keen to avoid such

elongations of the temporalities of the journey, leading to attempts to make the activity of packing take as little time as possible.

During my go-along with Emily, I observed this kind of packing process first-hand. In earlier interviews, Emily had described how she hated packing and tended to leave it right until the last minute. The Sunday afternoon that I joined Emily for the journey to her mum's was no different. As this extract from my field diary shows:

> *I was sat at one end of Emily's small and messy bedroom, perched on her desk chair. The room is split into two levels with a raised portion at the other end on which her bed sits. Emily is frantically moving around the room - climbing up onto the raised surface and back down again, hastily pulling clothes out of draws, turning and twisting round, grabbing toiletries from various surfaces and shoving them into her small handbag – only with the occasional pause to consider which earring to take, which piece of paper strewn around her bed might she need and if that top she's picked up is clean or not. There seems little order or thoughtful consideration going into what she's packing, but it's clear that she knows exactly what she's doing. It's frantic but not stressed. (Fieldnotes, Go-along, 01/03/20).*

In being with Emily that day, it became clear that her packing practices, and how they were enacted to compress their timespan, relied heavily on the formation and maintenance of habit – as has been discussed in the previous sections. Emily herself displays an understanding of these competencies as I asked her if any other preparations have been made to go back to her mum's today:

> *Urm not really no, There's never much planning towards it because I just have, I just know what I need now and take it when I need it,.. it's sort of just like a routine now.(Emily, 14)*

To unpack Emily's routine, it is useful to draw on Pink and Mackley's (2016) work, which explores the ways in which people enact domestic routines. Within their writing they introduce Alan and describe the ways in which he navigates his entering his house in the dark after a night shift:

> *Alan's route through his night-time home was a well-practised, habitual activity, a way of moving that was performed almost every 24h, normally not described or recounted, but nevertheless known and*

> *performed as part of a way of knowing in an environment with a certainty… which was simultaneously informed by his embodied and sensory memories and knowing about what he normally did and what felt 'right' (Pink and Mackley 2016: 173).*

This description of Alan feels very reminiscent of the ways in which Emily moved around her room. Thus, following Pink and Mackley's (2016: 178) lines of thought, we can similarly see the ways in which Emily skilfully navigates packing her bags, using 'embodied, tacit ways of knowing and seeing'. Her movement around her room carries with it the history of repeated action within that space, where the categories of vision, sound, smell and touch are enmeshed together to create the habitual action of moving round her room (Lea, Cadman and Philo 2014). Emily's case, therefore, further demonstrates the ways in which packing is a relational accomplishment, dependent on spatial cues and past forms of movement inscribed in the body (Bissell 2015). This adds depth to the discussions in the previous section, exploring further the process through which young people in post-separation families become mobile are highly relational.

This is not to say, however, that packing was performed in exact repetition every time. For example, the experience of packing witnessed during the go-along, was very different to the packing Emily captured when videoing her experiences of mobility over the Christmas holidays. This packing was far more measured and had little of the frantic pace witnessed in the go-along. With the camera propped up on one side of her bedroom, the video shows Emily taking her time to think about which items of clothing she might want, before taking them out of her wardrobe and throwing them into her suitcase. She explains that she is now going to go through this pile of clothes on her suitcase and think again about which of these she definitely wants to take with her and what other things she might need to add to this collection. In another video taken of the same period, Emily narrates as the camera pans over a pile of items, carefully placed on her bed, ready to be packed into her suitcase.

When talking through the videos in our interview, Emily described how rather than feeling the annoyance that usually characterised her sentiments towards packing, she was excited to pack for the holidays. Emily had a busy Christmas holiday, filled with travelling around the country visiting various sets of family and friends. Emily's more measured approach was thus both because she was doing things outside of her normal routine, requiring more thought as to what to pack, but also that she *wanted* to spend more time imaginatively inhabiting these exciting futures through her consideration of what to take.

Troubling the idea that habit is 'a force of stability, regularity or repetition of the same', recent work in mobilities studies has emphasised the ways in which habit has different modulations and changes in intensities (Bissell 2015: 128). However, these studies tend to draw on instances where habit unintentionally breaks down due to bodily states such as exhaustion or intense pressure (Bissell 2013; 2015). Rather, what is seen in the example of Emily's packing is a more intentional re-injection of cognitive effort into practices that were once instinctive. As Löfgren (2016: 123) states, the suitcase is 'a container in which emotionalities and materialities are entangled… into which not only objects are stuffed, but also emotions and dreams'. At this time, packing for Emily, therefore became an activity filled with the anticipation of exciting futures.

The discussion over the past three sections has provided a detailed 'unpacking' of one particular practice surrounding the movement of materialities: packing. In my discussion of this mundane activity, I have shown how it is a skilled practice relying heavily on the development and maintenance of habits and routines performed in conjunction with a range of spaces, bodies, times and objects. Within this discussion, I have demonstrated that the everyday lives of the young people within my study entail not only the mobility of bodies and objects, but also forms of imagined travel and the inhabitation of future times and spaces. Consequently, this shows how being a child in a post-separation family not only involves the navigation of mobility across spatial scales but also across temporal and imaginative registers, connecting back to chapter four. In this discussion, I have also articulated the entanglement of emotions and materialities, showing that packing elicited a range of emotions for young people and their parents including annoyance, frustration, anticipation, excitement, care, stress, and comfort. Furthermore, I demonstrated that packing practices were often performed differently in order to manage the emotions created by moving between houses. The final section picks up on these themes, exploring the connections between materialities and material practices and emotions in more detail.

5.4 Emotions and Materialities

The following section explores more explicitly the connections between emotions and materialities in the lives of my participants, picking up on threads running throughout the previous sections. In this section, these connections will be investigated in more depth through an empirical focus on instances of forgetting belongings, collecting these forgotten belongings, and an exploration of the enactment of rules around the movement of materialities in and out of the home. These themes have been chosen both because they were some of the circumstances in my participants' lives that generated the strongest emotional responses, but

also because simultaneously they were also some of the most common and mundane – demonstrating how the routinised experience of particular emotions often becomes a very expected and embedded part of young people's changeover routines.

In particular, the analysis will be focused on the notion that materialities play an important role in the emotional ways that family members relate to each other. To do so, I work with understandings derived from material culture literature, as explored in chapter two, which have been central to apprehending the 'socialness' of objects (Riggen 1994; Miller 2008). In particular, I will draw on research which has sought to understand how our relationships with others are 'negotiated, maintained or broken through our relationships with objects' (Woodward 2019: 74; Miller 2010). This picks up on previous strands of my own research exploring the domestic materialities through which home and family are (un)made after separation (Walker 2022).

5.4.1 Forgetting Belongings

The previous sections introduced the idea that young people, moving between parents' houses, are skilled mobile subjects - who draw on a range of refined competencies, orientations and movements to cope with their everyday experiences of transition. However, even for participants skilled in the art of packing, most described forgetting things as a regular occurrence. As Noah succinctly put it:

> *forgetting things is a big part of our lives. (Noah, 11)*

Forgetting was an experience that generated a range of emotions and practices for participants and their parents, at different points both in their weekly routines and along longer timescales as they aged. For example, often when participants were young children, the types of 'transitional' objects introduced in section 4.2.3., such as cuddly toys, could generate intense feelings of sadness if left behind. In this section, I introduced Laura, and her furry companions 'paw' and 'foxy'. When I asked Laura if these were ever forgotten going to her dad's house she replied:

> *Yes, and it was always devastating. The world would fall apart. Urm it was always the worst and there were times when I left them there… I was very very attached to those cuddly toys and I still have foxy, he's still here with me... I wouldn't sleep very well if I didn't have them - you know it was that kind of a deal. (Laura, 23)*

Returning to the literature on cuddly toys as transitional objects, it is possible to see why the separation between Laura and her toys would generate such intense feelings of panic and distress (Wincott 1971; Jaffe 2006).

In particular, Laura recounts how she found it challenging to sleep without these toys, as they were a key part of enacting her 'habitual bodily praxes of bedtime' (Horton and Kraftl 2010: 223). Other toys were never quite the same. The fur wasn't matted in the proper places, the smell was not quite right, and the contours of the toy didn't feel the same as she cuddled it when she fell asleep. They never held the same affective charge. Laura continued to say that this absence of paw and foxy often clouded her weekends with her dad, as she never felt quite as settled without them – especially if she was in houses she found 'creepy' like that of her grandparents or her step-mum's family friends.

Recent developments in the 'sociology of nothing' have explored the ways in which 'social objects that are *not* done, shown or seen' can have just as significant effects as those that are present and observable (Scott 2019; 2, *emphasis added*). Here the effects of objects that are missing, absent or lost has a great effect on Laura (Holmes and Ehgartener 2021). As Bille et al. (2010: 4) reminds us 'what may be materially absent still influences people's experiences of the material world'. This work has highlighted how such absent objects find a real place in the imagination, often strengthened by the very inadequacy of replacement objects (Holmes and Ehgartner 2021). This can be seen in Laura's experience, as the presence of the replacement teddies served to make the material, sensory and affective abilities of her absent toys even more pronounced.

The emotional challenges of forgetting the sorts of objects described by Laura also came through strongly in my interview with one parent, Rachel:

> *So like again it's not such an issue now but a couple of years ago you know Noah would want his rabbit and his duck, his teddies and they'd all be at his dad's and so he'd be going to bed without them and those kinds of things... it's kind of what we've got used to on a Friday evening, but it's also really stressful, you know (Rachel, Noah and Jemima's mum)*

In Rachel's quote, many of the same effects as described by Laura can be seen, but there is also a sense of the ways in which forgetting is fundamentally a relational event, not only affecting the young person whose belongings have been forgotten. Rather, it creates effects which ripple through families. Not only is Noah distressed without the comfort of his toys at

bedtime, but this creates stress for Rachel who is trying to put Noah to bed alongside worrying about when she will be able to get these teddies back. Interestingly Rachel's quote demonstrates how this type of disruption, and the ensuing emotional affects, become routinized – developing into an expected part of the process of transitioning between houses (Murray and Doughty 2016).

This is not to say, however, that the recurrent nature of these disruptions makes them any less stressful. In fact, in Rachel's quote, it is this very repetitive anticipation and continuation of the practices of forgetting that creates this sense of frustration. This came out strongly as my interview with Rachel continued:

> *there's been times when urm you know Noah has gone there with everything, like walking boots and trainers and you know whatever, all the clothes for the weekend like in case of walks and then he comes back the following Friday and I've asked for all those things and his dad will just drop a bag off, of stuff and it doesn't have half the things in it that we need for the weekend. Where he actually just didn't drop the bag round on the Friday, so we just had school shoes on Saturday morning and I wanted us to go orienteering on the Saturday morning cause my friends were organising this thing in the park urm. You know I had some old hats and gloves and scarves but no shoes! I was trying to contact his dad on the Friday night and the Saturday morning saying where are you and I just assumed that he'd gone away and wasn't answering. But he then rocked up at like.. 10oclock in the morning with the stuff just as I was getting really stressed thinking. Right sod it, our weekend's fucked, he's gone away! (Rachel, Noah and Jemima's mum)*

Rachel's quote highlights the ways in which things are used and consumed as parts of networks of other things and practices, as she discusses the objects important in the assemblage of the 'orienteering body' rendered useless without the walking boots (Merriman 2012; Clement and Waitt 2018). Here objects, which may usually fade into the background of mundane practices such as walking, become forcefully evident in their absence (Miller 2010).

Furthermore, without communication about when the kids' things will be returned, Rachel is left waiting, where she can do little to act upon the situation. Unpacking the emotionality of waiting, Löfgren and Ehn (2010) have highlighted how waiting is often linked to power. Rachel's quote demonstrates how she experiences these periods as an unwelcome exertion of control

by her ex-partner, as she is forced into an anticipatory mode of being, a suspended liminal space for an uncertain amount of time (Andrews and Roberts 2012). Particularly where Rachel's days with her kids are halved, time is seen as a limited good and not something to be wasted in the activity of waiting (Marschall 2017; Costa 2014). Emotions generated in the experience of forgetting objects can, therefore, be both born out of and create a continuation of antagonistic relationships between separated parents. In exploring these two examples, from Rachel and Laura, I have demonstrated the ways in which missing objects can generate intense emotional reactions – reactions that are not diminished, and in some ways are exacerbated, by their very routineness.

5.4.2 Collecting Forgotten Things

In my interviews with parents, this sense of frustration was very rarely felt towards their children when they forgot things. Rather, they often displayed a deep sense of empathy for their children in these scenarios, as forgetting became a moment when the complexity and challenges of their two-home routine came to the fore. As such parents often went out of their way to ensure that their children were not without the things that they needed. In this sense, the movement of these things became an expression of care, a theme which will be returned to in chapter six. This is demonstrated in an experience that Pete, Emily's dad, recounted:

> *The other day I dropped her at school, but we dropped off all her stuff at the house first… and I got back and I saw her school bag was in the car and I was tired, I'd been teaching that evening, and I thought, shit! And actually what I managed to do was I remembered that someone I was teaching lived quite nearby so I was able to give this bag to that person so Emily could pick it up on the way to school the next morning. So it was just, it gets a bit messy…. It's frustrating if she's forgotten something but not, not just frustrating cause I've got to take it but just sometimes I think poor her. (Pete, Emily's dad)*

Despite these sentiments from parents, most of the young people in my study described not wanting to rely on their parents when they had forgotten things. This was evident in something that Jemima stated. It was clear to Jemima that her mum did not have a lot of spare time. Managing self-employment as a music teacher, alongside coping with the domestic pressure of single motherhood, whilst also managing the kids busy schedules of extra-curricular activities meant that her mum was often pushed for time. Keen to avoid adding to this list of stresses, Jemima described often taking on responsibility for collecting forgotten things herself:

> *it's quite hard to remember everything so I might wake up on the morning of like school and I'll be like 'oh no I don't have a tie' so cause it's only like a minute walk so I'll like leave like five minutes early and then I'll walk over…. I feel bad for like relying on my mum if I forget something so I just kind of walk over which does take up a bit of time. (Jemima, 15)*

Studies of child-parent relationships following separation have demonstrated how traditional conceptualisations of the direction of care within families are often disrupted after separation, as children's roles as care-givers and adults as care receivers are made more explicit – something I talk more about in chapter six, section 6.3. (Smart et al. 2001; Butler et al. 2003; Haugen 2007; Marschall 2013). Working with these understandings, Jemima's desire not to involve her parents in collecting forgotten objects may be conceptualised as a form of care for her mother.

This sense of responsibility to take charge for not forgetting things could be a lot for young people to take on, however, as Gabby describes:

> *I put a lot of pressure on myself not to make mistakes. Not to forget, you know the book that I needed, because I was like I didn't want to use divorce as an excuse for me being a good student or not having the right book so I was yeh I was fiercely organised and I think I wouldn't admit if I had forgotten something...I'd just, I'd make do you know I'd find something else or maybe I'd sneak back to get it trying not to make a big deal out of it. (Gabby, 22)*

In focusing on Gabby's quote there is a real sense of the emotional toll the continued movement of materialities between houses can take on young people. For Gabby, making sure the right things were in the right places, at the right time became both a metaphorical and literal load for her to carry. Like Jemima, Gabby was able to collect things from her other house. However, taking responsibility for retrieving their own forgotten things was not so straightforward for all young people as often houses were not accessible without parents, whether because they were unable to make the journey alone or for other reasons.

As explored in her biography, Abi's dad lives just behind her school so even on the weekdays when Abi is with her mum she gets dropped off and picked up from her dad's. Therefore, if Abi leaves anything at her dad's it is very easy for her to get it. However, this ease of access does not translate to her mum's house:

> *I've got the keys to my dad's so I can get in anytime that I want but at my mum's I can't so sometimes like it was like a massive fuss last week because my sister's things were left there and so were mine so I didn't have school uniform and my sister didn't have her school uniform so we couldn't like.. we had to, well improvise. So we had to wear old school uniform. (Abi, 13)*

This highlights that even when houses are spatially proximate they are not always accessible. Ex-partners rarely had the access to these houses and young people's access was often dependent on their parents granting entry. In this sense, access was temporally dependent upon their agreed-upon arrangements – and entering that space outside of these times could often cause conflict. This can be seen in Lucy's experience.

Lucy's parents had had a rather difficult separation, and there were some tricky lingering emotional dynamics between her parents. As I highlighted in her biography, Lucy's mum was rather uneasy about what she perceived as the financial motivations behind the amount of time Lucy's dad had the kids and both Lucy and Kate insinuated that he could often be controlling over the time that Lucy and her sister spent with him. Lucy's mum, Kate, explained that this could often manifest in unease about the times that Lucy went to pick up things that she had forgotten at her mum's when she was supposed to be at her dad's. As she explained when I asked her about this popping back and forth:

> *I think he minded because he saw it as urm... as Lucy making an excuse to come back and see me. (Kate, Lucy's mum)*

Thus, even though Lucy's dad's was only a five-minute walk away from her mum's house, a walk that she could happily do alone, emotionally this popping back was more challenging practice. This demonstrates well what I have shown throughout this section, that it is not only the forgotten items themselves but the practices of collecting them which have emotional effects tied to family relationships. For some these can be expressions of love and care, whilst for others, such practices can conjure feelings of frustration, jealousy and suspicion. These more negative emotions were often related to the perceived transgression of entering into homes outside of agreed-upon arrangements.

This demonstrates that young people often experienced temporally contingent rules around when and how they were allowed to enter their homes. This connects with the theme of the following section, as I explore the ways in which materialities were subject to similar boundaries and borders around their movement in and out of the home.

5.4.3 Boundaries and Borders for Things

Traditionally, the home has been understood as a bounded private sphere, 'where the [adult] individual can exercise a degree of power and autonomy' (Thompson 2007: 1; Mallett 2004). The insertion of the word adult into the quote above is telling. Adding to work developing *critical* understanding of the geographies of the home (Blunt and Dowling 2004; Brickell 2012), has been research which has explored children's experiences of this space (Cieraad 2013; James 2013; Lincoln 2016). One key strand of this literature has been research which has explored 'the notion of home as a crucial site for the re/production of ideas around proper and improper use of space' (Luzia 2011:299), as researchers have examined how parents control domestic space through the imposition of rules and regulations around children's behaviour (Sibley 1995; Wood and Beck 1994; Sibley and Lowe 1992).

This literature has shown that part of this enactment of control involves an expression of power over the material, as Owen and Boyer (2022: 4) argue 'contemporary parenting in the global North is inextricably bound up with the management of flows of material things in and out of the family home'. In particular, this kind of management has been shown to be a way of navigating and coping with times of transition and change functioning as a form of emotion-work in circumstances such as the move to parenthood (Luzia 2011), the death of a family member (Owen 2021) and adult children moving out of the home (Owen and Boyer 2022). In doing so, this work has shown that these small-scale material mobilities can be seen to have a politics, where such movements are 'forbidden, regulated, policed and prevented' and are the subject of power struggles (Cresswell 2006: 735). This control of the movement of things was discussed often in my interviews, both with parents and young people, however, in this section I am going to focus on just one participant, Tamsin, in order to grant the depth of analysis her complex situation deserves.

From what Tamsin has been told by her mum as an adult, the separation involved a lot of conflict between her parents. As outlined in her biography, following her parents' separation, Tamsin and her siblings didn't see her dad but after he moved closer, they started to spend every other weekend together. The relationship continued to be challenging, however, both between Tamsin and her dad, and her mum and dad. Whilst she found her dad 'fun' and 'exciting', she also described him as being pretty 'dysfunctional' and she never really wanted to spend time at his. When I asked Tamsin to talk through her routine for going to her dad's during these early years, she said:

> *After I moved out of my grandparents he would pick us up at four o'clock every Friday urm, he would and we would, we had different*

> *clothes at my dad's house and at my mum's house because they always had arguments about clothes disappearing so it would be like a big hooha to get dressed into these special clothes. (Tamsin, 24)*

Later on in the interview Tamsin described how these 'special clothes' would often be her school uniform, and went on to speculate some of the reasons why her mum had enacted these rules:

> *well we used to like wear our normal clothes and it would be fine. But we would leave them behind cause we would go to school or something or we'd just forget them or we'd try and sneak a jumper into the bag and we'd leave it there. Anyway my mum said that she was just running out of clothes, so then it became, you're going to go there in your school uniform, you come back in your school uniform. (Tamsin, 24)*

These borders preventing the movement of objects out of the house did not only relate to clothes, however, as Tamsin continued, they extended to other materialities such toys:

> *T: We weren't allowed to take anything at all so my mum would check our bags, we could take our school bags but my mum would check that, I don't know we hadn't snuck a game boy in there or something.*
>
> *A: So why was that? Why weren't you allowed to take your stuff?*
>
> *T: Because, apparently we kept on leaving things at my dad's. Urm... and they just never came back, my mum said that things just disappear! and I mean maybe they did but you know, I urm... they, the thing worked both ways so like at my dad's house I had even better games and I wasn't allowed to bring them back and my dad's reason was like I'm not giving this to your mum. Whereas my mum's reason was like I'm not going to see this again. (Tamsin, 24)*

Various studies have shown how when relationships break down objects can often be the subject of intense bitterness and conflict, with competing and contested claims over ownership and attachment (Goode 2007; Thompson 2007). Materials which might have once been emotionally insignificant can take on new found significance in the processes through which former partners attempt to reconfigure their relationship to one another (Miller and Parrot 2009). Whilst this has been examined in the context of the dismantling of the marital home

(Goode 2007; Thompson 2007), what Tamsin's experience shows is the ways in which children's materialities can become bound up in the ongoing negotiation of parents' relationships to one another – where such materialities can continue to be a battleground.

