Abstract

Research to date suggests that mothers determine their children’s level of independent mobility and that risk, particularly risks relating to ‘stranger danger’ and traffic accidents, are decisive in shaping mobility decisions. This research set out to demonstrate that the relationship between mothers, children, risk and mobility is more complex and contested, and requires an in-depth analysis using a theoretical framework based on literature relating to sociocultural theories of risk, feminist approaches to motherhood, social studies of childhood and theories of mobilities emerging from the social sciences. This study disentangles the myriad factors that contribute to mobility decision-making through the application of the concept of mobility history, which utilises and critiques theories of mobility and risk through a gender and generational perspective. The research applies recently developed visual methods of social research to capture and analyse both affective and experiential responses to everyday risk. In particular it facilitates the analysis of children’s demonstration of agency in this relatively unregulated temporal and spatial context.

The research adopted a qualitative, mixed method approach and was based in Brighton in southeast England. Twenty five young people filmed their journey to or from school, describing their feelings and responses to space as they travelled. This was followed by film elicitation interviews, providing further data to analyse the beliefs and meanings attached to risk and mobility. In addition, indepth interviews with the eighteen mothers provided an insight into the role of personal biography in mobility decision-making; the importance of social networking and local cultures of risk; the impacts of lifestage on risk landscapes; and the inextricable links between risk and cultures of mothering and blame. The research found that both mothers and children demonstrate complex patterns of decision-making in terms of their journey to school mobilities and the concept of mobility history enables the exploration of not only the relevant influential factors in mobility decision-making, but also a way of interrelating these factors and thereby explaining their relative impacts in different temporal and spatial contexts. Mobility histories are contingent on a number of socio-cultural factors including gender and generation, which are the focus of this study. In addition, the thesis has shown that the application of video and film elicitation interviews is a valuable research tool in researching with children as they can: be empowering; participative; facilitate both reflexivity and contextualisation; allow the analysis of non verbal responses; and facilitate the triangulation of data.
## Contents

**Chapter 1 Introduction** ............................................................... 8  
  Children's and mothers' risk and mobilities: the key issues ........................................... 10  
  Addressing knowledge gaps .............................................................................. 12  
  Introducing the key concepts ............................................................................ 15  
  Introducing the key arguments ........................................................................... 17  
  Methodology and methods .................................................................................. 19  

**Chapter 2 Motherhood, risk, and mobility** ............................................ 22  
  Introduction ....................................................................................................... 22  
  Constructing motherhood .................................................................................. 23  
  Exploring risk .................................................................................................... 29  
  Risk and motherhood in mobile space ................................................................ 39  
  Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 52  

**Chapter 3 Childhood, risk and the mobilities of the school journey** ............ 55  
  Cultures of childhood ......................................................................................... 56  
  Space and the social studies of childhood .......................................................... 61  
  Childhood and risk ............................................................................................. 64  
  Children's mobilities .......................................................................................... 76  
  Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 86  

**Chapter 4 Methodology and methods** ...................................................... 89  
  Introduction ....................................................................................................... 89  
  Methodological approach .................................................................................. 89  
  Research design ................................................................................................ 100  
  The sample ......................................................................................................... 107  
  Visual methods in action .................................................................................... 111  
  Interviewing women and interviewing mothers ....................................................... 118  
  Ethical issues ...................................................................................................... 121  
  Analysis of the data ............................................................................................. 124  
  Limitations of the research ................................................................................ 126  
  Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 128  

**Chapter 5 Experiences of the journey to school** ........................................ 129  
  Introduction ....................................................................................................... 129  
  School journey experiences ............................................................................... 131  
  Experiences of motherhood and mobility ............................................................. 137  
  Experiences of childhood and mobility ................................................................. 143  
  Exploring risk landscapes .................................................................................... 148  
  Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 165  

**Chapter 6 Mobility histories** ................................................................. 168  
  Introducing mobility histories .............................................................................. 168  
  Risk landscapes: their role in mobility histories ..................................................... 170
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal biographies of childhood and motherhood</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing mobile spaces</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedoms</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile emotionalities and socialities</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility histories – contingent and collective</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7 Conclusion</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact of everyday risk</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothering cultures</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A space for autonomy</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility histories</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The value of visual methods</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility futures – policy implications</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons and future research</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1 Briefing for participants – young people</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3 In-depth interview with mothers - topic guide</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4 Minimizing risk during the research</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5 Information sheets</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 6 Consent forms</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 7 Relationships between participants</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of tables

Table 1 Age of participants .................................................................................................................. 110
Table 2 Mothers’ employment.............................................................................................................. 111
Table 3 Participants’ current journey to school ................................................................................. 131
Table 4 Risks mentioned by participants ......................................................................................... 149
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Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed

Dated 23 July 2007
Chapter 1  Introduction

In an increasingly mobile and risky world, the focus of academic attention is often on global movements of people, commodities, wages, finance and information, and on global risks such as environmental deterioration, pandemics and terrorism (Adams 1999, 2005; Urry 2000; Beck 1992). However, everyday life, with everyday mobilities and everyday risk are more often the predominant concern of the majority of people in the western world (Tulloch and Lupton 2003). This study is situated at this more local level, aimed at understanding a microcosm of everyday life: the corporeal mobilities of the journey to school, drawing out broader implications for our increasingly mobile society. In doing so it seeks to explore the interrelationships between mothers, who make the majority of journeys when children are accompanied, and children, in spaces that encompass gendered and generational aspects of risk and mobility. However, it is also crucial that this localized movement and the factors that underpin it, are situated within social, cultural and political contexts that span from local to global. The original application here of the concept of mobility histories, which is at the core of this thesis, not only allows an exploration of the factors that contribute to local decision making in these wider contexts but also facilitates their synthesis by interrelating individual and collective experiences of risk, motherhood, childhood, freedoms, mobile spaces and emotionalities.

Hence, the focus of this thesis on motherhood, childhood and risk is based, primarily, on the need to acknowledge and further understand the importance of the interplay between these concepts. The foundations of the research are therefore predicated on a gendered and generational approach. At the same time, it is recognised that other factors may be as significant in determining mobility histories and this is reflected in discussion in chapter 6. Class, in particular, is a recurring and highly influential factor and this is referenced throughout. However, an indepth analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The concept of risk is considered to be a necessary component of the theoretical framework developed within this thesis as its nuances are thought to underlie much of contemporary decision-making, particularly around the negotiation of space by social groups that may be marginalised within it. Risk here is highly subjective and contingent on socio-cultural contexts at the global and the local. As described later in this chapter, its meaning has changed markedly
throughout history and now, although broadly based on the likelihood of events, encapsulates 'uncertainties, anxieties and lack of predictability' (Lupton 1999: 13). Lupton (1999) discusses six categories of risk within current discourses: environmental risk, lifestyle risks, medical risks, interpersonal risks, economic risks and criminal risks. The understanding of the term 'risk' in this thesis spans a number of these categories. However, despite the contextualization of risk in global discourses of risk, it also relates most specifically to everyday spatiality, which is explained more fully in chapters 2 and 3.

In drawing from feminist approaches to motherhood (Miller 2005), new social studies of childhood (James et al. 1998), sociocultural theories of risk (Douglas 1986, 1992; Tulloch and Lupton 2003) and the 'mobilities turn' in the social sciences (Urry 2000; Sheller 2000, 2004, 2006) this study explores a range of trans-disciplinary issues that provide original insights into the understanding of everyday mobilities. The trans-disciplinary element of the research is key, as the theoretical framework spans not only the social sciences, but specifically a range of theories of risk, motherhood, childhood and urban space. This theoretical framework is developed in order to fill gaps in knowledge on mobility theory, which it is argued here, does not currently explore the myriad factors that construct everyday travel. There is no attempt to seek one 'true' view as some critiques of trans-disciplinary studies have argued (Hoggart, Lees, and Davies 2002) but rather to find interconnections where theories are complementary as well as identify gaps in knowledge that can be addressed through understandings gained from a transdisciplinary approach. In addition, the research utilizes visual methods, which are considered innovative in the social sciences (Pink 2001; Reavey and Johnson 2007). In order to capture the intricacies of both mothers' and children's everyday lives, a mixed-method approach is adopted, encompassing these visual methods. This is aimed at both exploring mothers' risk and mobility biographies and their perceptions of risk to their children, and ensuring that children as social actors are empowered by the research methods to represent their own experience of risk and mobility.

This chapter introduces and outlines the key issues identified by previous research in relation to mothers' and children's mobility and identifies the policy context for this research. It also identifies gaps in knowledge and sets out how this thesis will aim to address these gaps. The key concepts and arguments, which are then elaborated in the ensuing chapters in this thesis, are also briefly outlined. The chapter starts by setting out the key research issues in relation to children's and mothers' mobilities.
Children's and mothers' risk and mobilities: the key issues

Children's mobility has become a cause for policy concern with overall levels of mobility considered to be decreasing and children seen to be more dependent, lacking the skills required to negotiate public space (Hillman et al. 1990; Joshi and McLean 1995, O'Brien 2000; Pooley et al. 2005). The pattern of children's travel to school has changed significantly over the last 30 years (Hillman et al. 1990). In more recent years too the proportion of primary school children walking to school has declined significantly, with a corresponding increase in car use (DfT 2004). Independent travel to school has also decreased significantly (DfT 2005) with women making most of the escort journeys to school, which has a significant impact on mothers' overall mobility (ONS 2004). Mothers are facing mobility challenges as their gender role becomes increasingly multidimensional, children's spaces are constructed as more and more risky and cultures of 'good' mothering navigate them towards risk aversion (Murray, forthcoming).

Too often, however, the focus of government policy, particularly sustainable development policy, is on minimizing environmental impacts of increased school journey traffic and maximizing children's safety, without considering the wider implications of changing mobility patterns. As discussed in chapter 2, both the emphasis on environmental and safety aspects contributes to a culture of blame surrounding mothering (see Root et al. 2000 and Furedi 2002) and ultimately acculturates a climate of risk aversion and dependent mobility. Issues relevant to gender and generation are often sidelined in the policy arena.

Rather than contextualizing women and children's transport exclusion within their overall approach to social exclusion, the government's approach to women and children's mobility issues has taken place, misguidedly, in parallel to attempts to alleviate the mobility aspects of social exclusion. Women and children are now regarded by government as social groups with particular transport needs (Department for Transport 2003, 2004; Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions 2000), with regional and local government also recognizing the need to address issues relating to women and children (Scottish Executive 2000, 2002; Transport for London 2004). However, the Social Exclusion Unit's pivotal report, Making the connections: final report on transport and social exclusion (SEU 2003) gave little attention to group-based transport exclusion (see Church, Frost and Sullivan 2000, Greater London Authority 2001 and Lucas 2004).
Indeed in terms of gender issues, the then Department of Transport sponsored the development of the Women’s Transport Network in 1995, which aims both to address women’s transport concerns and to support women in the transport industry. However, the early momentum of the group began to wane in the early 2000s (Women’s Transport Network 2004). Although the relaunch of the Network in March 2005 aimed to reverse it, this decline in interest reflects a more general trend as gender initiatives such as this take place in isolation from broader issues of social exclusion1. In the policy arena too, the issues most often associated with women and travel are crime and accessibility. In a speech by Karen Buck MP, the then Parliamentary Under-secretary of State for Transport in 2005, the government’s approach to both these issues was outlined by giving examples of schemes that the government supports around the country. However despite her conclusion that ‘understanding and recognizing women’s transport needs isn’t a minority or marginal issue’ (Buck 2005 paragraph 56), there still appears to be a clear lack of a coherent strategy in approaching gender and mobility.

Transport policy on children and young people also tends to be compartmentalized, centred mainly on the 'school run' and issues of road safety (Department for Education and Skills and Department for Transport 2003a, 2003b; Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health 2002; Department for Transport 2000, 2005; Department for Transport and Department for Education and Skills 2004; Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions 1999; Department of Transport Local Government and the Regions 2001; The Mobility and Inclusion Unit 2001), although there have been more recent attempts to involve children and young people on a wider range of transport policy issues (Department for Transport 2003). Issues like the lack of a coherent approach to concessionary fares, an issue consistently highlighted by children (Hood 2001; The Kings Fund 2000; UK Youth Parliament 2005) are still largely ignored. Like other areas of social policy, practice does not necessarily follow on from academic approaches to mobility, which have tended to focus on issues and debates that are not necessarily taken up in the policy arena. Although there has been some focus on broader social issues amongst academics concerned with mobility issues (Grieco 1989; Grieco and Turner 2000; Hamilton 1989, 1999, 2000; Hine and Mitchell 2003; Kenyon 2006; Lucas 2001, 2004; Lyons 2003, 2004) as well as attempts to broaden social policy to include transport (Exworthy and Peckham 2006; May et al. 1996, Page 2003; Skinner 2005) as chapters 2 and 3 show, there remains gaps in the literature around the everyday mobilities of mothers and children.

1 The Social Exclusion Unit’s report Making the connections did not consider the transport barriers specific to particular social groups, such as women, but instead focused on issues of poverty in relation to transport exclusion.
Addressing knowledge gaps

This study seeks to address gaps in knowledge around mothers’ and children’s mobility and in doing so draw out issues that have wider implications for the understanding of everyday mobilities. As chapters 2 and 3 argue, theories of mobility alone, including both transport policy analysis and social studies of mobility, do not currently provide an adequate framework for explaining the interdependency of mothers’ and children’s mobility in urban areas, and particularly the everyday impact of the journey to school on their identities and lifestyles.

Most mainstream contemporary literature relating to corporeal mobility fails to encompass the social perspective on mobility that would be required for the study of mothers’ and children’s mobilities. Women’s distinctive transport needs have been identified since the 1970s (Pickup 1988) but still there have been few studies in the subsequent decades that either contributed to theoretical discourse on gender and mobility (exceptions include Pickup 1988; Law 1999) or have a significant impact on transport policy (exceptions include Greater London Council 1985). Most mainstream transport planning and policy literature is still mainly concerned with the workings of the transport system (see for example, Doherty and Shaw 2003; Glaister et al. 2006; Hoyle and Knowles 1998; Terry 2004,) rather than people’s mobility needs. Possible exceptions include Hanna’s (1990) call for more people-centred planning, but ultimately she too fails to challenge the prominence given to ‘expert’ views.

There is a lack of attention to the social construction of travel needs, with limited examples of broadly social approaches to mobility (see Lucas 2004; Lucas, Grosvenor and Simpson 2001; Lyons 2003; Thomsen, Nielsen and Gudmundsson 2005; Urry 2000). Instead, alternative views have tended to focus on environmental issues (Tolley 1990; Whitelegg 1997). The transport literature is based predominantly on realist values, with little attention given to social constructivist discourses. In relation to the call to rematerialize human geography, Lees (2002) discusses urban geography’s delay in making the ‘cultural turn’ to dematerialize. Urban transport geography has been slower still.

There is some lip service paid towards encouraging behavioural change (see for example Terry 2004) or instigating ‘soft’ measures in conjunction with the more readily accepted transport engineering measures (see for example Cairns et al 2004). This reflects the culture of transport
planning in this country, the Anglo-American approach based on mathematical and engineering theory as opposed to cultures in European countries which tend to reflect a more theoretical social science background (Bannister 2002). It could be argued that mobility theorists through the exploration of the social construction of mobility can seek to influence this transport planning culture, which as argued in chapter 2, is patriarchal².

There is a limited but growing quantity of literature on women’s mobility³ in general (Hamilton and Jenkins 1989, 1999; 2000; Ortoleva and Brenman 2004; Law 1999; Pickup 1984, 1988), and more specifically on mothers’ mobility (Dowling 1999; Gershuny 1993; Tvers 1988) and on children’s mobility (Fotel and Thomsen 2004; Hillman 1999; Hillman et al. 1990; Nielsen 2005, Thomsen 2005; Thomsen et al. 2005; O’Brien et al. 2000). Nevertheless, mobility studies have often been neglected in sociology but a number of social scientists (Urry 2000; Law 1999; Dowling 1999) have begun analyzing mobility in social terms. Much of the sociology of mobility has centred on the car and its impact on spatiality (Urry 2000; Dowling 1999; Barker 2003). Urry stresses the importance of car in shaping modern society: ‘The car’s significance is that it reconfigures civil society involving distinct ways of dwelling, travelling and socializing in, and through an automobilized time-space’ (Urry 2000, 59). Although automobilization and the societal impacts of car culture are crucial factors in the sociology and human geography of mobility, overemphasis on these concepts can detract from issues of everyday travel across all travel modes. Discourses around the sociology of mobilities tend to be centred on the car; on ‘automobility’ and on ‘hypermobility’ (Adams 1999, 2005; Laurier 2005; Sheller 2000; Urry 2000). It is argued in chapters 2 and 3 that the sociology of mobility goes far beyond the car, especially for children, who are as likely to use other modes and cannot travel by car independently.

It is clear from existing studies of mothers and children’s mobility and the apparent gaps in knowledge, that it is necessary to look to other theories within the social sciences to address these knowledge gaps and provide a more coherent theoretical understanding. In recognizing the link between risk, mobility, motherhood and childhood, this thesis therefore draws from the sometimes disparate theoretical debates around these concepts to be found in the social studies of risk, motherhood, childhood and mobility. The interrelationship between mothers and children and the decisions they make in relation to their own mobility are very much entwined with risk

² The term 'patriarchy' is used throughout in its widest sense as the structuring of society that results in the 'dominance of men over women' (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner 2000, 258)
³ the mobility of mothers is seen here as a gender issue
experience and perception. Risk literature, therefore can contribute to the understanding of mothers’ and children’s mobility as O’Brien (2000) and Fotel and Thomsen (2004) have begun to demonstrate. However in order to fully understand the complex interaction of factors this thesis firstly unpacks these key concepts, which will be introduced in more detail in the next section, in chapters 2 and 3.

Motherhood is explored as a gendered concept in chapter 2 (Miller 2005). The chapter looks at the different socially constructed ideologies of motherhood, which have an impact at different levels from the everyday to the global. This thesis concentrates on the everyday, although framing it in social, economic and political contexts. Chapter 2 situates motherhood as an embodied notion, requiring an understanding of the material influences on its construction (Miller 2005). It explores different cultures of mothering, what it is to be a ‘good’ mother (Phoenix and Woolett 1991, Chase and Rogers 2001, Valentine 2004), and how this concept is dynamic and contingent. In particular the chapter examines good mothering as an everyday practice, how mothers relate to their children, their approach to childrearing and their involvement in local networks (Holloway 1998a, 1998b); as well as considering dominant ideologies (Phoenix and Woolett 1991). In interrelating the concepts of risk and motherhood chapter 2 discusses how motherhood is subsumed within a culture of blame, based on guilt and insecurity (Douglas 1992; Miller 2005; Valentine 2004). It fills a gap in the literature by developing an analysis of motherhood, risk and mobility based on mothers’ hypermobility4, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Chapter 2 also examines different perspectives on risk and their potential contribution to this thesis. It sets out how the approach taken here draws from the range of sociocultural theories of risk (Adams 1995; Douglas 1966, 1986, 1992; Douglas and Wildavsky 1983; Lupton 1999a, 1999b; Tulloch 2000; Tulloch and Lupton 2003). The sociocultural theories outlined in chapter 2 allow us to look at risk within its social and cultural context and thereby provide the most appropriate basis for a theoretical framework that will contribute to the aims of this thesis.

The limitations of other theories of risk such as Beck’s ‘risk society’ (Beck 1992; Lupton 1999; Mythen 2004) and psychometric studies (Slovic 2000, 2004; Lofstedt and Frewer 1998) are examined with particular emphasis on areas of overlap with socio-cultural theory. For example,

4 Hypermobility is used by Adams (1999, 2005) to describe the grave consequences for society of unsustainable and deleterious increases in mobility. The term is borrowed in this study to characterise the negative impacts of increasing mobility for mothers due to their gender role.
some psychological approaches (Slovic 2004) now recognize the importance of sociocultural processes and therefore there are similarities between elements of these approaches and sociocultural risk theory. Chapter 2 sets out how a synthesis of theories of motherhood, risk and mobility can provide a framework to explore mobility issues for mothers and children in the everyday context.

Chapter 3 builds on the analysis in chapter 2, looking at children, risk and mobility specifically through the journey to school. The underlying argument developed is based on the social studies of childhood paradigm (James et al. 1998), which recognises that childhood is socially constructed and that children demonstrate agency in their travel behaviour both within and outside controlled spaces. Cultures of childhood are considered within a number of contexts including the family and changing family structures (Clarke 1996; Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Duncan 1999; Silva and Smart 1999; Valentine 1997a, 2004), and the state (Brannen 1999; Wyness 2000). Looking at issues of children’s mobility, chapter 3 develops the literature on children’s independent mobility (Fotel and Thomsen 2004; Hillman 1993, 1999; Hillman et al. 1990; Joshi and MacLean 1995; Maguire and Shirlow 2004; O’Brien et al. 2000; Pooley et al. 2005) and children and risk (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004; Prezza et al. 2005; Thomsen 2005) by applying the notions of children’s agency and in doing so marks a significant contribution to both risk, childhood and mobility theory.

Introducing the key concepts

As discussed previously, the key concepts in this thesis of risk, motherhood, childhood and mobility are complex and multi-dimensional. Although a wealth of literature is associated with each, it will be argued here that not only can the myriad theory pertaining to each be interrelated, but that each concept is co-constructed by each of the others. As well as examining each, it is recognized that there is a need to develop an understanding of the nature of this co-construction to begin to understand each concept in turn. As discussed, the beliefs and meanings surrounding the concepts of risk, motherhood, childhood and mobilities are set out in chapters 2 and 3, which develop the theoretical foundations for this thesis. It is useful at this point however, to set out the broad definitions for these concepts, before embarking on this more detailed process.

