The Impact of attending university on the sibling relationship
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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Cardiff Metropolitan University for the degree of Bachelor of Science
Declaration

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own independent investigation under the supervision of my tutor. The various sources to which I am indebted are clearly indicated. This dissertation has not been accepted in substance for any other degree and is not being submitted concurrently for any other degree.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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A big thanks to my mum and dad, your support throughout the past three years has made all the hard work feel worthwhile. Throughout the stressful times you were both there for me when I needed you and I will always be extremely grateful for that. I could never have done this without you both.

A huge thank you to my friends who have supported me throughout this process and the past three years. You have all provided so much support and encouragement, particularly showing me how to enjoy my down time to its fullest extent. I could never have done any of this without you all.
The Impact of attending university on the sibling relationship
ABSTRACT

Siblings are a prominent fixture in many family structures, they can be a source of companionship, support and comfort. A sibling relationship implies involvement, this may be warmth and care or conflict and rivalry, these contradictory feelings are perhaps due to the internal emotional conflict that children may experience whilst they develop an understanding of emotions. Research reviewed in this study highlights that the sibling relationship is unique because of the effects it can have on development and the longevity of the relationship. It has also been suggested that during early adulthood sibling relationships become less important. Thus, the outlined project aims to gain a greater understanding of this transitional phase through individuals’ experiences. Using a qualitative approach and semi-structured interviews to collect data. A total of five participants took part and Thematic Analysis was used to analyse the interviews. A total of five major themes which emerged from the analysis of all the interviews. These were different social worlds, conflict and rivalry, comfort and support, communication and changes at home. The results found in this study were consistent with previous research, with some of these themes corresponded with previous research which focussed on adulthood perceptions on the sibling relationship. Future research could enhance on findings from the current study as well as any previous studies focusing on the periods of transition into adulthood and its impact on the sibling relationship.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Definitions and Rationale

This study explores how sibling relationships change when individuals grow to university age and begin a stage of their life where contact with their sibling(s) potentially becomes less frequent. The study examines all aspects of being a sibling from childhood through adolescence to early adulthood but will primarily focus on the recent emotions and experiences of individuals attending university.

For this study, the term ‘siblings’ refers to any type of sibling, including but not limited to biological siblings, half-siblings, step siblings and adopted siblings. Siblings are a prominent fixture in most family structures (McHale, Updegraff & Whiteman, 2012), they can be a source of companionship and support. The influence they have on development throughout childhood, shape who we are as individuals (Davis-Kean, 2005; Tsao, Davenport & Schmeige, 2012). These relationships are often long-lasting, and the older siblings often have the responsibility of being a ‘role model’ for younger siblings throughout childhood and adolescence (Bank & Kahn, 1997; Whiteman, McHale, & Soli, 2011). A sibling relationship implies involvement, this may be warmth and support or conflict and rivalry, these contradictory feelings are perhaps due to the internal emotional conflict that children experience whilst they develop an understanding of emotions (Deater-Deckard, Dunn, & Lussier, 2002). Understanding this relationship is often neglected as a subject of research, even though in the UK and US around 80% of children grow up with at least one brother or sister (Pike, Coldwell, & Dunn, 2009).

Since the late 1970s, a growing body of research has focused on the dynamics of sibling relationships, and how it influences child and adolescent development (Brody, 2004; Kramer & Bank, 2005). Relationships between siblings can be incredibly diverse and vary in structure, they can change over time depending on familial and environmental circumstances, as well as any significant life events (McHale et al., 2012). There is now a considerable amount of research that focuses on sibling relationships throughout childhood, concentrating on how these relationships can influence social, emotional, cognitive and moral development (Brody, 1998; Blake, 1989; Howe & Recchia, 2014). Siblings take on various roles in each other’s lives such as a source of support or an annoyance (Furman & Giberson, 1995; Whiteman et al., 2011). During early childhood, sibling relationships can be characterised by disputes over personal belongings.
(Ross, 1996) and competition for attention (Teti, 2002). To that end, this project investigates how individuals believe these influences impact the relationship.

The experiences, history, genetics and family upbringing most siblings share cannot be replicated (White, 2001), making research into the area complex. There remains strong interest in understanding this because in theory children growing up in the same environment should be similar due to shared genetic material and experiences with the same parents/primary care giver (Plomin, Asbury & Dunn, 2001; Scarr & Grajek, 1982). Research into how siblings become ‘individuals’ most commonly uses the variables of; gender, birth order, age spacing and family size, the problem with this research is that it operates on the assumption that this alters the environment within family and fails to explain why two siblings are different (Scarr & Grajek, 1982). More credible theories by Bossard and Boll (1956) and Parsons and Bales (1955) focus on the role differentiation hypothesis that explains that children develop specific personalities so that they can differentiate themselves from other family members. This makes more sense when used in conjunction with the concept that siblings are competing for their parent’s attention, as being too similar may not yield the desired benefits (Brady & Stoneman, 1988; Teti, 2002). Therefore, siblings will attempt to distance themselves from the activities their siblings excel at, or compete for parental praise, which can be a cause of disruption.

The transitional period between childhood and adulthood is a time when siblings have more independence and can begin to spend more time away from their siblings and have their own experiences. This study aims to understand if changes in the relationship are influenced by the greater independence that university permits.

The greatest gap in knowledge exists for the period of young adulthood (Cicirelli, 1995; Brody, 2004; Cox, 2010; Lamb & Sutton-Smith, 2014). This is due to the fact this can be a period of distance for many siblings (Lamb & Sutton-Smith, 2014), as they explore their environment, develop a personal identity, separate emotionally from family and demonstrate an increased interest in new friends, social groups and romantic partners (Scharf, Shulman, & Avigad-Spitz, 2005). Although research has been introduced around the subject area, research has focused heavily on adults reflecting on their experiences later in life, with an emphasis on individuals’ feelings around the relationship in the past rather than current experiences (Ross & Milgram, 1982; Stocker, Lanthier & Furman, 1997; White, 2004). Research reviewed highlights that the sibling relationship is unique because of the effects it can have on development and the longevity of the relationship (Allan, 1977; Cicirelli & Nussbaum, 1989). It has also been
suggested that during early adulthood sibling relationships become less important (White & Riedmann, 1992), although other research supports the hypothesis that changes in the relationship take place rather than a loss of importance. Ross & Milgram (1982), found a total of 67% of participants believed that the level of closeness between them and their siblings changed through adolescence. In this respect, research moves away from the narrow framework used in previous studies (Downey, 2001; Spitze & Trent, 2006; Zajone & Markus, 1975), which often targeted a single factor such as gender differences, failing to consider the possibility that other factors have an impact.