This enactment of borders defining some objects' movements and their investment in emotional dynamics after separation provides interesting insights into the status of such materialities as they relate to power and ownership. For despite the fact that the clothes and toys described in the quotes above are used by Tamsin and her two siblings, through the imposition and implementation of rules around where and when these are able to be used, it is made clear that they do not really belong to Tamsin and her siblings. Rather, they undergo a similar process of claiming ownership as described by Goode (2007) and Thompson (2007). Whilst for parents this may help to create a sense of control over their domestic environments created separately from their former partners, for young people this often created a very challenging sense of separation between their two houses and their lives within them.

This is also touched upon briefly in Campo et al.'s (2021) study of fathers' homemaking after separation as one father recounts the fact that his children's mother did not allow them to bring personal items to the house – despite a court order telling her to. Campo et al. (2021: 8) highlight that such actions were 'undermining their [his kids] sense of security across household transitions' and making it more challenging for them to feel at home in his house. Similar emotional challenges can be observed in Tamsin's account as she describes that whilst her dad often brought them 'exciting' toys and technologies to have at his house, more practical objects such as clothes, and appropriate toiletries were often left out. Therefore, for Tamsin, the types of borders her mum enacted meant existing at her dad's in quite challenging circumstances:

> *Dad only went shopping for us for clothes when I was like 7, and you grow! And so I'm pretty sure those clothes are at his house now. They don't fit, they didn't fit. There's all these pictures at my dad's house where everything's just too tight. My dad only went shopping for us once. Urm fortunately the rule was kind of relaxed when I was about 12 maybe. (Tamsin, 24)*

In exploring this affecting example from Tamsin I have highlighted the ways in which some parents enacted temporally contingent borders and boundaries around the movement of materialities in and out of the home. Although I have chosen to focus on one participant, Tamsin, this was an experience also shared by others in the study. I showed how ongoing difficulties, arguments, and challenging emotional dynamics were played out through the

enactment of such borders and rules around children's materialities – demonstrating children's contingent ownership of such objects. This created emotionally and practically challenging experiences for young people and undermined feelings of connection, care and continuity and, for Tamsin, undermined her ability to feel comfortable, happy, and cared for in her dad's house. This has therefore provided further evidence of the ways in which materialities become embedded in familial relationships in post-separation, where emotions can be seen as productive of, and produced by, various materialities.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have made clear that the everyday routines of young people in post-separation families are dependent on the regular movement of 'stuff' between their houses, or the places where they spend time with their parents. I have argued that these material movements are central to apprehending how families *do (and undo)* living arrangements in post-separation and young people's emotional experiences of them. I have explored 'stuff' in motion as a topic of investigation in itself, alongside the practices and emotions surrounding this movement, including the relations between (im)mobile materialities and the people moving around them. In this focus on the connections between families and things, this chapter has made a contribution to the literature on post-separation, being one of the first to take an in-depth look at such connections in the context of mobility (see Walker 2022; Pallundan and Winther 2017; Campo et al. 2020 for work on the home). This is important given that my participants highlighted these topics as mattering greatly to their experiences of living in multi-housed ways.

I first focused on documenting what types of materialities move, and what this tells us about the capacities of those materialities for movement and reproduction. In focusing on the experiences of three of my participants, Mia, Gabby and Laura, I also began to demonstrate how these materialities interacted with the varying material, emotional and spatial dimensions of family and domestic life. Having established that all experiences of mobility in post-separation involve the movement of some amount of 'stuff' between houses, I then went on to provide a detailed discussion of the activity of packing. Through this detailed exploration, I showed that packing is a skilled practice involving the creation of habits and routines, that must be repetitively developed in conjunction with a range of bodies, objects and spaces. In this discussion, it has also been shown how such practices involve complex temporalities and spatialities, with forms of imaginative mobility as central to these practices.

This notion of the cultivation of young people's mobility skills is one that has rarely been explored within the literature on children's mobilities. As Kullman (2010: 829) states, geographers have variously accounted for the mobile experiences of children and young

people but ‘less has been said about the practices of becoming mobile, including the acquisition of skills’. Therefore, this chapter contributes to this understudied topic. Furthermore, this chapter also continues work started in chapter four, contributing to mobilities literatures through its focus on practices of ‘preparing, scripting, regulating, recruiting, organizing, rehearsing, anticipating, strategizing, plotting backstage’ that prefigure acts of embodied movement – practices which have largely been absent from mobility studies thus far (Vannini 2009: 245). This is a significant omission given that in this chapter I have shown that these practices were central to my participant’s experiences of mobility. They worked to elongate the times and spaces of what is normally considered in mobilities literatures. They set the conditions for mobility and worked to both exacerbate and help people cope with the challenges of movement.

The final section then took a more explicit focus on the connections between materiality and emotion – an undercurrent running throughout the chapter. I did so through an empirical focus on moments of forgetting belongings, collecting these forgotten belongings, and an exploration of the enactment of rules around the movement of materialities in and out of the home. In focusing on these experiences I brought to the fore some of the more difficult aspects of mobile routines for the participants in my study, examining how these challenges often become a very routinised and expected part of living in this way, which often heightens their emotional impact. Drawing on material cultures literatures, my analysis also focused on how these mobile materialities and the practices they incite play an important role in the emotional ways that family members relate to each other. In doing so, I extended work initiated in previous research where I argued that ‘material encounters play a significant role in the (re)creation, reinforcement and the undermining of family relationships in post-separation’ (Walker 2022: 224). This further builds upon recent work within the emerging field of family geographies which has drawn attention to the importance of everyday materialities in the doing of family (Holmes 2018; Price-Robertson and Duff 2019; Luzia 2011; Tarrant 2016).

The following chapter moves on from thinking about practices that precede mobility to focus on practices occurring whilst mobile. In doing so, chapter six picks up on strands of argument introduced in chapter four, as it explores how young people’s changing relationships with family, school and houses affected how spent time travelling was used and experienced. As highlighted in chapter four, the majority of young people’s journeys were made alongside family members – particularly before young people reached their mid-late teenage years. Consequently, the following chapter explores journeys that were made with family members. It examines how families interact during these journeys and how such interactions contribute to the (un)doing of family. This, therefore, also picks up on threads in this chapter, as it explores

how the dynamics of familial relationships are affected by mobile practices. In doing so, it continues the thesis' concern for exploring the complex and changing emotional experiences of journeying in post-separation.

Chapter Six: Families Moving Together and Apart: (Un)Doing Family in the Car

6.1 Introduction

Whilst the previous chapters have largely centred around the practices and materialities that surround mobility, this chapter focuses on embodied acts of movement. Specifically, it concentrates on young people's experiences of the journeys that are made between their parents' houses, or movements between other spaces, such as hotels or grandparents' houses, where they spend time with parents. In exploring these mobile experiences, this chapter argues that such journeys can be conceptualised as significant sites for the (un)doing of family in post-separation.

As a reminder, my argument is that in a similar vein to the ways in which family is 'done', it can also be 'undone'. Inspired by conceptions of home unmaking (Baxter and Brickell 2014), undoing refers to the processes by which family is intentionally or inadvertently, temporarily or persistently, damaged, distanced, disturbed or diminished. This chapter, therefore, picks up threads of (un)doing woven into chapters four and five, which explored the ways in which family relationships are negotiated, defined, sustained and eroded in post-separation through mobility and the practices surrounding it. In particular, this chapter connects back to chapter four, exploring how some of the changing family dynamics outlined in the biographies and the temporal characteristics of young people's routines, play out through embodied experiences of mobility. Through exploring these topics in more detail, in this chapter I develop more fully the concept of undoing of family, alongside and interacting with the 'doing' of family.

In recognising the significance of mobility to family, this chapter also continues to draw on perspectives from the 'new mobilities paradigm' introduced in chapter two and utilised in chapter five (Sheller and Urry 2006; Hannam et al. 2006). In particular, the following discussion works with research on the 'doing' of mobility, approaching mobility as a multi-sensory and embodied practice that is 'something that we feel in an emotional and affective sense' (Adey 2017: 162). Thus, this chapter foregrounds the sensory, affective, emotional and material dimensions of mobile family practices – adding to a growing body of research exploring families' experiences of moving together (Waitt and Harada 2016; Whittle 2018; Boyer and Spinney 2016). As I will show, these textures are highly significant to how family is felt, built and performed – particularly for geographers interested in the spatial and temporal contours of family (un)doing.

The chapter is formed of two sections. The first focuses on the theme of travelling and togetherness and investigates the kinds of activities participants carry out when travelling with their family members. I first explore how the car encourages different forms of talk between family members and unpack the particular contexts of post-separation relationships that make this talk significant. I then look at the role of music in the car and explore the connections between affect, emotion, music and kinaesthetic sensation. Breaking down some of the arguments I have just presented, I then explore how these performances of togetherness can also be experienced as forced, overly intimate, awkward and alienating. In doing so, I will explore how these various activities are significant in both the doing and the undoing of family in my participants' lives.

The second section focuses on care as a significant dimension of what families do together when moving between houses, picking up on the introduction of care as a theme in chapter five, section 5.4.2. I change the frame to think about care because of its importance to the ways in which participants narrated their ideas and experiences of family, particularly as it related to mobility. Thus, this section will demonstrate the overlap between care and family practices, arguing that mobile acts of care, in their presence and absence, contribute to the (un)doing of family in post-separation.

It first focuses on how driving can be conceptualised as a form of care for young people's mobile bodies. I then work with the notion of caringscapes to think about how parents find routes through the complex and dynamic time-space dimensions of care in post-separation (Bowlby et al. 2010). I then move on to examine how cars can allow transitions to be performed in care-full ways, conceiving of transitions in several ways. Firstly, I use the term to denote how, in their movements between houses, young people are transitioning between different material and emotional environments – transitions that demand time to prepare for and to adjust to. Secondly, I think about transitions longer and more ill-defined in nature, as families transition from what may be termed pre-and-post-separation. Thus, the diverse temporal qualities of changes occurring throughout participants' childhoods discussed in chapter four reappear here. The discussion then moves on to focus on young people's practices of mobile care, while the final section examines instances where young people felt their parents acted with an absence or deficit of care in their (im)mobilities.

The conclusion brings these themes together and further emphasises this chapter's contributions to family literatures in geography and beyond. In particular, the conclusion draws together my argument about the concept of family undoing as it has been developed over chapters four, five and six.

6.2 Travelling and Togetherness

As explored in chapter four, the majority of participants' journeys took place by car. Whilst the majority of mobilities research investigating experiences of 'automobility' has focused on people driving alone, there is some research looking at moving in cars as collectives – approaching the car as a rich and socially meaningful space (Laurier et al. 2008; Haddington, Nevile and Keisanen 2012). As part of this, researchers have explored what it means and how it feels to be a family in the space of the car, drawing attention to the significance of the car to the exercise of intergenerational power (Barker 2009) family disputes (Noy 2016) and parental care (Waitt and Harada 2016; Barker 2008; Dowling 2000).

This section both draws upon and extends this work. Drawing on geographic literatures discussed in chapter two, section 2.2.2., emotion and affect are understood as 'relational flows, fluxes or currents, in-between people and places' (Davidson et al. 2005: 3; Pile 2010). Thus, I explore how the spatiality of the car-in-motion, shapes these flows – alongside both affecting and being affected by the particular emotional, spatial and temporal conditions of each family's life. I demonstrate how the confined, liminal and technologically mediated space of the car-in-motion opens up distinctive possibilities for experiences of intimacy, closeness and fun, but also conflict, uncomfortableness, and sadness to emerge. In doing so, I explore how emotional intimacies and distances are produced in mobile experiences, contributing to both the doing and the undoing of family.

This section is divided into three subsections. The first explores the car as a space for conversation between family members. Approaching talk as an embodied practice affected by sociomaterial environments, I discuss the types of mundane talk happening in the car before examining it as a space for more sensitive exchanges to take place. I move on to look at the aural dimensions of car travel, focusing on the role of music in creating affective environments that connect families in playful ways. I end by discussing the ways in which cars bring together proximate bodies in ways that may be awkward, upsetting and aggravating. Throughout these four sections, I unpack the ways in which doing and undoing are woven together within mobile experiences, although the first three sections have a more explicit focus on the 'doing' of family, whilst 'undoing' has more of a presence in the final section.

6.2.1 Talk in the Car

6.2.1.1 Logistical Talk

All participants spoke of the car as a space in which a great deal of talk happened between family members. In part, these conversations were logistical and involved discussions and

deliberations about the organisation of daily life – particularly around the logistics of when parents and young people would be seeing each other next. As explored in chapter four, adapting routines around shifting day-to-day circumstances requires careful coordination of schedules across multiple households. Given that there are relatively few competitors for attention, the car emerged as a useful space in which to do the things of 'mobility work' discussed in chapter four.

This type of logistical talk can be seen in one of the videos taken by Emily, of her and her dad driving from her mum's to his house. As they drive, they discuss the fact that Emily is planning on starting ukulele lessons on a Wednesday evening, the time that she usually transitions between her houses. This requires a bit of thinking given that the class is in the centre of town, near to her school and her mum's, while her dad lives in a village on the outskirts of the city. The video begins in the middle of their, somewhat heated, discussion:

> *P: Well you haven't told me any information about it?*
>
> *E: Well that's it!, it's Wednesday's at five (Emily replies in a slightly exasperated tone as she chews a cereal bar)*
>
> *P: Oh yeh. So, and what do you have, when do you finish school on a Wednesday?*
>
> *E:mmmm,…..(Emily pauses as she swallows her food) same time as always 3:05! (The pitch of her voice raises as she talks in a sing-song manner).*
>
> *P: So you don't have anything after school?*
>
> *E: Nope*
>
> *P: So what do you go to your mum's for a bit?*
>
> *E: Mhm*
>
> *P: Then ukulele, then-*
>
> *E: Then I can get to yours (Emily interrupts to speed the conversation up)*
>
> *P:…is that, what time are the buses to mine on that, do they work for that time?*

E:… yeh I think so? (Emily replies in offhand manner)

Picking up on the exasperated tone of her responses, when watching back the video Emily explained that she was slightly annoyed at her dad because they had this conversation before, and she'd already worked out the details on her own. Here Emily appears as the competent mobile subject, as she did also in chapter five, with knowledge of the bus timetable and how this fits around her schedule. Here, the car becomes a space where Emily can, reluctantly, share this knowledge and where her dad can, with Emily as a captive audience, go over changing details of her day-to-day schedule. This shows how the car is an important space to work out the logistics of doing family in multi-housed ways, where such conversations become part of the processes through which young people's position within families is constructed.

6.2.1.2 'Mundane Talk'

Alongside and in amongst these logistical discussions, the car was also a space in which families engaged in, what Rodriguez (2014) terms 'mundane talk' about day-to-day life. This involved discussions around how their day had been, what school work they had, how friends or extended family were doing and more. Studying relationships between non-resident fathers and their children, Rodriguez (2014) argues that this type of 'mundane' talk can hold particular importance for those in post-separation families who live with rhythms of presence and absence from each other's lives. As Rodriguez (2014: 1141) states, often fathers 'did not know what is going on in their children's lives when they are away because they lack access to information typically shared in daily conversations'.

Such findings were mirrored in my own study. Most participants described sharing little virtual communication with their parents, apart from on special occasions such as birthdays or Christmas, and consequently, there was often much for parents and young people to catch up on from their time apart. In my interview with Matt, Abi's dad, he spoke about how engaging in such 'mundane' chat formed part of how repetitive journeys were habitually passed when he picked up Abi and her sister from her mum's after not seeing them for the week:

> *If I pick them up the conversations are about, what are we doing this evening, what's the plans for the weekend, what we're having for dinner. I will, I'll always try and talk to them about so what have you done this week, 'cause, you know, I haven't seen them and I don't really know what they've been up to and they don't know what I've been up to. But also you know try and, try and get them to see that*

there's no problem talking about the other house when you're going to this house. (Matt, Abi's dad)

In this quote, Matt raises another important point, as he suggests that these types of conversations, explicitly about life in the other house, can help to foster a sense of connection, continuity and openness to life in each place. Multiple studies have found that for children in separated families where there is little communication between or about their different houses, lives can often feel detached or incoherent, and transitioning between such environments can be a distressing or uncomfortable experience (Johnsen et al. 2018; Winther 2015; Marschall 2017). This type of mobile-'mundane' chat, therefore, performs an important function in the doing of family, helping parents and young people to feel integrated into each other's day-to-day lives, working to help 'sew places together' as they transition between different environments (Edensor 2010: 192).

Whilst drawing out this emotional significance may seem to challenge the framing of this talk as 'mundane', if one looks to scholars who have shown that the 'everyday' is imbued with emotional, relational and geographic significant one can see that these are not contradictory terms (Scott 2009; Highmore 2002; Lewis, Holloway and Hubbard 2000; Sullivan 2017). In fact, the importance of the habitual and banal is at the heart of a family practises approach, as Holdsworth (2013: 13) states 'the significance of family practices is that they are often unremarkable, as family is just 'done''. This suggests that there is significance to the ways in which families habitually interact on journeys, as through these mundane moments family itself becomes practiced. Connecting back to chapter four, these practices both shape and are shaped by the rhythmic nature of these movements. Families similarly craft rhythms to how they habitually interact on journeys, in ways that help cope with the repetitive oscillation from house to house.

6.2.1.2 Talking and Playing on Long Journeys

However, framings of catch-up talk as 'mundane' do start to break apart when considering those parents and young people with longer absences from each other, as well as those with longer times of co-presence on journeys. This is exemplified well by one participant, Laura and her lengthy journeys with her dad. These were journeys, performed around once a month, of about four (often more) hours in the car together. Taking about these, Laura described:

That was bonding time. That was time that we would have a laugh… and it's probably something I still miss now actually is you know, we used to sit in the car for just hours talking about stuff. I'd tell him like

> *what I'd learned in school, he'd tell me other stuff and just other sort of things I was interested in, he'd look up stuff and tell me... I don't think there was a time really when we were driving where it was ever awkward silence. Really, I think that we were always, always chatting. Urm, as I remember it anyway. 'Cause obviously like cause I wasn't seeing him regularly there was always lots to catch up on.(Laura, 23)*

In this extract, there is a real sense of the significance of the journey to Laura and her dad's relationship, particularly as it comprised such a large amount of their time together. In this context, 'mundane' talk gets transformed into something more extraordinary, given that she only saw her dad every fortnight and he got to experience little of her weekday life, unlike Matt. This is made all the more significant by the fact that the time they would spend together elsewhere was often shared with others such as her grandparents or her step-mum, or was filled with activities in an effort to avoid his 'grotty' flat. Consequently, the space of the car became a privileged domestic space that Laura and her dad could inhabit alone, a space in which they could engage in forms of talk, listening and play made difficult elsewhere. Continuing in her description of these journeys Laura stated that:

> *Once we'd sort of run out of things to catch up on we used to play number plate games that I made up, where you'd have three letters on a number plate and you have to make a sentence and again, most of my music taste comes from journeys with my dad in the car. So there was a lot of singing and listening to music. (Laura, 23)*

Vannini (2010: 115) has argued that 'individuals are not passive consumers of travel, but instead literally make the journey what it is by employing different strategies…by manipulating the changing rhythms of travel through diverse activities, and therefore by performing – rather than merely absorbing – the flow of temporality along the way'. This manipulation can be seen in the activities of Laura and her dad as they connect the pacing of their excitable conversations to the duration of the journey, draw on the changing materialities of the unfolding environment in the number plate game and use the sensory capacities of the car's stereo system as they sing together

In doing so they are able to recreate the loving and playful affectivity of what Laura remembers of their relationship before the separation, across a changed landscape of spaces, materialities and mobilities (Price-Robertson and Duff 2019). This crafting of travel time can be seen as a creative response to the challenges posed by the extended spatialities and compressed temporalities of their relationship, as they refashion what may be viewed as 'dead' or 'wasted'

time into a pocket of 'intensified togetherness' (Marschall 2014: 2014; Urry 2007; Jain 2009; Watts 2008). Such interactions were thus a significant means through which feelings of closeness and connection were re-established and maintained after absences from each other, and in so became incredibly significant to the reformulated and ongoing ways in which family was done by Laura and her dad at this time of their life.