As outlined above, motherhood is considered from a feminist perspective (Miller 2005) and childhood from a social studies of childhood perspective (James et al. 1998). In drawing from
these theories, motherhood and childhood are seen here as gendered and generational, socially constructed and co-constructed. Risk too, in being considered from a socio-cultural perspective is viewed as socially constructed. However, it appears necessary to attempt a more detailed introduction to this term as its definition can be a problematic one. The concepts of ‘motherhood’, ‘childhood’, and ‘mobility’ may be dynamic and fluid, but there is less misunderstanding and uncertainty around their use. It is therefore important to consider the concept of risk and enhance our understanding of the complexity and variation in its use.

Risk has myriad definitions depending on a number of factors but particularly the cultural perspective of the person defining it (Adams 1995). Similarly, approaches to risk theory are contingent on socio-cultural, economic and political context and especially on the role of the institutional ‘expert’ as opposed to the often disengaged layperson (Lupton 1999; Tulloch and Lupton 2003; Wynne 1998). The culture of risk has different historical components. Before the inception of modernity in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, risk was seen as an uncontrollable phenomenon associated with nature and the gods (Lupton 1999). The onset of modernity is associated with a shift in understanding of the concept of risk to one where risks were measurable and based on probability. It became associated with a scientific ability to predict and control. Risk taking was therefore considered a necessary process in economic development with advance and innovation necessarily incurring an element of risk. At this point, Douglas (1986) argues, the word risk became interchangeable with the word danger. Within the public sphere, it developed negative connotations: with behaviour deemed to be outside acceptable boundaries of safety being considered risky.

As Lupton argues: ‘the concept of risk is now used to explain deviations from the norm, misfortune and frightening events’ (Lupton 1999, 3). Risk is therefore often regarded as a negative term, something to be mitigated rather than embraced. This is important in understanding risk in the context of ‘fear’ and particularly in considering theoretical and empirical discussions of women and fear of public space, which will be considered in chapter 2. It is now widely accepted amongst social scientists, especially those outside the discipline of psychology, that risk is a cultural notion, one that is influenced by prevailing economic and political contexts and is subjective. As Lupton (1999, 3) states: ‘this concept assumes human responsibility and that “something can be done” to prevent misfortune’. It is this socio-cultural definition of risk that is adopted in this thesis as explained in chapters 2 and 3. So while a social constructivist view of
motherhood, childhood and risk has been quite well developed, the social construction of travel has been developed more recently within the theorization of mobilities.

The term ‘mobilities’ has been developed not only to represent the social theorization of travel but also to widen the discourse to include all movements and flows, which have a fundamental impact on social processes (Urry 2000). In recognizing the importance of this debate, this thesis has adopted this concept, although it explores mainly one type of mobility, corporeal mobility relating to the movement of people as they travel through space. This thesis is also concerned with people’s everyday mobilities, how they negotiate space on an everyday level, rather than with larger scale or global movements. It is also the everyday in differentiating between normal or usual travel patterns and tourism travel. In concentrating on the journey to school, this research investigates an everyday mobile situation.

Having introduced the literature and the key concepts in this thesis, this chapter now moves on to outlining the key arguments put forward in the subsequent chapters, which build from the literature review chapters 2 and 3, through the methodology chapter 4, and into the analysis chapters 5 and 6.

Introducing the key arguments

The key arguments set out in this thesis are associated with the co-construction of risk, motherhood, childhood and mobility within a socio-cultural frame. As discussed there is evidence, which is presented in chapters 2 and 3, to suggest that mobility issues for mothers and children will be intertwined with risk experience and perception, and that the literature on risk can provide a valuable contribution to knowledge on these mobilities. Risk, it is argued, is experienced rather than solely perceived, in that beliefs around risk are not developed in a vacuum but through interaction in social and spatial contexts. Risk experience is seen here as an iterative process determined by an individual’s interaction with social and physical space. Hence risk and mobilities are co-constructed.

In addition, it will be argued that a more thorough understanding of mothers’ and children’s mobility around the school journey is dependent on exploring theories of motherhood and childhood. Drawing from both feminist and social studies of childhood approaches this thesis allows an understanding of the sociocultural construction of motherhood and childhood and
enables an analysis of their co-construction with risk and mobility. Women's gender roles alter in motherhood especially due to the dependence of small children and also through the influence of household responsibilities. Motherhood is also constructed through mobility as the nature of mobility, the culture surrounding different forms of travel, and the level of access alter mothering identities, beliefs and meanings. In particular motherhood is increasingly multidimensional and this has a significant mobility element (Bostock 2001) as it is argued here that some mothers are becoming hypermobile. The increased hypermobility of mothers is often associated with automobilization, which Urry (2000) argues is redefining society. The car is an increasingly important space for an increasing number of people, particularly women (see Dobbs 2005 and Polk 2004 for a discussion on gender and automobility). It is argued here that automobility, whether mothers have access to a car or not, can be a contributing factor in the construction of motherhood, one of the key concepts of this thesis. Access to a car for transporting children can be seen as a symbol of good parenting and therefore important in establishing mothering identity (Dowling 1999).

Constructions of the hypermobile mother are bound up with sociocultural notions of risk and blame. However as chapter 2 explains, mobility decisions are not based solely on commonly held notions of risk aversion in relation to children (see for example Furedi 2002). Instead there is a complex set of factors including risk of inviting blame if mothers do not adhere to social norms. These 'norms' are both localized and set within wider social, cultural and political contexts (Douglas 1992, Tulloch and Lupton 2003). In particular, chapter 3 argues that parental risk experience needs to be understood within the contexts of patriarchy, the family, expert influence, the nature of urban space, and state control (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004). It will also be argued later that increasing children's independent mobility is not a direct function of 'minimising parental risk perception' (Potel and Thomsen 2004, 548) but that there is a need to recognise children's agency in determining their own risk experience.

A central theme in this study as argued in chapter 3 is that as well as parental perceptions of risk to children, children have their own risk identity, which is created and recreated by them in spatial settings. This is ascertained in some of the literature on risk and childhood (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004; Scott et al. 2000; Kelley et al. 1996; Hood et al. 1996), but the extent of children's agency in this process is not fully examined. Risk taking is part of children's boundary pushing and learning how to negotiate space. Children may choose to construct their own identity around
risk taking. It is likely that some children adopt different risk strategies at different times and in
different spatial contexts, with boundaries usually negotiated (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004;
Jackson and Scott 2000; Valentine 2004). There is a lack of analysis of children’s compliance with
this boundary setting and with the increase in surveillance as a whole. The latter theme, however,
is one that has received increasing amounts of attention in recent years (Lupton 1999; Fotel and
Thomsen 2004; Thomsen 2005). This is developed fully in chapter 3.

The main focus of attention in childhood and mobility studies has been the decline in overall
levels of mobility (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004; Hillman 1993) and particularly independent
mobility (Hillman et al. 1990). As mothers become hypermobile children become hypomobile. This
hypomobility, as described in chapter 3, is intertwined with prevailing notions of childhood as
well as cultures of motherhood that create risk aversion.

The key arguments are taken forward in the analysis, through the concept of mobility histories,
which is identified in chapter 3 and detailed in chapter 6. Mobility histories is a tool for explaining
the complex and multidimensional maze of experience and emotions that characterize
understandings of past movement in space. They can be both individual and collective,
embracing socio-cultural and spatial influences. They are not a description of sequential past
events, but are multi-layered and in constant flux. In this thesis, mobility histories encompass five
key elements: experiences of risk, motherhood and childhood, freedoms, mobile spaces and
emotionalities. These mobility histories are also set within the context of social characteristics,
which include gender, generation, class, race and disability. This thesis, in exploring motherhood
and childhood concentrates on gender and generational issues in the development of mobility
histories. However it is also recognized that motherhood and childhood are diverse and dynamic
and that they are inextricably linked with these other social characteristics.

Methodology and methods

The overall aim of the research is to gain a deeper insight into children’s and mothers’ mobility
associated with the journey to school, by exploring their relationship with notions of risk. In
doing so the research will provide an insight into gendered and generational issues of mobility.
This will be explored through the following research questions:

5 Hypomobile is used here to conceptualize the negative impacts of decreasing corporeal mobility amongst children.
1. To what extent does risk underpin mothers’ and children’s decision-making in relation to the journey to school?

2. How do mothers’ risk experiences and their perceptions of the risks experienced by children co-construct both their own and their children’s mobility?

3. How are children’s mobility decisions influenced by their own risk experience?

The methodological approach is outlined in full in chapter 4, which also explains the use of Brighton as a case study and the nature of the research sampling process with a description of the participants. Overall the approach adopted is qualitative, appropriate here due to the nature of the research questions, which seek to explore complex concepts, the interpretation of which varies considerably. This qualitative approach is based on the theoretical framework; the philosophical underpinnings of the research; the researchers’ personal biography, and the pragmatic application of a toolkit of methods appropriate to the research questions.

The approach draws from a number of research traditions and does not adhere to one particular methodological paradigm; it is a *briccolage* (Levi-Strauss 1966 developed by Denzin and Lincoln 2000). As described in chapter 4, this thesis is constructivist in approach, recognizing notions of socially ascribed meaning and beliefs. However, the ontological position as discussed fully in the methodology chapter encompasses the acceptance of the materialist nature of the body and its significant impacts on our beliefs and understanding that constitute our reality and it is therefore realist in this respect. Its epistemological approach is interpretative and reflexive, in that it is recognized that the social world is based on multiple realities dependent on interpretation of meaning and beliefs. Chapter 4 also sets out the methodological approaches from which this research draws including feminist approaches (see Stanley and Wise 1993; Maynard and Purvis 1994; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002) and social studies of childhood (James et al. 1998) approaches. As chapter 4 explains, the methodological approach recognises motherhood as gendered and childhood as generational, acknowledging the resultant power differentials and the need to adopt research methods to counteract these. Chapter 4 also looks specifically at the problematic nature of researching risk.

The key elements of the research design are: self-filmed video recordings of journeys to school by children; in-depth interviews with children using film elicitation; and in-depth interviews with
mothers. The role of visual methods in this research is set out in chapter 4 recognizing their reflexive (Pink 2001); and contextualizing (Emmison 2004; Emmison and Smith 2000; Pink 2001; Smith 2001) qualities. The analysis of the video recordings and interviews was carried out using QSR NVivo Version 2.0 (Richards 1999), a computer assisted qualitative data analysis package. A thematic approach was adopted, based primarily on the theoretical framework discussed in chapters 2 and 3 with further themes and concepts emerging from the data analysed within the context of this theory. In this way the analytical process was iterative.

Chapters 5 and 6 set out the analysis of this data. Chapter 5 presents the empirical context for the analysis developed in chapter 6, detailing the experiences of the school journey and the nature of risk in this space. This chapter begins to explore the characteristics of participants’ risk landscapes. Chapter 6 consolidates the analysis in chapter 5 and develops the notion of mobility histories as a tool to explain the intricate and multifaceted nature of decision-making around issues of motherhood and childhood, risk and mobility. It follows on from issues of risk landscapes explored in chapter 5, setting them within a mobility ‘story’, which is structured through mobility histories. The factors that constitute mobility history are explored in order to gain an understanding of mothers and children’s mobility in a socio-cultural context.

This chapter has set out the key issues, themes and concepts that will be developed in this thesis as well as the main arguments and methodological approach that are elaborated in chapters 2 to 6. The theoretical framework is developed in chapters 2 and 3, with the first of these examining motherhood, risk and mobility, and chapter 3 considering childhood, risk and the mobilities of the journey to school. It is accepted that it may be problematic to separate motherhood and childhood in this way as they are co-constructed. However, this division follows on from the epistemological approach recognizing the importance of children’s agency and the advantages in considering children’s issues in isolation from adults in order to avoid adultism. Chapter 2, therefore, explores issues of risk and mobility within motherhood, beginning the development of the theoretical framework that underpins this thesis. Chapter 3 continues this process linking a discussion of childhood, risk and mobility with the theories of motherhood explored in chapter 2. It was felt that this structure provides the most appropriate means of exploring the four co-constructed concepts of risk, motherhood, childhood and mobility and building a framework that both advances knowledge in this area and can be used as a basis for the analysis of data, which is carried out in chapters 5 and 6.
Chapter 2  Motherhood, risk, and mobility

Introduction

There are indications that motherhood is becoming increasingly constructed by mobility as a result of its increasing multidimensionality and the complex landscapes of risk (Valentine 2004) that both mothers and children negotiate in the everyday (Tulloch and Lupton 2003). This thesis argues that the resulting patterns of mobility are both gendered and generational, and explores the theoretical basis of this claim, in this and the subsequent chapter. Although gender has been recognized as a significant determinant of transport exclusion in the UK since the 1970s (Hillman 1976; Independent Commission on Transport 1974) with a range of research, both academic and policy orientated, focusing on women and transport (Pickup 1988; Tivers 1988; Hamilton and Jenkins 2000; Greater London Council 1985; London Research Centre 1998; Law 1999; Domosh and Seager 2001), there are few studies that look specifically at motherhood and mobility from a theoretical perspective. Recent contributions from the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ (Sheller and Urry 2006) focus on the gendering of the car (Sheller 2004) and the impact of car culture on gendered spaces (Sheller and Urry 2003). Although proponents of this ‘mobility turn’ view mobilities as the product of social processes (Cresswell 2006), they pay less attention to the everyday mobilities relevant to mothers and children.

It is argued in this chapter that not only can the mobility literature be enriched by encompassing mothering issues, but that a full understanding of motherhood requires consideration of its spatiality (Holloway and Valentine 2000) and in particular its mobility. In addition, both the construction of motherhood ideology and mothering practices, including mobile practices, are determined by risk, in particular through the construction of risky spaces and the allocation of blame. Studies of risk and gender have shown that motherhood, as well as gender, class, age and ethnicity, can have a particular influence on risk perception and experience (Douglas 1986; Lupton 1999; Mythen 2004; Slovic 2000). As Lupton (1999) argues risk taking is associated with the performance of masculinity that conforms to cultural norms and in contrast risk aversion is associated with dominant femininity and the everyday responsibilities of motherhood (although there are significant examples of contrasting gendered behaviour) which are acculturated from an early age. Douglas also differentiates between the risk perceptions of men and women, particularly
mothers, arguing that women overemphasize their vulnerability to crime as they are ‘socialized into high risk awareness’ (Douglas 1986, 70).

Like risk and mobility, motherhood is both a socially constructed and embodied position, which can be conceptualized through a range of theoretical levels, from local to global. This chapter explores the concepts of motherhood and risk through their interrelations and argues that they not only construct everyday mobilities, but that they are co-constructed within an increasingly mobile society. Mothering culture and risk experience are dependent on mobilities as the mobile society is shaped by gender and risk. It also argues that cultures of mothering are not only determined by ideology but through everyday risk and mobility practices. The chapter is divided into three main sections. It begins by examining constructions of motherhood according to global and local notions and ideologies, including the influence of ‘expert’ discourses, social and political contexts and emotionalities. The co-construction of motherhood and risk is then explained, applying socio-cultural theories of risk including the allocation of blame to everyday risk experience. The third section explores the constructions of risky mobile spaces according to gender and the ascription of the gendered roles of motherhood through changing patterns and cultures of mobility.

Constructing motherhood

The term ‘mother’ is both problematic and dynamic in all its representations. In its broadest sense, motherhood is the ‘context in which mothering takes place and is experienced’ (Miller 2005, 3). It should be stressed that the notion of ‘mother’ is itself fluid and contested. Mothers are a diverse group, with factors such as class, race, sexuality, disability and ethnicity contributing to both gendered identities and practices of mothering (Gillies 2006; McDowell 1999; Miller 2005). For Miller (2005, 137), being a mother is always more than ‘playing a part and performing an individualised biography’. She argues that despite motherhood being socially and culturally embedded, the biological act of giving birth and its association with ‘materiality and real fleshy bodies’, and the central responsibility of motherhood to meet the bodily needs of dependents are central to its construction.

Before beginning a discussion of motherhood, as a gendered identity, it is important to recognise the divergent approaches to gender and discourses of ‘women’, and therefore ‘mothers’, as coherent social groups. In particular, post-structural approaches deconstruct the category of
'women' as an over-universalizing, over-generalizing and some consider, over essentializing term (Maynard 1995; McDowell 1999). In line with feminists such as Maynard (1996), Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) and Stanley and Wise (1993) this thesis considers the use of terms such as mother, in order to enhance knowledge, as politically necessary. Mothers are subjugated as a result of their gender roles and it is therefore crucial to advance knowledge and seek to produce outcomes that can potentially undermine this subjugation.

The diversity of women and the complexities of identity within this diversity, therefore, do not preclude exploration of issues relating to mothers as a generic term. Mothers have a distinctive pattern of mobility, risk experience and role in determining children's mobilities as this thesis demonstrates and such distinctions legitimize the use of the category of mother as a means of exploring their subjective experiences. The range of experiences will, in turn, reflect the differential experiences of different women. Different social characteristics of mothers will impinge upon their experience of risk and their perceptions of risks to their children, and these will be outlined as fully as possible within the constraints of this thesis.

Dominant ideology, individualization and experts

Despite ideological notions of a 'good' 'nuclear' family (Valentine 2004), the structure of the family in the UK is changing (Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Silva and Smart 1999; Valentine 1997, 2004; Clarke 1996), with an increase in single parenthood (Duncan and Edwards 1999) and a corresponding feminization of childhood 6 (Silva and Smart 1999; Valentine 2004; Wyness 2000), which will be discussed further in chapter 3. The result of this changing family structure is that a significant proportion of both mothers and children are 'out of place' in this context. They are outside, and marginalized beyond, the norms of good mothering. They do not fit with idealized constructions of what it is to be a good mother, predominantly based on being non-disabled, white, over twenty, partnered, middle class and heterosexual (Chase and Rogers 2001; Phoenix and Woolett 1991; Valentine 2004). The dominant ideology of motherhood is based on these physical, social and ethnic characteristics equipping 'good' mothers with the qualities that are considered to enable them to parent to full potential.

Motherhood at an everyday level becomes associated with variations from established global norms of good parenting. This can be an additional burden on mothers, as Connolly (1998, 263)

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6 This reflects the preponderance of mothers as single parents.
Phoenix and Woollett (1991) contextualize motherhood within social structures and argue that the state protects these dominant ideologies through processes of surveillance and intervention. In broad terms two conflicting ‘dominant ideologies’ of motherhood can be identified based on the one hand on encouraging women back to work after they have children through policies such as New Deal; and on the other hand, an adherence to traditional moral values that prescribe a full-time home-keeping, child-rearing role for mothers (Miller 2005; Skinner 2005). However, dominant norms are, of course, socio-cultural and political and this can lead to conflicting and paradoxical standards depending on prevalent political and moral agendas. On the whole these standards or norms of good mothering are set by individuals or groups considered to be ‘experts’ within a particular socio-cultural and political context.

‘Experts’ on mothering
Since the early twentieth century and particularly the 1950s and 1960s with an emergent ‘expert’ discourse, there has been considerable pressure on parents to nurture their children psychologically (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Kelley et al. 1997; Lewis 1980; Marshall 1991; Urwin 1985). The nature and targeting of expert guidance, particularly through media amplification (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Weaver, Carter and Stanko 2000) and the degree to which parents feel pressurized to adopt dominant cultural practices of parenting is dependent on a range of cultural characteristics and particularly influenced by class (Duncan 2005; Gillies 2006).

A 2002 report in The Observer gave details of research on the effects of child-rearing practices according to class background:

The research fits in with other findings, which revealed that children of working-class parents tend to be more passive, less engaged in the world around them and have a more

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7 New Deal is a UK government programme aimed at encouraging unemployed people back to work. There are specific incentives for single parents.
limited vocabulary. Children from middle-class households have a wider vocabulary, better understanding of how to 'converse' with other people and were more skilled at manipulating objects.

(Ahmed 2002)

More recently, the initial results from a longitudinal study undertaken on childcare and children's development (Sylva, Stein and Leach 2005), which indicated a positive link between childcare by mothers, rather than nurseries, and 'development', were taken up in the national press as representing a call for the return of mothers to full-time child care in the home (Bunting 2004; Moorhead and Ward 2005). This is despite the assurances of Penelope Leach, one of the researchers that her findings should not be interpreted as a demand that mothers stay at home, but were advocating the need for good quality appropriate childcare (Roberts 2005). Nevertheless, the impression is that children are considered to be at risk if they are not subjected to the 'norms' of good mothering as established by experts.

It is argued here that dominant ideologies and the legitimization of expert knowledge is based on discourses of risk and that risk plays a profound role in establishing cultures of mothering, particularly mobile mothering. Social scientists, informed by the work of Michel Foucault (Fotel and Thomsen 2004), argue that state control through allocation of risk is based on expert knowledge, particularly the process of normalization. In this way parents are coerced into control and surveillance of their children, resulting in their loss of independent mobility and an increase in parental escort trips (see Hillman 1991; Joshi and MacLean 1995; Fotel and Thomsen 2004). The state therefore denies individual agency through the imposition of expert-driven management of risk. However this legitimization of expert knowledge by mothers in their everyday lives relating to risk is only possible when contextualized within social processes and interpreted according to prevalent cultures and beliefs, which operate at a more localized level.