This study is designed to address this deficit, by examining previous research into the impact of other key factors such as kinship, family composition and household dynamics. Previous research conducted by Stocker et al. (1997) supports this approach, concluding that further research is required into sibling relationships, most notably how they can differ across a spectrum of emotions from supportive and warm to conflicting and rivalry based. As sibling’s transition into early adulthood, the sibling relationship may become less stretched due to a decrease in face to face contact, but it remains important. Individuals will often turn to their sibling during times of crisis (Bedford, 1998) and can be there as a friend (Connidis & Davies, 1992). Thus, the outlined project aims to gain a greater understanding of this phase through an investigation of individuals’ personal experiences.

Research conducted in the past has used quantitative methods and aimed to understand correlations (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006; Denscombe, 2007; Downey & Condron, 2004; Muijs, 2011). Results are conflicting with some suggesting that the number of siblings, birth order and gender impact sibling bonds (Bank, 1982; Downey, 1995; Glotzer, 2006), whilst other research suggests that the bond is due to other significant relationships within the family such as parents and life events (Bossard & Boll, 1956; Parsons & Bales, 1955). The aim of the study is therefore to understand where future research should be focused. This will be achieved through the analysis of a small number of individual interviews.

**Sibling Relationship Theories**

Even though siblings are a fixture within family life, research into sibling’s relationships trails that of other family relationships (Boer, Dunn & Dunn, 2013; Uhlenberg, 2004). The basis for research into the relationship has been shaped by various theoretical perspectives which, will be discussed in line with the results from the study in the hope that current understanding into the sibling relationship can be advanced further. The psychoanalytic-evolutionary perspective
includes Bowlby’s (1969) attachment theory, which suggests a strong sense of security and foundation are formed through a healthy parent-child bond. However, the theory also argues that a sibling can also provide such an attachment, especially if the parent-child bond is strained or non-existent (i.e. foster children or those from difficult backgrounds). Also, part of the psychoanalytic-evolutionary approach is Adler’s theory of individual psychology first published in 1935 (Adler, 1982), which argued that sibling influences were central to personality development. If the sibling bond is so important with regards to the development of an individual’s personality it should have long term consequences for the ways in which siblings interact in later life. Thus, the current study will explore how participants believe their siblings may have influenced their development compared to their parents. Research has shown that this is the case with individuals maintaining a strong bond from childhood to adulthood (Cicirelli, 2013; Scharf, Shulman & Avigad-Spitz, 2005). However, research has also found that this bond is strained at times during adolescence (Shalash, Wood & Parker, 2013), at a time many young adults begin university.

Another approach to the relationship is the Social Psychological perspective, that focuses on how others influence individual’s development, examining the social psychological processes involved (Whiteman et al., 2011). Social comparison theory suggests that individuals naturally evaluate themselves based on how they compare to others (Festinger, 1954) implying a very changeable developmental experience.

As an individual’s social groups change (based on success or failure or other factors) they alter their social group and therefore view norms in a different way. If an individual begins to socialise with a different group, they compare themselves against the more ‘successful’ group. A key determinant in this theory is motivation; rather than being content with achievements, individuals seek more challenges to compete with the new comparison group (Buunk, Gibbons & Buunk, 2013; Suls & Wheeler, 2013). The theory therefore, suggests that the distance between siblings is caused by individual’s belief that they can develop/learn more by forming new relationships; University provides an opportunity for new friendships and personal development and it is important to understand individual’s experiences of this whilst it is ongoing.

Bandura’s (1977) Social Learning Theory is another leading approach in sibling research with social learning processes the most commonly used set of mechanisms describing the dynamics of the sibling relationships (Whiteman et al., 2011). The theory implies that all family members
are important role models for learning including siblings, notably some of these processes will be negative, as individuals may imitate the more negative aspects of the relationship. Finally, Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986) developed the ecological systems theory which aims to explain how a child's environment can affect their development and growth. For example, a sibling attending university could have drastic effects on a younger sibling’s environment at home.

Although these theories go a long way in explaining how sibling attachments form and their importance in an individual’s development, they fail to explain how relationship dynamics change throughout life. Factors such as moving away from home to university may have a beneficial effect or, indeed place additional strain on sibling relationships which is currently not considered in psychological literature.

The development of the sibling relationship

Research implies that individual’s feelings about interacting with their siblings will differ as they develop and contend with the challenges adulthood presents. Adults face different psychological issues at different life stages (Neugarten, 1969), and these issues might have a strong impact on how, when and why siblings interact. For example, in young adulthood, issues of intimacy and family formation are salient, and therefore maintaining existing relationships becomes less important.

Middle age brings new issues relating to the creation of a legacy and to the development of a ‘new’ family (Partner and children) (Connidis, 2007; Voorpostel & Van der Lippe, 2007). These issues keep individuals focused on the future rather than the past. However later life brings new opportunities with evidence suggesting that siblings tend to return to a level of closeness experienced at childhood (Gold, 1989). Parsons (1943) describes family relationships as groups of “nested circles”. During childhood siblings are generally to be found in the “inner circle” but this may change as they age with life circumstances changing, causing them to move to the outer circles (White & Riedmann, 1992). This research underlines that there is a change in the relationship, however fails to explain when this change takes place/what triggers this change. Hence the following research intends to focus on the period between childhood and middle age to understand this shift from inner to outer social circles.

The sibling relationship is a complex one, for example some may view it as a source of friendship and support (Connidis & Davies, 1990; O’Bryant, 1988) but for others it is a source of conflict and rivalry (Allan, 1977; Bedford, 1998; Connidis, 2007). However, research into the sibling relationship generally agrees that periods of time characterised by conflict and
violence between siblings has little impact on the long-term relationship (Ross & Milgram, 1982). Indeed, siblings often find it easier to forgive each other than they do others inside and outside the family group. A relationship characterised by rivalry and hostility can also have adverse effects on development (Sanders, 2004) but these are often extreme cases, with moderate conflict possibly aiding siblings to acquire social skills such as negotiation (Stormshak et al., 1996). To that end, this project investigates how individuals believe these influences impacted their own relationship(s).