6.2.1.3 Sensitive Conversations

Interwoven into chat about day-to-day lives, interests, hobbies and games were also conversations that were more sensitive and emotionally laden in nature. Whilst I am pulling apart an analytical distinction between these more sensitive and 'mundane' conversations, in practice, such talk formed part of everyday interactions within some families, where talk weaved in and out of such logistical, 'mundane', playful and sensitive conversations. Drawing this analytical distinction, however, allows me to focus on the particular qualities of cars as spaces in which such sensitive conversation may be enabled.

In particular, the car emerged as a preferred space for Emily to have these sorts of conversations with her dad and the following discussion draws only on their experience, in order to look in depth at their particular circumstances. However, the broader points regarding cars and sensitive conversations were also shared by other participants. Over the period that Emily was involved in the research, and for a few years prior to this, there had been some difficulties in her relationship with her mum and her new partner, meaning that she had sometimes found her mum's house a challenging space to inhabit. Whilst Emily chose not to disclose too much detail about these difficulties, from what she did say it was clear that her dad had been a great source of support over this time. In my interview with Emily's dad, Pete, he was similarly and purposefully vague about the challenges that Emily had been facing, feeling that it was her place to choose how much to tell me, but he did mention that the car had emerged as a space in which they talked together about what was going on at her mum's, in amongst other conversations:

> *She loves talking to me actually about what she's feeling, what's going on. Especially quite often with some of the stuff that's going on at her mum's. Not always, sometimes she hates it and she's like 'don't ask me, don't ask me'. But generally she was saying the other day that she was chatting with her friends about, you know I talk to my dad about anything when we're driving to school, or when we're driving back so she loves that. (Pete, Emily's dad)*

Pointing to why the car had become a particularly important space to talk about how she was feeling, Emily stated that:

> *It's nice to have conversations in the car because it's sort of like… it's… just easier. It's less formal than sitting down in the living room and having a chat you know… It's just us two as well so we can just talk about anything. Not that I wouldn't like tell my step-mum stuff but more... that it's just sort of me and my dad. It's just nice. (Emily, 14)*

Connecting with my writing about Laura's journeys in the previous section, Emily also highlights that the car is often one of the only spaces in which young people are alone with their parent, without the presence of step-parents or step-siblings. Previous research has found that even when children report having good quality with their relationships with step-parents, they often feel qualitatively different to relationships with parents (Allan, Crow and Hawker 2011). This often relates to the level and forms of intimacy in step-parent-child relationships, with acts of embodied intimacy, such as hugs, and forms of intimate disclosure being less present (Davies 2017; Gabb 2008). Emily's pause after mentioning her step-mum gives an impression of this felt difference.

Emily also draws attention to other qualities and affordances of car travel that shape the social and material framing of talk, opening it up as a 'less formal' space for potentially sensitive conversations. Given that Emily usually travels without anyone else in the car, she is able to occupy the front seat next to the driver. Consequently, Emily and her dad's bodies are particularly proximate, in a way not often observed in other studies of families within the car – partially due to the fact that such studies tend to focus on younger children (Barker 2009; Noy 2016). They are therefore more comfortably positioned in the 'front-seat-back-seat' geography of the car for conversation (Laurier et al. 2008).

Emily also highlights that there is a certain informality to conversations in the car. Given that bodies are positioned side by side there is less of the potential intensity of a conversation held face to face, as eye contact comes in the form of quick glances rather than prolonged exchanges (Ferguson 2009). Ross et al. (2009) also note that, as the driver's main focus is on the activity of driving and the processual backdrop of life outside of the car holds some attention for both driver and passenger, there is 'a certain inattentiveness to the conversations held' in the car (Ross et al. 2009: 612). They argue that this inattentiveness is productive in creating an unpressurised atmosphere in which talk can happen. As conversations in the car, intermingle with the background of life outside of the car, pause-full conversations are produced. This matches the slow pacing and rhythm of sensitive conversations, where silences

and time to consider responses are an enabling feature of this type of talk. As Laurier et al. (2008: 17) notes the car is 'a good place for certain sorts of conversations: the kind that might generate pauses, and yet want those pauses not to become too uncomfortable' (also see Ferguson 2009).

Viewed through the lens of family practices, these conversations between Emily and her dad can be seen as part of the processes of the doings and undoings of family, as they talk through the reactions and ruptures that have accompanied her step-dad entering the family sphere. This was an entry that led to multiple actions of undoing, as Emily's older brother and sister physically and emotionally distanced themselves from their mum and step-dad. The types of mobile conversations discussed above became a way for Emily to process these acts of undoing, becoming part of these processes as Emily tried to find a way to continue to 'do family' in these changed and challenging circumstances. This draws attention to the fact that acts of undoing and doing family may exist simultaneously, where acts of undoing cause actions of adjustment and re-routine as people try to find new routines to family practices.

Over the past four sections I have shown that the car is a space in which lots of talk happens between family members. Such talk comes in many interconnected forms, as young people and their family members discussed logistical details, chatted about their day-to-day lives, played games and discussed challenges in their home lives. In analytically drawing apart these types of talk, I have unpacked conversation as an embodied act, performed in conjunction with spaces, atmospheres and materials. Focus on the material and sensory environment of the car I have shown how the proximate arrangement of bodies, in which there is both lack of, but also, presence of particular distractions in amongst the rhythm and pace of the journey contribute to the creation of a space and an atmosphere conducive to talking in families. Furthermore, progressing my argument about the centrality of mobile spaces in the (un)doing of family in post-separation, I have shown how these interconnected forms of talk all play a central function in the performance of family. The following section will continue to focus on the car as a sensory environment, paying attention to music in the car and the ways in which it connects family members.

6.2.3 Music in the Car

Alongside talking, nearly all participants brought up listening to music as a central activity happening when mobile. There are a small number of studies that have explored this phenomena, finding that mediated sound has become 'a component part of what it is to drive' (Bull 2004: 246; Bull 2001), where music is one of the ways cars 'move' bodies (Sheller 2004; Waitt et al. 2017), adding to a host of habituated embodied interactions with technology

(Edensor 2012). These studies have tended, however, to focus on individual people, rather than examining the function and effects of music on collectives travelling together. The following section goes some way to remedying this paucity of research, examining young people's experiences of listening to music with their families on journeys between houses.

In my interviews with both Emily and Pete, they both described listening, singing and dancing to music as a large component of how they inhabited the car together. This was also remarked upon during my go-along with them:

> *I'm sat in the back of Pete's small car, with Emily upfront next to her dad. A few minutes into the journey I see Emily take out her phone and pick up the aux cable dangling from the car radio. Pete laughs as he comments, 'she loves to put on music and sing. She does a very good queen, bohemian rhapsody'. 'No it's not!' Emily forcefully replies before turning to me, 'well I do sing him but I don't do it properly, that's like serious singing. I'm very good at putting on accents when I sing. Usually there's sort of like a big car karaoke, like James Cordon style, but it's a bit embarrassing'. Emily turns back to the front and puts her phone back in her pocket, clearly wanting to avoid her dad pushing her into a performance. (Field notes, Go-along, 01/03/20)*

Geographers have conceptualised the ways in which music 'taps into our emotional and intuitive selves', working to enliven or deaden bodies (Doughty, Duffy and Harada 2019; Duffy and Waitt 2013; Anderson, Morton and Revill 2005). As Waitt et al. (2015: 329) argue, music may be conceptualised as 'a material and expressive force that may modify the flow of connections between bodies, spaces and affects/emotions'. Thus, multiple authors have noted that music can be an 'affective glue', connecting bodies in a viscerally shared experience (Thompson and Biddle 2013: 19; Wood and Smith 2004). Similar processes can be said to be happening between Pete and Emily.

Sonically sealed from the rest of the world, I got the sense that music usually serves to create a joyful mood in the car, connecting Emily and her dad in playful ways, whilst also disconnecting them from the outside world. These are moods created, enacted and sustained through a complex mixture of bodies, sounds, gestures and vocal tone – where music acts as a 'force' that moves their bodies to dance, sing, laugh and act out (Gallagher 2016; Doughty, Duffy and Harada 2019). Music's affects are thus contingent on this assortment, as the experience of the go-along highlights well. At that moment, my presence disrupted the feel of the space as comfortable, domestic and private (Merriman 2009; Urry 2006). In this

arrangement of bodies, Emily's hesitance to put on the music, suggests that music was a force that risks creating a mood of embarrassment and awkwardness.

The car as a space for fun between family members, amplified through the presence of particular music and bodily reactions to it also came through strongly in Tamsin's description of the journeys to her dad's house, when she first started seeing him after her parent's separation:

> *T: My dad always plays the same music in the car… Urm... yeh it would be a lot of like prefab sprout, lemontree, and this song it's called like mo mo land. It's like [Tamsin starts singing] and we used to think it was hilarious. Yeh urm... yeh they were always quite. It would always start, whenever dad picked us up it was always like a lot of fun like... it felt like a... I dunno it made you feel like really quite special because it was so exciting. Urm...*
>
> *A: In what way was it exciting?*
>
> *T: The music's on as loud as possible. My dad always drives very fast so he'd do this thing where he would urm, he would move the steering wheel from left to right very quickly and we'd all like rock around in the back. So like it was always quite exciting drives. Urm... it was always like that when I was a kid and dad picked us up. It was always like a big kind of like party on the way to the house yeh. (Tamsin, 24)*

Talking about their weekends together early in her parent's separation, Tamsin described that her dad was very keen to install himself as the 'fun parent', where his way of 'doing family' entailed very different, and more relaxed rules and routines than those of her mum's. Through Tamsin's description of these car journeys, it's clear that creating this atmosphere of fun started from the very beginning of their weekends together – particularly through the music that he played.

Reporting on his ethnography of 'automobile habitation', Bull (2001: 185) found that participants in his study coordinated the soundscape of their journeys to match their mood and to encourage particular ways of feeling. Here Tamsin's father is using music in a similar way, to work on the registers of affect to stage an 'exciting', 'party' atmosphere in the car (Bille et al. 2015; Edensor 2015). Music worked in combination with the kinaesthetic affordances of the car to enhance this mood. Kinaesthesia refers to an 'embodied awareness, a kind of sixth sense, which is a sense of the body's position and orientation in a movement-space' (Jensen

et al. 2015). Highlighting how emotion and affect can arise out of these particular sensations of movement, Sheller (2004: 228) has argued that motion and emotion are 'kinaesthetically intertwined', as we 'feel through and with the car'. With the fast pace of his driving, and the turbulent movement of the steering, Tamsin's father taps into this kinaesthetic potential of the car to further enhance to the 'party' feel of the car.

This section has explored the aural environments of cars, finding, as Waitt et al. (2017: 329) have, that ''sound/music can also be conceived as an integral part of the material and expressive dimensions that comprise driving'. In exploring examples of families listening together, I have shown how music and movement work on the modalities of emotion and affect to produce particular ways of doing and experiencing the family in post-separation. These findings are significant as the importance of sound, and its interconnections with other sensations, to the ways in family relationships are understood and experienced has had very little recognition in literatures on the family (although see Wilson 2012 and Mason 2018). Rather, this section has shown that such sensory registers are important to recognise if researchers are to more fully appreciate the modes through which family bodies are connected.

6.2.4 Togetherness in Difficult Circumstances

The above sections have focused on experiences largely characterised by 'positive' affects and emotions of intimacy, love, fun and excitement. Although I am wary about creating a false division between 'positive' and 'negative' experiences, it is important to acknowledge that not all journeys were appreciated by young people for the ways in which they brought family members together. Over the following section, I will look at the circulation of affects and emotions such as anger, awkwardness, frustration, sadness and alienation in the space of the car.

This section progresses my argument, with more of a focus on undoing than has been seen in the previous sections. This is not to say, however, that all adverse familial experiences will be acts of undoing – where 'doing' family encompasses 'positive' experiences and 'undoing' negative. Rather, throughout this chapter, I will unpack the ways in which doing and undoing are woven together within mobile experiences. In doing so, I will show that many of the embodied and material elements of car travel discussed above as working towards feelings of intimacy can in other contexts work against feelings of closeness.

In the sections above I described how many participants appreciated journeys as times to talk with parents, however, Mia's case highlights that this feeling was not universal. Talking about being driven the hour to her dad's house on a Friday evening, Mia described:

> *Having not seen my dad for two weeks and then having to do like small talk when you get in the car, about… and like kind of feeling like I'm telling all of my stories twice cause I've told my mum already everything that happened to me... as well with my brother like keep conversation flowing urm, yeh. And... yeh always like the sense of knowing that I was going away urm... was like always I think. Whatever all my friends had planned for that weekend was not on the table for me urm as I was sort of sitting in this car getting further away from where I wanted to be. (Mia, 25)*

Rodriguez (2014) notes that, for non-resident fathers, connecting to children after a period of absence is not always simple and smooth. They found that often fathers find it challenging to know how to relate to their children and have a difficult time getting them to open up. Mia's quote highlights that such clumsy and stunted ways of communicating may also be felt by children. Laurier et al. (2008: 14) note 'by its dimensions the car remains a small space and its confinement and proximity… exert considerable pressure to speak'. As such, in the space of the car, this feeling of awkwardness is heightened, as Mia's description of the pressure to 'keep conversation flowing' demonstrates. Therefore, whilst accounts of travelling in the car alone have emphasised that 'it can also constitute *time out* – time to escape from the obligations in different life roles: an opportunity for 'back-stage' time to be oneself', Mia's account highlights how travelling with others can be the very opposite of this (Lyons 2014: 157). Rather, Mia feels like time together in the car is a forced performance of family life.

This was also heightened by Mia's feelings of reluctance about going to her dad's, as I described in her biography. Thus, part of Mia's annoyance at having to repeat her stories may be born of this frustration with the sense of separation between her lives at her mum's and dad's. This highlights that journeys towards places that young people did not want to be could be frustrating and upsetting experiences, as they felt viscerally the physical, and emotional, distance between where they wanted to be and where they were travelling to.

Thus, Mia described feeling grateful for no longer having to endure these car journeys when she switched to moving on public transport:

> *I didn't miss it, me being stuck in the car with my dad was usually an opportunity for some awkward conversations to come up that I couldn't escape. (Mia, 25)*

When I asked Mia to elaborate on what she meant by 'awkward conversations' she responded:

> *my dad was like pretty depressed actually after the divorce so urm he generally was urm sort of urm sad urm... to be in the car with a you know your dad when he's in that state is difficult... urm yeh sooo I guess it was just, I was always worried he would talk about the divorce, which he always did. And.. yeh would just try and avoid the topic for most of the journey I think. (Mia, 25)*

In section 6.2.1. I emphasised that some participants appreciated car journeys as one of the only spaces where they could be alone with their parent. However, as Mia's quote highlights, this was not always a comfortable experience. For Mia, the car was a tension-filled atmosphere, alive with the possibility that her dad may bring up the divorce. Inhabiting this space meant constant monitoring of their conversation and of her dad's emotional state. As Mia continued:

> *there were occasions where like when like, particular memories of my urm... when it was just me going to school like if we, when my brother was just in primary school we'd dropped him off. Urm. and we were driving and I remember me and my dad being in the car and he started crying. Urm... so that was difficult especially for like an eleven year old urm you know your dad's crying. That that one sticks out, urm... as sort of not really knowing what to do urm and you know you've still got a really long way to drive as well. (Mia, 25)*

In section 6.2.2 , I explored how within car journeys the consequences of and emotions of ruptures and disturbances in family relationships were felt, negotiated and talked through. Similarly for Mia, the car was a space in which the emotions associated with family undoings were perceptible, however in much less comfortable and controlled ways. Once again, Mia presents a very affecting portrait of the car journeys with her dad. Approached through the lens of affect, her dad's crying body can be seen to disrupt and reconfigure the relationship between Mia, her dad and the space of the car. Such affects cause shifts in Mia's bodily capacities, producing a stasis where she does not know how to act (Simpson 2020; Emmerson 2017; Anderson 2014).

Whilst recent scholarship has been keen to demonstrate the ways in which children actively care for their family members, Mia's example highlights that researchers should be careful not to underestimate the challenges involved in this, potentially eclipsing times when young people feel circumstances are beyond their caring capacities, capabilities and knowledges (Marschall 2013; Horton and Pyer 2017). Connecting back to Mia's description of the tension felt in the

car, it may be the potential of this emotional rupture of crying that further produces this tension. This brings out a sense that cars can also be spaces of entrapment and claustrophobia, contrasting strongly with the descriptions of cars in previous sections.

Orla was another participant who remembered journeys bringing together her family members in uncomfortable ways. In her first year in Northern Ireland, Orla had little communication with her dad – purposefully distancing herself from that relationship. Describing the first time that she saw her dad after a year apart, when she, and her mum and siblings, when back to California for the summer holidays, Orla stated:

> *I remember actually getting pretty upset at both my parents because my dad was the one who liked picked us up from the airport urm so.. I was feeling very confused 'cause like say when my family and I were all driving in the car together, like chatting,.. I remember being really angry and saying why are we pretending that we're like one big happy family again… I remember being really angry, mainly at my dad but at both my parents. Urm… and my younger brother and sister as well. Kind of 'cause I think they were really happy to be acting like a family again (Orla, 23)*

Orla described feeling like her parents should have separated long before they did. There was a lot of conflict in the house, often stemming from her dad's anger issues, and she sensed her parents were both pretty unhappy. In moving to Northern Ireland, Orla felt relieved to get away from that environment. Thus, to see her parents acting like 'one big happy family' felt jarring for Orla. This was a performance of family life that Orla had rarely experienced. As they were far younger than her, Orla described feeling that her siblings were somewhat shielded from these aspects of their parent's relationship and therefore had much better relations with their dad. Thus, for her siblings, this atmosphere of togetherness may have been reaffirming in their continued status as a family, whereas for Orla this performance of a 'happy family' paradoxically became part of the further undoing of them as 'one big happy family'.

This highlights an important point not yet emphasised in my writing, that 'atmospheres can, and will, be experienced differently by different bodies' (Emmerson 2017: 2085). As Ahmed (2008: 125) notes we may walk into a room and 'feel the atmosphere', but what we feel depends on the angle of our arrival'. Orla brings with her the memories of her parent's conflict and her dad's anger into this current encounter. Thus, while the family practices approach argues that family is performative, both Mia and Orla's experiences highlight the ways in which *performances* of family felt as inauthentic, alien or artificial can have distancing affects. This,

therefore, complicates the links between physical and emotional closeness, drawing out important spatial implications of family (un)doing.

Taken together these four sections have examined what happens when family members travel together in the car on journeys between young people's houses. I have approached mobility as an embodied practice, and the car as a material and sensory environment which shapes the ways that families relate to each other. I have also focused on how the particular spatial, temporal and emotional dynamics of family in post-separation forms the contours of how this mobile time is experienced. Focusing on these things in combination has allowed me to focus on the emotional bonds and affective flows that are generated by moving together, thus demonstrating how car spaces become important in the emotional and affectual geographies of post-separation families. Overall, I have focused on how family is (un)done in the car through practices of talking, listening, dancing, sharing, playing, arguing and silence. In particular, through focusing on how families are brought together in ways that are not always harmonious, section 6.2.4., has advanced my argument on the undoing of family. The following section will continue these discussions through focusing on one particular element of the doing of family on these journeys: care.

6.3 Caring through the Car

Morgan (2011) has argued that family is just one lens through which sets of social activities may be viewed. Therefore, family practices may simultaneously be seen as gender practices, parenting practices or, crucially for the following discussion, caring practices. As drawn out in chapter two, section 2.3.4., care is central to the family and its geographies (Morgan 2019b; Hall 2019). People in families are expected to care *for* and *about* each other, even if these expectations are not always met (Tronto 1993). Care is at the heart of the interdependencies, obligations and expectations that constitute familial relations. Thus, in performing care for family members, family is often also being performed, maintained and reproduced (Morgan 2011). Such an emphasis not only comes from the literature. As I will explore over the following sections, care - both in its presence and absence - was central to how my participants narrated their ideas and experience of family, particularly as it related to mobility.

There have been several studies of care in post-separation families, exploring how the geographies and temporalities of care are reconfigured under newfound circumstances (Haugen 2007; Marschall 2013; Phillips 2013). However, these studies have tended to emphasise how caring happens (or does not happen) despite mobility - thus framing mobility as something to be overcome in caring practices. Rather, in this section, I explore the ways in which care occurs through mobility. I examine how the dynamics of established caring

practices, such as food provisioning or driving, are changed in post-separation, whilst also discussing how new forms of care, performed in cars, are demanded by new ways of living. In doing so, I demonstrate how the presence and absence of care becomes an important means through which family is (un)done in mobile experiences.

This section draws upon an array of geographic work on care, using this to examine the forms, practices, spatialities, temporalities, relations and emotions of caring that are enabled in the car (Bowlby 2012; Bowlby et al. 2010; Lawson 2007; Milligan and Wiles 2010; Horton and Pyer 2017; Power and Hall 2018). As such, this section draws less heavily on mobilities literatures, looking more to geographic work on care, whilst retaining a focus on the affective, emotional, embodied, and sensory dimensions of mobile family practices.