Social contexts of mothering

Duncan and Edwards (1999) propose that the position of mother is based on both individual identity and social context, which reflects dominant cultures and beliefs. They argue that mothers are coerced into their social position and constrained by norms of good parenting, as they strive towards the 'moral imperative' of meeting their children's needs. Mothering ideals, they argue, are imposed by legislation, professional practice or neighbourhood networks but can vary according to the particular social context of motherhood. However mothers themselves adopt particular
'gendered moral rationalities' based on being primarily a mother, as both a mother and worker combined, or as primarily worker. Different gendered moral rationalities will determine different cultures of mothering. Duncan (2005) later uses the concept of gendered moral rationalities to explore motherhood and class, concluding that there were class differences in constructions of motherhood, but also class similarities. He argues that gendered moral rationalities have a strong biographical basis predicated on experience of being mothered, on existing and experienced gender roles in families, and on mothering experiences in relation to friends and family. Overall Duncan (2005) concluded that paid employment was not associated with good mothering, that gender divisions were taken for granted, and that although there were changes in the distribution of gender roles, this change was incremental, rather than substantial.

Miller (2005) argues the notion of the 'good' ambivalent mother combining work outside the home with childcare refers mainly to a particular group of white middle class women and is less relevant to other groups. This has particular implications for mobility. As mothering practices vary by social class, so too will mobility and mobility choices. Miller argues that it is the social contexts of mothering that determine mothering culture as opposed to the singular notion of dominant western ideologies which ignore the diversity of women's experiences. Normative mothering is dependent on cultural beliefs and meanings and how these are interpreted by other cultures. She maintains that women exercise agency within the context of dominant ideologies. For Miller (2005, 3), mothering is about 'personal, individual experiences that women have in meeting the needs of and being responsible for their dependent children'. In turn these individualised experiences take place in the context of ideologies that determine the characteristics and behaviour of a 'good' mother whether or not they are consistent with the realities of motherhood (Connolly 1998). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) argue that this recognition of individual agency in determining their own mothering and mobility outcomes is defined by the late modern process of individualization. Within this the identities of mothers become bound up with notions of increasing emotional investment in children (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Jenks 1996; Valentine 1997).

The emotionalism of motherhood

The emotionalities of motherhood can be understood within the process of individualization, but it is argued here that this individualised process is part of wider socio-cultural processes that define emotionality and interpret collective experiences into emotional outcomes. Ideologies that
seek to protect established notions of childhood as an investment in the future promote this individualised emotional investment (Hendrick 1994, 2003; Wyness 2000). As Jenks (1996, 14) argues, before the Enlightenment children's needs were not considered to be important but since then ‘... we have become their protectors and nurturers and they have become our primary love objects, our human capital and our future’. It is argued that this is a culture constructed partly by the state, which has given increasing responsibility to parents as a means of protecting established notions of childhood and thereby investing in the future (Hendrick 1994, 2003; Wyness 2000). Jenks (1996) argues that the idea that the family is the most nurturing context for childhood development is used to legitimize modern approaches to child rearing, whereas in reality the family is used as a means of social control. He argues that self identity is all important in late modernity as uncertainty is increased. Within this culture of uncertainty the child is seen as a form of stability and social bond and in turn the family becomes an agent of control (Jenks 1996).

Emotional parenting is thereby a product of social, cultural and political contexts. This emotional investment in children can therefore have a direct impact on mobility options and practices through control and surveillance and this is discussed later in this chapter. When these contexts change, so too does the manifestations of this emotionality, particularly the enrichment of identity that is often associated with mothering.

Chase and Rogers (2001) argue that this identity enhancement is a characteristic of middle class mothering. For working class mothers, it is argued, the practical issues of reduced choice and the constraints of motherhood are more important. In line with this, Gillies (2006) argues that the notion of ‘emotional capital’, with its emphasis on positive outcomes, is less meaningful to working class parents. She contests that in working class households, mothers invest significantly on an emotional level, but that this is more likely to be based around risk minimization. For middle class parents therefore it is argued that risks are less tangible and more likely associated with reflexive practices. Miller (2005) argues that reflexivity needs to be understood in a structural context, linked to culture, class or race, and that external structures still restrict mothering practices. In addition, she argues that the opportunity for reflexivity is not universally experienced with, in particular, the middle classes having more resources to self-reflect and establish identities in this way.

However, the emotionality of the practices of motherhood as opposed to the reflexivity of motherhood is more broadly experienced. Duncan (2005, 65) found that decisions about working
and childcare were highly emotional and argues that 'being a mother was a constant and emotional position... a significant social experience centred on emotion, moral identity and a practical relationship with child(ren)'. This emotionality, especially when alongside risk can be negative. Dyck (1990, 1996) found that women experienced stress due to contradictory values of mothering with a 'concern over remaining a good mother' and feelings of guilt often reported. This relates to women's own identity with motherhood and the sense of failure and guilt that often accompanies child rearing, which is in part a function of the allocation of blame as discussed later. As Dyck (1990, 1996) herself argues, however, this must be situated within its political context as well as the everyday context of social interaction.

This section has shown that the construction of the good mother that forms part of cultures of mothering can be based on both dominant ideologies and on individual emotionalized practices of mothering determined within socio-cultural contexts. The reflection of these different levels of ideology means that mothering cultures often encompass conflict, either between different levels or within them. It is argued here, however, that it is mothers' collective, as well as individual, experience that determines local cultures of mothering. It is seen as collective as motherhood, even the emotionalities of motherhood that are often individualised are given meaning through socio-cultural processes. It is argued here that it is not only ideological and individual factors that construct mothering cultures but also collective notions of mothering. It has also become evident that biographical experience is important in determining individual and collective approaches to mothering, which contribute to mothering cultures.

The notion of the 'good' mother, therefore, is determined not only by discourses and ideologies of motherhood as set out above, but is bound up in the relationship between these ideologies, risk and mobility. It is constructed by risk through the allocation of blame and the adoption of coping strategies and mobility through the pattern of access to and adoption of particular mobility practices. The following section begins therefore by outlining theories of risk that can be used to explore these relationships at an everyday level through social processes, including emotionality, which as discussed is socio-culturally constructed (Lupton 1999; Tulloch 1999, 2000).

Exploring risk

Risk can be explored in many ways using a number of dichotomous approaches including subjective/objective, political/apolitical, realist/socially constructed, and global/everyday (see
Lupton 1999 and Zinns 2006 for a full discussion of different approaches). There is of course substantial overlap between different theories of risk and this thesis draws from a number of them for this reason. However, due to the nature of this research, examining elements of everyday life within the context of social policy, sociology and human geography, the approach adopted here is based primarily on socio-cultural theories of risk. These theories, which contextualize risk in social and cultural processes emerged in the 1980s pioneered by Mary Douglas. Douglas (1986; Douglas and Wildavsky 1983) contested the then prevalent realist models of risk analysis based on psychometric approaches, which were based on risk being something that is objective, measurable, and controllable.

The psychometric paradigm had been developed by Slovic, Fischhoff and Lichtenstein in the 1970s as a result of increased demand for greater understanding of people’s attitude to natural hazards and new technologies such as nuclear power (Lofstedt and Frewer 1998; Slovic 2000). It was predicated on the analysis of stated perceptions of risks and benefits, and expressed preferences for risk-benefit trade-offs, which are then used to produce quantitative measures of perceived risk against perceived benefit. The psychological approaches were criticised by cultural theorists like Douglas (1986; Douglas and Wildavsky 1983) not primarily in terms of their objectivity, but rather their failure to allow for the impact of contextual factors such as social structure, culture and politics. Instead Douglas argued that risk could not be viewed in an objective way but is by nature subjective. Douglas' socio-cultural approach to risk has been developed by a number of academics (Adams 1995; Lupton 1999a, 1999b; Tulloch 1999) most notably here by Tulloch and Lupton (2003) in their study of everyday risk.

Socio-cultural risk theory

Douglas (1986, 1992; Douglas and Wildavsky 1983) argued that risk perception is constructed on a number of levels including: an individual level, where personal solutions are applied to individually perceived risks; and a collective level, through scapegoating to vulnerable groups. However, she argued that acceptability of risks is dependent on cultural factors, in particular ‘standardised public ideas’ about justice, fairness and freedom, rather than on psychological processes (Douglas 1986, 10). She critiques psychometric approaches to risk, and particularly the use of the notion of ‘subjective immunity’ by demonstrating the importance of culture in decision-making around risk (Douglas 1986, also discussed in Adams 1995). Subjective immunity is based on the overestimation of risks associated with rare events and the underestimation of
risks associated with common events and those within individual control.

Psychologists have used subjective immunity to demonstrate human irrationality, the inability to think in a probabilistic way, and to recommend better education around low probability risk, such as those associated with nuclear power. Douglas (1986, 33) argues that subjective immunity is culturally specific, that this inability to think probabilistically is seen as particularly apparent when people 'venture outside of our own culturally given intuitions'. Remaining within cultural intuitions thereby meant deferring to the culturally prevalent expert knowledge, as discussed previously in terms of the emotionality of motherhood. She also refuted claims that education can provide the answer to irrational risk perception by citing work by Slovic, Fischhoff and Lichtenstein in 1981, which concluded that attempts to bridge the perceived gap in knowledge were unsuccessful in the nuclear power industry, a frequently cited example in the 1980s of emerging technological risks.

The allocation of 'blame' as a result of expert discourses of risk is a key element of Douglas' theory (Douglas and Wildavsky 1983; Douglas 1986). Douglas (1986, 1992) argued that a community is more likely to exclude risk-takers and that this encourages subjective immunity through the process of blame. Communities avoid conflict and maintain control through the allocation of blame, where 'victim blaming facilitates internal control; outsider blaming enhances loyalty' (Douglas 1986, 60). Douglas contends that predictions about whether cultures are risk averse or risk inclined can be based on what or who is at risk and the levels of solidarity and structure maintained within the community (Douglas 1992). Risk is therefore very much a socialized concept, where in a community 'the norms of acceptability are debated and socially established' (Douglas 1986, 69). This can therefore include acceptable levels of risk to children, which can then contribute to the construction of mothering cultures. Thus mothers who are out of step with local practices around children's independent mobility can fall outside of acceptable standards of 'good' mothering. Predictions of whether cultures are risk averse or risk inclined can be based on what or who is at risk and the levels of solidarity and structure maintained within the community (Douglas 1992). Douglas' notion of 'dangerousness', a term describing those who seek out risk, is attached to marginalized groups and particularly those whose cultures and practices fall outside established norms. This marginalisation, which can be gendered and therefore applicable to mothers, legitimizes spatial as well as social control.
Douglas (1986) cited examples of expert discourse around risk, for example attachment theory developed in the 1950s, which it is argued had a direct impact on mothers’ mobility by reducing their uptake of employment. Although an example of blame directed at middle class career orientated mothers, blame is most often directed towards marginalized mothers and those who are considered to fall short of constructions of ‘good’ parenting. Blame is often dependent on a range of social characteristics including class, race and sexual orientation, leading to the further marginalization of certain groups with characteristics beyond the norms of good mothers as discussed previously (Phoenix and Woolett 1991; Chase and Rogers 2001; Valentine 2004; Connolly 1998). This is particularly the case in a political climate which seeks scapegoats for social deviances, with specific parenting practices considered the cause of anti-social behaviour (Gillies 2006). The attribution of blame is therefore recognisable on both a global and local level, through expert discourses and community blame impacting on local cultures of ‘good’ mothering. It is argued here however, that in the context of everyday mobility, it is not only the impact of local and global ideologies that determine mothering cultures, but their interpretation within everyday social experience.

Douglas’ approach has been developed by more contemporary socio-cultural theorists such as Adams (1995), Lupton (1999a, 1999b) and Tulloch (1999; Tulloch and Lupton 2003). Like Douglas, Adams also argues that risks associated with a particular culture will be more accepted within that culture (Adams 1995). He maintains the importance of culture in risk experience and perception, but argues from a more relativist position where attitude to risk will be dependent on a particular cultural position, or ‘rationality’ (Adams 1995, 215). Risk is dynamic, constructed and re-constructed according to cultural context and the meanings ascribed to risk within this. He stresses the importance of the concept of risk compensation, where behaviour is adapted in response to the mitigation of a particular risk, thereby maintaining the original level of risk. Attempts to design out risks are therefore redundant as individual and collective behaviour will be adapted to maintain the original level of risk. In addition, ‘cultural filters’, factors that influence beliefs and interpretations, such as stories, news reports, statistics and research, can affect the processing of information to support established biases and thereby change and/or maintain the nature of the risk (Adams, 1995).

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8 This theory developed by Bowlby (1952) relates to the psychological impact on young children as a result of being separated from their mothers.

9 See for example Connolly’s (2000) study of homeless mothers in the USA.
These cultural filters, together with community notions of acceptable risk construct cultures of motherhood and childhood through a number of processes including the allocation of blame where women usually take the blame if the assessment of risk is perceived by peers to be wrong. As Valentine contends ‘parents recognise that if their child were to have a dangerous encounter in public space, that not only would they feel responsible and blame themselves but that others would blame them too’ (Valentine 2004, 20). In Valentine’s (1997b) study some of the respondents said that they imposed restrictions on their children in order to avoid blame. Valentine (1997a, 1997b, 2004) found that mothers whose attitudes to parenting did not fit in with local beliefs were ‘marginalized’ and ‘excluded’. This forced them to adopt the local practices in terms of children’s use of space in order to be seen as a ‘good mother’. It can be argued that parenting decisions are made in relation to wider social processes as well as the individualized relationship between mother and child. In this way risk is not only individual but collective, a central theme in the theory of everyday risk put forward by Tulloch and Lupton (2003).

*Everyday risk*

Tulloch and Lupton’s (2003, 1) theory on ‘risk and everyday life’, which they describe as a ‘socio-cultural approach to meanings and significance of risk for non-experts or laypeople’ is a core theory in this thesis. For Tulloch and Lupton risks are both historical and local. They therefore critique Beck’s ‘risk society’ theory as over rationalistic and individualistic, ‘failing to pay sufficient attention to the roles played by gender, age, social class, ethnicity, nationality and so on’ (Tulloch and Lupton 2003, 6). They also argue that contradiction, ambivalence and complexity are more important than Beck contends and that risk is an embedded notion, embedded in socio-cultural processes and spatiality.

In their study of risk amongst groups of Britons and Australians they found that contrary to Beck’s notion of the importance of catastrophic risk, people are more concerned about everyday risks. The qualitative study, carried out between 1997 and 2000 (Tulloch and Lupton 2003, 11) involved interviews with Britons and Australians about what ‘risk as a concept mean[s] to people’. Tulloch and Lupton (2003) argue that Wynne’s (1996) work on expert discourses ‘demonstrates the complexities and ambiguities that are part of risk knowledges, and that such knowledges are themselves often open to challenge and revision, based on context’ (Tulloch and Lupton 2003, 9). For Tulloch and Lupton geographical and social context are important in risk decisions. Above all risk need not be negative, as risk taking can be about conquering fear, displaying courage, self
actualization and challenging stereotypes. Contrary to much research on individualization of risk, they found risk is shared, ‘spread over more than one body/self’ (Tulloch and Lupton 2003, 20). With particular relevance to this research they found that women in their study adopted their children’s risks as their own and that both men and women became more risk averse after they had children.

Tulloch and Lupton (2003) use people’s ‘risk biographies’ to analyse everyday risk practices, an approach developed in this thesis by applying everyday risk to issues of gender and generation. In addition, it is argued that risk is constructed through mobility and must be contextualized in both time and space as discussed later in this chapter. It is also claimed here that in line with Tulloch and Lupton (2003) risk perception is not individualised but collective, and that it is cultures of motherhood, childhood and mobility that contextualize this collective risk experience and perception. Before exploring this co-construction, which it is argued here is based on socio-cultural processes, it is useful and appropriate to consider other theories of risk, which although are situated outside socio-cultural theory, can nevertheless contribute to this thesis, particularly where they overlap with socio-cultural theory. The following section, therefore, examines the contribution of psychological, ‘risk society’ and governmentality approaches to this thesis.

**Theoretical intersections**

*Drawing from psychological approaches*

Psychological theories can offer insight into factors such as emotionality, which have been underexplored within social theory. Although the approach to emotionality here is socio-cultural, it is useful to explore psychological risk theory where there is an acceptance of the impact of socio-cultural processes. The problematic nature of psychological approaches with respect to the study of risk has already been outlined. Nevertheless, theorists such as Slovic (2000) recognise the importance of socio-cultural factors in contributing to risk responses.

Some studies are increasingly recognising the importance of emotional responses to risk and how these can be situated in a socio-cultural context. Slovic (2000, Slovic et al. 2004) discusses the importance of affect, a subtle form of positive or negative emotion, in risk decision-making. In particular he cites Epstein’s idea of the dual systems of the ‘rational’ and the ‘experiential’ in risk decision-making to explain the range of embodied responses to risk. Rational processes are those based on an individual weighing up a given risk according to models of rational behaviour. At the
same time, and interacting with these models, there are experiential models of behaviour based on emotions and feelings. Slovic et al. (2004) changed the term 'rational' to 'analytical' as they argue that both models contained rational elements. Both systems are therefore working with each other and dependent on each other. An individual's affective response to a risk situation is said to be based on a lifetime's collection of images, metaphors and narratives, which are called upon in a given situation.

This risk discourse, although taking a realist approach to risk, is useful in introducing emotion into risk and in particular the embeddedness of different levels of affective knowledge based on non-discursive processes. They are useful in understanding responses and experience of risk on an individual level. However, in doing so, psychological approaches tend to reduce risk experience to individual perception and limit the understanding of both collective experience of risk and of the socio-cultural contexts of risk experience. Other approaches to risk, such as the 'risk society' (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991, 1994) also tend to emphasize the individual.

Drawing from the 'risk society'
Beck's (1992) 'risk society' thesis is based on global risk, both 'natural' and anthropogenic, and attempts to identify and manage these universally distributed risks. Although the level of impact of these global risks on everyday life is debatable (Lupton and Tulloch 2003) there is also evidence that large-scale risk is becoming an increasing concern (Mythen 2003) and that the climate of risk created by both discourses of environmental risk and global terrorist risk (Mythen and Walklate 2006) filters through to individual ontological security. In particular, Beck developed notions of institutional risk production and 'organised responsibility', where institutions purposefully underplay the importance of specific risks, which is linked to contemporary notions of trust and uncertainty in risk management (Mythen 2003). Beck relates these global risks, and individual perception of them, to the process of reflexive modernization and individualization and the accompanying fluidity in social structures, which it is argued is characteristic of late modernity (see also Bauman 2000, 2006). In approaching risk in this way, Beck re-invigorated academic debate on risk and thereby instigated the growth in knowledge of risk in recent years.

However, the processes of reflexive modernization and individualization, which are part of Beck's (1992) 'risk society' have been criticized by motherhood (Lewis 2005; Miller 2005) and risk theorists (Adams 1995; Lupton 1999; Mythen 2004; Scott 2000; Wynne 1996). Beck argues that
reflexivity liberates women from their gender ascribed roles as ‘men and women are released from traditional forms and ascribed roles in the search for a ‘life of their own’ (Beck 1992, 105). It is argued here that although Beck’s theory is more applicable on a macro level, to technological risks that are less relevant to people’s everyday lives (Adams 1995; Lupton 1999; Scott 2000; Tulloch and Lupton 2003) it is through socio-cultural risk theory that risk and its impact within everyday life can be understood.

Despite the difficulties of applying Beck’s ‘risk society’ thesis to everyday life and to issues of gender and generation, there remains some elements that are applicable to this study, although they relate mainly to the broader context of risk. Within risk society the uncertainties introduced through the escalation of risk associated with technological development become paramount and override the development of the technologies themselves. The existence of these risks leads to social disorder as society is no longer based on the distribution of resources but on the distribution of risks. The risk society is particularly characterized by high tech risks, which have the ability to ‘endanger all forms of life on this planet’ (Beck 1992, 22). The nature of these risks and their scale renders them incalculable to all but particular experts. Beck argues that although there are risk positions where risk can follow existing social divisions, as late modernity progresses risks become more evenly distributed through society as class and other social divisions are broken down. Beck’s risk society is associated with a disintegration of community affiliations and a move towards individualization (Beck 1992). The theory assumes the breakdown of class relations and subsequent redistribution of risk. Whilst Beck’s theory provides a political context for risk relations it contains a number of shortcomings in relation to risk and minority groups as Lupton (1999) and Mythen (2004) have argued.

Giddens (1991, 1994) also analysed the impact of risk in late modernity and has proposed theories that have much in common with Beck’s risk society. Unlike Beck, Giddens maintains however that it is greater knowledge that has led to a higher awareness of risk and thereby greater uncertainty, rather than greater levels of risk (Giddens 1994). Like Beck, Giddens also asserts the existence of a reflexivity that is particular to modernity. He differs from Beck, however in his definition of reflexivity in that he contends that reflexivity in modernity is based on working and re-working the self in a bid to establish identity (Giddens 1991). It is an inward directed reflexivity as opposed to Beck’s, which is more focused on societal reworkings. Giddens also emphasized the notion of trust in his analysis of risk (Giddens 1991, 1994). Trust is seen as a necessary
acquisition in allowing an individual to negotiate risk and so develop self-identity. It is also a way of protecting individuals from confronting the possible consequences of risk and the uncertainty associated with it (Giddens 1991). It is this focus on the individual that limits the application of Gidden’s work on risk in this study. In addition, both Beck and Giddens are criticised for their overly realist approach to risk (Wynne 1996).

**Drawing from governmentality approaches**

In contrast to the realist approach to risk adopted in risk society theories, a strong social constructivist approach is taken by those associated with the governmentality10 approach to risk, which views risk as wholly social constructed and dynamic. This strong constructivist approach, to which Wynne adheres, views risk (including hazard and danger) as a wholly subjective concept that is determined through social and political processes. As a result risk can be distorted and used by the state and other agencies, to create a climate of uncertainty, which can then be used to control populations.