Generally adult siblings live separately and have volitional relationship where there see each other from time to time (Cicirelli, 1994). Stocker et al. (1997) suggested that a sibling’s perception of their relationship could have an influence on their interactions. Once a sibling leaves home for reasons such as university, siblings parents are often the instrumental factor in initiating interaction by organising family occasions and passing ‘news’ from one to another (Allan, 1977). The average adult is thought to have some contact with a sibling once or twice a month for 60 or 70 years after leaving home (White & Riedmann, 1992), therefore it is important to understand when and why a decrease in contact occurs.

Leaving Home

After children leave their family home, their parents are often left with an ‘empty nest’, which can lead to maladaptive responses such as grief, depression, loss and anxiety (Rosen, Ackerman & Zosky, 2002). This has been labelled as ‘empty nest syndrome’ and may cause individuals to have an identity crisis. Research into the impact of a child leaving home focuses around the effects on parents and the parent-child bond, neglecting the effects on a sibling when the older sibling(s) leave home. It is an important area of research because the relationship siblings have differed from that of the parent-child relationship, and when a sibling moves out they are losing an aspect of who they are. The responses to ‘empty nest syndrome’ will also occur at different times, as the parents still have a child at home, which can lead to the remaining sibling facing the adverse effects alone. Currently research fails to address the possibility of siblings suffering from ‘empty nest syndrome’ and thus there is no solution to prevent individuals from suffering alone. The current study will help advance research into how one child leaving ‘the nest’ impacts on the sibling(s) they leave behind.

Conclusions and Aims

There is not yet a clear understanding of what significant life events impact on the sibling relationship and to what extent the consequences are of importance to current psychological
issues. Due to the difficulty with defining and operationalising psychological issues, past literature has focused on the association of age, demographic factors, and life events with regards to how sibling’s relationships change.

There is a vast amount of research that looks at how the relationship impacts on development in childhood and how in adulthood the relationship takes on a different form. Lang and Fingerman (2003) conclude that past research has focused on the sibling relationship in childhood and adulthood, highlighting an existing gap in the literature. This gap explores the transitional period between childhood and adulthood, whereby siblings begin to become more distant due to factors such as geography and social lives.

The aim of this study is to use a qualitative approach to explore the experiences of being an individual who has recently moved away from their siblings for university. More specifically it will look at how the relationship has changed with regards to communication and home life, centring around the positive and negative feelings attributed to this change.

Three research questions that need to be addressed in the research are; Does the sibling relationship change during late adolescence and early adulthood? Is university associated with changes in the sibling relationship? Is there a common and identifiable pattern of change across the student population? A systematic evaluation of patterns of change in the sibling relationship should establish a frame of reference in which the sibling relationship can be better understood.
CHAPTER 2: METHOD

Design
The methodology used in this study is qualitative in nature, utilising semi-structured interviews. Participants were invited to answer questions surrounding their perceptions and experiences of the sibling relationship and how university impacted this.

Participants
The sample was based on participants over the age of 18, of both sexes, studying at a university in South Wales, each participant had at least one sibling. The student population is ideal because universities bring together individuals of varying ages, cultures and social backgrounds. The student population is likely to include a range of individuals who have spent a differing amount of time away from their siblings as they begin to embark on their own life-journey (Scharf, Shulman, & Avigad-Spitz, 2005). All five participants were chosen using a purposive sample, all were obtained through Cardiff Metropolitan's Participant Panel, to be considered eligible, participants were required to have at least one sibling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Siblings</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Birth Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arya</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robb</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Male, Male</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sansa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Male, Male, Male</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Male, Female, Female</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Participants information

Materials
Prior to interviews the materials required included a participant information sheet (appendix 1) and consent form (appendix 2), these detail the purpose of the study, the potential positive/negative consequences and information around anonymity, confidentiality and withdrawal rights. Some pre-set questions (appendix 3) created by the researcher were used to ensure relevant information is obtained. Finally, a recording device in the form of a Dictaphone was used to maintain a record of the participants responses, this information remained in a locked cabinet for the duration of the analysis before being destroyed at the end of the study.
Development of semi-structured interview

Dunn (2005) suggests semi-structured interviews require establishment and construction therefore the questionnaire was based on previous academic literature relevant to the study aims, for example, family composition and frequency/type of communication (McHale et al., 2012). The use of a semi-structured interview allowed for personal feelings and emotions to be expressed by the participants (Aleandri & Russo, 2015).

Open-ended questions were used throughout the semi-structured interview, for example, “Since attending university how has contact with your siblings changed?”, as they were flexible in design and allowed participants to reveal their experiences, beliefs, and opinions (Ramirez-Rubio, Brooks, Amador, Kaufman, Weiner & Scammell, 2013). Once suitable questions were constructed they were arranged into an appropriate sequence beginning with basic information/closed questions followed by open-ended questions.

Questions were designed to avoid jargon and over complicate questions, negatively impacting participants’ responses. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the interviewer to control the direction of the interview and directing it into new pathways that had perhaps not previously been considered (Gray, 2009).

Ethical Considerations

Ethics form was approved by Cardiff Metropolitan University (reference number: 9949) on 31st January 2018. Participants names were not disclosed at any point, and they were each given a pseudonym (for example; Aryra). Potential risks the participant and researcher could experience included emotional distress from sensitive subjects, as well as any language and cultural differences. An information sheet was given to each participant prior to the interviews that provided sources of support if necessary, as well as contact information and right to withdraw. All participants gave informed consent as they were all over the age of eighteen, and no deception was used in this study.