This discussion is divided into six subsections. The first explores how driving between houses is a form of care for young people's bodies. The next section works with Bowlby et al.'s (2010) conception of caringscapes to explore the ways in which using a car helps parents and children navigate the complex and changing spatialities and temporalities of care in post-separation. The third and fourth sections consider how the car enables care-full transitions to be enacted. Here transitions are conceived of in multiple ways, to think both about short-term moves between houses alongside transitions between states of 'doing' family with longer temporalities. These multiple conceptualisations of transition thus connect back to discussions in chapter four, as I continue to think about transitions existing across multiple temporalities. The fifth section examines how children care for their siblings and their parents on the move. The final section then moves to talk about instances where parents' acts of (im)mobility were deemed uncaring by young people, examining how such instances were integral to the (un)doing of family in these contexts.

6.3.1 Caring for Mobile Bodies

Previous research connecting care, family and mobility has emphasised how cars have become an integral component of western middle-class ideals of what it is for parents to care for their children (Dowling 2000; Barker 2008; 2011; Murray 2008). These studies evoke how the family car is bound up in powerful economics of affect and emotion that connect the physical sensations of driving to notions of 'good' parenting (Sheller 2004; Waitt and Harada 2016). This connection was clear in my own study, where parents frequently described driving their children between their houses through the lens of love, care and comfort.

Rachel, Jemima and Noah's mum, provides a good example of this. Over five months of researching with this family, I learned that living an ecologically conscious life was important to their ways of doing family. Thus, Rachel described feeling uncomfortable about using the

car for short trips, such as driving the five minutes to her children's dad's house. However, she continued to do these drives. Talking about this Rachel stated:

> *It's just shit isn't it! Because you bring the kids into this world, the parents then split up and we're the ones responsible for making the decision as to how they live, therefore we should give as much as we can to make their lives as easy as possible. So if that means that we're driving them around then so be it. (Rachel, Jemima and Noah's mum)*

Rachel described the sheer amount of stuff that needed taking between houses as the main driver behind the continued use of the car for these short trips. Later in the interview, she spoke about a rare instance that had recently happened where Jemima had chosen to walk from her dad's:

> *she had her P.E. bag and her big red bag which has got like all her clothes in and her school bag. She was carrying quite a lot of stuff! She just walked here on her own but she said that she was fine. It's not that far but still it's quite a lot of stuff to carry. (Rachel, Jemima and Noah's mum).*

It's clear how uncomfortable Rachel feels watching her daughter's encumbered body carrying the bags. Thus, for Rachel, the act of driving becomes an 'appeal to the body', as she seeks to prevent bodies that are uncomfortable, tired or burdened in their connections to objects (Kent 2015: 727). Connecting back to the first quote, Rachel feels a powerful sense of guilt surrounding the challenges that multi-housed life has brought to her children – common among separated parents (Kiiski, Määttä and Uusiautti 2013). Her children's bodies, as Rachel sees them, are encumbered by a decision that she made for them.

Consequently, Rachel tries, in the everyday practice of living between households, to act with a personal 'ethic of care' towards her children that amounts to attempting to make their lives 'as easy as possible' (Tronto 2013). Here an ethic of care refers not to universalising moral principles but rather concerns how ethical responses emerge in specific circumstances (Lawson 2007; Tronto 1993; Duncan et al. 2019). In other circumstances acting with care may amount to *not* using the car, out of care for the environment and the future her children will inhabit (Dowling and Maalsen 2020). However, as Hanrahan and Smith (2018: 231; 245) note caring practices are 'ever changing, adapting and responding to contingent circumstances and spaces'. Thus, under the particular circumstances of separation, using the car has become central to the care-full routines that sustain their multi-housed way of doing family. The

following section continues this focus on how changing geographies affect caring practices, drawing heavily on the notion of caringscapes to do so.

6.3.2 Driving through Dynamic Caringscapes

As I outlined in chapter two, Bowlby et al.'s framework of 'caringscapes' focuses attention on the temporal-spatial patterning of individuals' caring practices, behaviours and obligations – capturing a sense of how these change and adapt throughout the lifecourse. Thus, 'caringscapes' is a useful way of thinking through the complex ways in which the spatialities and temporalities of care and care relationships are refigured in post-separation.

The following section uses this framework to explore how the car helped Pete, Emily's dad, navigate his changing caringscape. In investigating this it is important to note that separation is just one process, in amongst many, that shapes Pete's performances of care, such as economic resources, welfare support or employment practices. The following discussion, however, will focus mainly on the spatial and temporal changes emanating from his separation from Emily's mum.

Pete lives in an eco-housing development on the outskirts of a small city that encourages forms of communal living. In the development, residents are strongly discouraged from owning their own cars and instead there is a communal pool of vehicles which residents can book, paying for each minute that they are in use. Recently, however, Pete had - with a lot of resistance and resentment from the community - bought his own car. Talking about this Pete stated:

> *it was stressful because I'd have to book the car for a certain time partly they'd charge for the time so there's a sort of a bit of a clock ticking... or someone else has booked it and it's not available... or.. I think I'm just going to be half an hour but actually I need to be three hours because suddenly I'll go to drop Emily off and then her brother or sister calls and says can you do this. That just got more and more stressful actually and so when we got to the point, what was it about six months ago or more.., urm... Emily's brother had moved in with my mum instead of being with his mum... urm... I realised actually all of that would be requiring a lot more of me driving round and doing stuff so we, we got our own car…. That's made that a lot easier, so I'm less precious about the time in the, I'm not anxious about the time with it, 'cause I didn't like that and it wasn't really fair on Emily – getting annoyed if she was late or something. (Pete, Emily's dad)*

As Pete describes, and as was outlined in Emily's biography, the last few years had seen many changes to his children's living arrangements. All of these acts of family doing and undoing had caused shifts in Pete's caringscape that necessitated changes to the means through which he moved through it (Bowlby et al. 2010). Such changes not only had spatial characteristics but were also temporal in nature. The purchase of a private car was largely driven by an acknowledgement that the rigidity of the communal 'car club' was out of sync with the lived unpredictability of the temporalities of Pete's reconfigured caringscape. In buying the private car, care became untethered (or less explicitly tethered) to commodified clock time, allowing Pete to move in ways more synchronised with the rhythms of his kids' caring needs. In opening up ways to care across complex geographies and temporalities, Pete was able to perform the work of reconstructing, maintaining, and reaffirming his family's relationships.

Over this section, I have used the framework of caringscapes to show how the time-space dimensions of care in post-separation are dynamic, complex and shifting. They involve adaptive changes around day-to-day variations and longer-term shifts in children's living arrangements. As emphasised in chapter four, such changes are characteristic of most young people's lives and therefore, Pete's case is not unique. The following section re-enters the interior of the car to examine how transitions between houses can be done in care-full ways.

6.3.3 Enacting Care-full Transitions

The discussions in the two preceding sections have focused primarily on acts of physical care enabled and enacted through the car. However, exchanges of emotional care, encompassing practices such as listening, empathising, advising and instructing also happened within cars – as was already highlighted in section 6.2.2. (Bowlby et al. 2011). The following discussion draws on and extends this work, focusing on how cars facilitate spaces in which to manage and express the emotions of transitioning between differently experienced environments.

This is exemplified well by Matt's comments, as he discusses what happens on the five-minute journey to Abi's mum's house:

> *Over the last few months their mom's had, she's been signed off work for various health problems. So a couple of the times when I was dropping the kids off, I was just, trying to talk to them about what that may mean. So it may mean that they have to be a bit more considerate, urm it may mean that their mom can't do all of the things that they want her to do. So trying to, trying to prepare them as well for changing*

> *environment, from how it was in our house to how it needs to be in their house. (Matt, Abi's dad)*

Matt's quote highlights, as other studies have, that young people with separated parents are often travelling between different environments, and that transitioning between the different people, practices and emotions of each household can be challenging (Marschall 2017: Schier and Proske 2010; Johnson et al. 2018). Thus, part of the ways that Matt cares for his daughters, and for his ex-wife, is to prepare them for this change.

This brings the fact that travel time 'can constitute *transition time* – time to adjust between different life roles: for the opportunity to experience distance and gear up to the destinations demands' into focus (Lyon 2014: 157; Jain and Lyons 2008; Murry and Mand 2013). Whilst this has mainly been conceptualised in terms of transitions from work to home, in Matt's example we see the journey as a space in which transition from one way of being and doing family, to another. Connecting to my writing about the car as a space for sensitive conversations, in section 6.2.2., it could be argued the particular material, sensory and affective characteristics of the car also make it a space in which Matt can chat with his children about the need to act with sensitivity towards their changing environments.

This sense of journeys as a space to air and manage emotions as children transition between houses was also apparent later in my interview with Matt, when I asked him to recall the last journey he made with Abi:

> *Abi got in the car in a right foul mood. Complaining about everything. So that was, that car journey in particular was quite, you know, Abi was just kind of downloading everything that she felt was unfair or unjust or that she wasn't happy about in the last couple of days. So my, my kind of reaction there was, giving her the space to kind of get some of that out. But then also sharing with her that, you know, now it's the weekend so firstly we're not spending our Friday evening all being grumpy. So let's try and put that behind ourselves… you know we're going home, we're going to go walk the dog let's just, let's just calm down. (Matt, Abi's dad)*

Hörchelmann has argued that despite conceptualisations of 'emotions as relational flows, fluxes or currents' (Bondi, Davidson and Smith 2006: 3), there has tended to be a 'persistent focus on locatedness' within emotional geographies literatures (Hörchelmann 2018: 34). She argues that geographic work acknowledging the mobile properties of emotions have tended to

focus on relations between bodies and spaces in the context of particular places, whereas 'how emotions, and with them people and places, travel and thus co-produce entangled time–spaces is rarely discussed' (Hörchelmann 2018: 34). Rather, Hörchelmann (2018: 32) argues for a focus on 'unbounded emotional geographies', calling for more attention to how emotions are deterritorialised through embodied mobility.

Here Matt displays an understanding of the fact that the emotions relating to Abi and her mum's interpersonal conflict are not contained within one location. Rather they have spilt over into the space of the car. Therefore, Matt approaches the journey as a space in which to mediate and manage this mobility of emotions. He gives Abi space to unload frustrations, whilst also aiming to deescalate and dissipate the atmosphere in the car so that calmer states may be achieved. In doing so, Matt attempts to ensure that 'deterritorialised' emotions are not reterritorialised in the space of his house (Hörchelmann 2018).

For Matt, Friday nights are an important night for the family, where they would enjoy ritualistic practices of eating pizza together and watching a movie. Consequently, in the car Matt cares for the family through the creation of less hostile ways of relating to each other – protecting the evening they have planned together. However, it may be questioned as to whether Abi understood such actions as caring, she may have wished to continue to 'complain about everything'. This draws attention to how there may be misrecognition or misalignment between how care is intended and received (Hughes 2017).

In this section, I have looked at how cars are important spaces of emotional care between family members. I have shown how travel time provides an opportunity to prepare for the destination's demands, as well as to shed the emotions associated with the space recently departed. Thus, I have demonstrated that cars are important spaces in which to manage the emotions associated with transitioning between houses.

6.3.4 Care in Liminal Spaces

The past sections have drawn on examples from where participants had been performing their mobile routines for several years. However, I now want to take the reader back to a time when one participant's parents had very recently separated. In this case, the car became an important space for this young person to help manage the transition between her parents living together and her parents living apart.

Sophia's parents separated when she was ten years old. She described that initially the separation was very difficult for her to accept and for the first few months she was very upset.

In particular, she hated that her dad would no longer be living at the house and she wouldn't see him every day. Talking about seeing her dad over this period, Sophia described:

> *I remember not being, like when he moved out I wasn't particularly surprised. But equally I didn't expect it….Yeh he moved out and went to stay initially with a friend and then with, in this kind of like rented house where he stayed for a few months. Urm....but I didn't really probably even go to that house for a long time because it kind of felt yeh that would be acknowledging that it was actually a thing so I probably spent a lot of time more just in the car, driving round and stuff before I was ready to spend time there. Kind of in a space where it was still…kind of private to talk but without actually kind of going into his...kind of without acknowledging his...the reality of it a little bit. (Sophia, 21).*

The transition described by Sophia is far more gradual and ill-defined than the transitions explored in the previous sections. Here, the transition becomes about moving from her old way of life to her new 'reality' of her dad living in another house, moving from an emotional state of shock and denial to something close to acceptance of the new separation, between one way of doing family and another. However, like in the examples explored before – the car becomes an important space to inhabit in this transition.

This inhabitation of space in transition brings to the fore the ideas of time-on-the-move as imbued with the qualities of liminality (Jain 2009; Murry and Mand 2013; Andrews and Roberts 2012). Originating in the anthropological literature of van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1969) on sacred rites of passage, the liminal is used to denote 'the symbolic and/or spatial act of transitioning between one socially sanctioned position or state to another by way of certain sacred rites' (Downey, Kinane and Parker 2017: 6). The notion of the liminal has grown from these specific origins to be utilised 'as something as a catch-all expression for an ambiguous transitional, or interstitial spatio-temporal dimension' (Downey, Kinane and Parker 2017: 2).

In the space of the car, Sophia and her dad occupy a liminal space – a space in-between the 'solid states' of living apart and living together (Andrews and Roberts 2012). Inhabiting this space thus allows an uncertainty and imprecision as to her dad's domestic status – that infers a certain suspension from 'reality' for Sophia, and potentially also for her dad (Shortt 2015). Residing in this liminal space gives Sophie time to come to terms with this change, as it is not only a state of imprecision but a state of movement and active transition where they are moving towards their new states of living together. This liminal space becomes a space of mutual care

for Sophia and her dad, and care for their continued relationship. Such practices of care become important ways of 'doing family' over this period of transition. This brings to the fore ideas of care as an interdependent collaboration with both people, spaces and times, connecting back to my discussion of children's 'caring agencies' in chapter four, section 4.3.3.4. The following section continues these themes, drawing out more clearly how children perform acts of caring in transition.

6.3.5 Children caring

Thus far my analysis of care has focused largely on the ways in which parents care for their children. This reflects much of the literature on care which has tended to marginalise the ways that children care (Horton and Pyer 2017; Kullman 2014; Evans 2012; Haugen 2007). However, conceptions of the unidirectionality of care in these relationships are misguided, for children 'care in all kinds of ways, and within all kinds of caring relationships, reciprocities and caringscapes' (Horton and Pyer 2017: 14). Like their parents, in my research, I found that many of the ways in which young people cared for their family members involved forms of mobility. This has already been explored in several instances throughout the rest of the chapters. Children's care was visible when, for example, Jemima took responsibility for retrieving forgotten items (5.4.2.) or when Laura switched to taking the train (4.3.3.4.). These themes are continued in the following example from James.

As I explored in James' biography, around the age of nine James' dad remarried and moved in with a new partner and her two children. James strongly disliked his dad's new wife. She was frequently rude to James and his sister, and he described a 'weird tension' between them. Consequently, James began to dread weekends at their house, causing him a lot of anxiety. When I asked how this anxiety would present, James stated:

> *I would just sort of retreat into myself I would just sort of shut off and not really talk to other people. But you know if I was being taken by my mum, with my sister, they could always tell when I was nervous. So they would be like telling me it would be alright, and my sister would like you know make a point of 'I'm going to be there with you' you know, she was always quite protective of me – even though I know she didn't want to go. And then actually if we were getting taken over by dad which happened quite often when he was coming home from work, she would be really good at like keeping the conversation going with dad in the front cause like we didn't want him to know urm urm…. well that we hated his wife… (James, 25)*

The limited studies examining sibling care emphasise that whilst care is an integral part of most sibling relationships, sibling positions often shape the flow of care – with older siblings exercising practical and emotional care to younger siblings (Edwards et al. 2006; Davies 2015b; Punch 2018). Researchers have also found that the particular circumstance of parental separation can often intensify bonds between siblings, and the care that they provide for each other, given that they often form a consistent presence in each other's lives when travelling between different environments (Winther et al. 2015). These dynamics play out in James' quote where, as the older sibling, James' sister takes on the role of caregiver and protector for him. Therefore, although much of what James and his sister experienced at these weekends could be seen as acts of family undoing, as they increasingly wanted to spend less time with their dad, step-mum and her kids, through the ways that they cared for each other James and his sister reaffirmed their own relationship as siblings.

Davies and Christensen (2018: 38) have argued that 'children's sibling relationships are characterised by particular intimate engagements and embodied knowledge of one another', built through repeated histories of careful observations of facial expressions, body language and bodily interaction with family members. They continue to state that children use these embodied, interphysical and sensory knowledges to interpret, assess and respond to the care needs of their siblings (Davies 2015b; Mason and Tipper 2008). In responding to James' subtle bodily clues of his emotional state, his sister draws on these forms of knowledge to sense when he needs encouragement or shielding from conversations in the car.

In James' quote, his sister can be seen to not only be caring for James, but also caring for her father. James described that his sister had similar feelings as himself towards visiting their dad's house. However, showing such feelings to their dad was complicated, as he would often get upset or angry at the thought that they did not want to stay with him. Hence, in her efforts to keep the conversation going, to hide James' quietness, she both guards James from his dad's potential questioning and protects her dad from finding out their feelings towards going to his. In a similar sense to Matt in the previous section, James' sister is doing emotional care work to sustain peaceful and calm ways of doing family. James' sister is thus placed within, and attempts to navigate, an intricate web of emotions and caring relations, whilst also managing her own emotional reactions on the journey. This example, therefore, highlights the interdependent and multidirectional nature of care within the family – emphasising that children care in complex ways and under complex circumstances in separation (Milligan and Wiles 2010; Haugen 2007; Marschall 2013).

6.3.6 Deficits of Care

Thus far I have focused on the ways in which caring practices and relations were established, enabled and performed in mobility – arguing that these caring acts are integral to the doing of family. However, my participants also described (im)mobility as an area through which parents demonstrated that they did *not* care about them or their siblings. As Tronto (2013; p.x) argues 'care expresses relationships' and if mobility is an expression of care as I have argued in the section above, then it may also be an expression of *not* caring. This highlights, as Cresswell (2006) has argued, that mobility is simultaneously affective and reflexive, mobilities have and create social and cultural meanings. Thus, I will explore how parents' (im)mobilities were felt and understood as having deeply affecting meanings relating to the quality and qualities of their relationship with young people. In such circumstances, perceived absences or deficits of care became part of the *un*doing of family as they caused fractures and ruptures in relationships between parents and young people.

This was made very explicit in my interview with Orla. As discussed in section 6.2.4, following her parents' separation Orla moved to Northern Ireland from California with her mum and two younger siblings. They stayed in Northern Ireland for about two years, after which Orla moved to England to attend university, whilst her mum and siblings moved back to the US. Over the time they were in Northern Ireland, Orla's dad never came to visit them. Speaking about this Orla stated:

> *He just, he always had a reason like, he didn't have a passport, or he's scared of planes, or he had to look after our dogs. I'm, I'm not entirely sure why he couldn't bring himself to do it or care enough. Maybe that's me being harsh but I don't really understand why, If he was able to a few years later come to my [university] graduation then he must be able to you know care enough to travel, so I don't understand why that didn't happen sooner. (Orla, 23)*

Here Orla explicitly connects the physical action of mobility, to caring about her and her siblings, taking the fact that her dad never visited them as an indication that he does not care *enough.* It's clear that Orla does not accept her father's reasons for stasis as legitimate and that a failure to find an acceptable reason for his lack of travel troubled and continues to trouble Orla. If care can be defined as about 'maintaining, continuing and repairing worlds', then family care may be also seen as maintaining, continuing and repairing families (Tronto and Fisher cited in Tronto 1993: 103). Reading Orla's quote, it could be said that her father's failure to

travel was a failure to complete acts which would have worked to repair their relationship and continue the family.

In studies of relationships after parental separation, young people have been shown to be reflexive in their judgements of family members' actions - often distancing themselves from relationships which they feel are not built on notions of respect, care and mutuality (Moxnes 2003; Berman 2015 Smart et al. 2001). As Davies (2015: 90) argues 'children closely consider the making and maintenance of family connections through the process of family change'. In talking about such reflexivity, however, researchers must be careful to not disregard the intense emotions of pain, loss and disappointment involved in these acts (McCarthy et al. 2012).

This could be observed in Orla's relationship with her father, where his failure to travel formed part of her reasoning behind her continued, distanced relationship with her father. As she speculates when I ask her about how it may have been had he come to Northern Ireland:

> *I think it would of been a lot more normal, I think that maybe I wouldn't of gone through such intense periods of like just a year of just refusing to see him. Urm, I think maybe our relationship wouldn't of kind of had as many ups and downs. (Orla, 23)*

Thus, it is in reading Orla's quote that her father's lack of travel can be interpreted as part of the undoing of family – which in turn demonstrates a number of important dimensions of family undoing. Firstly, as her dad's stasis in California demonstrates, actions *not* taken or decisions *not* made may be considered practices of undoing – connecting back to Scott's (2019) ideas of the sociology of nothing introduced in chapter five. Secondly, it also shows that undoing can also be non-linear, involving (non)actions whose effects might not be registered in the present or actions that are reconsidered over time – as Orla's reassessment of her dad's past immobility in the face of his travel to her graduation displays.