Much of this discussion of state control through allocation of risk is informed by the work of Michael Foucault as discussed previously (Lupton 1999; Fotel and Thomsen 2004). According to Lupton (1999) Foucault, like Beck, recognises the importance of expert knowledge in governmentality, particularly the process of normalisation within which the individual exists. Risk is a tool of normalisation serving to control the population through regulation and management. According to Foucault, populations can be divided in relation to levels of risk they are subject to and appropriate forms of regulation used. Individuals are regulated through both coercion and ‘voluntary compliance’. Risk aversion in modernity is associated with ‘self-control’, ‘self-knowledge’ and ‘self-improvement’ (Lupton 1999, 91). Lupton critiques the governmentality approach due to its overemphasis on state discourses and strategies of risk rather on people’s response to these, thus limiting it application to studies of everyday risk (Lupton 1999). However, these insights into discourses of risk and power are useful in contextualizing risk and exploring links between risk and surveillance. Fotel and Thomsen (2004), in particular, have developed the governmentality approach into frameworks that help explain everyday behaviour and in particular parents and children’s mobility and will be discussed further in the next chapter. Another important feature of this approach is the role of experts in determining risk experience. Wynne

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10 Power relations based not only on the state but more subtly on knowledge and information gained through surveillance and accumulated by agencies of the state (Abercrombie et al. 2000).

The role of experts in risk

The role of experts in constructing motherhood has already been discussed. This section develops this notion in relation to risk. As Wynne (1996) argues, for realist approaches to risk, where risk is measurable, it is experts who are in the position to control it and their role is validated by this perceived ability. The expert-layperson relationship here is dependent on trust, as experts are only as powerful as the belief that individuals have in them to maintain their position. Although there are different definitions of ‘expert’, it is generally taken to represent the power relationship between those with greater and those with lesser knowledge. This simplistic view of the expert-layperson relationship has been criticised by constructivist approaches to risk (Wynne 1996). Wynne uses an authority based definition in his criticism of expert driven realist models including Beck’s risk society, which he contends lacks understanding of the importance of ‘lay’ knowledge. He argues that although Beck situates risk within social, cultural and political processes risk is still considered an objective phenomenon and therefore controllable by experts and expert knowledge. As Wynne (1996, 75) states: once the concept that ‘scientific knowledge itself embodies a particular culture’ is introduced then it is no longer possible to consider ‘expert’ opinion as paramount in risk studies. Expert knowledge is thus as dependent on socio-cultural context as any other, limiting its legitimacy.

The contested role of experts and the degree of influence they exert is of paramount importance within risk discourse. Giddens argues:

An expert is any individual who can successfully lay claim to either specific skills or types of knowledge which the layperson does not possess. ‘Expert’ and ‘layperson’ have to be understood as contextually relative terms. There are many layers of expertise and what counts in any given situation where expert and layperson confront one another is an imbalance in skills or information which – for a given field of action – makes one an ‘authority’ in relation to the other.

(Giddens 1994, 84)

In Gidden’s view, therefore, an expert is not necessarily a person in authority but can be anyone that is considered to possess a more informed or specialised knowledge in a given circumstance. This is an important distinction from an authority or institutionalized expert, as an expert in risk
analysis in one context may not be deemed an expert in another. This is particularly applicable to everyday risk and to the expertise of mothers and children in determining their own risk and their own mobility.

This section has demonstrated how socio-cultural theories of risk allow both individual and collective experience of risk to be considered, recognising the importance of locating this experience within its socio-cultural and spatial context. Risk is therefore culturally specific and based on cultural interpretations. Risk experience within this theory is subjective and complex and cannot be mitigated through increased knowledge and education. However in seeking to understand this complexity there are elements of other theories of risk that contribute to an understanding of mothering cultures and thus mothers’ risk experience and mobility. These theories intersect with socio-cultural theory where they acknowledge socio-cultural processes. Psychological approaches can contribute to understanding of emotionalities, risk society to political context and governmentality to expert discourses and the role of risk in legitimizing surveillance and control.

Risk is experienced in the everyday, is complex, ambiguous, changeable and embedded in socio-cultural processes and spatiality (Tulloch and Lupton 2003). Cultures of mothering are determined through risk experience and in particular the acceptability of risk within communities at different levels. Mothering practices that are deemed to be outside of established norms are considered blameworthy and this constructs risk experience. Risk is collective and so parents adopt their children’s risk. It is constructed through biography as motherhood too is biographical. It is emotionalized as mothering is emotionalized. It has been established that risk and motherhood are co-constructed. However in order to understand how this relates to mothers and children’s mobility, it is necessary to firstly explore mobile space, the space in which this mobility is enacted and experienced.

**Risk and motherhood in mobile space**

Much of the theory relating to risk and motherhood, although recognising the importance of social, cultural and political processes (Chase and Rogers 2001; Duncan 1999, 2005; Gillies 2006; Miller 2005) fails to contextualize these processes in space. It therefore underestimates the impact of mobility, and particularly the embodied nature of mobility, on these concepts as the mobile body is constructed in space and in turn constructs space (Grosz 1992; Law 1999; McDowell
As McDowell (1999, 5) argues '... space and place are gendered and sexed, and gender relations are 'spaced''. She illustrates this with examples of the 'embodied knowledge' of young working class mothers in Britain and the USA where in working class communities and ghettos women often have a different attitude to issues such as young motherhood and this can lead to restricted opportunities. As McDowell states: 'Behaviours and attitudes that are learned in the locality, and reflected in style and language, as Bourdieu termed 'embodied knowledge' distinguish these young women from their more affluent peers' (McDowell 1999, 102). The young women develop gender identities as a result of their interaction with the local social environment.

Mothering cultures themselves are spatial and mobile, as spatiality defines culture of mothering through discourse (Dowling 1999; Holloway and Valentine 2000). Law (1999) argues that it is the social coding of the body as female in our society that produces a specific vulnerability to sexual assault by men, and an associated set of norms of respectable and safe behaviour. She cites research by Hart (1979) and Katz (1993) that has shown that such norms are acculturated by young girls, and restrict their spatiality and mobility options. Law (1999, 580) specifically refers to 'after dark' and 'dangerous' places being constructed as risky through this acculturation.

Similarly, Dyck (1996, 126), in her study of women in a residential suburb of Vancouver, found that women's identities as mothers are 'embedded in the notion of safe space, which is defined and negotiated by the women in their daily mothering work'. Dyck (1990) related mothering practices to women's social interactions and the political and economic context in which decisions about their children's use of space are made. Women negotiate 'good' mothering through these everyday social interactions, adopting strategies to avoid blame. This occurs through everyday discourse with friends and acquaintances and within different levels of 'expert' intervention, from regular meetings with child health and educational professionals to central government policy and information.

This mothering identity based on established norms of good parenting can be associated with particular mobile spatial contexts (Holloway and Valentine 2000) and particularly that of the private car. In her study of suburban mothers, Dowling (1999) found that the car was instrumental in constructing mothering identities based on parental aspirations for their children. She found that the use of cars amongst middle class parents in suburbia, enabled parents to maximize parenting abilities. They used the car to maintain the prescribed image of 'good
parents'. The person-car hybrid (Urry 2000) in this instance becomes the culturally defined 'good' mother. Urry argues that this hybrid is based not only on changing patterns of individual behaviour but is reflective of social life, a society constructed through different mobilities. He argues that automobilization constructs social life through coercion as it imposes 'intense flexibility' (Urry 2000, 191). The automobile mother is therefore forced to adopt multiple roles as flexibility is imposed by a car driven society.

Although drawing on Urry's (2000) analysis of the impact of the car on society, it is argued here that it is the co-construction of motherhood, risk and mobility that results in the increasingly flexible and at the same time constraining, social context in which mothering is practiced. This is located not only on the macro level, to which Urry most often refers, but to everyday, localized mothering. Everyday meanings and identities of motherhood are bound up with notions of good parenting, which are themselves inextricably linked to risk experience and mobility. This is particularly the case with children deemed to be in risky spatial and social contexts, with blame not only from the local community but from mothers who blame themselves and impose mobility restrictions as a result (Valentine 1997, 2004). Again risk is seen to be individualised and collective as well as spatial.

Everyday discourse and the development of local cultures of mothering can be empowering as discussed later in the chapter but they can also represent an expanding network of blame (Dyck 1990, Valentine 1997, 2004) necessitating greater sensitivity to risk taking. For middle class parents in particular the desire to network may be bound up in issues of emotional capital with pressures to maximize their children's social potential (Gillies 2006). In doing so, mothers increase social interaction and become increasingly mobile (Barker 2003). Backett-Milburn and Harden (2004) emphasize the importance of the everyday 'mundane' negotiation of risk in determining parenting practices, including mobility practices. They argue that risk is minimized through the 'the manipulation of space, place and people' (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004, 435). Everyday risk is thus experienced through mobility. They argue that this is a dynamic process where 'experts' are created and recreated in time and space and risk negotiated and renegotiated.

The risk minimization process, which can also be mobility minimizing, emerges from cultures of blame, and can paradoxically lead to accusations of paranoia. Everyday discourses around risk and
children contribute to the construction of a mothering culture based on expert-induced uncertainty and blame, in turn leading to increased parental fears for their children in space. This can lead to a significant impact on both mothers’ and children’s mobility as there is an increased dependence on escort trips. The escalation of fears then leads to the creation of notions of parental paranoia (Hillman 1993; Furedi 2002) which are considered to be symptomatic of our ‘culture of fear’ (Furedi 2002). There is some evidence for this ‘culture of fear’ especially in relation to media representations of risk.

The layering of media amplification of risk onto existing global and local ideologies of risk is a crucial factor in constructing this culture of fear (Furedi 2002). As Valentine (1989) found ‘the mental maps of feared environments are elaborated by images gained from hearing the frightening experiences and advice of others; and from media reporting... ’ (Valentine 1989, 386). Like expert discourses of mothering, the media are highly influential in constructing risk and particularly gendered risk (Weaver, Carter and Stanko 2000; Tulloch 2000; Furedi 2002). As Weaver, Carter and Stanko (2000) explain:

by accentuating the risks that women face when they enter public environments, the media help to construct such spaces as profoundly gendered ones in which women are urged to be increasingly fearful for their personal safety and therefore never at ease.

(Weaver, Carter and Stanko 2000, 171).

This is achieved by the media ‘constructing the female body as a site of risk’ (Weaver, Carter and Stanko 2000, 182) contributing to the social coding of the body discussed by Law (1999). However, the ‘paranoid parent’ discourse, which is part of this culture of fear, can be critiqued for its lack of attention to the complex interaction of motherhood, risk and mobility on an everyday level (Jackson and Scott 1999; Pain 2003). This complex interaction includes the consideration of not only mothers’ perceptions of risk, but their everyday risk experience, which is bound up with their personal biography and spatiality (Tulloch 1999, 2000; Tulloch and Lupton 2003). Tulloch (1999) argues that the risk aversion of women is based not on irrational perceptions but on their experiences of risk and their expertise in processing this experience. He undertook a major fear of crime research project which showed that women adopt coping strategies to maximize their mobility in public space and these were based on their past experiences rather than ungrounded perceptions. Tulloch (2000, 186) argues that charges of “irrational women” with ‘mistaken impressions’ of their ‘objective risk” are based on ‘decontextualized’ and ‘expert driven’ research.
Risk experience can therefore be seen as fluid and dependent on everyday mobilities in socio-cultural contexts. It is also embedded in space and the construction of mobile risky spaces. It can be argued that a useful means of exploring the construction of mobile space as risky is through the public/private dichotomy.

Risky space: the public and the private

The public/private dichotomy is important here as it represents the socio-cultural gendering of urban space and the impact of risk and mobility on this process. The dichotomy demonstrates how the concept of motherhood and mobility are co-constructed as well as the differing approaches to gender and mobilities. The division between public and private is based on a gendering of space within patriarchal society, with women controlled through the domesticated private space of the home (Massey 1994; McDowell 1999). Urbanisation in the early modernising period gave rise to the potential for increased mobility, particularly for middle class women, including the female flâneur (Law 1999), blurring the boundary between private and public space and threatening patriarchal control (Massey 1994; McDowell 1999; Domosh and Seager 2001). The private public divide is definitively linked to mobility whether through the localisation of women's everyday lives (Little et al 1988; MacKenzie 1988; Pickup 1988) or the regendering of urban space through specific mobility patterns (McDowell 1999).

Although rigidly defined boundaries of public and private have been replaced by a less distinct boundary, the factors that underpin this indistinctness and the fluidity of these boundaries are useful in exploring constructions of gender, risk and mobility. Part of the public-private divide is predicated on risk experience, and the ascription of public space as fearful, an ideology that is produced and reproduced in patriarchy (Domosh and Seager 2001; Lupton 1999; Pain 1997; Valentine 1989; Weaver, Carter and Stanko 2000). Within this discourse, women develop risk aversion as a result of notions of their physical vulnerability to men and fear of sexual violence. This negative experience of risk then impacts on the experience of other risks (Lupton 1999) and contributes to a risk aversion based on public/private space that is passed through generations (Pain 1994).

However, fear of space is just one aspect of risk experience and perception and therefore only partially explains women’s interaction with the urban environment (Tulloch 2000). Tulloch argues that risk experience is determined by a range of factors experienced over a long period of time.
and dependent on spatiality and social contexts. Studies had already shown the differential risk experience according to low income (Hood et al. 1996; Kelly et al. 1997) where low income parents were more likely to recognise risks in both public and private space, as they lacked the resources to reduce risks inside the home. ‘Better-off’ parents externalized risks using semi-public space and coping strategies to control risk, contributing to increased automobilization (Dowling 1999).

It is the indeterminate space of the car that Sheller and Urry (2003) argue is making the public-private dichotomy irrelevant. Instead they argue that this ‘quasi-public’ has become the context for the playing out of gender roles. They argue that public and private are relational and fluid and therefore there are no boundaries to be blurred. For them the ‘distinction between public and private domains should be dispensed with since nothing much of contemporary life remains on one side or other of the divide’ (Sheller and Urry 2003, 122). However, it could be argued that the fluidity of these concepts, rather than making them obsolete, is leading to an iterative process of redefinition. They can therefore act as a baseline, even if this is a baseline in constant flux, from which to interpret the riskiness of different spaces. This is particularly apparent when gauging the gendered nature of risky space as it is around this public-private dichotomy that much of the work on gendered space has been located.

Risk and fear

A significant proportion of the existing literature on women and public space is associated with women’s fear of violent crime (Adams 1995; Pain 1997; Tulloch 1999, 2000; Valentine 1989). It is argued (Lupton 1999; Massey 1994; Pain 1997; Rose 1997; Valentine 1989) that it is male dominance of public spaces that excludes women from them, that a climate of fear is developed for this purpose:

The bodies of white, heterosexual bourgeois men tend to claim public space as a right and frequently seek to dominate and exclude others through exerting an aggressive gaze or through violence. Other bodies must fight to establish their place in this space... Other categories of bodies within public spaces, are positioned as vulnerable to confrontation or attack and therefore tend to lack the self-possession of privileged men in the same space.

(Lupton 1999, 145)

This fear of public space is developed through the social processes of patriarchal control as
women’s perceptions of risk from crime in the city, and the gendered association of the city as male, are mutually reinforcing’ (Domosh and Seager 2001, 99). The result of male dominance of public spaces is the construction of a series of barriers imposed to intimidate women from certain public spaces and create risk aversion, with some public space becoming a space to be avoided. Lupton argues that this fear is then passed on through generations, accentuating the effects. As Hart states: ‘... girls are socialized into a restricted use of public space through observing both their parents differential fears for them...’ (Valentine 1989, 386). For both Valentine and Pain, women’s use of public space is highly politicized. Valentine (1989, 389) argues that it is ‘a spatial expression of patriarchy’, while Pain states that ‘the geography of women’s fear reinforces dominant patterns of political relations’ (Pain 1997, 234). In opposition to this fear of being in a public space, women ‘adopt false assumptions about their security when in places falsely deemed safe for women such as home’ (Valentine 1989, 385). In line with other writers, Pain’s research suggests that women are not unaware of this ‘spatial fear paradox’ but that there ‘is a wide gap between beliefs about risk in general and feelings about personal risk’. This is achieved by separating knowledge of violence from the self both geographically and socially. The environment itself may redistribute fear on a relatively small scale but the explanation of fear lies elsewhere ‘in the interaction of social relations with space’ (Pain 1997, 233).

Some feminist writers argue that there is another more theoretical division in women’s reaction to threats in the environment. In contrast to the work of Valentine (1989) and Pain (1997), who argue that fear of violent crime is rooted in patriarchy, post-structural approaches to women and violence, such as Mehta and Bondi (1999), take account of both structures of power and domination, and ‘the individual’s agency, desires, and creativity’ (Mehta and Bondi 1999, 68) and thus these theories ‘create a space in which it is possible to think about gender identity as both constructed and lived without having to posit a gender neutral, pre-social essence at the core of the person’. This allows for either compliance with or resistance to social norms, in this case of patriarchal social control. They set out to demonstrate this through a study of perceptions of violence of university students concluding that the ‘female respondents resisted the challenge to their autonomy that fear of violence represented...’ (Mehta and Bondi 1999, 79). However, this finding can be explained within Pain’s (1997) and Valentine’s (1989) theories of fear and space as women adopting coping strategies that allow them to continue using space, but do not necessarily diminish the risk experience, thereby limiting the challenge to the underlying structures that construct risk. Although poststructural theories are recognised in terms of individual agency, this
thesis posits these within wider theories that accept the importance of wider social structures.

The degree to which fear of public space can be understood in terms of risk theory and the extent to which fear can parallel risk aversion are contested. However, as it is important to differentiate between the concepts of risk and fear, it is also important to understand the extent of their overlap. Both concepts are about uncertainty and potential harm. Risk theory can provide the opportunity to contextualize fear of public space within socio-cultural processes. However, fear of crime is just one aspect of risk experience and perception and therefore only partially explains women’s interaction with the urban environment. As Tulloch (2000, 189) found:

There are a range of factors other than incidence of crime that contribute to an individual perception of risk. Some of these are local, physical and direct. Others are more indirect and systematically long term, depending on experience of a declining environment or social exploitation.

However, in viewing ‘fear’ as an emotion associated with risk experience, it is possible to gain an understanding of the driving forces of mothers’ claims for control of their children’s spatiality. In Pain’s study of women’s fear of violent crime carried out in Edinburgh in 1992, 42.4 per cent of the women involved were mothers or guardians of children who were under 16 years old at the time of the research. Although the majority of regulating children’s spatial scope is carried out by women, the women in Pain’s study also highlighted the fact that safety concerns were shared with their partners. Spatial restraint was almost always based on public rather than private space.

Although recognizing the difficulty in making historical comparisons, Pain is confident that parental fears for their children have increased in the last few decades, and are continuing to increase (Pain 1994). Women’s fears for their children reflect their own fears in public space, in Pain’s study drawing ‘a strong association between dark, lonely public spaces and the risk of child sexual and physical assault to their children’. Pain (1994) also found large social class differences in parental fears, with middle class parents being able to control their children through their participation in organized activities. Overall Pain argues that parental fears are instrumental in shaping children’s experiences and activities (Pain 1994, 2001). One of the main arguments here is that these potential fears are part of wider cultures of mothering, which through this spatiality are influenced by risk and mobility.

Whether through institutionalised ideologies of mothering or more localized everyday discourses,
different cultures of mothering are established and re-established at different times and in different spaces. The penalties for not succumbing to the dominant cultures of mothering are manifold as they involve potential harm to their children as defined by ‘experts’, including state sanctions and localized cultures of blame. It could be argued then that risk underpins the very nature of parenting and contributes to constructing parenting culture. It is this relationship between gender and space that, together with cultures of risk and mothering, determine mobility. The remainder of this chapter therefore explores mothers’ corporeal mobility more specifically, looking firstly at the interaction between changing mobility and the construction of mothering roles and cultures.

Gender constraints: multidimensionality and increased mobility

The norms and practices of mothering are fluid and mobile. They have changed considerably over the last century. As an increasing number of mothers enter the workplace (Office for National Statistics 2004), with parallel increases in nursery and child care places 11, motherhood becomes defined by its multidimensionality and subsequently its mobility. Gender constraints continue to have impacts as the workplace continues to exclude mothers and demand for childcare continues to exceed supply, despite increased flexibility in working practices (Skinner 2005). In addition, women spend more time on childcare and household responsibilities than men, even if they are in full time employment (Office for National Statistics 2004). Women make more education escort trips than men, over 40 per cent more in 1999-2001 (ONS 2004). Between the age of 30 and 39, 15 per cent of trips made by women are escort to school (Department for Transport Local Government and the Regions 2001).

These gender constraints are dependent on both the underlying ideologies that define cultures of motherhood and the ability of the space to accommodate changing patterns of mobility. As Hamilton and Jenkins (2000, 1799) state: ‘transport also plays a key role in women’s efforts to manage the multiple roles they play’. However, it is cultures of mothering that are bound up in everyday risk experience that seem to determine, as they are determined by, everyday mobility practices and decision-making. This is demonstrated in Dowling’s (1999) study of the interdependency of cultures of automobility and mothering in suburban Sydney. Dowling (1999, 347) argues that everyday discourse is set within the context of dominant ideologies of mothering, which ‘become points for negotiation in everyday practices of mothering, and to this extent are

11 There has been a quadrupling of nursery places in the UK since the mid 1990s (Skinner 2005).
indirectly shared'. For Dowling cultures of mothering are about how women relate to their children and their general approach to child rearing.