Procedure

To begin, a rough list of important areas was created to cover in the interviews, allowing the formation of pre-set questions. After ethical approval was obtained participants were recruited via the psychology participant panel, allowing access to the psychology undergraduate population, the inclusion criteria were displayed in the studies description ‘Must have at least one sibling’. Interviews then took place in a private room on the university campus closed off
from visual and auditory distractions. Prior to beginning the interviews participants were presented with an information sheet which contained the aim of the study, contact information for the researcher/ research supervisor and a consent form explaining the participant’s right to withdraw, anonymity and confidentiality. Questions were then asked about the number of siblings, age and gender differences, level of contact and family background; themes which, have been generated in a great deal of previous research (Bank, 1982; Downey, 1995; Glotzer, 2006). The interview process lasted around 10 minutes to complete and the participants were granted two credits for their participation. Lastly the data was transcribed word for word, allowing the researcher to further familiarise themselves with it, the participants were also allowed access to the transcript if they wished via email correspondence with the researcher.

**Method of Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Familiarisation of data</td>
<td>Transcribing data, reading and rereading the data, noting down initial ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Generating initial codes</td>
<td>Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Searching for themes</td>
<td>Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reviewing themes</td>
<td>Checking in the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic „map” of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Defining and naming themes</td>
<td>Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Producing report</td>
<td>The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

A qualitative method was viewed as superior to quantitative methods, it provides descriptive data of personal opinions and experiences (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015), something quantitative research is unable to achieve (Punch, 2013). Each audio recording was transcribed and then analysed using the qualitative method of Thematic Analysis (Braun, & Clarke, 2006). Qualitative methods such as interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith, 2011) are ‘theoretically bounded’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and aim to explore interpretations of unique individual experiences. Thematic Analysis approach was chosen as it is the most appropriate method used to identify, analyse and report various patterns or themes found within a data set, and it is considered the most appropriate method that seeks to discover themes using
interpretations (Alhojailan, 2012; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013; Willig, 2013). It can be used to highlight specific similarities and differences across various data sets, and allows for detailed descriptions, although this approach is often used in psychological research, it is poorly defined and rarely acknowledged (Boyatzis, 1998). Braun and Clarke (2006) proposed six steps in the thematic analysis approach, these were carried out in a correct and efficient manner. The interviews took place in a quiet room and each took between 10-25 minutes.
CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

The analysis process revealed five main themes; Conflict and Rivalry, Comfort and Support, Communication, Different Social Worlds and Changes at Home. Each of these themes consists of subthemes and further emergent themes. Each theme and some of the corresponding subthemes will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The diagram below (Figure 1) displays all five themes and a selection of corresponding subthemes.

![Figure 1 - Mind Map Displaying Emergent Themes & Subthemes](image)

Key: (Participant Pseudonym, Page Number = P, Line Number = L)

Different Social Worlds

With all the participants currently studying at university, they are all leading very different lives with regards to commitments and responsibilities. This in turn has made it more difficult to balance both commitments to university with maintaining the relationship they had with their siblings prior to attending university.
“I work as well, so I can’t get home that much” (Robb, P2, L45)

“we now lead two separate lives completely. Whereas before she kind of knew what I’d been doing, my daily stuff, now If I go back she has no idea what I’ve been doing” (Arya, P3, L65-67)

Participants begin to invest more time and interest in new friends, university work and entering employment, which results in difficulties maintaining the same sibling relationship. These commitments and responsibilities are often new to these individuals; thus, they must find a way of balancing them with maintaining their relationship, which can take time and motivation, which may be lacking in a period characterised by change.

University has had an adverse impact on participants opportunities to see their siblings, and through the tone of voice it appeared that Jon was saddened by this. He highlighted work specifically as an aspect of university that has impacted on their relationship, which would not have been a problem prior to attending university.

“I feel as though when I ring when I ring him he’s in uni or when he rings me I’m in work or stuff like that, it breaks down, you know I think we’ve got different social lives in that respect.” (Jon, P2, L33-35)

Alternatively, Robb was much more upbeat when discussing how university has had an impact on his relationship, explaining that he and his brother are both motivated to keep in contact, which appears to be enough that the relationship would not negatively impact it.

“now we actually make a conscious effort to go out of our ways to message each other” (Robb, P2, L33-34)

On the other hand, some of the participants found that spending more time away from their sibling(s) was just part of the process of growing up and moving forward with their own lives. Perhaps this is due to the perceptions of university which adolescence have prior to attending, and therefore place higher priority with their new social groups leading to changes in the relationship.

“a lot of people get homesick and miss people but there’s so much going on, like I was older and had worked for a couple years before uni” (Sansa, P3, L73-74)
“I wasn’t that bothered me, I think it was just the freedom, when you get, when you keep yourself busy, you’re not as bothered” (Jon, P2, L44-45)

The way in which Jon discusses that moving away did not bother him, appears to be due to the influence of new found independence which university provides to individuals. He explains that he does not speak to them often as this would mean sacrificing time which he does not appear to have due to the commitments and responsibilities brought on by university. Sansa also came across as less concerned with the changes in the relationship because the changes have allowed her an escape from the ‘hectic’ upbringing she had with three brothers.

“I liked it to be honest, it was is nice, peaceful, growing up with three brothers was hard and hectic” (Sansa, P3, L69-70)

Conflict and Rivalry

There are often complex challenges involved within any sibling relationship, especially in childhood, as siblings develop skills such as compromising. Many of the participants spoke about how conflict and rivalry between them and their siblings has impacted upon their relationship now they have moved away.

“oh, so much relief, I think we were getting on top of each other, so being able to move away I think I kind of appreciated the contact we did have more, and the fact that what we were talking about completely changed” (Arya, P2, L33-35)

“we argued less because when we seen each other there was nothing really to argue about.” (Cat, P1, L26-27)

Participants all seemed to have experienced conflict with their siblings when they were younger and now look back at it as a common characteristic of the sibling relationship which, has not had a significant impact on their enduring relationship.

“we used to argue a lot and uhm fight” (Robb, P1, L4)

“classic sibling stuff, like who’s got the tv remote and just who's better at stuff” (Robb, P1, L7-8)
Arya emphasises that they would argue over small things and the influence of living in close proximity, this problem does not exist when he is at university and therefore the issues surrounding relationship conflict become less of a concern.