Orla's example highlights the ways in which the *immobility* of a parent was read as displaying a lack of care; however, forms of *mobility* could also be read by young people as meaning that their parents did not care enough for them – as Isabel's case highlights. As described in her biography, about a year after her parent's separation, Isabel's father unexpectedly announced that he was getting engaged to a new partner and was moving over one hundred miles away from Isabel's mum to live with his fiancé and her two children. Talking about this decision Isabel stated that:

> *I was beyond…upset. I was devastated because I, the only, the only logical way that I could process it was… all I could feel was that he was choosing them over me that's the only thing that I could think for like two years. I still feel it a bit, because he did choose them over me out of convenience because he wanted to fit into their family rather than create a new family of mixed. He wanted to fit into their pre-exiting family, he didn't really sort of want or care to try… They could of, they could of easily brought a house in the middle and they could of… I dunno they could of moved schools or stayed in the same school. His reasoning was that my step-mum's parents are still there. And I'm like your mother is at the end of our road. So he was choosing her family over his own and that, it was the undeniable fact. (Isabel, 20)*

It's clear that this move away from her and toward his 'new' family was felt viscerally as an act which indicated he cared more about this 'new' family. This is not to say that care is a finite resource, but it is to make the point that Isabel felt the lines of care were uneven. Connecting to Orla's case, it can similarly be seen that her dad is not living up to expectations about the effort that parents should be putting in to sustain family and their relationships. For Orla, this was part of a continuation of a relationship with her father and various acts of undoing their relationship over the years; whereas, for Isabel, this was a very new and unexpected dynamic. Thus, unlike Orla where the temporalities of her family undoing were slow and cumulative, this move became felt by Isabel as an act of quick undoing – connecting back to the temporalities drawn out in chapter four.

Following his move, Isabel's visits felt very different. They no longer did the same things or visited the same places. Rather, she travelled to an unknown city, to spend time in, what felt like, another family's house – a family in which she felt she didn't belong. They had a very different way of doing and being a family that Isabel felt excluded from. Consequently, this move was the start of a pattern where Isabel felt more and more distanced from her dad's 'new' family and therefore visited less and less. This demonstrates how acts of doing family in her dad's eyes, of moving to further sustain three new members in his family, became an act of undoing for Isabel. This picks up on a point introduced previously, that acts of doing and undoing can exist simultaneously and are complexly intertwined – where undoing actions may reorientate towards doing family in other ways, in other actions or with other actors.

Another circumstance surrounding mobility, in which some young people felt a lack of care from their parents was when they were made to wait to be picked up. This was often the case

for Tamsin. Talking about the periods that she and her two older siblings would spend getting ready to be picked up by their dad to go to his for the weekend, Tamsin described:

> *He was supposed to be there at four and he was always like late. Sometimes he would come as late as like seven or eight… Yeh he was usually late and like we would try and call him and he wouldn't answer the phone to us. You know as we got older, mum got us a Motorola to share for like when we go on school trips and stuff and when you'd call him on that phone he answered. I always remember that. I called him like 50 times, just sat by the phone for like an hour on the landline calling him. He didn't answer and then I called him once on the Motorola and he answered and I'm like daddy! It was really weird because we'd always have our shoes and stuff and our bags and stuff by the door and we weren't allowed to take this uniform off for a few hours, it was really weird. We'd just kind of be in this weird limbo, and my mum would get annoyed if we start getting like, pulling toys out... I've always found it like a little bit embarrassing for me because it's my, it's my dad and he's doing this and I kind of felt a lot of shame towards it and... It is what it is really. Urm I don't know where he was, I don't know what he was doing. (Tamsin, 24)*

As multiple authors have noted, and as I discussed in chapter five, section 5.3.1., waiting is inextricably linked to power (Griffths 2014; Foster 2019; Straughan et al. 2020). In its connection to power, there is also politics around who is made to wait, for what duration and under what conditions that are 'unevenly distributed along the lines of race, class, gender and citizenship' (Turnball 2016: 62). I would also add age to this list, given that age is another characteristic which shapes inequitable access to mobilities.

Tamsin had little choice but to wait for her dad, she did not have the means to get to his house or to be there by herself, and she wasn't able to choose to not spend the weekend at his. Tamsin described trying to exercise power over this time by calling her dad, attempting to bring the waiting to an end – or at least understand why she's waiting. However, this rarely worked. What seemed to hurt Tamsin the most is not knowing what her father was doing during this time, what he cared more about doing? In describing the 'shame' she felt, Tamsin highlights the pain experienced by those whose parents fail to live up to expectations or obligations of care. This continues what I have tried to emphasise throughout this chapter, that actions of undoing carry heavy emotions of distress, loss and disappointment.

Tamsin also had little power over the mode in which she waited. She couldn't inhabit the space of her mum's as she normally would, attempting to shift the focus of her attention through playing. Instead, Tamsin was forced into an expectant mode of being, forming a 'weird limbo' with few forms of activity available to distract from the pressing, yet uncertain, imminence of her dad's arrival. This produced a body-in-waiting that was agitated, restless and impatient (Bissell 2007).

Importantly, Tamsin highlights that it was the chronic form that her waiting took, as her dad was persistently late, that formed into a pattern of activity understood as uncaring. Thus, Tamsin highlights how past experiences of care are enrolled into current practices and interpretations of care (Bowlby 2012). In looking to these temporalities of care, Tamsin's experience further highlights how it is in the accumulation of uncaring experience that practices such as waiting become actions of undoing, that chip away at the binds that hold families together. This connects back to similar experiences of disruption that Tamsin experienced, discussed in chapter four, section 4.3.3.1. - with similar effects of undoing felt.

These six sections have provided an in-depth exploration of the forms, performances, organisation and emotional consequences of care enacted and enabled through mobility in post-separation. Extending the discussion in the first section, I have explored how care is intimately connected to the (un)doing of family. Across these sections I have thought about care in different ways, drawing on various literatures from the geographies of care to do so. I have explored mobile performances of embodied and emotional care, examined how mobilities provide routes through complex caringscapes and unpacked how absences or deficits of care are felt in (im)mobile acts. Adding depth to the arguments presented in the first section, I have continued to examine the ways in which family and caring practices are shaped by the dynamic spatialities, temporalities and emotionalities of post-separation, alongside discourses, expectations and obligations of care within the family.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the experiences of post-separation families travelling together in cars, reaffirming the significance of mobility as a central dynamic in the study of post-separation families. Specifically, it has focused on the journeys that young people make between their parents' houses, or movements between other spaces in which they spend time with their parents – particularly focusing on journeys made by car. Bringing a mobility studies informed perspective to the study of family, this chapter has explored the various practices, emotions, affects, moods and orientations produced when young people and their parents move together in the car. I have thus shown how cars perform an important function in how

family is sustained, maintained, and damaged in post-separation, in other words how family is (un)done. This chapter has, therefore, added to work which has emphasised the importance of mobility in the performance of family – particularly in work which has examined the role of automobility in families' lives (Waitt and Harada 2016; Noy 2012; Laurier et al. 2008; Barker 2009).

The first section, travelling and togetherness, examined what happens when family members travel together in the car in various compositions of mobile bodies, and what kinds of emotions and affects travelling in these collectives creates. Across the three subsections, it found that car rides elicit a wide range of practices such as talking, singing, dancing, listening and arguing – connecting families in playful, intimate, uncomfortable and awkward ways. It paid attention to how such interactions, affective relations and emotional bonds are shaped by the material and sensory affordances of the car in combination with relations to spaces, times and people outside this immediate environment. In doing so, the first section explored how emotional intimacies and distances are produced in mobile experiences, contributing to both the doing and the undoing of family.

The second section, caring through the car, then focused on caring as a significant dimension of the ways in which participants experienced family (un)doing. This section explored the ways in which care was, and was not, performed in and through the journeys young people made between their parents' houses. Through the six subsections, I articulated how care took varying forms and practices. In looking at such diverse instances of care, I examined how the dynamics of established caring acts and caring spaces are changed in post-separation. I also discussed how new forms of care were demanded by the circumstances of separation that are enabled by the car. Across these sections, care was appreciated as an activity and an orientation that entailed part of the doing of family, working to sustain, retain, transform and maintain bonds between family members. The final section of this chapter moved from looking at instances where care was present to thinking about acts of (im)moblity where young people felt there to be an absence or deficit of care from their parents. In focusing on such deficiencies or misplacements of care I demonstrated how these instances were central to the ways in which participants experienced their families being 'undone'.

In offering the notion of undoing as an important dimension of family practices, this chapter in particular, although (un)doing family has run throughout this thesis, has furthered work on the family. Inspired by conceptions of home unmaking (Brickell and Barker 2014), I have argued that undoing refers to the processes by which family is, intentionally or inadvertently, persistently or temporarily damaged, distanced, disturbed or diminished. I have argued that

focusing on family doings and undoings provides a way to more fully capture experiences and dynamics of change, disruption and adaptation apparent in families, whilst centring the complex emotions and affects that accompany such processes. Throughout the past three chapters, I have offered numerous examples of practices of family undoing, which have highlighted a number of important dimensions of this conceptualisation, which I will now draw out.

Firstly, I have demonstrated the significance of space to practices of undoing. I have shown how undoing is lived through certain spaces, particularly the car, and through movements across space. Furthermore, the spatial concepts of proximity and distance have proved particularly useful in thinking about undoing. Like others have done, I have troubled these concepts to think about how physical proximity can bring people together in uncomfortable ways, leading to feelings of emotional distance, whilst physical 'distance does not necessarily reduce the social and emotional significance of bonds' (Holdsworth 2013: 4; Larsen et al. 2006: Baldassar et al. 2016).

Secondly, I have also demonstrated the importance of time to practices of undoing, showing that undoing exists through multiple temporalities – connecting back to my discussion of change and continuity in chapter four, section 4.3.3. For example, I demonstrated that in some cases mobile experiences are built on histories of past actions, where such repetitive or cumulative experiences shaped into actions of undoing. This was shown in the example of Tamsin waiting for her dad to arrive discussed in this chapter, or in the repeated disruptions to visits with her dad examined in chapter four. Alternatively undoing may be more unexpected, happening at faster speeds, as in Isabel's father's unanticipated move. Doing and undoing may also not be linear – they might involve actions the effects of which are not registered in the present but that are reconsidered over time – as Orla's dad's travel to her graduation showed. Focusing on these different temporalities demonstrates that undoing may happen in exceptional moments but is also part of daily interactions, routines and exchanges.

As was shown throughout the chapters, young people had many different emotional reactions to processes of undoing, reactions which often shifted over time. Furthermore, young people had different expressions and routes for agency in these processes of undoing, at different points in childhood – routes which connected to the spatial and temporal dimensions of undoing. Thus, through demonstrating that family (un)doing is a process that exists through different temporalities and spatialities I have reaffirmed the importance of geographers' engagements with the family, particularly in 'everyday processes of family conflict, trouble and

disrupture [that] currently occupy a marginal space in the geographic literature about family' (Tarrant and Hall 2019: 4).

Orla's dad's stasis in California also highlights that actions *not* taken or decisions *not* made may be considered practices of undoing (Scott 2019). This is an equally important realisation for the ways in which family is done, as well as undone, highlighting that family may be better considered as a 'dynamic location of [in]activities' (Holdsworth 2013: 3). The discussion in this chapter also highlighted that actions of undoing might not always directly involve each family member but their effects are always relational. They ripple through families, and although each member may be affected differently, reactions to acts of undoing are always intertwined. Furthermore, doing and undoing may also exist simultaneously, where undoing actions may reorientate towards doing family in other ways, in other actions or with other actors. For undoing does not mean that family members do not remain connected; rather, relationships endure through continued obligations, emotions, memories and longings. Thus, doing and undoing may ebb and flow together, drawing attention to the ways in which 'family is *always* in motion' where 'family is an ongoing process of change, adjustment and re-routing' (Murray et al. 2019: 1-2).

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has explored the mobility experiences of young people with separated parents, specifically focusing on the journeys that they make between households. Examining journeys diverse in their frequency and duration, this thesis has provided detailed accounts of the doings of journeys at different points in childhood. Starting my analysis with mobility biographies of each participant in the research, I presented complex, textured and dynamic portraits of mobility practices and family lives over childhoods – which allowed the subsequent analyses to be contextualised and placed within participants' life courses. Conceiving of journeying holistically, encompassing moments of preparing, leaving, travelling and arriving, the discussions over the next three chapters pulled apart the temporal, material and spatial dimensions of journeys – taking a distinctly geographical approach to analysing post-separation life. In doing so, this thesis has explored the mobile practices that it takes to live in this multi-housed way, young people's experience of and feelings about these, and how families traverse the challenges and benefits this mobility brings.

In thinking through these experiences this thesis has centred the emotions and affects that mobile experiences evoke – with emotions and affects being a central theme running throughout all three analysis chapters. In taking a geographical approach, I have examined how these emotions and affects emerge through changing webs of relations with spaces, times, materials and persons. In doing so, this thesis has presented complex and nuanced emotional accounts that are often ambiguous, ambivalent and sometimes contradictory. It has not presented mobility as a positive or negative experience, as a burden or a joy. Rather I have shown that mobilities can tire, annoy, alienate and sadden, but also connect, excite, cheer and bond – sometimes simultaneously. I therefore argue that periods of moving between houses are significant to the emotional geographies of post-separation families.

Through presenting these complex accounts, I have not sought to provide lofty diagnoses for how mobilities can be done better and it is by no means a representation of how all families experience mobility, and nor is it intended to be. Instead, by remaining open to the specificities of each family, it has provided an apprehension of the practices and processes through which mobility becomes significant to the lives of young people with separated parents that will have relevance to families outside of this thesis. This is timely and important research given that 'marital breakdown and resultant moves are an important dimension of understanding the

increasingly normative journeys which household and individuals experience' (Brickell, 2012, p. 233).

In this conclusion I will revisit the four research questions outlined in the introductory chapter, to examine the findings of this thesis. Although these questions map more clearly onto some chapters than others, in my discussion I bring together themes and insights from across all of the chapters. Within my discussion I also draw out the key empirical and conceptual contributions of this research to literatures from across children's, young people's and family geographies, mobility studies and childhood experiences of divorce and separation. First though, I will briefly reaffirm the methodological contributions of the thesis. To finish the chapter, I explore the implications of the research for policy and practice, and then I offer a number of possible avenues for future research emanating from this thesis.

7.2 Methodological contributions

As I explored in chapter two, the vast majority of research within children's geographies has focused 'on the present moment of childhood experience' – researching with children and young people in the here and now (Kraftl 2017: 25). Therefore, there is a very limited number of studies that engage empirically with childhood memory as data, placing my research within a rather unique position within the subdiscipline. As such there have been few methodological techniques offered for children's geographers interested in researching (with) memory.

Inspired by geographers' use of place-based methods to explore the connections between memory and space, whilst also working within the context of the COVID-19 lockdown, I used Google Maps as a research tool. Utilising the share screen feature of video platforms and the satellite and street view functions of Google Maps, participants were able to give me a tour of their childhood journeys whilst I interviewed them. This was a method, not encountered in the literature previously. Using this method, I found that Google Maps acted as a tool of elicitation, helping to prompt memories and emotions that might not have otherwise been recalled. Thus, in devising this method I have both suggested techniques for researchers interested in engaging with childhood memory and offered a virtual alternative to 'being-in-place' for our pandemic world and beyond. In using this method, I have also been clear about its limitations, particularly relating to its emphasis on the visual and the limited temporal and spatial reach of the images provided. Nonetheless, as a free, and easily accessible piece of software, Google Maps offers potential for virtual methods that aim to engage with participants' remembered experiences and understandings of place, beyond the themes explored within this research project.

7.3 Revisiting the Research Questions

i) How are mobilities structured and coordinated? How and why have they become configured in these ways? How does this change over childhood?

This thesis has shown that there is a great deal of variety in the ways in which journeys between houses are structured and coordinated – as the biographies with which I began the analysis made clear. There was diversity in the duration of journeys, with lengths of a couple of minutes to over 15 hours captured in the research, and their frequency, with some travelling multiple times each week and others just once a year. The biographies also illuminated that journeys often encompassed multiple spaces, including schools, car parks, McDonalds and grandparent's houses – often not just being movements from one house to another. Most commonly it was children moving, although sometimes parents travelled to spend time with their children instead. The thesis also found that siblings did not always have the same routines, with variations occurring because of differences in ages, priorities and emotional reactions to familial events. These findings are important as there has been very little research that has documented the mobility practices of post-separation families, particularly within a UK context (see Schier 2015 for examination in Germany). Therefore, in giving a detailed picture into the changing mobility patterns of a number of families within the UK, this thesis has presented pictures of an understudied phenomena.

Whilst I found variety in the journeying practices of young people, I identified similar forces shaping and forming mobilities – even if these were unevenly or differently felt and negotiated around. Across the three analysis chapters, I demonstrated how journeying practices were shaped through a complex and changing mixture of emotions, affects, materialities, bodies, infrastructures, policies, family ties, caring responsibilities, institutional temporalities and calendar events. These were not only shaped by concerns in the present but were effected by past events and movements and anticipations of the future. In particular in chapter five, I examined how mobilities were shaped through the need to bring a host of objects along with young people, and in chapter six I looked at how choices in transport technologies and travelling times were made to create particular emotional and affectual experiences during journeys – as families made room for togetherness, care and co-presence. However, chapter four is where there was the most thorough discussion of how journeys were structured and coordinated.

In chapter four, I apprehended some of these forces through the temporal modality of rhythm. I observed that mobilities tended to follow repeated patterns, forming anticipated rhythms repeated over time. Using the work of Lefevbre ([1992] 2004) and subsequent thinking about

rhythm from mobilities scholars and geographers, I saw these rhythms as one pulse in the interconnected polyrhythmia of the everyday. In doing so, I showed how mobilities are embedded in social and relational contexts, as their mobilities are intertwined with friends, family, work, school, seasons and bodies. This supports research which has similarly drawn out the deeply relational character of children's and family mobilities (Holdsworth 2013; Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019; Jensen et al. 2015). In particular, I add to the limited number of studies which have drawn out the rhythmic character of young people's mobilities – showing how such a lens draws attention to their relational nature (Kullman and Pallundan 2011; Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019; Baldin and Harju 2021).

Although this thesis observed a rhythmic expectation of most young people's mobilities, it also found that these anticipated patterns were frequently disrupted, modified and diverted from due to a host of changing circumstances. Thus, mobilities were constantly having to be responsive to the complexity, messiness and dynamism of everyday family life – requiring choreographic work from families to adapt and hold rhythms together. In focusing upon this work I took up Wind's (2014: 17) notion of 'mobility labour' – as a 'tentative analytical tool capable of inquiring into the planning, coordinating, negotiating and preparatory efforts in making everyday mobility'. Using this concept enabled me to access challenges, energies, and practices central to how mobile routines were made to work, practices that had, notably, largely been missing from post-separation literatures. I found families had different strategies for organising mobilities and different levels of how adaptive mobility practices were able to be – with young people and their parents differently placed within these negotiations (as discussed further in relation to research question three).

Focusing on such 'mobility labour' highlighted that separated families contend with additional layers of emotional and practical complexity in the organisation of their daily mobilities, on top of what has been documented of mobility practices in households that have not experienced parental separation (Pooley et al. 2011; Rau and Sattlegeer 2018; Murray and Doughty 2016; Jensen et al. 2015). I have therefore argued for more diversity and nuance, highlighting that using the term 'everyday family mobilities' without differentiation of the journey's purpose and the family form may fail to capture the complexity of the practical and emotional dynamics of some families' mobilities. As hinted at in Pete's frustration with his eco-housing's car club (section 6.3.2.), this is likely to have consequences for mobility transitions towards more sustainable transport modes, the sphere in which many studies about household mobility sit, suggesting a potential avenue for future research.

It was also clear that that mobility patterns and practices rarely stayed static over time. Given that mobilities were constantly responding to changing contexts, as they were relationally linked with other spheres of life, arrangements shifted and adapted as young people's and their families' circumstances changed over childhoods. The biographies showed changes occurring for a variety of different reasons, including parents re-partnering, changes at school, spending more time with friends, becoming exhausted and moving house. These changes occurred at a variety of different speeds and tempos, which had consequences for how they were apprehended and responded to by young people – as explored further in relation to research question three. Whilst this dynamism has been acknowledged in the literature around living arrangements in post-separation, it has rarely been empirically investigated (Berman 2015; Campo et al. 2013; Bakker, Karsten and Mulder 2015, Neale and Flowerdrew 2007). This is potentially due to methodologies that have tended to focus on a snapshot of children's present lives, rather than the adoption of a biographic approach.