The constraints imposed by childcare responsibilities (Paull and Taylor 2002) become constraints imposed by an increasingly mobile society, which increasingly encompass a mobility management role, co-coordinating children’s movements throughout the day (Skinner 2005). Skinner uses the concept of ‘co-ordination points’ to explore periods in the day when management of children’s mobility is critical, finding the significant number of such periods were managed by mothers within the household. She found that informal childcare was being used to transport children at key times between different kinds of childcare and educational settings. The mothers in Skinner’s (2005) study therefore were not only involved in directly escorting their children between their various destinations, but also in imagined mobilities, both in organising additional trips for their children and in virtually taking these trips with them at the critical times of the day. In this way it can be argued that motherhood practices are not only increasing mobile but potentially hypermobile12, as risk experience coupled with the expectations of ‘good’ mothering result in mobility that is potentially damaging to quality of life. Mobility can therefore represent significant constraints on mothers’ lives, just as gender roles can represent barriers to mobility.

Mobility constraints are, of course, bound up with risk and blame. Indeed some studies on women and automobilization perpetuate the culture of blame that can surround women’s use of the car. Root et al. (2000) set out to demonstrate that women have a particular contribution to make in the area of sustainable development. This is due mainly to the growth in motorization of women in developed countries, the ‘particular nature of women’s travel behaviour, and their designed behaviour’ (Root et al. 2000, 370). In particular the localization of women’s travel could mean that they give ‘value to safe local streets, relatively clean air and low levels of traffic noise more than men’. Root et al. (2000) argue that women are ‘less likely to adopt the dominant attitude of valuing mobility above accessibility’ and hence ‘could respond more positively to the challenges of environmentalism in transport’. Conversely the trip chaining behaviour of women and the related multiple stops, Root et al. state, ‘have adverse implications for atmospheric pollution because of the larger amount of ‘cold running’ entailed’ (Root et al. 2000, 374).

12 Hypermobility is used by Adams (1999, 2005) to describe the grave consequences for society of unsustainable and deleterious increases in mobility. The term is developed in this study to characterise the negative impacts of increasing mobility for mothers due to their gender role.
However, this oversimplified approach to women’s automobilization fails to recognize the complexity of women’s socially constructed gender roles. It imposes an additional layer of constraint on both the practice and the culture of mothering and mothers’ mobility.

Mobility constraints (and freedoms)

The mobility constraints on women have been recognized as travel exclusion for a number of decades, with women considered to be situated within a social group that can be transport excluded. The concern with travel exclusion dates back to the 1970s with the Independent Commission on Transport in 1974 and research by Hillman in the same year (Pickup 1988). Hillman (1976) showed that an increase in household car availability did not necessarily lead to an increase in the mobility of women within that household (Tivers 1988). This initiated a number of studies into women’s travel behaviour, though most was focused on a limited set of criteria such as travel to work, and the substantial work by policy-making bodies (Greater London Council 1985; London Research Centre 1998; Transport for London 2004) concentrated on the physical barriers to mobility in the built environment. Women are a diverse group but ‘there are sufficiently significant differences between women’s transport demands and experience as opposed to men’s’ (Hamilton and Jenkins 2000, 1794), including access to the car, activity patterns, care responsibilities, and attitudes to travel by various modes. It has been argued that mobility along with access to childcare are the main constraining impacts on women’s activity patterns (Hamilton and Jenkins 2000; Pickup 1988; Tivers 1988).

As discussed gender constraints operate both ideologically and in practice and are both spatial and embodied. Tivers argues that ‘the complexity of the gender role constraint seems much greater than the simple idea of having to be at certain places at certain times in order to attend the needs of children’ (Tivers 1988, 86). She maintains that the gender role constraint is the ‘outward face of the ideology that assigns child-caring responsibility to women’. Law (1999) argues that mobility constraints are often embodied as movement is embodied with mothers often forced to move through space encumbered with children thus redefining their bodies’ physical boundaries.

However it could also be argued that it is the social and physical structure of the urban environment that is restrictive. Spatial embodiment can however define both the nature of mobility and its purpose, with the urban environment reflecting the body that is ‘normal’ and ‘risk-free’.
Constraints are also spatial as the gender ascribed roles of mothers necessitate and impose a pattern of mobility that reflects their responsibilities within a patriarchal society (Massey 1994). Mothers therefore exhibit complex travel behaviour characterized by multi-purpose trips that often demand travel beyond the capacity of the public transport system. At the same time, mobility has been constructed, in the main, as a masculine concept. As Law (1999, 580) argues ‘men are expected to move between spheres, while women’s mobility may be interpreted as transgression’. Women’s immobility, due to barriers specific to them, can lead to their transport exclusion and this is exacerbated by the gender roles of motherhood. Paradoxically one of the most masculinized forms of transport (Domosh and Seager 2001), the private car, offers the potential to liberate women from mobility constraints.

The car and the culture surrounding its use are highly gendered, with cars designed for male bodies and subsequently less safely accommodate women drivers (DfT 2004), and the car masculinized in western culture (Law 1999; Ortoleva and Brenman 2004). Law (1999, 579) argues that ‘of all everyday technology, transport technology probably has the most deep-seated and wide ranging connection to gender distinctions, as everyone who has ever heard a joke about women drivers or noted the prevalence of images of trucks and cars on clothing for little boys will recognize’. Women’s, and consequently mothers’, mobility options are therefore constrained through socio-cultural barriers.

Although studies have shown that women tend to use some forms of public transport, such as buses (London Research Centre 1998; Transport for London 2004) more than men, they also account, almost entirely, for the growth in private car use. However many women, those on low incomes in particular, have limited access to motorized transport of any kind. In addition, mothers’ everyday experiences of walking as explored by Bostock (2001) can exacerbate mobility constraints. In contrast to the automobile representing emotional investment in children (Sheller 2004), Bostock argues that walking can be emotionally draining if it is the only option available. Often compounded by poor physical environments, the young mothers in Bostock’s study encountered a number of problems while walking. These included fatigue and stress, negative psycho-social effects of looking after fatigued children, and restrictions to limited geographical areas lacking shops, services, and social resources. Access to public transport for all the mothers was limited due to high fares and the prioritisation of other resource demands. As Bostock (2001, 16) found: ‘mothers used their bodies as a means to bridge the gap between responsibilities and
Discussion of the socially excluding impacts of being without access to a car is often underplayed in social studies of mobility. However, low income can be an important contributory factor in restricting women’s mobility options (Pickup 1988; Hamilton and Jenkins 1989). Mobility, like risk can constrain or liberate. Mothers’ mobility is constrained by spatial and temporal factors as mothers adopt a multidimensional role and as mobility is gendered and excluding to women through culture and spatiality. However, mobility, as well as reinforcing gender constraints through a failure to provide access, can also potentially liberate women from their gender roles. Although referring to migration specifically McDowell states: “Travel, even the idea of travelling, challenges the spatial association between home and women that has been so important in structuring the social construction of femininity in the ‘West’...” (McDowell 1999, 168).

As well being a constraint therefore, mobility can represent emancipation from the imposed cultures and practices of motherhood. In turn, motherhood can represent freedom in terms of identity enhancement and spatial security as discussed previously. The sense of identity through motherhood can be a valued and positive element of women’s lives. As Valentine (1997, 49) states: ‘Although taking prime responsibility for children is a major constraint on women’s lives which can undermine their own sense of self, motherhood can also give women a sense of meaning and identity’ not only through reflexivity but through everyday mothering practices. The sense of self that parenthood provides, therefore, can liberate women’s lives as well as constrain them and this occurs in the context of localized identities and cultures of mothering. There is also evidence that women establish support networks with other mothers when their children are young, important in locating and understanding their own experience (Tietjen 1985; Urwin 1985; Holloway 1998). This period of motherhood can therefore represent a relatively mobile period, with a sense of freedom and autonomy gained through networking.

As increased mobility can be liberating so too can increased automobility, most apparent when compared with the relative impacts of carlessness described by Bostock (2001). As well as maintaining gender roles, cars can represent freedom from gender and generational constraints for both women (Hamilton and Jenkins 2000; Dowling 1999) and children (Lucas 2001). Their ‘semi-private’ space can represent a relatively ‘safe’ environment, a way of coping with risk as discussed. They can represent a more positive experience in escorting children (Bostock 2001).
They can facilitate emotional investment in children (Sheller 2004) and ‘facilitate “family time”’ (Dowling 1999, 351) as some parents consider cars to be a good space for one to one social contact with children (Barker 2003). The car is important for multi-purpose trips to fulfil the complex travel needs of women, particularly mothers (Rosenbloom 1992). They can go where public transport cannot, allowing multi-purpose trips that are often unfeasible by other means. As Tivers (1988, 87) states: ‘access to a car... may widen activity patterns without in any way changing the dominance of the overriding constraints’. However, as discussed the car can contribute to the need for multi-purpose trips in the first place (Urry 2000). The solution to a hypermobile motherhood may therefore be relative immobility.

Where mobility is considered risky studies have shown that immobility can be considered an effective control of risk. Domosh and Seager (2001) discuss immobility in terms of its challenge to gender roles. They cite the work of feminist geographers who show that immobility is not necessarily disadvantageous, that ‘networks based on “localness” and “fixedness” can and do provide deep reservoirs of resources, reciprocity, assistance and comfort...’ (Domosh and Seager 2001, 121). However, this is not an option available to most mothers as the next chapter discusses and it is not an option conducive to the health and wellbeing of children (Department of Health 2004; Kegerreis 1993; Mackett 2005; National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence 2006).

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how motherhood, risk and mobility are based on dominant ideologies and localized cultures and are dependent on a range of socio-cultural and spatial factors. The co-construction of each of the concepts has been evidenced throughout the chapter. It has been argued that motherhood is a multi-dimensional concept encompassing the diversity of women and the impact of this diversity on global and local ideologies of mothering. Within both global and local ideologies are constructions and reconstructions of what it is to be a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ mother, and these are associated with cultures of blame attached to mothers’ role in risk minimization and control. The ambivalence that results from ever changing constructions of good mothering facilitates the existence of this blame culture, where risky behaviour outside established norms is unacceptable. It is also apparent that other factors, which may result in further marginalisation, such as class, can be determining factors in terms of ideology and practices of motherhood, risk and mobility. Marginalized women are often constructed as ‘bad’ ‘risky’ mothers and this in turn leads to further marginalisation.
Socio-cultural theories of risk have been shown to offer the most appropriate framework for exploring the scale and nature of risks associated with localized mobilities such as the journey to school. Within socio-cultural theory, risk is experienced rather than solely perceived, it is subjective and complex, based on socio-cultural context and variable in time and place through everyday interactions within this context. Mothers are constructed primarily as risk averse, with women’s role as a mother being found to accentuate women’s risk aversion. The meanings and identities of motherhood become tied up with notions of good parenting, which are themselves inextricably linked to risk experience. Studies within psychology have shown that past experiences of given situations can lead to affective or emotional response to a current experience, so mothers’ past experience is likely to influence their experience of everyday risk. The risk society, although limited due to its acceptance of the breakdown in gender divisions, is useful in politicizing risk. The governmentality approach facilitates explanation of the role of experts in constructing risk experience and an understanding of the increased surveillance and control around risk, particularly risk to children.

It is argued here, however, that mothers’ experience and perception of risk to their children is bound up in the complexities of local and global cultures of risk and mobility and especially in cultures of blame, which often results in the imposition of notions of risky mobility onto their children. This in turn acts as a mobility constraint for mothers as they attempt to cope with the risky spaces that are constructed. Although mobility in itself can be deemed as risky within dominant and local cultures of risk and mothering, there are apparent exceptions and these are dependent on socio-cultural contexts. Mothering cultures are seen as a key determinant of risk and mobility. Within some mothering cultures the car is a coping strategy, a way of overcoming risk and a symbol of good mothering, whereas in others minimizing risk demands minimizing mobility, thus complying with local cultures of mothering predicated on risk aversion. There can be little doubt that mothering, along with other aspects of gender, is definitively shaped by mobility and its riskiness and in turn that changing intensities of mobility are shaped by what it is to be a mother.

Valentine (2004) contends that risk aversion, particularly in relation to children’s use of public space could be explained through the process of individualization, where the extent of the increased emotional investment in children gives rise to a low risk tolerance. However it is argued
here, in line with Tulloch and Lupton’s (2003) thesis on risk and everyday life, that risks are not just based on individualized experience but on shared experiences. It is the recognition of the role of the community in determining risk landscapes that enhances the notion of collectivity. Risk may be experienced as an individual also but it is the collective experience of similar risks, with similar levels of acceptability that give meaning to these risks and give rise to collective interpretation and collective coping mechanisms.

Central to this chapter is the notion that exploring the journey to school requires analysis of mothers’ as well as children’s mobility as firstly mothers make the journey to school and this accounts for a significant proportion of their overall trips; and also because mothers’ mobility and risk experiences impact on their children’s mobility. This chapter has examined knowledge based on existing theory and empirical studies and in combining theories on motherhood, risk and mobility has sought to expand knowledge in relation to gendered risk and mobilities. In particular it has emphasized the complexities and ambiguities of these concepts, the notion of the everyday in understanding mobilities on a daily localized level, and the importance of experience, both of risk and of mobility in determining these everyday mobilities. The importance of biography and lifestage emerge from these key themes in explaining the cumulative effects of this everyday risk and mobility experience. This also provides a link to generation and its relevance in determining risk and mobility, which is developed in chapter 3, which examines childhood and risk within the context of everyday mobilities and specifically the mobilities of the journey to school.
Chapter 3 Childhood, risk and the mobilities of the school journey

Children's agency in determining their own mobilities is a central theme in this research but needs to be understood in context. As chapter 2 has shown, mobility is closely linked to experiences of risk and the ideologies and practices of motherhood. This chapter develops this exploration by drawing out the key intersections between children's mobility in the everyday context of the journey to school, the constructions of risk in this space and the interplay between children and their mothers primarily, as this is the basis of this research, but also in the wider context of their families. Although the role of fathers is, of course, recognized, the primary aim of this research is to understand the gendered role of the mother in the context of the school journey. A number of similarities emerge between constructions of motherhood and childhood and it can be argued that the co-construction of motherhood and childhood is an inevitable consequence of the meaning and identities ascribed to each of these notions in western society as both are rooted in subjugation.

Oakley (1994) argues that women and children are both from social minority groups and that they 'are so constituted within a culture dominated by masculine power – in other words patriarchy' (Oakley 1994, 14). She also contends that the main difference between women and children's studies is that women's studies are rooted in the political movement of women's liberation whereas children have not had a similar political agency as it is generally adults who advocate on their behalf. Oakley also points out the negative association between women and children. In the past the role of women as mothers was considered problematic within the women's movement (in the 1970s in particular) with childbirth and motherhood seen as major gender constraints. However, Oakley contends that 'the children-as-a-problem perspective came to be revised later, as it became obvious that women needed to find ways of representing motherhood as a cultural strength rather than a biological weakness and imposed social necessity' (Oakley 1994, 22).

Overall, Oakley argues that children rather than childhood itself are the responsibility of mothers and that childhood is constructed within the context of wider social structures as described in this chapter.

Thus as discussed in chapter 2, motherhood, childhood, risk and mobilities are not just
constructed through individualism, but through social processes and spatial contexts. Like motherhood, therefore, constructions of childhood take place at different scales from local to global (Holloway and Valentine 2000) and this will be explored in this chapter. Firstly, however, it is necessary to discuss the construction of childhood more broadly by addressing the contested notions of a ‘universal childhood’ (Hendrick 1994, 2003; James et al. 1998; Valentine 1997a, 1997b, 2004; Wyness 2000), notions based on childhoods that are universally experienced. These more global constructions of childhood are then contextualized in discussions of the specific role of the family and the state in constructing childhood. The social studies of childhood (James et al. 1998) paradigm is then explored as an influential approach in understanding the social construction of childhood and this is followed by an analysis of how risk, childhood and mobility are constructed in space.

Within this discussion it is recognised that there are many constructions of childhood and this thesis does not seek to present a definition. Indeed notions of childhood are deemed to be fluid and dependent on social and cultural contexts as well as the origin of the definition. However, this research aims to broaden understanding of these different constructions, including how childhood is constructed by children, by focusing on issues relating to children’s mobility. In doing so, it is recognised that there are other bodies of literature, such as the wealth of literature on youth studies, which conceptualize around this broad lifestage. However, this literature in particular is concerned with ‘youth’ rather than children, engaging with a later period in the lifecourse and although provides useful insights into issues such as risk (Campbell 2006; Essau 2004; Kelly 2003, 2006; Lawy 2002; Ojala 2005; Sweeting and West 2003) and transitions (Byner 2005; Holland et al. 2007; Lehman 2004), these are based on transition from school rather than between primary and secondary.

**Cultures of childhood**

**The concept of universal childhood**

The social constructivist notion of childhood as an invention, as ‘an ideology which is (re)constructed and (re)produced over both space and time’ (Valentine 1997b, 65), contrasts with dominant ideologies, which despite widespread criticism, continue to draw from Piaget’s (1929) linear development model. Universal notions of childhood, such as the twentieth century characterizations of innocence, incompetence and vulnerability fail to embrace the fluidity,
spatiality and temporality of childhood (Valentine 2004). Prevailing notions of universal childhood date from the late seventeenth century when there was a new attitude towards children, with the conceptualization of children as innocents (Hendrick 1994, 2003, Valentine 2004). Before this, childhood was regarded as a period of cleansing for children in preparation for adulthood (Valentine 2004), with children seen as 'inheritors of original sin, which justified a near-universal corporal punishment' (Hendrick 1994, 21) and little attention paid to the welfare of children (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995).

This continued to the late nineteenth/early twentieth century welfarism, which was based firstly on children's physical health and then increasingly on their mental welfare (Hendrick 1994). Prior to the welfare legislation in the late nineteenth century, children were highly valued economically. It was not until 1875 that children under ten years old were excluded from working in factories. This is an important period in constructing our present ideology of universal childhood (Hendrick 1994, 2003; Wyness 2000). The Factory Acts, along with other welfare legislation and the Education Act of 1870 could also be seen to define childhood in terms of space as they directly resulted in a broad corporeal movement of children from a public space to a private space, and one controlled predominantly by parents and family cultures. From the Enlightenment, therefore, children have been the object of greater investment of affection and this underlay universal notions of childhood.

However dominant ideologies also encompass contradictory notions of childhood: 'the binary conceptualization of children as both vulnerable and in need of protection, yet also potentially menacing and dangerous' (Valentine 2004, 1). This too remains an underlying theme in universal understandings of childhood. The realm of childhood is on the one hand predicated on innocence, and on the other hand on abhorrence, especially following cases of child against child crime such as the murder of James Bulger in 1993, where children are depicted as a threat to societal stability (Jackson and Scott 1999; Maguire and Shirlow 2004; Valentine 1997b) leading to a 'conceptual confusion of concepts of childhood' (James et al. 1998, 52).

Global childhoods: out of place and risky

Universal notions of childhood then created both the 'normal' child (Hendrick 2003) and the 'othered' child who was outside the 'the good, the valued, the respected' (Hendrick 2003, 13).
This normality is very much an embodied normality, created through adultist\(^{13}\) prescriptions of acceptable physical and mental wellbeing. The marginalisation of the ‘othered’ child is a symptom of the implausibility of universal models of childhood as children fail to conform to notions of acceptability and thereby challenge adultist norms. However, even children defined within adultist ‘norms’ are marginalized as they are considered to be in transition to adulthood as discussed later in this chapter. As such children are out of place, ‘neither one state nor the next’ (Douglas 1966, 96), and this transition from childhood to adulthood represents a threat or danger.

The notion of dangerousness is particularly attached to marginalized and socially excluded groups, such as children (James et al. 1998; Hendrick 2003) and it acts to legitimize intervention from the state, or from those acting on the state’s behalf. This will be discussed later in relation to the construction of children as increasingly ‘precious’ and requiring nurturing, so that the family’s role becomes one of protection not only of childhood but of the future. To be ‘at risk’ is linked to social notions of dangerousness in that it is based on a multitude of social factors and is not just the result of individual behaviour. As children are constructed as dangerous, they are also considered both ‘at risk’ and ‘risky’ and these constructions are spatial as well as social as discussed later in this chapter.

As with global and local cultures and practices of motherhood, universal notions of childhood are not necessarily reflected in everyday experiences. Valentine and McKendrick (1997) argue that the universal conceptualization of ‘normal’ childhood as opposed to ‘othered’ childhood as happy and free from responsibilities is far from the reality experienced by most children. Even if childhood was a determinable period in our lives, within this children are such a diverse group with an accompanying wide range of life experiences. As Valentine states:

> The experience of childhood has never been universal, rather what it means to be a particular age intersects with other identities so that experiences of poverty, disability, ill health, homelessness, being taken into care or having to look after a sick parent have all denied many children this idealized time of innocence and dependence.

(Valentine 2004, 5).

Thus contradictions of universal childhood create the ‘normal’ and ‘othered’ childhoods. Both notions of childhood set children as ‘out of place’, as ‘at risk’, as risky and in transition to

\(^{13}\) A term frequently used in studies of childhood (Holloway and Valentine 2000, James et al. 1998, Jenks 1996, Valentine 2004) to distinguish approaches that reproduce power differentials between adults and children.
adulthood. As discussed later in this chapter the social studies of childhood paradigm seeks to contest the underlying assumption of this universality. Firstly, however, it is important to consider how these universal notions are contextualized in other social processes such as the family and the state.