“we bickered a lot, I think because were both girls, neither of us like to admit that we stole each other’s clothes, so we made a bit of an issue if we found out” (Arya, P1, L11-12)

“she’d come in my room and take stuff and she doesn’t have that much opportunity to do it now, and I used to do the same to her.” (Cat, P2, L48-49)

As some of the participants reflected on the conflict which they experienced with their sibling they mentioned their parents, which appears to highlight that when siblings are younger there is competition for attention.

“general sibling stuff, fighting and the younger one would always get his way with mum and stuff and that caused arguments” (Sansa, P1, L29-30)

“there was a lot of fighting for our parent’s attention” (Arya, P1, L14)

**Comfort and Support**

Although the sibling relationship often involves various conflicts it can also be extremely meaningful and involves a bond which is different from any other, it frequently involves positive experiences. The importance of siblings is highlighted throughout the participants interviews and how university has impacted individual’s feelings of closeness within the family. All the participants were clear about how their siblings had been there for them to support in what they were doing or comfort them when they were distressed. Many of them stressed that their siblings had enabled them to cope with managing changes and stresses in their life.

“I would ring her for support and in hard situations.” (Arya, P2, L44-45)

“he was more like a father figure” (Sansa, P1, L21)
The longevity of the relationship and the shared experiences represent the common ground which siblings share, and this is accentuated by the reciprocal nature of the relationship during a period of change, for not only the sibling moving away but those staying home. The support does not have to be from the sibling at home, and as Jon suggests those who have experienced moving out have the knowledge to support their siblings through similar experiences.

“In communications a lot higher now it’s a lot more, but I think that’s down to him, his experiences, it’s a lot more comforting and supporting” (Jon, P2, L57-58)

Although the sibling bond can be characterised by the unconditional support for one another, the participants have highlighted how they have noticed themselves caring more about their siblings since they have been distanced.

“I care for my siblings more than I use to” (Robb, P2, L38-39)

The support and comfort provided by a sibling is reciprocal, as the individuals have grown up they have both provided and benefited from the sibling bond. Moving away to university has facilitated this change because individuals are in a new environment and need support from those they believe can provide it, of which siblings are an ideal option along with parents and old friends.

“Conscious effort to go out of our ways to message each other, like see how it’s doing and then if I ring up or they ring me then” (Robb, P2, L34-35)

**Communication**

Growing up, siblings spend much of their childhood in close proximity to one another, with some exceptions. This means that siblings will be in face to face contact daily, something that is unlikely to happen at university as most students move away from home and into halls of residence or into a house/flat with friends.

The interviews show us how various types of communication become influential in the maintenance of the sibling relationship. The type of communication which appeared to be the most common form used by the participations was social media platforms, because they allow individuals to communicate with one another even when they are not available simultaneously.
“I’d say we have some form of contact every day, in the sense she might tag me in something on Facebook or Instagram” (Arya, P1, L28-29)

“There’s a family group chat we have” (Jon, P2, L33)

It is worth noting that although communication through social media is a common practice now between siblings, it does appear to correlate with the age gap between siblings. The participants with multiple siblings were in more frequent contact with siblings nearer to their age and contact with siblings much younger than them through their parents.

“I’ll ring mum and ask her about Harvey the younger one, just see how he’s doing” (Sansa, P1, L66)

“my sisters in fact I haven’ spoken to on the phone for about a year” (Jon, P2, L36-37)

Siblings closer in age are likely going through similar experiences and therefore contact is likely to involve communication which both parties are more invested in.

“the oldest one ill message him see how he is, because he’s got kids and stuff, and I keep in contact with them, the one at uni we don’t keep in contact” (Sansa, P2, L62-64)

Participants have also indicated how communication with their sibling has changed due to attending university, as communication has evolved from face to face communication.

“I speak to them more often than I use to” (Robb, P1, L17)

Changes at Home

As children grow they begin to take up different roles in their relationships and with the household, which impacts on their development. By removing one sibling there will be a shift in how the other siblings readjust with regards to responsibilities and relationships with parents or other siblings. The interviews have some exploration of the different aspects of change at home which the participants themselves have noticed since attending university.
An important factor stressed by the participants was the change in how they were treated when they returned home. In most cases they were no longer responsible for helping their parents around the house.

“I think my parents treat me now as more of a guest, whereas before I would be doing an equal amount of housework, well I would always do more, but I don’t do any housework now when I go home.” (Arya, P2, L55-57)

“They always take me out for food and treat me well and that and a bit like a guest.”

(Robb, P2, L43-44)

This suggests that they have been given a greater level of independence, whereas the siblings who remained at home were still required to help their parents. Results suggest that when some individual moves away from home their siblings become more responsible with regards to supporting their parents, usually taking this responsibility from the older sibling.

“I don’t do any housework now when I go home. I’m a guest to them and think my sister kind of grudges that a little bit because she then has to do a little bit more.” (Arya, P2, L57-58)

The participants did stress that they did not believe their siblings had to help as much as when they were at home themselves, which is perhaps due to their parents granting greater independence to their siblings when they leave home for university.

“They do ask them to do the odd job like maybe hoover downstairs or the dishes every now and again, but it’s nowhere near as much as what it was like when I was there”

(Robb, P2, L48-50)

Participants also emphasised the changes in their relationship with their parents and how this impacted their sibling’s relationship with their parents. This is an important issue because these changes initiated by one sibling leaving for university has an impact on the development of the other siblings.

“Yes, my dad secluded, I remember my brother telling me my dad went a lot quieter”

(Jon, P3, L74)
However, the uniqueness of the sibling bond and familial relationships is highlighted by the fact that even though most participants did see changes in their relationships, one participant felt that there was none when she left.

“No, I’d say it’s about the same, really, I go home and it’s like it never changed really”
(Sansa, P3, L82-83)

Summary of Results

The themes identified within the research highlight the influence which moving away from home, to attend university, can have upon the sibling relationship. When leaving home for university, individuals become exposed to new experiences and become largely independent. Thus, the sibling relationship can become of lesser focus. However, this independence can help to facilitate improvements in the relationship with regards to reducing sibling conflict, and heightening displays of affection. Furthermore, interactions between sibling’s change in different ways, dependant on the individual. It is however important to note the significance of technological advancements in enabling siblings to communicate regardless of distance with relative ease.
CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to use a qualitative approach to gain a greater understanding of how attending university can have an impact on an individual’s relationship with their siblings. The rationale was influenced by previous research which focused on how different sibling relationships are between childhood and adulthood (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990). Initial research highlighted the extent that siblings are often neglected by most researchers, even though in the UK and US around 80% of children grow up with at least one brother or sister (Pike, Coldwell, & Dunn, 2009). Literature focuses on sibling relationships throughout childhood, and centres around how these relationships can influence social, emotional, cognitive and moral development (Howe & Recchia, 2014).