Through taking a biographic approach this thesis has complicated many of the ways in which post-separation has been apprehended previously, for often young people's living arrangements have been presented as simple divisions of time based on percentages (e.g Steinbach and Augustijn 2021). Rather, through using an approach, which employed creative, flexible and in-depth qualitative methods to get at the everydayness of routines, I have shown that families resist and exceed such simplified categorisations. I have argued that that routines are far less coherent and stable than previously characterised – both at the scale of the everyday and over longer term temporal scales. Whilst such simplifications have their use in capturing the prevalence of various arrangements (e.g. Haux, McKay and Cain 2017) or for comparative studies on young people's outcomes (e.g. Nielsen 2014), I have shown how they overlook much of the work, emotions and challenges of living in this way. Thus, without appreciation of the dynamism of routines much of what mattered to the families in my research would have been lost.

Within chapter four, and the chapters that followed, I also demonstrated that not only are the practicalities of life after separation temporally diverse and complex, but so too are the emotional afterlives of parental separation. These involved repeated patterns of behaviour, accumulated tolls, undercurrents of feelings that rupture in future moments, re-evaluations of past experiences and slow re-buildings of emotional closeness. Across the chapters, I examined how these emotional reactions and relations shaped, and were shaped by, the changing structure, coordination and experience of mobilities.

In using this biographic approach, I have also contributed to critical literatures on time, particularly within children's geographies. This speaks to and extends beyond, literature on transitions which has largely dominated writing about the temporalities of childhood and youth (Worth 2009; Ansell et al. 2014; Horton and Kraftl 2006b). Transition appeared as a major theme, particularly within chapters four and six, conceived of in multiple ways. I have looked at transitions between houses and between ways of doing and being family, alongside transitions more traditionally looked at in children's geographies literatures, such as transitions between schools or transitions to adulthood. In part, I have therefore looked at changes occurring over a longer duration than those typically found in the literature, with changes occurring over months, years and even decades – alongside and interconnected with transitional moments, events and vital conjunctures. Connecting with literatures on transition, I have similar emphasised the non-linearity of time – compressing and confounding notions of past, present and future, whilst also recognising time as having dynamic qualities, textures and flows (Worth 2009; Punch 2015; Ansell et al. 2014).

ii) What practices, skills, competencies and habits have children and parents established to help navigate these periods of transition and change in their lives?

Through concerning itself with the doing of mobility, this thesis has shown that journeying between houses requires the development of a range of practices, skills, competencies and habits that aid young people and families as they traverse mobility in their everyday lives. Connecting to the rhythmic character of young people's mobilities, I have shown how such repetitive movements create habitual ways of performing mobilities as young people become accustomed to managing the practical and emotional demands of movement. These include more consciously crafted rituals and ways of interacting, and more unconscious reflexes developed over time. The thesis explored how such practices incorporate novel assortments of people, spaces and materials which become integral to the doing and undoing of family and everyday life.

In chapter four I drew attention to the practices of planning, coordinating and negotiating as integral to mobile routines. Families often had their own ways of organising mobilities that had been tried and tested over time, where different members took on different roles, as they happened in certain spaces (like the car) and through certain technologies (like the online calendar). The particularities of how these practices were performed enabled and constrained expressions of agency in different ways, creating different paths for parents and young people's agencies to emerge – as I will discuss further in relation to my third research question.

Chapter five focused on practices, skills, competencies and habits as they related to the movement of materialities between houses. I argued that movements in post-separation include not only the movement of people but also a range of materialities that sustain spatially extended ways of living and doing family. I demonstrated that the amount and form of this 'stuff' differed between families and at different ages, but that there were always objects moving for all participants. In focusing on such mobile materialities, I highlighted the importance of the practice of packing. Packing received an in-depth analysis as a practice which most young people talked at length about as central to the challenges, annoyances and emotions of living in multiple houses.

This discussion of packing gave me a window into thinking about how young people develop mobile skills and habits. I argued that packing was a relational accomplishment, involving connections with materials, spaces and people, which become more habitually performed over time through repetition. I argued that parents were integral to the process through which young people learned to pack – as they enacted collaborative spaces through which competencies were developed. This picked up on themes introduced in chapter four, in particular in section 4.3.3.4., as I examined the kinds of socio-material practices Laura and her dad undertook to enable Laura to travel on the train without her dad.

These descriptions of the kind of relations forged to facilitate children's mobilities add weight to descriptions of children's mobilities as relational and interdependent (Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019: 2; Nansen et al. 2015; Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009; Kullman 2010; Worth 2013). In particular, this thesis contributes to this literature by accounting for 'practices of becoming mobile, including the acquisition of skills' which Kullman (2010: 829) argues children's geographers have had little engagement with. Similar to Kullman's (2010) study, in focusing on these processes of acquisition and cultivation, this thesis has presented pictures of more affirmative relations between children and their parents than has often been presented. Rather than seeing parents as restrictive forces, this thesis painted a less oppositional and more nuanced picture where children and parents collaborated and negotiated to facilitate children's mobilities (and the mobilities of their possessions) (Kullman 2010; Benwell 2013; Horton et al. 2013).

Here I focused not only on the processes through which habits and competencies are built, but also how they break down, adapt and change. Given the dynamism of routines across temporal scales established in chapter four, it follows that the practices and skills it takes to perform them are similarly subject to such shifts and changes. This could be seen in unexpected interruptions to routines, such as the temporary shifts in the timing of Noah's movements

(section 5.3.1.), more permanent changes, like Lucy's house move (section 5.4.2.), the repetitive disruptions of, for example, forgotten items (section 5.4.1.) and incremental breakdowns, such as the 'slow creep' of exhausted bodies (section 4.3.3.4). In exposing these interruptions, I have demonstrated how the challenges of mobility could both be helped but also intensified through repetition (Bissell and Gorman-Murray 2019; Bissell 2013). Recognising these processes of breaking down and building up - of the doing and undoing of both families and mobilities - is important given that it 'helps to generate a more fragile understanding of our bodily competencies.' (Bissell and Gorman-Murray 2019; Murray and Doughty 2016).

In answering this research question, this thesis has contributed to scholarship in mobility studies through focusing on what is often left out of these literatures. As I argued in chapter four, whilst there are significant strands of mobility studies which have foregrounded accounts of the practices of mobile subjects, these have tended to focus on embodied acts *of* movement, rather than on practices that precede and create the conditions *for* movement (Wind 2014; Vannini 2012; Watts 2008; Hui 2015). These include practices of packing, planning, waiting and preparing and I have shown how such practices work to elongate the space and time of the journey, extending beyond what may be thought of as the 'start' and 'end' points of leaving and arriving (Watts 2008). Without focusing on these elongated spaces and times, much of what mattered to young people about their routines would have been lost. This was most clearly shown in my discussion of Jemima's exasperation over the pace of her Friday evening changeovers (section 4.3.3.6.). For it was not the five minute journey that caused Jemima this frustration, but rather the pace of the practices that surrounded this movement.

A focus on practices, skills and habits was not limited to these phases of movement however, for in chapter six I also focused on embodied practices of movement. I will explore the findings of this chapter in more depth in relation to research question four, however, it is worth mentioning now the variety of practices, rituals and skills enacted during mobility to help cope with the practical and emotional demands of movement and the dynamics of absence and presence in relationships. This included practices like catching up about day to day lives (section 6.2.1.2.), rituals such as listening to certain songs on the journey (section 6.2.3.), and skills such as masking sibling's emotions about visiting (section 6.3.5.).

iii) What understandings can be developed of how young people exert agency over how mobilities are made and experienced?

This thesis has considered young people as agentic subjects over the ways in which journeys are made and experienced. However, I have not just taken agency as an empirical fact; rather

I have interrogated how this agency emerges, in what contexts, how it is exercised and what changing shades and qualities this agency has. To do so, I have drawn on recent critical reflection on the concept of agency from children's geographies and childhood studies (Holloway et al. 2018; Esser et al. 2016; Oswell 2013; Prout 2005; Abebe 2019). Using this work, I have considered young people's and their parents' agency as interdependent, relational and situated, therefore examining 'heterogeneous resources, practices and contexts that establish the variability of children's agency' (Bollig and Kelle 2016: 35).

The discussion of young people's agency was most explicit in chapter four, as I made use of these conceptualisations to think through how agency emerges as young people react to, accept, instigate and resist changes in their mobilities at different temporal scales. As changes occurred in spheres of life with shifts in friends, family, school and work, the young people in my study were continually attempting to find routes through their changing landscapes of mobilities. Often young people were those most knowledgeable about their mobile routines, their needs and thus the possibilities for movement, as Pete and Emily's discussion of changing her routine around her ukulele lesson demonstrated well (section 6.2.1.1.). In considering these routes young people always saw their options as interlinked with those of their families. They understood themselves not as bounded or separated selves but rather as interdependent with their family members. Young people were skilled at taking into account the needs, desires and obligations of their family members, alongside managing their own. A sense of there being no perfect solution to the challenges of movement often emerged; rather choices that were ambiguous, constrained, conceded and compromised for different family members at different times.

When young people felt their needs may be being prioritised over those of their parents or siblings they often found ways to compromise or compensate, as Jemima spending more quality time with her dad and brother demonstrates (section 4.3.3.6.). Young people are active in their management of relationships and often found ways to cultivate interdependencies through their mobilities, often, as I argued in section 4.3.3.4., finding ways to exercise their 'caring agencies' (Kallio and Bartos 2016). On the other hand, such caring agencies sometimes were exercised in strategies to distance themselves from relationships wherein they felt their caring energies were not reciprocated, out of care for the self, as my discussion about Tamsin and her dad demonstrated (4.3.3.2.).

However, the extent to which young people were able to live out, influence, suggest and resist changes in their mobilities differed not only between families, but also within them. As I demonstrated, agency is situated and contextual, giving it shifting and changing qualities. Such

qualities are thus dependent on age, time of year, the actions of others, the spaces they are in, the pace of change and connections with past and projected futures. For example, in section 4.3.2., I discussed how Lucy often had little opportunity to make changes to her routine that were dictated by the online calendar her dad kept. However, she was able to make a change to fit around the 'legitimate' reason of attending music college – tacking other changes onto this shift. However, in other families, there was much more space for open negotiation around young people's changing needs, even if this could come with its own challenges. For example, Emily's siblings' rejection of their routines had opened up space for her to craft her own, but had also strengthened her feelings of obligation to continue to divide her time equally with her mum (see Emily's biography).

Although changes to mobility routines was the topic where I most explicitly drew attention to these relational, interdependent and situated characteristics of agency, throughout the thesis I also presented accounts of the ways in which young people attempted to shape the ways in which mobilities were experienced. I showed how young people made use of connections with people, space, time, objects and technologies to build, extend and express their agency – connecting back to literatures drawing out the relational character of children's mobilities discussed in relation to the previous question (Murray and Cortés-Morales 2019). For example, there was agency in the ways young people worked with their parents to craft journeys into spaces of mutual enjoyment – such as in the way Laura used the changing mobile environment to create the 'number plate game' (section 6.2.1.2.). However, agentic relations with parents were not always this affirmative. For example, in section 6.3.6. I discussed Tamsin's efforts to bring her periods of waiting for her dad to an end through calling her dad on different phones. As this demonstrates, young people were often operating within constrained circumstances where parents had elements of control over when and how journeys occurred.

The picture of agency I have presented differs in a number of ways from accounts in previous research about childhood experiences of divorce and separation. As discussed in chapter two, previous research has tended to view agency as an innate capacity of autonomous agents where agency is a finite and contested resource (Haugen 2010; Smart et al. 2001; Smart et al. 1999; Butler et al. 2003; Smart 2004). Furthermore, agency has also often only been explored in the context of making decisions over initial living arrangements or lasting changes to these. This has tended towards the view that children either have or do not have agency and that this agency is only seen when children are viewed as acting (rationally) in their own self-interests.

Instead, through appreciating agency as having changing and situational qualities and expressions I have presented a more nuanced and dynamic picture of their ability to navigate

and negotiate their post-separation life. This leads to a more pertinent set of questions than 'do young people have agency?', rather orientating inquiry towards the spatial, material, emotional and relational factors that shape expressions of agency in enabling and restricting ways – for both young people and their parents. For, this thesis indicated that parents' agencies are similarly relational, interdependent and situated. Parents do not always have complete control over how mobilities are performed – as was perhaps most clearly demonstrated in the example of Kate (4.3.2.). Therefore, in further interrogating the character and qualities of changing agencies within the post-separation family, more nuanced and subtle recognition of the ways in which children's agencies can be facilitated, recognised and validated may be found.

In reimagining how agency is conceptualised in this context, this thesis contributes to literatures within children's geographies outside of the specific topic of separation. Firstly, the understandings described above can tell us more about children and young people's agency within the family, drawing attention to how children navigate, negotiate and contribute towards their families. Whilst separation brings out some specific spatial, temporal and emotional dynamics, the broader themes of obligation, connection, constraint and care through which expressions of agency are formed exist within all familial contexts. This, therefore, builds upon and develops the small but growing body of research within children's geographies which examines familial relationships (Wilson et al. 2012a; Punch 2008; Seymour 2015; Punch and Vanderbeck 2018; Holt 2011; Fairbrother and Ellis 2018).

Furthermore, through taking a biographic approach, I have contributed to work which has considered children and young people as dynamic temporal agents – moving beyond the usual focus on being/becoming debates or youth transitions (Holloway et al. 2018). I have examined how the qualities of young people's agency shifts and changes over childhood, whilst also demonstrating how agency involves connections with the past, present and future. Furthermore, I have shown that time is a dynamic resource for agency, as young people manipulated and contested time in their navigations of everyday life, whilst also suggesting ways in which concepts of speed and tempo might shape propensities to act. Thus, I have taken the connections between time and agency in a number of different, yet interconnected directions suggesting strands that may be picked up in future work.

iiii) How can journeys between houses be conceptualised as significant sites, practices and processes of doing family in post-separation?

Using Morgan's (1996; 2011) concept of 'family practices' as a starting point, this thesis took a performative approach to thinking about the family – focusing attention on the active and

everyday ways in which family is '(un)done' and in turn reproduced. Thus, this thesis started from the position families are always in processes of becoming, never fixed or finished, where separation is part of these processes of change. Adding to the arguments of Holdsworth (2013) and Murray et al. (2019), the research found that (im)mobility was central to these processes of change and becoming.

Throughout the biographies in chapter four, I highlighted the multitude of ways in which 'mobilities create, sustain, modify and bring to a close familial and intimate relations' (Holdsworth 2013: 4). This included movements at a range of scales such as moving houses, partners moving in, going on holiday, visiting relatives, moving schools, moving to university, talking on the phone and imagined travels. Against this backdrop of the importance of mobility to the family, in this thesis I argued specifically that journeys between houses are significant sites for the (un)doing of family in post-separation. This supports and substantiates a reading of family mobilities not as just instrumental movements from A to B, but as emotionally and affectually charged *practices* through which families (dis)connect with each other (Holdsworth 2013; Waitt and Harada 2016; Clement and Waitt 2018; Whittle 2018). Thus, I argue that journeys are important in the emotional and affectual geographies of post-separation families.

In chapter five, I argued that the material practices that surround journeys play an important role in the routine ways in which family members relate to each other, thereby recognising 'the material processes that forge families and family members' (Schadler, 2016, p. 508). This included attention to how the absence and presence of personal belongings affected connections to home and family (5.2.1.), how collecting forgotten things caused arguments between parents (5.4.2.) and how borders around the movement of objects could create disconnections between households (5.4.3.). These were all events and processes which participated in family relationships; which in other words, were family practices. In focusing on these mobile material practices, I extended work started in previous research where I argued that 'material encounters play a significant role in the (re)creation, reinforcement and the undermining of family relationships in post-separation' (Walker 2022: 224). This, therefore, further builds upon recent work within the emerging field of family geographies which has drawn attention to the importance of everyday materialities in the doing of family (Holmes 2018; Price-Robertson and Duff 2019; Luzia 2011; Tarrant 2016).

In chapter six, I then focused explicitly on the time that families spent on the move together in the car, as a technology that facilitated most participants' movements between houses. In doing so, I examined what families do together on these journeys, what functions these doings have in the performance of family and how much of what occurs in and through cars may be

seen through the lens of care. Paying attention to the specific spatiality of the car, I considered how such familial interactions were shaped by its material, scalar, liminal and sensory affordances, alongside the changing spatial, temporal and emotional dynamics of particular families. These affordances and dynamics shaped different performances of family, as the space of the car was used to talk, play, sing, argue, listen and care. In focusing on these varied interactions, I demonstrated that journeys were not universally experienced but were spaces of diverse emotional and affectual relations, including intimacy, closeness and fun, but also conflict, uncomfortableness, awkwardness and alienation.

In particular, I found that care was a significant dimension of what family members did together during journeys and therefore dedicated much of this chapter to unpacking care as a dimension of mobile family practices. Here young people were conceived of as both objects and subjects of care, as those receiving and delivering care through mobility. This chapter therefore, adds to studies that have examined children and young people's practices of care by further demonstrating the complex exchange of care that happens between adults and children (Horton and Pyer 2017; Day and Evans 2015; Borsch et al. 2020; Bartos 2012; Kallio and Bartos 2017; Millar and Ridge 2013). In doing so, chapter six also contributed to the small number of studies which have examined the dynamics of care in post-separation families, (Haugen 2007; Marschall 2014; Phillips 2013), adding to these literatures through demonstrating the ways in which care happens *through* and during mobilities, rather than despite them - as has often been presented.

Answering this research question has also contributed to work which has looked at the role of automobility in family life and how car trips function in the emotional and affectual geographies of families (Waitt and Harada 2016; Noy 2012; Waitt and Harada 2016; Laurier et al. 2008; Barker 2009). Through its focus on the post-separation family, this thesis has nuanced and diversified this work. I have shown the importance of looking at diverse family forms alongside differentiating between the purpose of car trips – highlighting the need to be more specific in discussions of 'everyday mobilities'. Although not the focus of this thesis, this suggests routes for more work looking at how the car functions in diverse groups of families in order to more deeply understand the 'affective economies that sustain car dependency' (Waitt and Harada 2016; 1097).

In analysing families' mobile experiences, I also introduced and unpacked the notion of family *undoing* to accompany the more often used notion of the 'doing' of family within the family practices approach. Inspired by conceptions of home unmaking (Baxter and Brickell 2014), undoing refers to the processes by which family is, intentionally or inadvertently, temporarily

or persistently, damaged, distanced, disturbed or diminished. Through using this concept, I was able to more fully capture the dynamics of change, disruption and adaptation in my participants' family lives, recognising the ways in which mobile actions and experiences did not always reinforce a sense of family bonds.

Through exploring the weaving together of family doing and undoing across childhoods, in the conclusion to chapter six I unpacked some of the spatial, temporal and relational dimensions of undoing. I reaffirmed the importance of geographers' contributions to work on the family, firmly placing my own work within this growing subfield (Valentine et al. 2012; Hall 2016; Harker 2010; Tarrant and Hall 2019). A focus on the undoing alongside the doing of family represents an important contribution to these geographic literatures, given that 'everyday processes of family conflict, trouble and disrupture currently occupy a marginal space in the geographic literature about family', and in the family practices literature more widely (Tarrant and Hall 2019: 4; Wilson et al. 2012b; although see Evans et al. 2019; Hall 2019, Ribbens McCarthy et al. 2013). Thus, I argue that through focusing on the dynamics of doing and undoing such processes may come into clearer view.

7.4 Implications for Policy and Practice

There are a number of important potential implications for policy and practice emanating from this thesis. Firstly, this thesis joins calls that have been made over the last two decades for giving children more of a voice in decisions around their life in post-separation (Smart 2004; James and James 1999; Holt 2004). In the UK, although some mediation and court processes include ways for children to be involved, this is not a requirement and often parents are asked to speak for their child's wishes. However, working with understandings of children's agency as interdependent and contextual, as offered in this thesis, would mean going further than advocating for children to have 'a voice'. Rather, it would mean paying attention to the ways and means through which this 'voice' is enabled and disabled, taking account of the spatiality and temporality of their involvement. Although finding ways for children to express their agency in these processes immediately after divorce and separation is essential, this thesis also shows that this is merely a starting point. As chapter four demonstrated, decisions over post-separation life are continually ongoing and therefore parents should be supported to find ways to enable young people's participation in decisions that affect them throughout their childhoods.

This connects to the fact that the thesis showed the importance of the interplay between structure and flexibility in the mobilities of young people. Although mobilities worked well when they had an expected rhythmic structure, the thesis also showed that this needed to operate

with a level of flexibility to be adaptive and responsive to a range of various circumstances. This presents challenges for court and mediation-based arrangements, alongside policy stipulations such as child benefit, which often rely on strict delineations around the separation of time between parents which rub up against the unpredictability and messiness of everyday life.