The feminization of childhood

The family is a key social context in which childhood is constructed. It is important, therefore, to outline some of the changes in family structure and their impact on notions of childhood. Brannen and O’Brien (1996, 1) seek to ‘recontextualize children within their families’, especially as the family structures in late modernity such as ‘divorce and relationship breakdown are reshaping the lives of children’. As outlined in chapter 2, children are increasingly unlikely to be brought up in nuclear families (Clarke 1996). However, contrary to some media representations, this does not necessarily equate to a breakdown in the family (Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Silva and Smart 1999; Valentine 1997a, 2004). There are two major changes that have impacted on childhood. Firstly, the increase in single parent families, which have more than tripled between 1972 and spring 2004, to 24 per cent of the total number of families and secondly the female dominance of single parenthood, with ninety per cent of these families headed by women (ONS 2005).

An emerging theme therefore, as the structure of the family changes, is the feminization of childhood as more children are living with their mothers, either in single parent families or families with a new social parent (Silva and Smart 1999). This change in family structure is not a ‘sign of decline or immorality’ but an establishment of ‘families as agents of self-reflexivity, actively interacting with the wider environment’ (Silva and Smart 1999, 2). Silva and Smart argue that ‘families remain a crucial relational entity playing a fundamental part in the intimate life of and connections between individuals’. Contrary to idealized notions of a ‘good’ family, they usefully suggest that ‘families are what families do’ (Silva and Smart 1999, 5).

Social trends such as the growth in single parent families and the feminization of childhood mean that fathers continue to have a marginalized role in children’s lives (Valentine 1997a, 1997b, 2004). Although time budget studies show that the amount of time spent by fathers with their children has increased since the 1970s (Fisher, McCulloch and Gershuny 1999), the extent to which this impacted on the gendered division of childcare is contested (Gray 2005; O’Brien and Shemilt 2003; O’Brien 2005). Studies have shown that that the amount of time that women spend...
with their children has increased also (although slightly less) and more importantly that fathers, particularly in the UK are under increasing pressure to work extra hours, thus reducing time in the family (Gray 2005; O'Brien and Shemilt 2003; O'Brien 2005). The pattern of fatherhood involvement is becoming more polarized as a significant proportion of fathers are spending more time with their children, whilst a similarly significant proportion are spending little or no time with their children as the incidence of single motherhood increases (O'Brien and Shemilt 2003). Changes in the gender division of childcare are therefore incremental, with differences between working class and middle class fathers still evident (O'Brien and Shemilt 2003), although becoming less marked (Duncan 2005).

Changes in family structure therefore impact on the experience of childhood and hence its mobility and spatiality. This occurs both indirectly through changes in gender roles and directly as they can lead to further displacement of children from constructed norms of childhood (Wyness 2000). These changes take place, however, within the context of the state, which is a key factor in the establishment of perceived norms of the family and childhood.

The family and the state

... we have become their protectors and nurturers and they have become our primary love objects, our human capital and our future.

Jenks (1996, 14)

Jenks argues that before the Enlightenment children’s needs were not considered to be important but since then there has been an increasing investment in children by both the state and as Hendrick (1994, 2003) and Wyness (2000) argue, through family structures on behalf of the state. It is argued (Hendrick 1994, 2003; Jenks 1996; Wyness 2000) that the idea that the family is the most nurturing context for childhood development is used to legitimize modern approaches to child rearing, and protect established notions of childhood as a means of investment in the future, as safeguards for the future of the nation. As Wyness (2000, 130) argues: 'The family is quintessentially the unit that embodies and produces individuals and an ethic of individualism'. As uncertainty increases in late modernity the child is seen as a form of stability and a means of constructing identity in an increasingly individualized world (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Jenks 1996). Thus the family is used as a means of social control as it is given an increasing role in terms of child welfare, through, for example the 1989 Children Act, which introduced the notion

In particular, community orders introduced in the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act encourage parents to adopt complex forms of surveillance in order to observe and control. Parents are deemed to be responsible for their children's 'misbehaviour' and are blamed for the anti-social behaviour of their children, the basis of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and Parenting Orders. Manifestations of this regulation also include elements of children's mobility (Fotel and Thomsen 2004) and lack of engagement in mobility decision-making (Barker 2003; Hood 2001) as discussed later in the chapter.

The state therefore acts to intensify the role of the family in children's lives. Emergent trends in family structures such as their feminization construct a childhood that reflects the ideology and culture of motherhood and in turn motherhood, as argued previously, is constructed through notions of childhood. However, as well as childhood being relational to motherhood and wider family and social structures, there is also a paradigm in the social studies of children based on children's agency in determining notions of childhood (James et al. 1998). This is a key theoretical underpinning in this research, particularly as one of its key features is the recognition of spatiality (Holloway and Valentine 2000).

**Space and the social studies of childhood**

As the previous section outlined there are a number of contextual factors that influence childhood and these operate at different levels. James et al. (1998), in their social studies of childhood paradigm develop a theoretical framework for studies of childhood based on a classification of approaches varying between those based on structure or agency and those based on local or global factors. They argue that although linkages are made between structure and agency, fewer connections are made between local and global, with analysis of aspects of childhood ascribed to either global or local contexts. Although recognising that childhood is socially constructed within these contexts, James et al. (1998) are also aware of its embodied nature.

\(^{14}\) Parents were given authority over their children as long as they acted 'responsibly' (Hendrick 2003, 197)
James et al. (1998, 146) are critical of social constructivism as 'the body and the child appear as effects of social relations leaving little room for the body/child as a physical or corporeal identity'. They argue that within social constructivism the child is treated as discursive object rather than a physical one. They contend that 'refocusing on the material bodies of children could enable us to explore childhood as both a construct of discourse and an aspect of children's lives which shapes social relations as much as it is shaped by them' (James et al. 1998, 47). As argued in chapter 2, the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive and this thesis recognises the materiality of mothers' and children's bodies as well as their social construction. Childhood is therefore seen to be embodied within the context of social, political and economic circumstances, as will be discussed further in the context of childhood and space later in this chapter.

James et al. (1998) are also critical of the notion of children as passively socialized by the family and the state. The child as a 'strategic actor' is fundamental in their establishment of the new paradigm in studies of childhood. They advocate the recognition of the 'rise' of childhood agency and 'call for children to be understood as social actors shaping as well as shaped by their circumstances' (James et al. 1998, 6). In addition, they argue that children's agency needs to be understood not only in contextual terms but also in terms of the 'structural connections between different arenas of action, how they mutually influence each other and how children move in and between these positions' (James et al. 1998, 138). This spatial as well as social movement introduced the notion of spatiality as well as social interaction into the social studies of childhood (Christensen and James 2000; Holloway and Valentine 2000). This is reflected in the underlying spatial and social approach of this thesis, which is set out here and in chapter 4.

A number of social scientists have developed the work of James et al. (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004; Holloway and Valentine 2000; Jackson and Scott). Holloway and Valentine (2000b) set out to make linkages between local and global contexts of childhood and draw from both the social sciences and children's geographies (Aitken 2001; Holloway and Valentine 2000a.). They argue that both are important in developing our understanding of childhood as they are both 'shaped by mutually constituting sets of practices' (Holloway and Valentine 2000, 767). In their view, therefore, children's meanings and identities are based on global factors and on local cultures, which are themselves constructed in a global context. Holloway and Valentine (2000, 779) argue that 'children's identities and lives are made and (re)made through the sites of everyday life'. This too informs the approach developed in this thesis, which situates everyday risk as a key
factor in children’s identity formation.

Jackson and Scott (1999) also develop the notion that childhood is constructed on different levels with an analysis framework based on structural, discursive and situated influences. Structural factors have a significant bearing on childhood through changes in family, education and the state. Scientific and expert discourse can define childhood, with regulation from stages of pre-birth through to adulthood. Experts like social workers, doctors, and teachers monitor, categorize and manage childhood and in doing so contribute to its prevailing understanding. However Jackson and Scott (1999) recognize that although children exercise agency in determining aspects of their everyday lives, this is always in the context of adultist ideologies and structures of power.

Like Jackson and Scott (1999), Brannen (1999, 150) argues that in ‘focusing on children’s agency, there is a need to treat the notion of agency cautiously and not to confuse it with notions of autonomy and independence’. She therefore supports situating the social studies of childhood firmly within a political context (Brannen 1999) and this informs the approach to children’s agency in this thesis. However, it is recognized also that in line with Holloway and Valentine (2000, 772), children can ‘resist and ally’ themselves with adults in manipulating the controls within these contexts. Holloway and Valentine (2000) found that children are proficient in creating strategic alliances with adults and this is a way of demonstrating agency. The ability to demonstrate agency, however, is dependent on social and spatial contexts.

James et al. (1998), Holloway and Valentine (2000), Mayall (1994) and Wyness (2000) have all analysed childhood within the context of the home, school or both. James et al. (1998) argue that in school, children are controlled through space, a space that has meaning attributed to it at different times by different people, whilst children’s place in the home is based on a different set of spatial meanings. Mayall (1994, 116) has also studied children in their main spaces of the home and school and argues that children occupy ‘different social frameworks’ in home and in school and have different limitations on their actions accordingly. In contrast, within the school environment behaviour tended to be more prescribed than negotiated. Both home and school, however, are considered to be regulated spaces. As Wyness (2000, 13) argues children are unable to demonstrate agency in the home as parents have a stronger sense of ownership of children there and that the school ‘denies children any informal access to the structures and resources’ required to demonstrate agency. In exploring how locally negotiated ideas of good mothering and
negotiation of boundaries are spatially defined, Holloway and Valentine (2000) argue that both homes and schools are porous rather than bounded. However this is contested here.

This study draws from the work of James et al. (1998) and developed by Brannen (1999), Jackson and Scott (1999), and Holloway and Valentine (2000). It recognizes children as social actors within socio-cultural and political processes, whilst contextualizing this in adultist power structures. It also recognizes the importance of the different scale and nature of children's interactions with social processes and with space, and the construction of childhood within different socio-cultural and spatial contexts. In particular, this study's approach is based on constructions of childhood and risk on the journey to school, when other studies have tended to focus on more regulated childhood spaces. It is argued here that, although the social studies of childhood situates childhood in a spatial context, there is a limited study of different spatialities. In addition, this study is based on the existence of boundaries, even if they are fluid and sometimes indistinct. These boundaries mark out spaces that are regulated or less regulated, free or restricted, risky or safe. It concentrates on the journey to school as a relatively unregulated and at the same time public space, as well as a space that is often deemed to be a risky. It is the construction of childhood in the 'risky' space outside the contexts of home and school that is explored in the next section.

Childhood and risk

Kelley et al. argue that 'exploring people's ideas about risk in relation to children and to childhood might help to broaden our knowledge of how people understand, and construct, childhood' (1997, 309). Jackson and Scott (1999, 86) on the other hand, argue that generalised notions of risk are constructed in relation to notions of childhood as 'risk anxiety helps construct childhood and maintain its boundaries'. Childhood is thus a key generational stage when critical elements of risk landscapes are developed, and this has been neglected in risk theory (Jackson and Scott 1999). Jackson and Scott 1999 argue that childhood can be constructed through 'everyday situated interaction' particularly in relation to risk and anxiety. Children themselves can help define childhood through active social engagement, although it is important to acknowledge that this is set within their subordination in relation to adults: 'There is no free and autonomous realm of childhood outside the social relations in which childhood in general, and particular childhoods are forged' (Jackson and Scott 1999, 92).
Variations in risk outlook are also shaped within the dominant notions of ‘risky’ and ‘at risk’ childhoods. Notions of children ‘as little devils in one breath and little angels in the next’ (Jackson and Scott 1999, 95) can be linked to the allocation of blame, as discussed in chapter 2, in that it is usually people’s own children that are seen as innocent with other people’s children depicted as dangerous, predatory and polluted (Valentine 1996). It could be argued therefore that parents may take the view that risks are not constructed by their own children but are barriers to freedom constructed by other children as well as other adults. This is therefore a deflection of risk-taking behaviour which, in line with Douglas’ (1992) socio-cultural theory of marginalisation of risk takers, would protect the ‘good’ mother from community blame.

Following on from the discussion of risk theories in chapter 2, sociocultural theories of risk allow an exploration of children’s and mothers’ risk landscapes in contextualizing risk in socio-cultural and political processes and developing the notion of everyday risk (Tulloch and Lupton 2003). Risk is seen as collective as it is informed by ideologies on a global scale but is constructed collectively through local discourses. As well as allowing for a gendered exploration of risk this also facilitates the consideration of generation. In order to illustrate this it is useful to consider how other theories such as the theory of the ‘risk society’ (Beck 1992) contribute to an adultist notion of risk.

The ‘risk society’ and childhood

Wyness argues that we ‘need to locate our understanding of childhood within a social, political and cultural context’ (2000, 2). Although Beck’s risk society facilitates this contextualization, Wyness (2000) is critical of Beck for his lack of discussion of how the process of individualization challenges boundaries between adults and children, arguing that individualization strengthens existing ties between the two groups. He also criticises Beck for discussing children relative to their increasingly important role in adult identity, as defined only through their relationship with adults.

The individualised management of risk is set out by Beck in his theory of ‘risk society’ (Beck 1992) and discussed in terms of attitudes to children and parenting by Beck and Beck-Gernshein (1995). Valentine argues that even with the knowledge of a small degree of risk from ‘stranger danger’ parents still restrict children due to the individualization of risk and the increasing value of children in modern society. As discussed previously, children are more valued in ‘personal and
emotional terms' and 'anchor parent's identities' (Valentine 2004, 19). However it is argued in this thesis that the emotionality of parenting is a product of sociocultural as well as individual processes, as outlined in chapter 2.

There are therefore limitations to adopting Beck's 'risk society' in analysing risk in the everyday as in addition to criticisms in the last chapter, the 'risk society' thesis can be deemed as adultist. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, elements of the risk society thesis are useful in contextualizing risk and childhood in the social, political and cultural. Ferguson argues this in relation to state child protection where the changing nature of risk perception has led to a change in approach to children and risk, and in particular the management of risk by the state apparatus of child protection:

"The experience of child protection continues to be that of the fleeting, the ephemeral and the contingent, but here the new parameters of risk anxiety in late-modernity mean that the solidity that surrounded it in simple modernity has gone and it has become 'liquefied'."

(Ferguson 2004, 117)

Ferguson (2004) argues that the 'risk society' (Beck 1992) serves to introduce additional risks to children through the child protection process itself, citing this as an example of the reflexivity of late modernity. As Ferguson states: 'problems of risk management in child protection come to concern hazards brought about by the development of the expert system itself' (Ferguson 2004, 118). Ferguson then uses Beck's 'risk society' to explain structural impacts of risk on childhood.

Beck's 'risk society', therefore, is useful in enabling a better understanding of ideologies of global risks and the global contexts of the everyday. However, it is argued here that whilst it is important to contextualize risk in the social, political and cultural, it is the everyday experience of risk (Tulloch and Lupton 2003) that needs to be better understood in determining children's risk landscapes and mobility decision-making and this is discussed further in the next sections.

Children's risk landscapes

Tulloch and Lupton's (2003) everyday risk in this context concerns the daily risk experiences of children as opposed to larger scale risks such as terrorist threats or global climate change. They are risks that are within the realms of daily lives even if they are not experienced on a daily basis. Road accidents are therefore considered to be a daily concern even if they are not directly
experienced. Another important aspect of the everyday, which is developed here from social studies of childhood, is that children experience and develop their own everyday risk landscapes. The notion of a risk landscape (Valentine 2004) is developed here to encompass the both the multifaceted nature of children's experience of risk and its spatiality. There are existing studies that have recognized children's determination of their own attitudes to risk (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004, Kelley et al. 1997) where the children in the study indicated 'some scepticism about parental constructions of life at home as essentially safe and harmonious' (Kelley et al. 1997, 310).

In addition, Backett-Milburn and Harden (2004) have discussed the everyday mundanity of risk. They are critical of studies by Valentine and Kelley that 'stop short of directly exploring how risk, safety and danger are not fixed but shifting entities, which are reconstituted and negotiated through everyday interaction in families' (Backett-Milburn and Harden's 2004, 430). Backett-Milburn and Harden (2004) also argue that childhood meanings and practices are 'created and recreated' through their own experiences and through relationships with adults. They found that families negotiated the 'bottom line', a set of boundaries based on age, position in the family, and 'contextualizing risk in the attitudes and behaviour of others', and that risk is minimised through the 'the manipulation of space, place and people' (Backett-Milburn and Harden's 2004, 435) Coping strategies were employed, which included parents being informed of children's whereabouts at all times and children adhering to their spatial plans to ensure this.

Although drawing from the work of Backett-Milburn and Harden (2004) in studying everyday risk in a cultural framework, this study takes this work further by considering children as social actors not only within the family context but within the less regulated risky space of the journey to school. It is argued here that Backett-Milburn and Harden's (2004) notion of a 'bottom line' is too restrictive and oversimplifies the complexity and fluidity of the factors that define everyday risk landscapes of both parents and children. It is accepted that children are deeply influenced by parental risk experience as Kelley (1997) and Backett-Milburn and Harden (2004) demonstrate. However, it is argued here that children's risk landscapes are based on their own lived experience in social and physical space as well as the experience of their parents (particularly their mothers) and the translation of this perception of risk to them. Children's risk landscapes can therefore encompass a sense of empowerment and potential for autonomy. Studies have already found that children identify risks in public space that only they can experience such as bullying by other children (James et al. 1998). Parents may have a tendency to neglect such risks as they overplay
Of course children's risk landscapes are embedded in space as well as sociocultural contexts. As Maguire and Shirlow (2004) argue 'in order to understand children's geographies of risk fully it can be contended that to look at either parental or children's perceptions in isolation is insufficient' (Maguire and Shirlow 2004, 70). Maguire and Shirlow (2004) contend that children's environmental fears reflect parental values in addition to media influences and their own sense of powerlessness. The issue of parental values is explored in this study.

Valentine discusses the media hype of incidents involving children and their contribution to increasing levels of risk anxiety (Valentine 1997b, 2004). The notion of amplification of risks to children is one which has had much attention (Carter, Branston, and Allan 1998, Furedi 2002, Weaver, Carter and Stanko 2000, Valentine 2004). The male body is demonized as a dominant threat to children in the mass media (Valentine 2004) with a related tendency to underplay other risks in the environment such as those associated with prioritisation of motorized vehicles in streets that may once have been play spaces. Whilst measures to control paedophiles in the community are given priority in the popular press, the dangers associated with road traffic accidents are relegated. As Jackson and Scott argue 'while it is well documented that sexual risk to children is most likely to be posed by intimates, it is 'stranger danger' which hits the headlines, captures the populist imagination and informs educational campaigns' (1999, 93).

It is also argued that the media can facilitate children's agency in the negotiation of risk. Buckingham (1994) argues that children use the television to make sense of the world, including their everyday lives. He argues that television allows children to challenge socially constructed notions of childhood, pushing boundaries by talking about 'risky' subjects (Buckingham 1994, 95). It is this agency that can be explored through everyday risk landscapes within a socio-cultural context. As discussed, the 'risk society' allows a contextualization of risks in childhood at a macro level but it is overall an adultist approach that does not recognize children's role in determining their own risk landscapes. Before discussing this in more detail the following firstly develops the theory of how this agency is contextualized in adultist notions of risky space.

**Adultist constructions of risky space**

As discussed previously, linking the sociology of childhood to spatiality is a relatively recent
addition to literature concerning social studies of childhood (James et al. 1998). Much of the literature is concerned with the construction of risky spaces rather than the influence of risk landscapes on spatiality and mobility. This section sets out how space is constructed as risky by the local and global discourses of risk discussed previously.

Jackson and Scott note that 'parental risk anxiety and children's consciousness of risk need to be set in the context of what children actually do, their journeys to and from school, their patterns of leisure' (Jackson and Scott 1999, 101), which is one of the aims of this thesis. They stress that these will differ with class and ethnicity and between urban and rural dwellers. There is recognition that there are particular dangers in a city but risk experience is dependent on a child's images of these. They argue also that there is a cultural dimension to risk, with countries such as the UK and USA being more risk averse than other European countries, especially Scandinavian countries. Hillman et al.'s (1990) work on children's mobilities supports this in that they demonstrated the cultural differences between British and German children, with the latter having a great deal more independent mobility. Risk is therefore both culturally and spatially defined.

In the UK risky space is often associated with threat from 'strangers'. Furedi (2002) and Valentine (2004) argue that the stranger-danger discourse has created a landscape of risk around children. They argue that stranger-danger discourse actually heightens fears and thereby restricts children's freedoms further. Stranger discourses revolve around children and childhood itself being at risk from physical and sexual threat from strangers in public space. As Kelley et al. (1997, 137) found in their study of risk in private space: 'mothers' perceptions that the community was a dangerous place for children was particularly important in influencing children's accounts - particularly the fear of adult strangers'. As outlined in chapter 2, it is local discourses of risk that play an important role in constructing this space as risky, but these local discourses take place in the context of more global ideologies centred on risk experts.

Discourses of the relative risk of public and private space can fuel this notion of irrationality and paranoia as discussed in chapter 2. Valentine (2004) refutes the idea that society is more risky to children by drawing attention to crime statistics that show the number of children murdered is 'exceptionally low on average fewer than six children a year are murdered by strangers and relatively unchanged year on year' (Valentine 2004, 17). Children, she argues, are most at risk in private space from someone they know. However, this argument too readily accepts the validity
of crime statistics (Stanko 1985). Although, therefore it may be suitable to critique stranger-danger discourse, this fails to recognize the importance of the complexity and fluidity of both mothers and children’s risk landscapes based on their everyday experience (see Tulloch 1999). As discussed in chapter two, Tulloch (1999) found that women’s use of space is based not only on perception but more importantly on their experience of space and this study is based on both perception and experience and how they interact. Mothers’ general experiences of space are thus transferred to the space of the school journey. Following on from the discussion of this space as bounded, separate from the potentially more regulated spaces of home and school, the following section explores the extent to which it is regulated through parental perceptions and experiences of risky space.