McHale et al. (2012) however, argues that sibling relationships are far more diverse and complex, changing over time and dependant on family and environmental context including significant life events. One such example could be attending university.

Lang and Fingerman (2003) published a book which addresses the transitional period and argues that individuals engage in relationships which will provide opportunities and skills. In childhood these can be achieved from familiar contacts such as parents and siblings, however as individuals grow into young adults their social encounters are very different. Siblings become less ‘useful’ in this context and therefore the relationship evolves, this is also influenced by other factors such as contact time (work/school), geographical location and shared spaces (halls of residence/societies). The idea that siblings engage with each other less over time because they are less ‘useful’ is controversial because each relationship is unique. However, results suggest that they do become less ‘useful’ in areas such as development but the relationship can be valuable for other reasons such as emotional support.

Findings in Relation to Past Research

Five broad themes were found throughout interviews, these were conflict and rivalry, comfort and support, communication, different social worlds and changes at home. Each of these themes consisted of subthemes and further emergent themes. When current findings are considered in conjunction with previous studies, there are several overlapping areas. Primarily the change from an argumentative to a more egalitarian relationship, which appears to be associated with age-related changes in individual siblings. There remains a debate to when this occurs, with suggestions it occurs as early as 12 or as late as 25 years old (Raffaelli, 1992). The
findings in this study suggest that by the time the eldest sibling attends university this may have already taken place.

Every sibling relationship differs and therefore explains why research can be so conflicting. As younger siblings age they become more self-reliant and competent, thus they require less from their older siblings in terms of developmental needs. The gap in terms of development therefore narrows as they age, for example a 3-year-old will be far less developed than their 6-year-old sibling, when compared to the same siblings at 18 and 21 years old. Consequently, as sibling’s developmental needs become more similar, their relationship becomes more balanced (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990). This pattern, which also appeared in the research has several parallels to research into the changes in the parent-child relationship during adolescence, whereby there is a shift in authority structures (Younis & Smollar, 1989).

The changes which occur in a sibling relationship are unique not only between sets of siblings, but individual siblings will have different experiences depending on whether they are a younger, middle or elder child. An older sibling is placed in a position of authority and responsibility they would not have with their parents or if they were an only child. Previous research has suggested that the sibling relationship can be characterised by property disputes (Ross, 1996) and competition for attention (Teti, 2002) and this appears to be the case in the findings of this study. However, the results from this research suggest that these characteristics diminish as the siblings age, and the younger siblings become more equal.

In the past, research into this age group has been neglected because the period is often one of distance between siblings (Cox, 2010; Lamb & Sutton-Smith, 2014). This phase has been linked to personal development and increased interest in new social groups among other lifestyle changes (Scharf, Shulman, & Avigad-Spitz, 2005). The results of this study appear to support this theory with participants explaining how it has become increasingly difficult to make time for their siblings. These results can easily be linked to social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), whereby the siblings attending university have met new social groups to compare themselves too, and therefore spend less time with older, ‘less’ successful groups, including their sibling(s). This is not done out of malice or dislike, but rather through individuals motivation to develop and learn more by forming new relationships, university provides an opportunity for these new friendships and personal development. This theory may also explain why some siblings move from an individual’s ‘inner’ circle outwards during adolescence as explained by Parsons (1943), which had previously failed to explain what
triggers the changes. Similarly, Tanner’s (2006) re-centering framework explains how an individual adjusts their focus toward their new social relationships and spends less time on their family relationships.

Leaving home for a more permanent residence, be this an individual residence or shared accommodation at university appears to affect individual’s sibling relationship differently. The nature of the relationship prior to leaving the home may have lingering effects on the individual. Some examples that appear from the research; warm and supportive relationships may cause feelings of loss when it is not there anymore, but relationships built on conflict, moving out could result in an element of stress relief. When leaving home, the sibling relationships evolves (Allan, 1977; White & Riedmann, 1992), and this allows them to develop greater appreciation for one another (White, 2001) and the departing sibling could once again act as a role model if they can successfully negotiate their new-found independence. Although leaving home puts greater physical distance between siblings it does not appear to have had a major impact on the participants in this study, as they remained in contact on a regular basis albeit in a variety of different ways. This is contradictory of research which suggest that contact decreased significantly in early adulthood (Stocker et al., 1997), which may be a result of the method used in that research, whereby contact was defined through proximity, giving and receiving help. The issue with this is that contact would be defined differently in other studies as siblings speak with one another regularly and it is not always for help or because they are geographically close. The results of such findings may also be indicative of the fact that social media had yet to be established, mobile phones were costly to purchase and run, e-mail was still in its early stages of development so therefore, forms of long-distance communication were not readily available when the research was conducted in 1997. The advancements of technology over the past 20-30 years has had a major impact upon how individuals communicate with each other from a very young age. This has caused a lot of research to become outdated (Stocker et al., 1997; White & Riedmann, 1992), thus it is important that future research reflects upon old theories which may need to be brought into the present day.

The importance of research into this area cannot be underestimated, leaving home can be a daunting experience and having a positive sibling relationship can make this easier, as it has been associated with higher self-esteem, academic competence, and empathy (Volling, 2003).

According to Conger and Little (2010) a supportive relationship can be beneficial during times of change. This highlights the importance of the sibling relationship whilst attending university.
because it is a situation many can struggle with, such is the risk for depression in college-age students (Schulenberg & Zarrett, 2006; Costello, Swendsen, Rose, & Dierker, 2008). Siblings are able to offer support which could be essential in promoting mental health. This is consistent with Goetting’s (1986) assessment that emotional support is a fundamental function of the sibling relationship across the life-span. The basis of a strong sibling relationship in adulthood could be built on the early period after leaving home, whereby the departing sibling makes the choice about how much contact/type of contact they have with their siblings. The research conducted appears to show how these choices have impacted the relationship after a significant time since leaving home, with all participants having very different experiences.