This thesis also suggests several implications for policy and practice surrounding young people's home and homemaking in separation. For example. this includes implications for policy relating to the provision of housing in separated families, calling into question UK policies which are underpinned by an understanding that there will be one resident and one non-resident parent following separation. This means that one parent is entitled to the majority of the child-related benefits, whilst the other is treated as a single adult within the system – regardless of their contact arrangement with their child. Thus, there is currently no provision within housing payment regulation that would allow for non-resident parents to take on larger properties to accommodate their visiting child(ren) - whether they have access to social housing or are in receipt of housing benefit. This issue is particularly stark for single adult under the age of 35 where housing payment would only cover the cost of a room in shared accommodation. The findings of this thesis, in combination with my previous research on homemaking and separated families (Walker 2020), suggests that the lack of space for young people and their things within parent's homes is potentially damaging to parent-child relationships.

Rather my research demonstrates the importance of young people feeling materially present in their parental houses – suggesting important advice for families undergoing separation and the organisations supporting them. This thesis suggests ways that this may be enabled including, allowing young people to leave things within both houses and not hiding away these possessions when young people are absent, involving young people in the decoration of houses and not restricting the movement of objects between houses.

7.5 Directions for Future Research

This thesis has raised several interesting questions around how families negotiate the afterlives of parental separation and the role of mobilities in this, which could be explored in more detail in future research. I began this thesis by reflecting on the fact that during the Covid-19 pandemic children with separated parents were one of the only groups permitted to move between different households – to sustain contact with both parents. As I highlighted in chapter two, there has begun to be some reflections on the experience of divorced and separated parents during that time, but little that engages with the experiences of children. The findings

of this thesis raise some interesting questions surrounding children's experiences of mobility during this time that could be explored in future research. For example, How did journeys change to fit with the adapted rhythms of everyday life under lockdown?; How did parents come to agreements over how journeys would be performed?; What was young people's role in these changes?; How did young people cope with transitioning between environments that may be materially different, or in which the rules and routines may have differed?; What emotions did journeys bring about?; How were existing routines adapted and what new practices and skills did young people have to acquire to perform them?; What things did young people did young people bring with them to cope with life in lockdown in both houses?. Furthermore, given that time since the events of lockdown, doing this work may also mean engaging in methods seeking to elicit memories and working with memory as data - potentially taking further inspiration methodological inspiration from this thesis.

Secondly, as stated previously in this chapter, much of the research around family mobility has been done so within the context of transitions to low-carbon forms of transport, looking at the barriers and enablers of sustainable transport choices for families in minority world contexts. This research has, however, tended to look at the level of the household, usually working with families that have a 'nuclear' structure. As chapter six showed, separation brings new, and connected, emotional and practical dynamics into families' car use, and thus understanding how low-carbon transport can be facilitated in separated families, and the potential barriers to this could be an important direction for future research.

Furthermore, as outlined in my methodology chapter, this thesis has largely worked with middle class families, as has typically also been the case in previous post-separation research. There is a need for research exploring mobility experiences after parental separation in low-income families, particularly given that separation often deteriorates families' financial situations, especially those of mothers, suggesting that separated families may be overrepresented in those living in poverty (Mortelmans 2020). This would build on Ridge's (2017) research, which explored how economic hardship introduces additional challenging dynamics into children's relationships with their parents following separation. Ridge's findings, alongside insights from this thesis, suggest that the financial cost to mobility, access to space within the home, managing changing schedules around insecure work and interactions between separation, childcare and various state benefits are all issues that would affect young people's experiences of mobility and how their agency emerges among these conditions.

A fourth avenue for future research, which this thesis began to explore in talking through Orla's family, is looking at the experience of young people who travel internationally to see their

separated parents. In Poole et al.'s (2015) research they found 7% of non-resident fathers in the UK live in a different country to their children (and continue to have contact with their children), suggesting a potentially large number of young people moving internationally. Travelling across borders adds potentially complex spatial, temporal, cultural, legal and administrative dynamics into how relationships are lived and how mobility is performed. In doing such research, fruitful connections could be made between well-established bodies of work on young people's experiences of transnational families and migration (White et al. 2011; Choi, Yeoh and Lam 2018; Ní Laoire 2010; Bushin 2009; van Blerk and Ansell 2006; Mand 2010), with what this thesis has found about how mobilities are organised, felt and experienced in post-separation.

Much of the research on transnational families has explored the interweaving of physical and virtual mobility, examining how connections of care, emotional support and affection are sustained through texts, video calls, social media and other forms of communication technologies (Fresnoza- Flot 2009; Wilding 2006; Madianou 2012; Baldassar et al. 2016). Examining these interconnections in the context of post-separation would be an interesting and novel area of study. Building on the work of this thesis, such research may look to understand how forms of virtual mobility are build into the rhythms and routines of everyday family life. Furthermore, continuing this thesis' attention to the interconnections between the emotional/affectual and the material, such research could also attend to the specific materialities and affordances of particular technologies of communication – examining the distinct forms of sociality produced in encounters with them. Such research would build on the arguments I have made about the importance of different forms of mobility to the doing and undoing of family following parental separation.

Finally, there is also space for research which expands the types of personal relationships considered as being lived through mobility. In particular, this thesis started to explore how young people's relationships with friends are affected by mobility and how this changes at different points in the lifecourse. It was clear from these brief discussions that managing schedules around friendships and the balancing of time with friends and family was of particular concern for many of the young people I spoke to. Understanding the spatialities and temporalities of friendships under post-separation is thus a topic which thus deserves more attention. This thesis is thus just the first step in understanding the relationship between mobilities and young people's personal lives in post-separation.

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Appendix A: Family Trees

Key

Orange: 'Biological' family

Green: Step-family

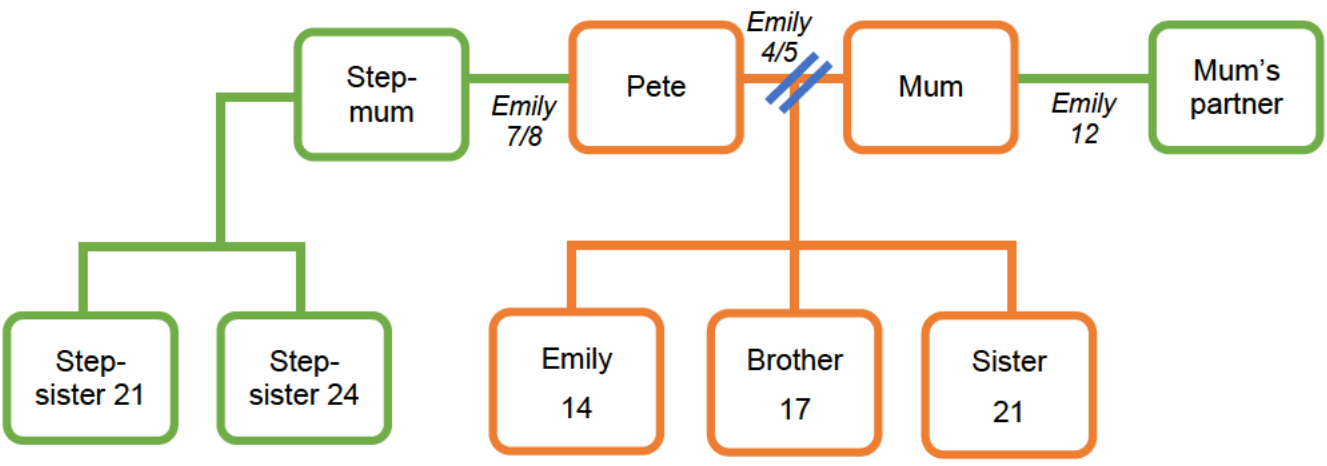
// : Indicates separation

The information below each line indicates age at **partnering**

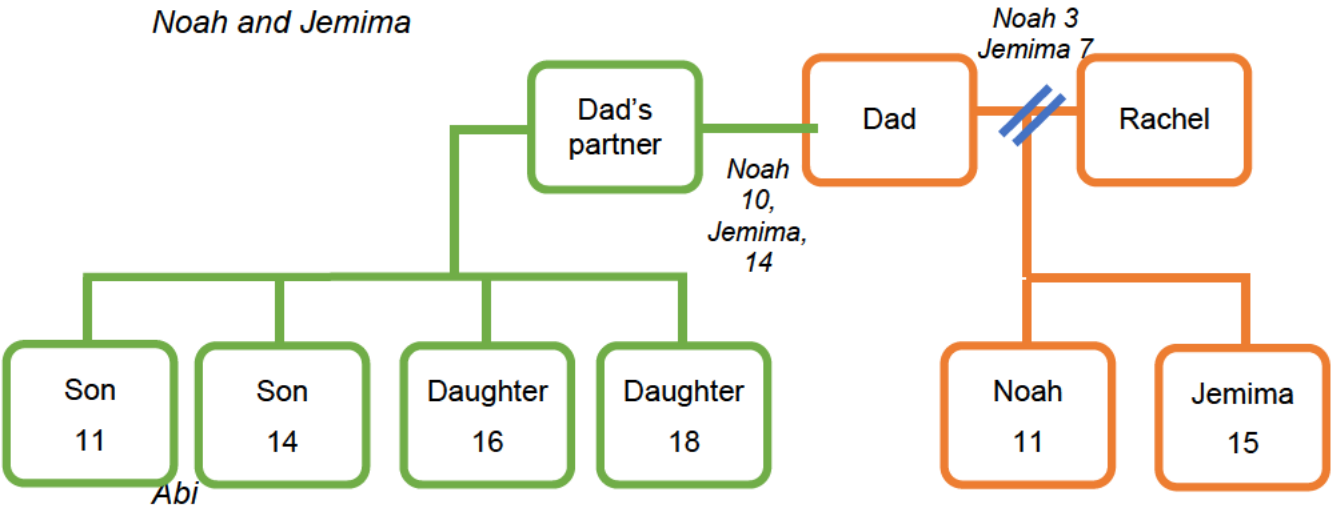
The information above each line indicates age at **separation**

Ages for child participants are ages at beginning of research

Emily



Noah and Jemima



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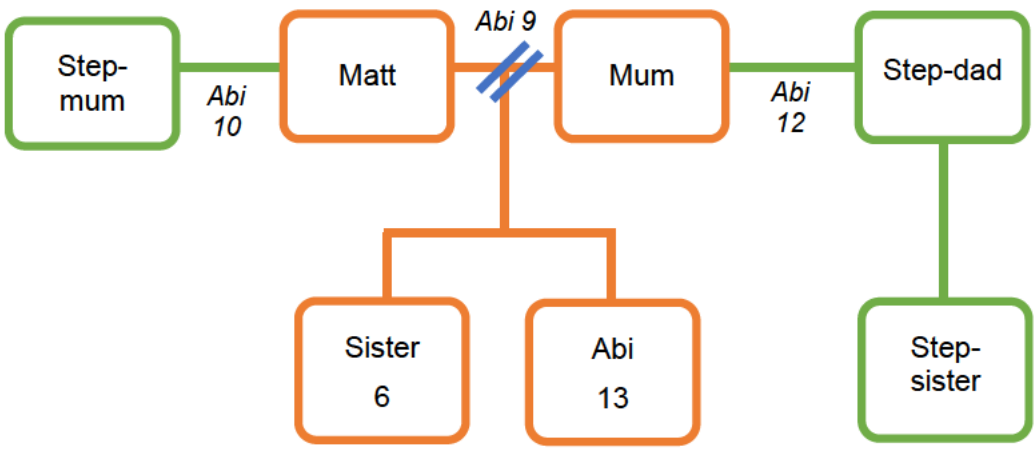

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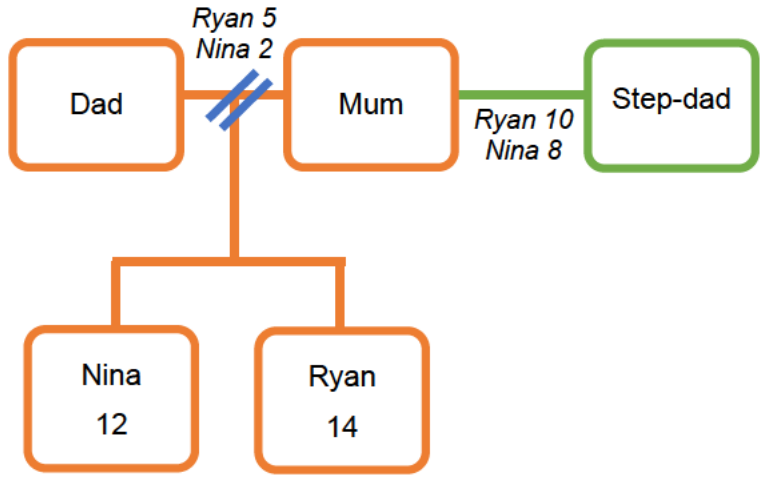

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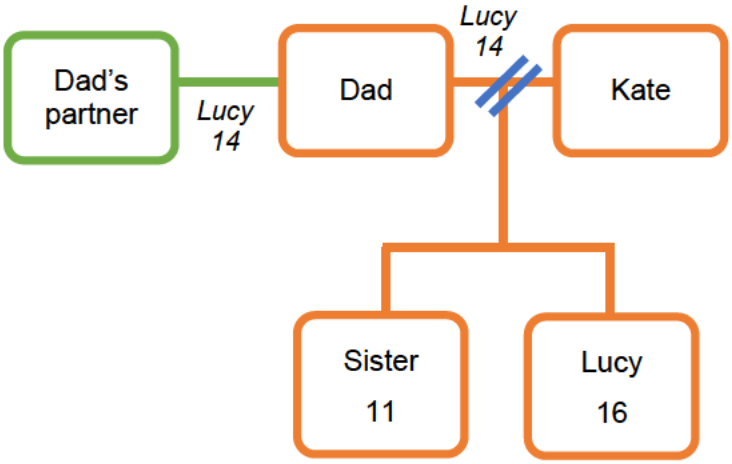

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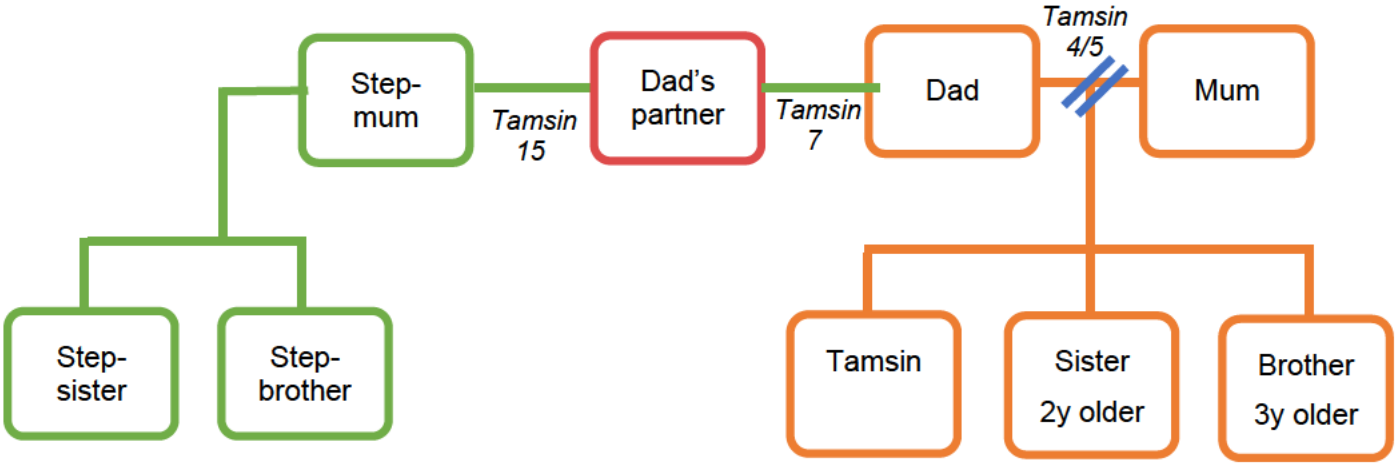

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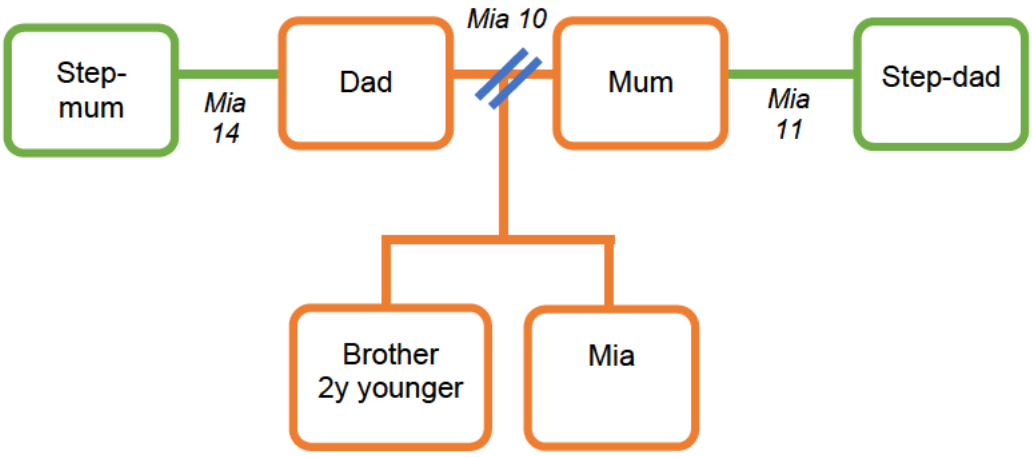

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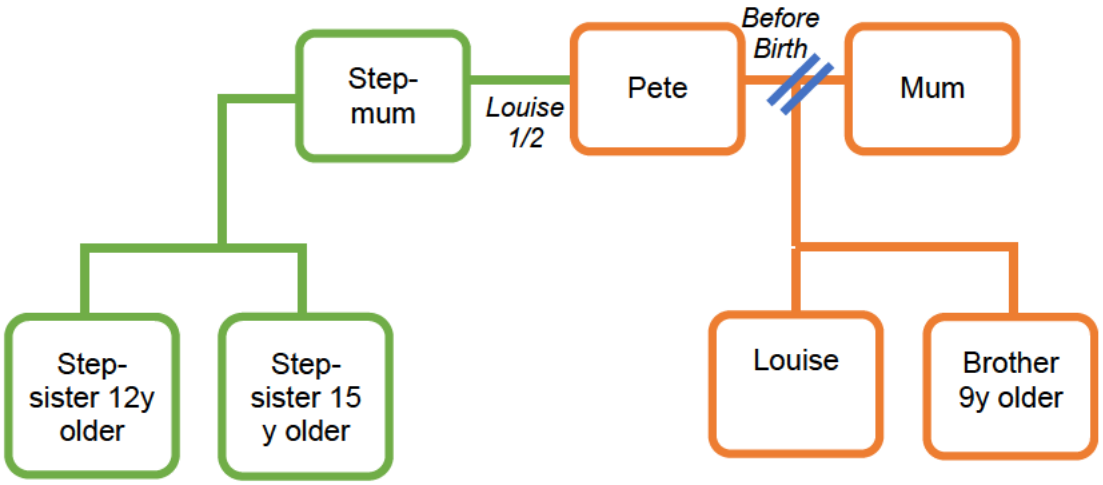

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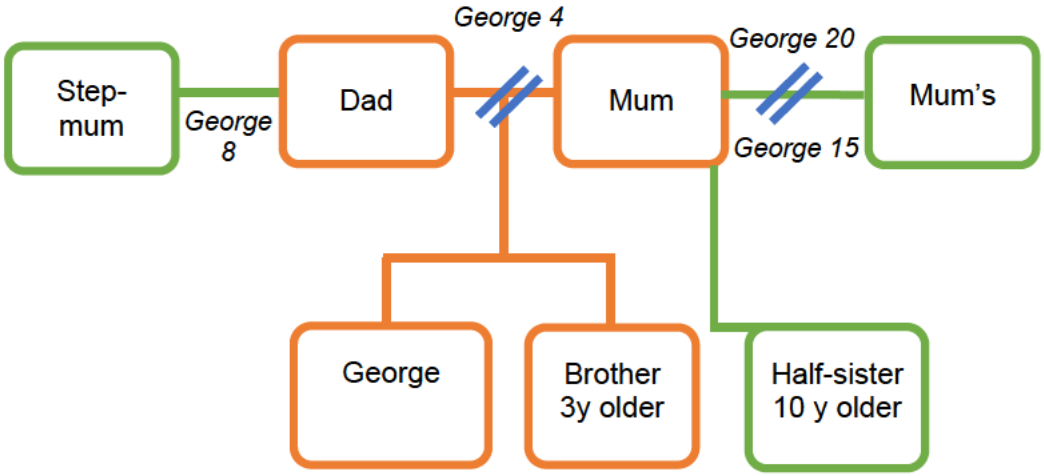