Establishing boundaries
As factors external to parents and children’s everyday lives influence constructs of childhood and motherhood, they also act to constrain the use of space through mobility. As James et al. (1998, 38) maintain: ‘physical, conceptual and moral boundaries circumscribe the extent of children’s wanderings’. Thus boundaries are defined by a ‘gerontocratic hegemony and policed by discipline... legitimized through ideologies of care, protection and privacy’ (James et al. 1998, 39).

As discussed previously, Hendrick contends that the rise of welfarism in Britain concerned the ‘imposition of adult will upon children’s bodies’ (Hendrick 1994, 2). Children’s spatiality and mobility are therefore controlled to maintain this ‘gerontocratic hegemony’. Children’s mobility is thus a generational issue and one which is contextualised in socio-cultural processes.

In the late twentieth century, children’s everyday movement and use of public space became more and more limited, increasingly controlled by adults through restricted independent mobility as discussed later in this chapter (Hillman et. al 1990, O’Brien et al. 2000). As gendered space has changed over time so too has generational space with changes such as the introduction of compulsory education for younger children in the late nineteenth century impacting on the mobility and spatiality of childhood (Hendrick 1994; James et al. 1998). It is argued (James et al. 1998; Pain 1994, 2001, 2003; Valentine 1997a, 1997b, 2004) that the repositioning of ‘public spaces’ is based on them becoming largely ‘adults’ spaces’. As James et al. (1998, 48) state: ‘...for children in western societies and especially those of the middle class, the city has developed from a public space to a private, adult place, one which they, as children, have little access to’. The public/private space dichotomy is therefore utilised in exploring generation as well as gendered
constructions of space. Of course, these spatial constructions are related and particularly so through the regulation of spatial boundaries by mothers (Valentine 2004).

With an increase in more organized activities for (especially middle-class) children women tend to do most of the escorting as described in chapter 2. Some studies have attributed this to mothers being more flexible with children negotiating with them rather than their fathers as a result (Valentine 2004). This could also be attributed to mothers having more of the day-day responsibility for family management and decision-making (Gray 2005; O’Brien 2005; O’Brien and Shemilt 2003). Chapter two explored the relationship between risk and motherhood and the interrelationships between cultures of ‘good’ mothering and the allocation of blame. This interrelationship is crucial to the maternal control of space as mothers are forced to accede to local risk cultures rather than accept blame and these local risk cultures are highly influential in terms of constructions of risky space. At the same time, local mothering cultures may also advocate increasing children’s independence as this may be considered beneficial to children’s negotiation of space and ability to cope with risk.

Children may also be given greater freedoms if their parents, as discussed previously, are unable to maintain strict rules on boundaries due to their particular sociocultural and spatial positionality. In Valentine’s study, boundaries were more likely to be extended if a parent was distracted by domestic pressures (Valentine 1997b). In turn situational factors may dictate adoption of very rigid boundaries such as the spatial restrictions associated with living in high rise flats (Valentine and Kendrick 1997). As Valentine and McKendrick (1997, 224) argue ‘children’s access to outdoor play is mediated by class, gender and environmental location’.

Social characteristics in boundary setting

Children’s boundaries are dependent on social characteristics as well as spatiality (Jackson and Scott 1999; James et al. 1998). Space and mobility are defined and delineated by social class, age, ethnicity, gender, and age. Class has been identified as a significant determinant of boundary setting in a number of studies (Kelley et al 1997; Valentine and Kendrick 1997; Valentine 2004). Kelley et al. found that middle class mothers were more protective than working class mothers in reducing the risk of blame. Working class mothers may be more pressured by lack of indoor space and so are forced to broaden their children’s boundaries, even if their risk experience would otherwise lead to greater restrictions (Kelley et al 1997). Parents on low income in their study
recognized risks in both public and private space, as they lacked the resources to reduce risks inside the home, whereas ‘better-off’ parents externalized risks (Kelley et al. 1997). O’Brien et al. (2000, 270) develop this by discussing the imposition of spatial limitations ensuring ‘the cultural reproduction of middle-class, gendered lifestyles and identities’.

Studies have found that ethnicity also impacts on parental practices and boundary setting. In Valentine’s (2004) study southern Asian people appeared to be under particular pressure to maintain certain boundaries and parenting practices. Research on children’s perceptions of their environment has shown that parents attitude to the independence of their children is dependent on gender and age differences. Gender differences in spatial freedom given to children are usually based on girls being more restricted by their parents and boys generally given more freedom (Hart 1979; O’Brien et al. 2000; Pain 1994). Kelly et al. (1997) argue that this may be because girls are more likely to make an explicit link between sexual violence and strangers than boys. O’Brien (2000) also found that girls from certain minority ethnic groups were restricted further. However, Valentine (2004) found that there was a cultural shift in attitudes to gender, partly attributed to the higher profile given to abduction of boys, and the belief that girls can be more rational and therefore better able to effectively negotiate public space. As discussed in chapter 2, girls and boys are taught different gender roles with regard to public and private space (Valentine and Kendrick 1997). It is anticipated in this research that gender differences in terms of risk are bound up in the social and spatial complexities of risk landscapes and it is necessary to be mindful of this in drawing conclusions about the relative perceptions of risk to boys and girls.

It appears that although the process of parenting is highly gendered, perceived competencies are based on a number of factors and not on gender alone. Valentine (2004) argues that the position in the family and age are important in the acceptance of children’s competence according to their developmental stage leads to children’s views being ignored. In particular parents consider younger children to be unable to understand inappropriate touch and sexual violence and generally unable to negotiate public space safety. Children are therefore required to demonstrate competence in order to be given more freedom (Valentine 2004).

There has been much debate about the relative age at which children are competent to negotiate space, however there is a general consensus that greater freedoms are given between the ages of ten and twelve (Hart 1978; Hood et al. 1996; Matthews 1992; Valentine 1997a, 1997b). This
correlates with the transition from primary to secondary school and chapter 6 therefore explores other issues in the transition they may impact on independence. It is noted also that, as Robinson and Kellett (2004) argue, spatial independence is based on the acquisition of skills and abilities rather than age per se and therefore the study of a broad age range is appropriate in research such as this.

This chapter has argued, therefore, that childhoods are constructed through global ideologies that maintain gerontocratic hegemony and local cultures of mothering that are influenced by a range of social and spatial characteristics and contexts. As James et al. (1998) argue, childhood is, in part, defined by the degrees of freedom devolved to children in space, which makes understanding the practices and ideologies around children's movement in space key to understanding childhood. An exploration of boundary setting by mothers is therefore appropriate in this study, especially as it relates to everyday mobilities and the journey to school. As discussed previously however, children also demonstrate agency in determining their own experiences, which impact on constructions of childhood in space. The spaces that have usually been studied are the home and school. Constructions of the home and school spaces as regulated, give rise to the space in between - the space of the journey to school - having the potential to be constructed differently. It also has the potential to be an extension of home-school spatialities and alternatively as a more risky but more autonomous space, where children have greater opportunity to exercise agency. It is the potential for the demonstration of this agency, as discussed in the next section, which bounds this space differently as the boundaries are not necessarily constructed by adults.

Family context is also crucial as discussed in chapter 2 with studies showing that children of single parents found to be the most mobile (Valentine and Kendrick 1997). Valentine and Kendrick (1997) argue that single mothers have particular problems in that the practicality of single parenting means that they have little choice but to give their children a greater degree of independence than two parent households. Risk issues can also be central to tensions between single parents and ex-partners: 'mothers sometimes find it hard to ensure that their offspring are kept out of danger in public space because their ex-husbands or new partners have different views about the children’s safety’ (Valentine 1997a, 52).
Children's agency in boundary setting

It is argued here that there is a limit to parental ability to determine children's spatial ranges. Valentine found that 'just as parents described their children as naïve, gullible and consequently incompetent, many children used the same language of incompetence to describe their parents' (Valentine 1997b, 81). Children are thus able to extend boundaries by limiting information about their use of space and potential risks within it. They have an active role in negotiating boundaries. There is also some evidence to suggest that although children may be outwardly critical of maternal boundary setting, they also value it. Allat (1996) found in her study that the young people found maternal worry about their use of outside space irritating but also reassuring.

Just as Kelley (1997) argues that risk is determined by children as well as adults, so Jackson and Scott (1999) argue that it cannot be assumed that children's boundaries are based solely on parental risk anxieties. In line with Sibley (1995) they suggest that boundary setting can be based on children's own experience as children develop their own risk landscapes as outlined previously. Sibley (1995) stresses the importance of autonomy in allowing a child to develop their own boundaries rather than having them imposed by adults. This is supported by Valentine's study as she found that the children had a strong sense of vulnerability and were more aware of local dangers than parents due to their everyday contact with them (Valentine 1997b). Pain (2001), in her study, also found that children often refused to be confined by parental rules as these sometimes exposed them to greater risks. For example, children who are set strict time limits which differ from their social contacts may need to use space in a relatively risky way in order to adhere to them, by travelling alone for instance. In the process of following parental rules, however, children adopt their cultural practices with regard to spatial geography. Although children respond differently to attempts to curtail their freedom, Pain observes that 'evidence suggests that by the time they are allowed autonomous mobility, adolescents have learnt powerful lessons about safe places and spaces and safe times to be out of the home' (Pain 1994, 14). Thus children's risk experience is determined by both their own interaction with space and through adopting the risk experiences of their mothers, a key focus of the research in this thesis.

Valentine (2004) argues that children's independent use of space is a product of negotiations with parents, with various peaks and troughs in independence according to the level of negotiation reached at a certain time. Maguire and Shirlow (2004) draw upon work by Hart (1979) and Matthews (1992) that demonstrated the important negotiation between children and parents in
establishing both physical and behavioural boundaries. They argue that parents' risk experience is bound up in both their experience of childhood through their own children, and their own experience of risk in space: 'the 'free-range' spatial and temporal restrictions placed on the child are shaped by the parents' (mothers') belief in the competency of their child and their own readings of the risks presented by the physical and social landscape' (Maguire and Shirlow 2004, 69). Children must be considered within a social, as well as parental, context to understand their boundary issues.

In addition, as James et al. (1998) argue, children's agency in determining their spatial ranges is also based on their corporeal identity and its social construction. In particular, five aspects of the body are seen as being most significant in terms of children's identity: height, shape, appearance, gender and performance. They argue that '... children have to come to terms with not only their own constantly changing bodies and those of their peers, but also with the changing institutional contexts in which meanings are given to these changes' (James et al. 1998, 155). The ability to control the body is seen within established culture to distinguish a child from an adult.

This section has discussed the co-construction of risk and childhood within the context of sociocultural and spatial processes. Generation emerges as a key determinant of risk as childhood is a critical stage in the development of risk landscapes. This can be explored most thoroughly through socio-cultural theories of risk as this allows contextualization within socio-cultural and spatial contexts and particularly in the everyday. The 'risk society' is useful in providing a political context, but is limited in its adultist approach. However, there is a need to understand adultist meanings given to space in constructing spatial boundaries, which are based on global notions of children in space as well as local mothering and risk cultures. In addition however, children's boundaries are negotiated and children demonstrate agency in this process, which is based on their own sense of risk within their own risk landscapes.

The preceding sections have discussed the constructions of risk landscapes and boundary setting in determining independence. However, as outlined within this discussion, children's mobilities are often neglected in discourses of risk and independence. Like childhood, motherhood and risk, mobility too is socially constructed. An exploration of how children's mobility has been analysed in existing literature is therefore essential to understanding risk landscapes and follows in the next sections. Here the nature of children's mobilities in relation to the journey to school will be
explored.

Children's mobilities

The following section explores the literature relating to children's mobility in the context of an overall decline in this mobility, and a decline in independent mobility associated particularly with the journey to school. Research has shown that children's overall activity levels, and therefore everyday mobility, are decreasing, whether they are supervised or not (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004; Hillman et al. 1990; O'Brien et al. 2000). It has been found that children are compensated for this lack of freedom with more organized activities, but that this is not counteracting this overall decrease in children's mobility (Valentine and McKendrick 1997; Valentine 2004). Children are considered to be under active and this is having a deleterious impact on their health (Biddle et al. 1998; Mackett et al. 2005; Department of Health 2004; NICE 2006). On these terms children are therefore increasingly hypomobile in contrast to mothers' hypermobility. Indeed it has been found that the mobilities of the school journey could have a significant impact on children's hypomobility as 'walking to and from school for a week is much better than a weeks worth of PE and games lessons for many children' (Mackett et al. 2005, 217). The decrease in independent mobility also has impacts on the mobility of mothers as they are the main escorts as discussed in chapter 2.

The decline in children's independent mobility

Independent mobility is a critical issue in children's studies as it encompasses issues of risk and space that define childhood cultures. Research shows that the number of primary school children being escorted to school is increasing. In 2002/03, 79 per cent of children aged 7-13 years travelled to school accompanied, compared with 29 per cent of 11-13 year olds (DfT 2005). A 2001 study found that 75 per cent of parents say that they let their children play outside less than they used to, and 43 per cent are concerned about busy roads (Living Streets Campaign 2001). Children's independent mobility is therefore seen to be decreasing over time with significant consequences.

Pain (1994) argues that restrictions on independent mobility have three important consequences: reducing children's acquisition of the skills needed to negotiate public space effectively; developing fears that mirror their parents; and increasing children's exposure to the risk of child
sexual abuse. Valentine’s (2004) research on children’s use of public space also demonstrated the negative impact of a general decrease in mobility particularly on children’s physical, mental and creative abilities. But it is perhaps the erosion of children’s autonomy that accompanies decreases in mobility that has the most insidious impact. As discussed previously, the maintenance of gerontocratic hegemony (James et al. 1998) is dependent on restrictions on children’s autonomy. Restricting children’s mobility in space is a way of containing autonomy. In addition, independent exploration of space has been found to be crucial to the acquisition of the skills necessary to cope with risks (Kegerreis 1993).

There are many reasons given for the decrease in independent mobility amongst children, with research based mainly on ranking these reasons. Recent research by the Department for Transport (2005) has found that 58 per cent of parents said traffic danger was the cause of accompanying children aged 7-10 to school, compared with 45 per cent stating ‘fear of assault or molestation’ (DfT 2005). The groundbreaking and often quoted quantitative research by Hillman et al. (1990) found that nearly four times as many children were escorted to primary school in 1990 than in 1971. The study compared data from 1990 with data from the same schools gathered in 1971 and with data collected in West German schools. In 1990 only half of the children in the survey were allowed to cross roads on their own, compared with 75 per cent in 1971. The proportion allowed to use buses on their own also fell from half in 1971 to one in seven in 1990 (Hillman et al. 1990). However, these analyses are based on quantitative data and oversimplify the reasons for dependence.

A number of studies have sought to update the work of Hillman et al. in exploring the journey to school using quantitative methods. Joshi and MacLean (1995) are critical of Hillman et al.’s work and particularly the issue of ranking the reasons for restricting independent travel. They felt that Hillman et al.’s range of reasons was too narrow and prescriptive, using terms such as ‘molestation’ rather than more familiar and perhaps less sinister terms like ‘stranger danger’, which they concluded was a greater concern for parents than Hillman et al. found. Pooley et al. (2005) also seek to provide an update on Hillman’s work with a consideration of wider issues of increased automobility, increased parental choice, and an overall increase in mobility due to time-space compression. They found that change in family structures, complex journeys and perceptions of crime were important but did not explore these issues in depth. It is argued in this thesis that the range and complexity of mothers’ and children’s experiences of the school journey
cannot be gauged through quantitative research alone and that ranking reasons for accompanying children per se is not necessarily productive. This study therefore seeks to explore the range of factors that influence mobility decision-making and analyse their interrelationships. Other studies (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004; Jackson and Scott 1999; O'Brien et al. 2000) have approached risks in children's mobile spaces in a more in-depth way although they do not employ methods that adequately gauge the views of children in relation to these risks.

It is clear from these studies, however, that parental risk perceptions are an important factor in the erosion of independent mobility. Jackson and Scott (1999) argue that the effects of risk anxiety are to limit children's lives and experiences due to the increasing inability to develop autonomy and self-reliance. Parents are then 'blamed' for not encouraging mobility. Institutional guidelines on children's abilities to cope with various types of space tend to follow the developmental paradigm as discussed in chapter 2. The most recent NSPCC guidelines, for example, argue that 'in most situations children under about eight years old shouldn't be out alone' (NSPCC 2004). With regard to a hypothetical situation of an eight year old child going to school alone they state 'it is not safe for them to be alone near busy roads'. Apart from danger, they say the child may 'feel different' from other friends'. They also cite risks from injury in the playground, bullying, and from adults who could harm them. Jackson and Scott argue that 'such guidelines tend to bureaucratize decisions without regard to the social context or life experience of the individual children' (Jackson and Scott 1999, 94).

As well as direct adult control of independence through reductions in mobility, the urban landscape can limit children's independence. O'Brien et al. (2000, 258) found that 'contemporary children are faced with hostile urban landscapes dominated by physical decline, threatening adults and fast-moving cars restricting their access and independent movement even more than in the past', with resulting decreases in independent mobility. O'Brien et al. (2000) emphasized the importance of family context in determining levels of autonomy in their study where parents and children were both emotionally engaged with issues of dependence and independence. In their study of children's independent mobility, they argue that parental anxiety is a product of the environment, and that within 'poor, distressed urban environments... the parenting strategy of 'keeping him in/keeping him close' is a legitimate, protective response' (O'Brien et al. 2000, 270). It is argued here, however, that it is not the existence of an inhospitable environment per se that leads to reductions in independence, but the way in which mothers and children construct and
experience their environment as risky.

O'Brien et al. (2000) also found that in comparison with Hillman et al.'s study parental anxieties in public space have increased, with fewer parents allowing their children out after dark. Parents in O'Brien's study revealed worries about traffic and stranger danger, whilst reminiscing of their own independence when they were at school. O'Brien et al. contend, in line with the previous discussion, that it is not only everyday factors that affect children's risk experiences but that 'children's spatial lives are bound up in a web of personal emotional biographies and family practices, as well as local and global factors' (O'Brien et al. 2000, 274). It is this complex web of factors that this study seeks to explore in the context of both parental and children's everyday experience.

Understanding the complexities of mobility decision-making

The importance of biography emerged also in chapter 2 as an important component in this complex layering of factors, both in understanding mothering ideologies (Duncan 2005) and practices and everyday risk (Tulloch and Lupton 2003). It is useful therefore to consider the extent to which biography has been explored within mobility theory. Hall (2005, 89) uses Gidden's concept of life course in considering impacts on tourist mobilities, where it is 'not constructed by the endless repetition of orderly sequences'. Instead, life course is used in recognising the diversity in life paths and the influence of spatial and cultural factors. Hall (2005) argues that tourism mobilities can be set within the context of the life course, where milestone events such as leaving home and career changes are particularly influential. In this study, however, this concept is adopted in the form of mobility history, a means of approaching mothers and children's mobility from a broad conceptual frame, which will allow the inclusion of not only milestone events, but elements of everyday life that are deemed to be significant. It is therefore a term that allows an interweaving of the key interdisciplinary themes that have emerged in chapters 2 and 3 and will be developed through the analysis of data in chapter 6.

The use of the concept of mobility history recognizes the complexity of the factors that determine the social, cultural and spatial characteristics of the journey to school. It is argued here that parent's reasons for limiting independent mobility are often oversimplified and considered in isolation from children's experiences. This is a critique that could be made of the work of Fotel and Thomsen (2004) who argue that children are excluded from mobility, primarily through their
inability to hold a driver's licence and through increased surveillance from parents and educational institutions. It could be argued that this list of regulators could be expanded to include all adults that children come into contact with, particularly other users and operators of the transport system. Fotel and Thomsen (2004) present this regulation almost wholly in negative terms as they ask:

Have dangers in neighbourhoods and cities increased so much that children need to be monitored in order to care for them properly, or is the monitoring of children's mobility done on behalf of parental perception with negative consequences to children's perception of space and place as a result?

(Fotel and Thomsen 2004, 536)

The exception to the negative impact of parental surveillance through escorting is their finding that accompanying children can be valued time with children. They talk of parents 'caring rationality' (Fotel and Thomsen 2004, 539) as a motivational force in controlling children's mobility, but point out that the child does not benefit in welfare terms. What is unclear in Fotel and Thomsen's account is the extent to which children welcome and in fact require this level of surveillance in order to feel safe and able to negotiate public space. Fotel and Thomsen (2004) intimate that parents’ actions contrast with statistical evidence of the reduction in traffic accidents, without giving any details of the type of accidents they are referring to or mentioning the accompanying reduction in children walking and playing on the street. In conclusion they argue that family welfare could be improved by 'minimizing the parental risk-perception' (Fotel and Thomsen 2004, 548). As this chapter has argued however, parental risk experience is complex and co-constructed with gender and generational ideologies and practices that are encompassed in mobility history. This minimization would therefore require a challenge to the patriarchal system, to the process of individualization and to socially constructed identities.

However, as this chapter has argued, it is not only parental experiences that determine children's mobilities, but that children demonstrate agency in determining their own mobilities. The importance of parental risk landscapes is evident, however applying this to children is more problematic as existing research has tended to focus on parents. For children, the public space of the journey to school has already been deemed risky before they experience it directly themselves. However, it is possible that mobility decisions are made irrespective of risk landscapes due to the distinctiveness of the spatiality of the school journey as discussed earlier in this chapter and therefore that mobility history provides a valuable means of exploring this. The spatiality of the
school journey offers the potential for the demonstration of children's agency, as it is distinct from the usual spaces either side of it, which are regulated and controlled in different ways. For mothers too, it is not only a space to experience risk and act out parental control of their children, but a space in which mobility choices symbolize the success of their mothering strategies. It can also be the space they inhabit for a significant portion of their day, in which a set of social interactions and emotions can be experienced that do not relate to their children directly. Again mobility history can be used to explore these myriad social and spatial processes. The next section describes this mobile space, how it has changed and the policy context for the mobility decisions made about and within it.