Limitations and Future Research

For those who are looking to pursue research into the sibling relationship and the factors that influence it, this study highlights some areas in which future research is needed. Principally it is important that methods are developed for direct measurement of the potential relationship influencing factors. Currently, factors which influence the sibling relationship are deduced through patterns found across different sibling relationships, such as when the number of siblings is suggested to impact future closeness (Ross & Milgram, 1982), or intellectual development (Downey, 2001). This is problematic because findings that are seen to negatively influence the relationship in one group of siblings may not have the same impact on another group and therefore the sample can cause an underestimation of certain influences. Research may need to utilise quantitative methods more effectively to determine with the use of larger samples how reliable and valid the findings into influencing factors are.

The results from this study mainly focus around the eldest siblings in the family, expanding future research to investigate the experiences of younger siblings would therefore add a further dimension to our understanding of this complex area (Whiteman, McHale, & Soli, 2011). These differences may be due to the separation and how individuals struggle with physical separation, the results suggest that the eldest separate themselves to an extent from the family home, this may result in the younger sibling attempting to be more mature and acting like their older sibling. However, this should be addressed in future research.

Sibling relationship research would also benefit from examining the increasingly diverse family and larger sociocultural contexts (advancements in technology) in which siblings interact. Most of the research reviewed in this study derive from European and American families. In recent years demographic changes in rates of cohabitation, marriage, divorce, and
multiple births, perhaps due to societal changes have resulted in substantial diversity in the family contexts, however the sibling relationship remains embedded within this. Comparative research such as this have successfully documented differences in sibling relationships (Deater-Deckard et al., 2002; Noller, Feeney, Sheehan, Darlington & Rogers, 2008) but, a more process-oriented approach is important for understanding how and why sibling relationships develop differently in different contexts such as university.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the aim of the study was to explore the experiences of being an individual who has recently moved away from their siblings for university and the impact on the sibling relationship. A semi-structured interview was used alongside a qualitative design to gain an in-depth account of participants’ experiences (Smith, 2007), and a thematic analysis was then used to analyse the data. Five main themes were identified from the data; different social worlds, conflict & rivalry, comfort and support, communication types and changes at home.

Differences in sibling’s social worlds and the geographical distance between them were important factors, dictating how and how often they communicate, why and what about. The level of conflict and rivalry along with the differing forms of comfort and support appears to play an important role in the type of relationship between siblings. Lastly the changes at homes appear to depend more on the dynamics of the sibling relationship in childhood and how the removal of one sibling has impacted the home environment, such as parent-child relationships. Future research should be conducted on adolescent perspectives of moving away from home, studies could focus on more specific aspects or continue to explore experiences in a broader sense. Overall there is a gap in the field of sibling relationship research when it comes to separation from one another (Cox, 2010). Various studies focus on childhood and adulthood; however, adolescent experiences bring different challenges and new roles for siblings, these aspects therefore need more attention (Tsao et al., 2012).

**Reflective Analysis**

The semi-structured interview is conducted through verbal exchanges and therefore its effectiveness can depend upon the communication skills of the interviewer (Newton, 2010). These skills include the ability to listen attentively, pause, probe and prompt where appropriate (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013), I personally do not believe that as the interviewer I managed to effectively utilise these skills to the best of my ability and in turn perhaps failed to gain the best possible results from the interviews. Without the ability to establish a rapport...
through sharing my own accounts it is possible that the participants did not have complete trust when sharing their experiences, possibly preventing them from talking freely (Opie, 2004).

An individual’s interpretation is formed by their socio-cultural and past experiences, these experiences act as a basis for researcher’s interests (Bryman, 2008). Consequently, the level of interpretation with the research is specific to my own experiences. It is also possible that those who read through the results interpret the data differently and draw other conclusions. Therefore, my role as the researcher may have had an impact upon the findings of the study. Currently studying at university with three younger siblings I found it easy to relate to several of the participants experiences. I could personally relate to some of the difficulties they encountered but also appreciate the positive impact that it had, having experienced this myself. This may have led to a slight bias with regards to the identification of themes because the rereading of transcripts may have prompted emotional responses which influenced my interpretation.
REFERENCES


Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

Title of Project: The Impact of attending university on the sibling relationship

Participant information sheet

The study
This study will explore the differences in sibling relationships within the student population.

What would happen if you agree to participate?
Before the study can begin, the participant will need to read the participant information sheet and give their consent to proceed. Participants will then engage in a semi-structured interview with the researcher. These interviews will be conducted on a one-on-one basis with only the participant and the researcher in the room. The interviews will take place within a lab on university campus. The semi-structured interview will be based on pre-determined questions and will engage participants to explore experiences of their childhood, relationships with their siblings. The participant’s information will be recorded and then transcribed before a thematic analysis will be conducted. The interview will take no longer than 30 minutes to complete.

Exclusion criteria
A participant will be excluded if they do not have a minimum of one sibling and/or are under the age of 18.

Potential Risk
Potential risks for the participants are that they make become bored and fatigued if the interview lasts for longer than expected. The participant may become emotional distressed or slightly anxious and may become upset.

If you find that you need additional support after participating in the study, please refer to:
Student Services (Cardiff Metropolitan University): studentservices@cardiffmet.ac.uk / 02920 416170
Or
Relate: 03001001234

Potential benefits
An insight into how psychological research is conducted and possibly an insight into why the participant has the relationship they do with their sibling.

Withdrawal, anonymity and confidentiality
Participants may withdraw from the study at any point during the interview stage. The participant can view their transcript and decide to withdraw their data for up to 5 days after completion of the study. If a participant wishes to withdraw their data after the interviews have been completed and analysis has begun, any decision for a participant to withdraw from the study would be at the discretion of the researcher. To withdraw data, participants will be required to email the researcher using the email provided at the bottom of the page and quote the number provided to them at the time the study took place. The data collected from the interviews will only be discussed between the researcher and the researcher’s supervisor. The participant’s real names will not be used, and another person’s name is revealed, they will be changed within the research. All data will be stored on a password protected computer with only the researcher having access to it.
Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Reference Number:

Participant name or Study ID Number:

Title of Project: The Impact of attending university on the sibling relationship.