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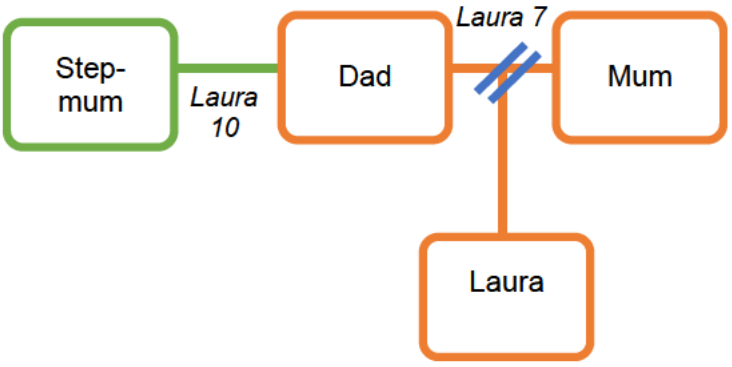

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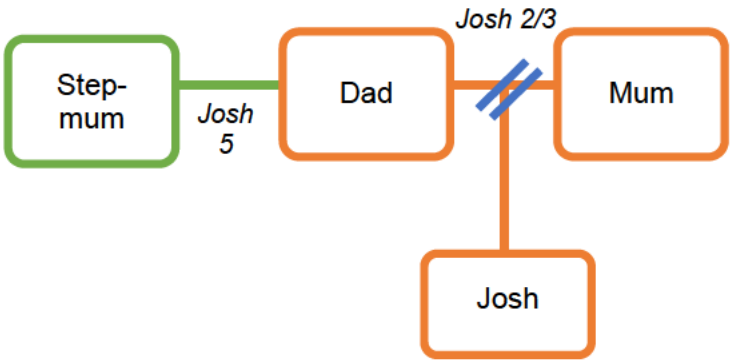

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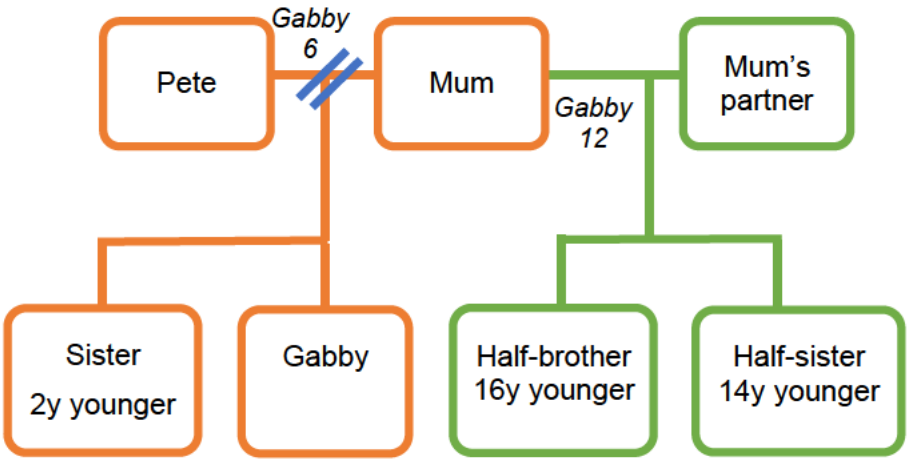

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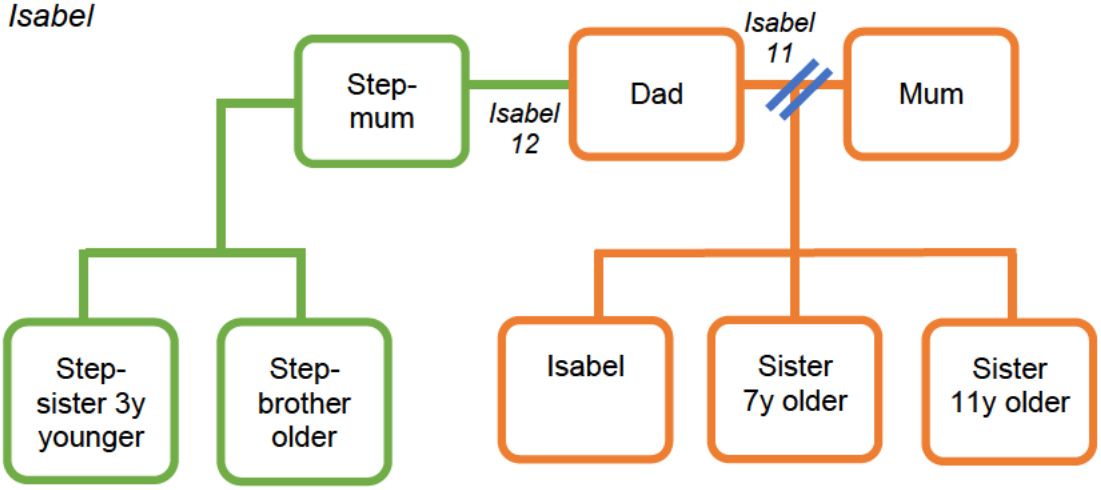

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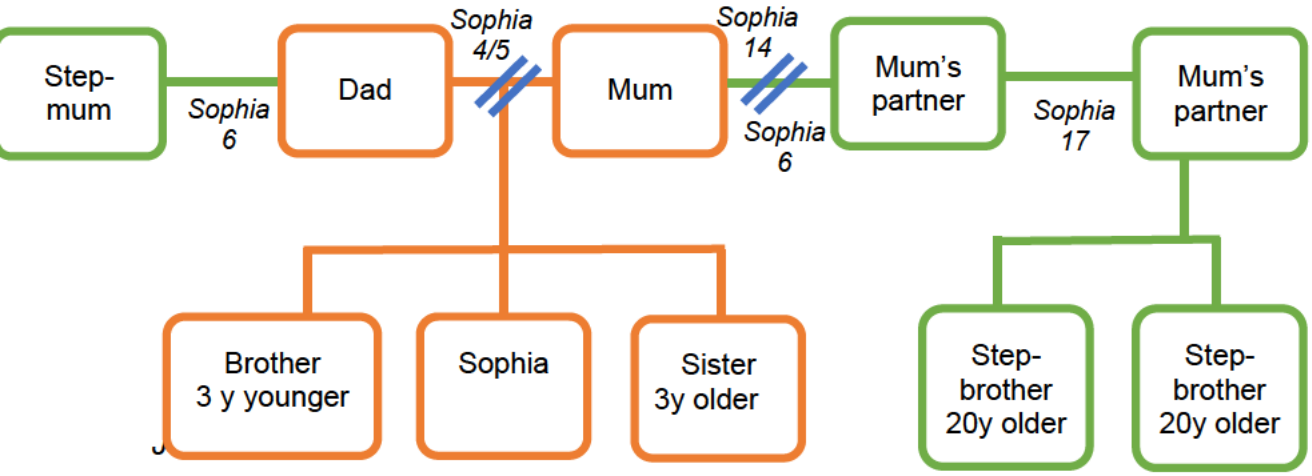
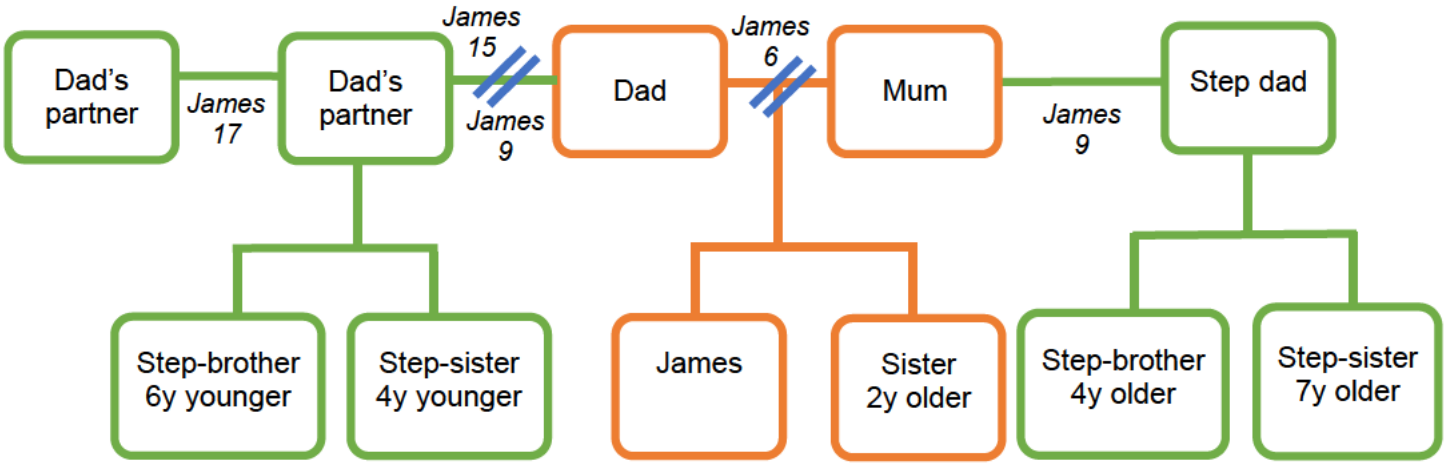
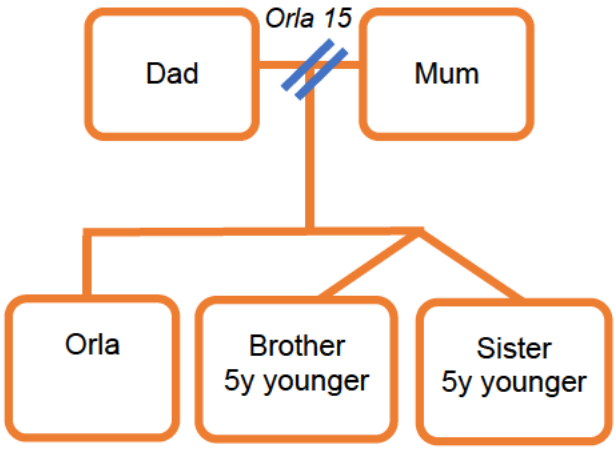

Step-mum
Sophia 6
Dad
Sophia 4/5
Mum
Sophia 14
Sophia 6
Mum's partner
Sophia 17
Mum's partner
Brother 3 y younger
Sophia
Sister 3y older
Step-brother 20y older
Step-brother 20y older


Dad's partner
James 17
Dad's partner
James 15
James 9
Dad
James 6
Mum
James 9
Step dad
Step-brother 6y younger
Step-sister 4y younger
James
Sister 2y older
Step-brother 4y older
Step-sister 7y older

Orla


Dad
Orla 15
Mum
Orla
Brother 5y younger
Sister 5y younger

Appendix B: Elicitation activity instruction sheet

Young People on the Move: Exploring Experiences of Parental Separation

Activity Instruction Sheet

Over two journeys, so to one house/parent and then back again, I would like you to take some videos or photos. For this activity you can choose which media you would like to use. Or you can use a mixture, taking photos and videos. It is up to you!

I would like it if these captured the activities of preparing, leaving, travelling and arriving. It is completely up to you what you show me about these activities and you can be as creative as you want. Here are some prompts, if you need them, but you do not have to use them:

- What you pack and how you pack
- How you organise when and how you are going to travel
- What you do when you leave the house
- What type of transport you use
- The different spaces you move through when you are travelling
- The kinds of activities do you do whilst you are traveling
- What you do when you arrive and how you make yourself feel at home
- What you like or dislike about these journeys
- What you think is easy about them and what you find challenging

What will happen next?

After you have done this we will arrange a time for us to do an interview, using video-calling software. During this interview we will look at the videos and photos together and talk about what they show and why you took them.

Things to remember

If you are in public please be careful not to take close up pictures or recordings of people that you do not know. If anybody asks what you are doing, explain that you are part of a research project, if you feel comfortable, or just show them the card I have given you and ask them to contact me.

Always ask people you know if they are happy for you to record them, explain what it is for and show them the card I have given you if they want to know about the project.

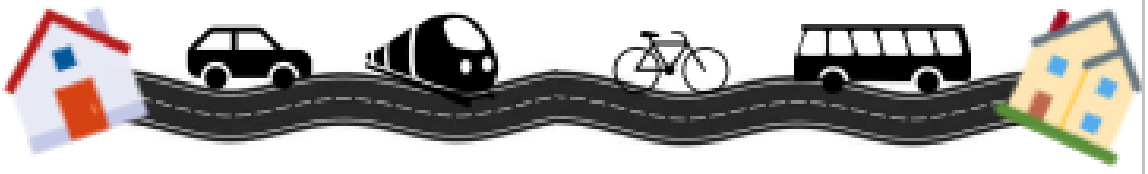
Be careful around moving traffic and make sure you are always aware of what is going on around you. If anyone tries to take your recording equipment give it to them and do not try to protect it.

Appendix C: Research information sheet

Young People on the Move: Exploring Experiences of Parental Separation

A Research Project

This leaflet is for young people and their parents



What is the research about?

Lots of young people spend time moving between their parents' homes or travelling to spend time with their parents elsewhere because they don't live together any more. But no one has asked young people what it's like to do this or how they feel about it. So I think its really important to talk to young people, like you, about your experiences so other people can understand what it is like and how best to offer help and support. I would like to find out about what you do when you are on these journeys (including when you prepare, leave, travel and arrive) and what your feelings and opinions about them are.

Who can take part?

Any young person, aged 11-18, who has separated parents. I am interested even if your journey is very short or if you don't do it very often.

If I agree to take part, what do I have to do?

To begin with I will come over to one of your houses to have a chat about the research, so you decide if you want to take part. If you say yes then we will arrange a time to have a short conversation where you can tell me some basic information about your family and the journeys you normally take. During this we will also create a map of your route together. I will audio-record this, so I can remember what you have said.

After this there are a few different activities that you can choose to take part in, you can do as many, or as few, as you like. It is up to you! If you have any ideas for other activities I would love to hear them:

- You could take either pictures, short videos or short sound recordings of your journey. We will then have a conversation about what you have taken pictures of or recorded, talking about what they show and how you feel about them.
- You could create either a video, audio or written diary where you talk about and reflect on your experiences of travelling, either as you are doing it or after.
- I could come with you as you travel between your parents houses, so you can show me what it is like.
- We may create other activities, such as cartoon making or storyboarding, to help show me your experiences. It depends what you enjoy doing.
- Parents and guardians will also be invited to take part in an interview.

If you do not have equipment for these activities I will provide it.

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you whether you take part, you do not have to. Even if you say yes now, you can say no at any point without giving me, or your parents, a reason. If you have already done the activities but decide you no longer want me to use your information then you can withdraw it up to the 1st of September 2020 by contacting me.

Who is the researcher?
My name is Amy and I am a PhD researcher at the University of Birmingham. Please contact me with any questions you have about the research:

Email: [redacted]
Phone: [redacted]

How will you use my information?
I will use the information you tell me to write a PhD about the experiences of the young people I have spoken to. A PhD is like a very long report. I will also write publications and give presentations about this research to other people at universities as well as organisations working with young people, like so they can better support young people like you.

Will anyone know what I have said?
Your information will be confidential, which means that I will not discuss what you told me with other people. This includes your parents, who can not request a copy of what you have said. However, if you tell me something that makes me worried about your, or someone else's safety, we will have a discussion and I will inform an appropriate adult. I will store all of the information you give me carefully on secure computers at the University of Birmingham so only I, and my supervisors, can access it.

All the information which you tell me will be anonymised. This means when I talk and write about my findings your name and personal information will be changed. Only me, and my supervisors, will be able to see and hear the photos and footage you record. If you agree, I would like to use some of the photos and recordings in my project, but you do not have to say yes to this. If you say yes I will block out all faces, names and identifiable information or exclude media from public use where this is not possible - so no-body can tell it is you or your friends and family

Thank you for reading this information sheet

You may also contact my supervisor, Professor Peter Kraftl, regarding this research at:

Email: [redacted] **Phone:** [redacted]

This research has been approved by the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee. If you are concerned about how the research is being carried out they can be contacted at:

Sue Cottam [redacted]

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

The research is being funded by the Economic and Social Research Council

Appendix D: Consent Form

Young People on the Move: Exploring Experiences of Parental Separation

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Activity and Interview Consent Form

	Initial here
I understand that this research is being conducted by Amy Walker from the University of Birmingham as part of a PhD project and that the research findings may also be used in academic publications and presentations alongside reports for schools and organisations	
I have read and understood the information sheet for this research	
I have asked the researcher any questions I have about the activity	
I understand that I do not have to take part in this research and I can stop taking part at any time. I understand I need to ask Amy to delete my data by 1st September 2020 if I want to withdraw from the study	
I understand that my name and personal information will not be used in any research outputs, but that Amy will speak and write about the research findings	
I understand that none of the information I tell Amy will be shared with anyone else unless she is worried for mine, or someone else's, safety.	
I understand that all data relating to the research will be stored safely in accordance with GDPR 2018 and will be kept for 10 years	
I agree to being voice recorded during the interview	
I consent to my photographs, videos and/or sound recordings being used by the researcher in anonymised form in academic publications and presentations alongside reports for schools and organisations. I understand that the identities of anyone appearing will be obscured or excluded.	

YOUNG PERSON	PARENT / GUARDIAN*	RESEARCHER
Name:	Name:	Name:
Signature:	Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:	Date:

I have read and understood the information leaflet and give permission for the child (named above) to participate

Appendix E: Information sheet and consent form, young adults

Young People on the Move: Exploring Experiences of Parental Separation

Participant Information Sheet

What is the research about?

This research explores the everyday lives of young people with separated parents. It specifically looks at the periods that young people spend moving and transitioning between their parents' homes, or travelling to spend time with their parents elsewhere. The research is interested in the varying ways these periods are structured and coordinated and young peoples opinions and feelings about them.

In the research I am working with children, aged 11-16, who are currently experiencing this mobility, alongside young adults, aged 18-25, looking back on their childhood experiences.

Who can take part?

Any young person, aged 18-25, whose parents separated before they were 16 and who regularly saw both their parents after their separation.

If I agree to take part, what do I have to do?

You will take part in at least two interviews. These will both be conducted virtually, using video-calling software such as skype or zoom – depending what is most convenient for you.

The first will be a short interview, lasting around half an hour, where you will give a short 'biography' of your family and your living arrangements during your childhood.

The second interview will be longer, lasting around an hour, and more in depth. This interview will be based around you taking me on a 'virtual tour' of your childhood journey, using google maps and the share screen feature, where we will discuss your experiences of moving and transitioning between your parents.

This activity has been designed to help aid you in remembering your childhood, accounting for the ability of places to provoke memories. These interviews will be relatively open, not following a strict script, allowing space for you to speak about your own experiences in detail.

It would also be useful if you could bring any childhood photos that may be relevant to the discussions, or any particular objects that were significant to you during this time (or photos of this object).

Recording, confidentiality and data storage

With your permission, interviews will be audio-recorded and then transcribed. All information will be kept strictly confidential and all names and personal information will be changed when transcribed.

All data relating to the project will only be accessible by me, and will be electronically stored on a secure University computer and any hard copies will be stored in a locked cabinet in accordance with GDPR 2018. Data will be held securely for 10 years in line with University of Birmingham regulations.

If you agree, I would like to use your photographs/videos in my PhD, and presentations/publications stemming from the project. This is entirely voluntary. If you agree I will block out all faces, names and identifiable information or exclude media from public use where this is not possible.

Who is doing the research? And how will my data be used?

The research is being conducted by Amy Walker, a doctoral researcher in Human Geography. The data collected will be used to write a PhD, but may also be used in academic publications and presentations alongside reports for organisations working with separated families.

Participants will be sent a copy of all publications stemming from the research. They will also be given a short summary of the research findings at the end of the project, and can request a full copy of the PhD if desired.

Consent

Involvement in the project is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the project at any time without giving reason, even during or after the interview. In this case, please contact me and all information relating to you will be removed from the project and destroyed. After the 1st September 2020 it will be possible to withdraw from data being used in further projects, however, as write up will be in its final stages, withdrawal from the PhD thesis will not be possible.

Thank you for reading this information sheet

You may also contact my supervisor, Professor Peter Kraftl, regarding this research at:

Email: [redacted] **Phone** [redacted]

This research has been approved by the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee. If you are concerned about how the research is being carried out they can be contacted at:

Sue Cottam [redacted]

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

The research is being funded by the Economic and Social Research Council

Young People on the Move: Exploring Experiences of Parental Separation

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Activity and Interview Consent Form

	Initial here
I understand that this research is being conducted by Amy Walker from the University of Birmingham as part of a PhD project and that the research findings may also be used in academic publications and presentations alongside reports for schools and organisations	
I have read and understood the information sheet for this research	
I have asked the researcher any questions I have about the activity	
I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any point. I understand I need to ask Amy to delete my data by 1st September 2020 if I want to withdraw from the study	
I understand that my name and personal information will not be used in any research outputs, but that Amy will speak and write about the research findings	
I understand that all data relating to the research will be stored safely in accordance with GDPR 2018 and will be kept for 10 years	
I agree to being voice recorded during the interview	
I consent to my photographs and videos being used by the researcher in anonymised form in academic publications and presentations alongside reports for schools and organisations. I understand that the identities of anyone appearing will be obscured or excluded.	

PARTICIPANT	RESEARCHER
Name:	Name:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

Contact telephone number: _____

Email Address: _____

Your details will not be shared with anyone. This is purely for the needs of the researcher.