Name of Researcher:

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time before leaving the experiment, without giving any reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature of person taking consent
Appendix 3: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

1. How many siblings do you have altogether?
   - Older/Younger
   - Step Siblings/Half Siblings
   - Brother/Sister

2. Growing up, how close were you and your sibling throughout your childhood?

3. Were there any difficulties growing up with your sibling?

4. What 3 Characteristics would you use to describe yourself?

5. What 3 Characteristics would you use to describe your sibling?

6. First to go to University?
   Yes – Interview will be focus on relationship with siblings at home
   No – will focus on relationship with sibling that went to university

7. When you/sibling went to university was it the first time you had spent significant time apart?

8. How often were you in contact with your siblings and how did you stay in contact?

9. What were your initial feelings about spending long periods of time without face to face contact?

10. Since attending university how has contact with your siblings change? i.e. less frequent or different form (phone or IM)

11. Did your feelings change about your sibling whilst you were away?

12. Has the dynamic of life at home changed with parents and/or other siblings?

13. How are interactions with your siblings when you return home from university? Is there more focus on being individuals?
## Appendix 4: Table of Quotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>Participant Name, Page Number, Line Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different Social Worlds</td>
<td>“I work as well, so I can’t get home that much”</td>
<td>Robb, 2, 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“we now lead two separate lives completely. Whereas before she kind of knew what I’d been doing, my daily stuff, now If I go back she has no idea what I’ve been doing”</td>
<td>Arya, 3, 65-67</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>“I feel as though when I ring when I ring him he’s in uni or when he rings me I’m in work or stuff like that, it breaks down, you know I think we’ve got different social lives in that respect.”</td>
<td>Jon, 2, 33-35</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“now we actually make a conscious effort to go out of our ways to message each other”</td>
<td>Robb, 2, 33-34</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>“a lot of people get homesick and miss people but there’s so much going on, like I was older and had worked for a couple years before uni”</td>
<td>Sansa, 3, 73-74</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I wasn’t that bothered me, I think it was just the freedom, when you get, when you keep yourself busy, you’re not as bothered”</td>
<td>Jon, 2, 44-45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I liked it to be honest, it was is nice, peaceful, growing up with three brothers was hard and hectic”</td>
<td>Sansa, 3, 69-70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict and Rivalry</td>
<td>“oh, so much relief, I think we were getting on top of each other, so being able to move away I think I kind of appreciated the contact we did have more, and the fact that what we were talking about completely changed”</td>
<td>Arya, 2, 33-35</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“we argued less because when we seen each other there was nothing really to argue about.”</td>
<td>Cat, 1, 26-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“we used to argue a lot and uhm fight”</td>
<td>Robb, 1, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“classic sibling stuff, like who’s got the tv remote and just who’s better at stuff”</td>
<td>Robb, 1, 7-8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“we bickered a lot, I think because were both girls, neither of us like to admit that we stole each other’s clothes, so we made a bit of an issue if we found out”</td>
<td>Arya, 1, 11-12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“just arguing all the time, taking each other’s stuff, basically that sort of stuff”</td>
<td>Cat, 1, 15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“she’d come in my room and take stuff and she doesn’t have that much opportunity to do it now, and I used to do the same to her.”</td>
<td>Cat, 2, 48-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“general sibling stuff, fighting and the younger one would always get his way with mum and stuff and that caused arguments”</td>
<td>Sansa, 1, 29-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“there was a lot of fighting for our parent’s attention”</td>
<td>Arya, 1, 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Comfort and support | “I would ring her for support and in hard situations.”  
“he was more like a father figure”  
“now communications a lot higher now it’s a lot more, but I think that’s down to him, his experiences, it’s a lot more comforting and supporting”  
“I care for my siblings more than I use to”  
“conscious effort to go out of our ways to message each other, like see how it’s doing and then if I ring up or they ring me then” | Arya, 2, 44-45  
Sansa, 1, 21  
Jon, 2, 57-58  
Robb, 2, 38-39  
Robb, 2, 34-35 |
|---|---|---|
| Communication | “I’d say we have some form of contact every day, in the sense she might tag me in something on Facebook or Instagram”  
“There’s a family group chat we have”  
“I’ll ring mum and ask her about Harvey the younger one, just see how he’s doing”  
“my sisters in fact I haven’ spoken to on the phone for about a year”  
“the oldest one ill message him see how he is, because he’s got kids and stuff, and I keep in contact with them, the one at uni we don’t keep in contact”  
“I speak to them more often than I use to” | Arya, 1, 28-29  
Jon, 2, 33  
Sansa, 1, 66  
Jon, 2, 36-37  
Sansa, 2, 62-64  
Robb, 1, 17 |
| Changes at Home | “I think my parents treat me now as more of a guest, whereas before I would be doing an equal amount of housework, well I would always do more, but I don’t do any housework now when I go home.”  
“They always take me out for food and treat me well and that and a bit like a guest.”  
“I don’t do any housework now when I go home. I’m a guest to them and think my sister kind of grudges that a little bit because she then has to do a little bit more.”  
“They do ask them to do the odd job like maybe hoover downstairs or the dishes every now and again, but it’s nowhere near as much as what it was like when I was there”  
“Yes, my dad secluded, I remember my brother telling me my dad went a lot quitter”  
“No, I’d say it’s about the same, really, I go home and its like it never changed really” | Arya, 2, 55-57  
Robb, 2, 43-44  
Arya, 2, 57-58  
Robb, 2, 48-50  
Jon, 3, 74  
Sansa, 3, 82-83 |
Appendix 5: Tables of Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Social Worlds</th>
<th>Conflict and Rivalry</th>
<th>Comfort and Support</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Changes at Home</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
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<td>Closeness</td>
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<td>Equal</td>
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<td>Arguing</td>
<td>Reciprocal</td>
<td>Text Messages</td>
<td>Independence</td>
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<td>Property Disputes</td>
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<td>Value Contact</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
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<td>Competition for Attention</td>
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<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Changes</td>
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<td>Staying home</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
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Signed: ____________________________

Date: __________ 20.04.18