Journey to school: contexts

There is generally a lack of understanding of children's mobility practices and ideology due to a relative neglect of this area of study. As discussed, studies of children in space tended to focus on the home and school (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004; James et al. 1998; Hood et al. 1996; Kelley et al. 1997; Mayall 1994). The previous section showed that travel research has tended to focus on the safety and sustainability of the 'school run', the privatization of children's travel through use of the car and the decline in independent mobility from a quantitative perspective. The National Travel Survey (DfT 2005) which produces basic statistics on the choice of mode, shows that the car is the predominant form of travel for children under the age of about ten, at which time car use decreases and bus use increases. Overall walking accounts for approximately a third of all trips for children and young people. From 5-15 years education trips make up about 35-40 per cent of the overall number of trips (DfT 2005).

There are a number of barriers to children's travel, reflecting the lack of understanding and policy input from children themselves. Research that has involved children and young people in identifying travel barriers has shown that young people have a number of transport and health concerns including: pollution, traffic danger, lack of safety for cycling, increased car usage, as well as issues of cost and personal security on public transport (DETR 2006; Imagine London 2000). Government (DETR 1999; DfT 2006) research has also shown that the perception of personal security by children themselves is also a major transport barrier. It is often the private car that is considered to be the means to their independence. Even where there is low car ownership in households, children still state a preference for the private car as a symbol of freedom, status and adulthood (Lucas et al. 2001). When a child chooses to travel by car, they may also be choosing to
travel accompanied and this has a profound impact on levels of independence as they are choosing dependence and exercising agency in doing so. Children, therefore, may have different accounts of the underlying factors that influence their mobility and these may not be currently reflected in policy approaches, although the government has recently published a report which looks specifically at these issues (DfT 2006). The following therefore outlines these approaches to both illustrate this and to provide a context for the exploration of the school journey in chapter 5 and 6.

**School travel planning**

School travel plans have been in place in the UK since the mid 1990s when Sustrans developed the Safe Routes to School programme following evidence of the success of such schemes in other European countries, most notably Denmark (Sustrans 2005). The Sustrans vision was to ‘create a safe route to school for every child and make walking and cycling the natural choice for every short school journey’ (Sustrans 2005). In 1995, Sustrans set up a Safe Routes to School demonstration project with ten schools and four local authorities to prove that it was possible to increase levels of walking and cycling. The focus of Sustrans’ work however seems to be on environmental issues and encouraging sustainable travel rather than improving mobility options for children and young people. Indeed their position statement (2005) on Safe Routes to School states:

> We all have different expectations regarding the school journey: parents’ main concern is that their child’s journey is ‘safe’ (or as safe as can be expected), schools need to know that the involvement of pupils and teaching staff will meet their wider educational objectives, and local authorities must demonstrate that their investment of time and money represents good value and will improve residents’ quality of life.

There seems to be a lack of consideration of issues of the welfare and involvement of children in this process. However, Sustrans take their inspiration for school travel planning from Denmark, where children’s welfare is at the centre of the school travel planning process (Osbourne 2005). Legislation there requires that every child has a safe route to school and without this in place, bus transport must be provided (Nielsen 1990). As with road safety measures in the UK, however, it is difficult to evaluate whether a particular scheme has had an impact (see Adams 1995).

There has since been much government activity around school travel since the Labour government came to power in 1997. In 1998 the government set up the School Travel Advisory
Group (STAG), the members of which include representatives of parents, teachers and governors, business, experts in child health, road safety and school transport, and a range of local authorities from around the country, but notably no children. The aim of the group was to develop the government's programme on school travel initiatives. A number of studies have been carried out and guidance on school travel produced (DfT 1999, 2000a; DfES 2002, 2005). In addition, there has been a Commons Transport Select Committee paper on school travel (House of Commons 2004). This has been accompanied by resources to support local authorities and schools. In February 2001 the DTLR announced a £9m programme of investment in the form of bursaries to finance travel planners in local authorities. In addition, there was a programme of capital funding to complement funding of school travel plan (STP) coordinators with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) making available small capital grants to schools that have approved travel plans, £5k for a typical primary school and £10k for a typical secondary. Following the announcement of provision of bursaries for travel advisers, 50 per cent of local authorities in England had a STP in at least one school (DTLR 2001).

Local authorities were also advised on promoting safe and sustainable travel to school through their Local Transport Plans (LTPs) submissions. The guidance on full Local Transport Plans (DfT 2004) states that the LTP programmes should reflect the impact of school travel planning initiatives. In autumn 2003, the Secretaries of State for Transport and Education and Skills jointly announced the Travelling to School Initiative to improve the safety and sustainability of the school journey (DfES and DfT 2003). This includes support in developing the concept of sustainable travel in the school curriculum and the provision of additional capital funding for STPs and the provision of further bursaries for school travel advisers in local authorities.

Even where outcomes do not include the involvement or recognition of children's concerns, they are still unclear. A report prepared for the government on the potential impact of 'soft' measures in contributing to sustainable transport (Cairns 2004) found that school travel plans, on average, cut school run traffic by between 8 per cent and 15 per cent, with high performing schools commonly achieving reductions of over 20 per cent. However the Department for Transport's evaluation (DfT 2005b) of the impact of the school travel advisers and the extent of modal shift following the introduction of STPs found that overall there was little evidence of modal shift, although there had been significant shift from car to more sustainable modes in a number of schools. In addition, research which studied the impact of site-specific 'expert' guidance from
travel planners found no evidence of changes in children’s travel patterns, or reductions in ‘parental fears’ about children’s safety (Rowland et al. 2003). Research that found improving public transport services has the potential for the greater changes in school travel (Bradshaw and Jones 2000) appears not to have been adequately integrated into the government’s strategy around school travel. There are, however, wider issues of concern in terms of school travel, and these are entwined with issues of quality of life, social exclusion and choice around both primary and secondary education (see Butler and Zanten 2007; Pooley et al. 2005; Thornthwaite 1994). Choice of school may be limited by mobility options, particularly issues of travel cost.

At present, the availability of free school transport is determined by the Education Act 1996 (in England and Wales and similar legislation in Northern Ireland). The Act stipulates that the maximum walking distance for children under eight is two miles, and over eights, three miles, with these distances based on nineteenth century calculations (DfT 2004c). The House of Commons Transport Select Committee’s report (2004) concluded that these distances were inappropriate and required review. They also felt that parents determine children’s mode of travel to school and that this was dependent on safety. They recognized that the provision of school buses also needed attention concluding that bus companies used ‘older buses and sometimes unsafe’ buses for the school run and that this should be reviewed as a matter of urgency. The recent Department for Education and Skills White Paper (DfES 2005) proposes extending the entitlement to free school travel to reflect changes in school availability and changing family structures:

We will introduce legislation to entitle disadvantaged pupils (eligible for free school meals or in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit) to free transport to any of the three suitable secondary schools closest to their home, where these schools are between two and six miles away.

(DfES 2005, 44)

The White Paper goes on to detail proposed work with local authorities to evaluate the impact of extended free transport including on school admissions. In this context local authorities are also asked to propose innovative schemes such as safe walking routes, ‘customized yellow buses’ and provision for transport for activities outside the normal school day. The policy context for mobility issues involving the journey to school is therefore adultist in approach, particularly as there is has been a basic failure to take young people’s views into consideration, although recent research by the Department of Transport has attempted to incorporate young people’s views
Children who took part in this research felt that their views were not listened to because they were not adults (DfT 2006). Policy does not therefore reflect children’s agency in determining their mobilities. Instead, school travel planning is centred on demand management to increase sustainable travel and issues of traffic safety. This thesis argues, however, that the school journey is about more than transport and risk management, that it is a distinct space in which children can potentially experience childhood on their terms.

The school journey: a distinctive space?

The notion that the school journey is a distinctive space has been outlined previously in this chapter. Barker defines the geographies of this space as ‘unique’ as it is ‘highly complex, well-organized yet diverse set of spatial movements that constitute the journey to school’ (Barker 2003, 139). However, in this thesis the school journey is distinctive as it becomes a space for both children to demonstrate agency and for mothers to ‘act out’ their gendered roles according to local cultures. For mothers, it can also symbolize a transition from motherhood, a letting go of children as they reach different stages of independence. For children, it can be a place for children to use their agency to ascribe risk and autonomy to the space. Despite the increased surveillance of school journeys, there is still therefore potential for self-determination and agency. As touched upon previously, increased car use on the journey is often presented as a sign of decreasing independence (Fotel and Thomsen 2004), although it can also represent an opportunity for dependence.

Since 1992, the proportion of trips to school by car increased from 30 to 40 per cent, with a reduction in walking trips from 61 to 52 per cent (DfT 2005). Secondary school travel has changed less over the last decade or so, although the proportion travelling by car has increased from 16 per cent in 1992/94 to 23 per cent in 2002/03 with just over 15 per cent of children in 2002/03 living in households without a car (DfT 2005). These statistics have led to concern, mainly on environmental and health grounds, about the increase in car use amongst children and have led to state intervention. In turn, the car has provided parents with the opportunity for greater surveillance and control (Fotel and Thomsen 2004).

As discussed, children are increasingly supervised and accompanied on the journey to school and the time-space constraints this imposes on parents, particularly mothers, along with perceptions of risk in public space have contributed to the increase in car use for this purpose. This was
observed by Sibley in 1995:

The locality is more likely to be experienced from the car, necessarily in the company of adults, rather than alone or in the company of other children. The car then functions as a protective capsule from which the child observes the world but does not experience it directly through encounters with others.

(Sibley 1995, 136).

Of course many children do not have access to a car and therefore have less opportunity to experience this privatized form of travel and its accompanying levels of surveillance (DfT 2005). The car forms one of the many barriers that dependent travel can impose on children's development of spatial awareness. 'The supervised, bounded space of the car represents the culmination of surveillance and protection of children by their parents and is thus arguably the key contemporary social space of childhood' (Barker 2003, 137). The car has become a private regulated space and, as Valentine and McKendrick (1997) and Barker (2003) argue, it is an institutionalized space. Within this space children can be monitored and their behaviour observed. As Barker states: 'These institutionalized spaces are created, structured and organized by adults and segregate children from the wider adult world whilst enabling parents or other adults to maintain continuous surveillance and regulation of children' (Barker 2003, 137). However, as discussed, cars are also a space that many children favour over less regulated spaces and this is explored in chapters 5 and 6.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the theory relating to childhood, risk and mobility demonstrating that as with motherhood, risk and mobility, these concepts are co-constructed. Universal notions of childhood are based on established childhood norms with acceptable risk identified according to 'expert' analyses. At the same time, children's risk landscapes are constructed in the everyday, through mundane negotiation of social structures and of space. Both of these contexts, the global and the everyday, are ever-changing and notions of childhood evolve to reflect this. Family structures and state interventions are also increasingly constructing social and physical spaces as risky in order to monitor and control. However, children are often embracing these changes as a consequence of their position as social actors, despite being subjugated by adultist constructions of universal childhood.
Children, in contrast to mothers, are constructed both as potential risks themselves; and their identities are shaped partly by adult attempts to protect them from risk. Children's risk landscapes are set within adultist ideologies and within social, political and cultural contexts. However, given the potential for autonomy in the distinctive space between home and school, children can demonstrate agency in negotiating their own independent mobility. The approach to this research encompasses the problematic nature of constructions of risk and childhood in establishing mobility. It sets out to explore the complex factors that determine children's mobility, whilst recognising that children demonstrate agency in their determination. It also considers the mobilities of the journey to school in relation to mothers, constructing this space as one that is significant within their overall mobility experience. The approach taken is based on an exploration of the gender and generational aspects of risk and mobility, developing a conceptual tool in the form of mobility history, which facilitates this on an interdisciplinary basis.

Existing studies of the decline in independent mobility are limited in that they tend to approach this complex set of factors with methods that are inappropriate and fail to recognise children's agency in determining their own risk experience. Also, issues of declining independence do not only relate to understanding and 'minimising parental risk perception' (Fotel and Thomsen 2004). Parental risk experience needs to be understood in a social cultural and political context and this includes adopting the broad conceptual frame taken by this thesis.

Chapter 2 and 3 have explored a selection of the available literature on risk, motherhood and childhood in an attempt to synthesize the emergent theory and in doing so begin to develop a broad theoretical framework for explaining how mothers and children experience and perceive risk. It is evident that the concepts are fluid, dynamic and complex and are co-constructed. Following on from the discussions in this chapter of the distinctiveness of the school journey, Chapter 5 uses the themes that have emerged in these chapters to begin to disentangle the complexities of the journey to school, including mothering cultures, notions of childhood, the nature of risk and mobilities on the journey, including the influence of local and global discourses and sets out to contextualize these issues.

Chapter 6 develops the concept of mobility histories, drawing from O’Brien (2000) and Hall (2005), which will facilitate the exploration of the complex ‘web of personal emotional biographies’ (O’Brien 2000, 274), whilst recognising the influence of spatial and cultural factors.
Hall (2005). It will develop this conceptual frame in the context of the everyday (Tulloch and Lupton 2003), where everyday risk is distinguished from more global risks that are considered to be less applicable to everyday lives. The notion of mobility histories allow the key themes emerging from this and the preceding chapter to be integrated with those emerging from the data in chapters 5 and 6. The next chapter sets out how and why this data was collected, explaining the methodological approach to the research.
Chapter 4  Methodology and methods

Introduction

Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 99) contend that a social research tradition or 'paradigm' is a 'set of beliefs that guide action'. This chapter outlines the methodological approach, the set of beliefs along with the action taken to develop knowledge of mothers' and children's mobilities adopted in this thesis. These beliefs do not adhere strictly to any singular established paradigm but draw from a number of research traditions according to researcher philosophy and the nature of the research based on the theoretical perspective set out in the preceding chapters. It is a 'bricolage', 'a 'pieced together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation' (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, 4), a concept developed by Denzin and Lincoln based on original usage by Lévi-Strauss (1966). The complex situation being explored here is the myriad co-constructions and re-constructions of motherhood, childhood, risk and mobility that impact on a slice of everyday life: the journey to and from school. The approach embraces both philosophy and pragmatism in researching this part of everyday life using a qualitative methodology in order that the intricacies of the interrelationships between different elements can be explored fully.

The first section in this chapter sets out the methodological approach, the theoretical, philosophical and biographical underpinnings of the way in which this research was tackled. It outlines the theories that have informed this research and have been introduced in chapters 2 and 3 including feminism, social studies of childhood and social approaches to risk and mobility. It then sets out the ontological and epistemological positioning of this study, the rationale for the use of qualitative methods and the impacts of researcher biography. The second section explains the research design, particularly the theory and rationale for the use of visual methods. Finally, the methods are described, including the use of a multi-method approach, the approach to ethical issues in the research, the analysis of data and the research limitations. This section also contains reflections on the use of the various methods in this study, which include video filming of journeys, film-elicitation interviews, and in-depth interviews.

Methodological approach

The approach taken here is both pragmatic and philosophical. The use of an appropriate 'toolkit'
of methods is often considered to be divergent from philosophical considerations. As Richie and Lewis (2003, 15) state, pragmatism is adopted ‘rather than focusing too much on the underlying philosophical debates’. They explain that pragmatism originates in debates about ‘multi-method, transdisciplinary’ research in the late 20th century, which contested the value of philosophical approaches, arguing that overemphasis on philosophy could inhibit the adoption of the most appropriate method. As Bryman (2004) and Silverman (2004) argue, however, there needs to be a better balance between pragmatism and philosophy. The approach taken here, therefore, recognizes the importance of setting out the philosophical rationale for qualitative methods, as the researcher’s beliefs about the world and about different theoretical and political positions underlie decisions made about the methodology and methods. However, it also acknowledges the need for some level of pragmatism in applying appropriate methods, although of course the pragmatic approach will also always be informed by the positionality of the researcher.

The approach is therefore predicated on the researcher’s philosophical thinking and the nature of both the research and the research participants. Of course, these factors are relational and fluid as each is dependent on any incremental change in another. As a result, the approach set out in the following sections evolved over the course of the research. It draws from a number of philosophical, methodological, social, and political debates within the social sciences and cannot therefore be defined within a specific paradigm. Due to its focus on motherhood, childhood, risk and mobility, its epistemological position is based on theoretical discourse within a number of disciplines and established methodologies. The approach cannot therefore be limited to any particular methodological approach as this may be detrimental to knowledge gain in relation to the other concepts under investigation. This thesis therefore draws from a number of methodological traditions, in particular, feminist approaches to motherhood, the social studies of childhood, socio-cultural approaches to risk and the social studies of mobility.

Drawing from feminist approaches

Although this study is not deemed to be feminist research in its purist sense, where the main focus is gender relations, it draws from feminist methodological approaches in the study of motherhood to the extent that it is shaped by feminist theory, politics and ethics and ‘has some grounding in women’s experience’ (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002, 16). It is therefore based on broad feminist beliefs. This study recognizes mothers and children as marginalized groups in a patriarchal society and aims to be useful in both understanding and changing injustices that may
result from this. Chapters 2 and 3 have cited a range of feminist literature arguing that the
subjugation of women in a patriarchal society underlies sociocultural processes. As Ramazanoglu
and Holland (2002, 4) argue ‘feminism provides theory, language and politics for making sense of
gendered lives’.

The approach taken here is therefore feminist in part as it involves social research on gendered
lives (Stanley and Wise 1993; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). The epistemological and
ontological positions can not necessarily be categorized as feminist, but are necessarily grounded
in feminism. As Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) argue, the researcher cannot escape from their
own politics, beliefs, and ethics and so methodology will be shaped by these. As a result there is
not one epistemological or ontological position within feminism (Stanley and Wise 1993;
Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). In line with Stanley and Wise (1993), there is no singular
standpoint and no conceptualization of a universal womanhood or motherhood in this research
(Benton and Craib 2001; Maynard and Purvis 1994; Stanley and Wise 1993). Rather, mothers are
considered to be a diverse group with specific commonalities in particular contexts, with
differences in mothering cultures according to race, class, gender, sexuality and disability
recognized where appropriate and possible.

As discussed in chapter 2, the criticism that traditional feminist approaches are subject to
overgeneralization is taken up by poststructural feminists, who argue that gender should be
deconstructed. In particular, they argue that the term ‘women’ is inappropriate as it essentializes
womanhood. However, at no point within this thesis is womanhood or motherhood reduced to a
singular essence or to biology. Rather, motherhood is seen as a gendered social construct,
although one that is linked to the body (Miller 2005). Critiques of postmodern approaches
(Benton and Craib 2001; Maynard and Purvis 1994) contend that it is not possible for such an
approach to be fundamentally feminist while deconstructing gender; and that external constraints
on research such as time, money and funding from external bodies need to be considered.
Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) argue that although feminists do not need to discount
postmodernism, there is also a need to understand real social divisions, the meaning of everyday
experiences and the factors that impact on them, which are the goals of this study.

Another key feature of this research methodology that draws from feminism is that it is based on
the ability and necessity to analyse emotion, which has emerged as particularly important issue in
this study. Stanley and Wise (1993, 193) argue for the need to locate ‘an experiencing and feeling subject at the centre of all intellectual endeavour’. The use of visual methods in particular facilitates the exploration of the emotions of the journey to school and the implications of this for wider mobility issues. As Reavey and Johnson (forthcoming, 4) argue:

... identification with an image, or presenting oneself through one’s ‘image’, can be a more powerful way of capturing emotions which may be more removed from verbal articulation. This is not to say that ‘emotions’ or ‘embodiment’ are in any way separate from socially constructed language systems or discourse, but he way in which we live feelings and experiences are not always available to verbal description.

The concern to capture the emotional elements of mothering and being a young person is maintained throughout the methodological approach. The range of methods adopted allows emotionalities to emerge in a way that is not possible using quantitative methods. In-depth interviews with mothers, which are semi-structured allowed the participants to explore an aspect of their risk and mobility biography to the depth they chose and to maintain control of the emotionality of this process. This is of course dependent on another key element: the recognition of the subjectivity of the research process and the need to be reflexive in approach, appreciating the positionality of the researcher.

**Drawing from social studies of childhood approaches**

In acknowledging children as actors in social processes, as valid sources of knowledge and that children’s agency can provide valuable input to research methodology, this study draws from the social studies of childhood paradigm developed by James et al. (1998) as described in chapter 3. Mayall (2000) argues that as womanhood needs to be understood within the context of gender, childhood needs to be understood in a generational context. She contends that the ‘new childhood studies’ is based on a broadly social constructivist approach, within which, ‘a child is not a natural category and that what a child is and how childhood is lived is structured by adult norms, aims and cultures’ (Mayall 1999, 12). For Mayall a new childhood studies epistemology is grounded on: viewing the child as a part of the social order; seeing children as a social group with its own power structures; setting children’s learning and experience within the political arena that includes children, parents and the state; and children having their own agency. She argues for the development of a ‘child standpoint’ like feminist standpoint epistemologies: ‘we need to explore childhood from a generational standpoint, including children’s own understanding of the generational order’ (Mayall 1999, 17). Drawing on this, the methodological approach adopted here
situates children at the centre of research conducted with them and ensures that research is carried out on issues that are relevant to them.

Researching with children

As well as understanding theories of childhood, research also involves adopting methods that are appropriate to these groups. The suitability of particular research methods for researching women’s experiences and perceptions has been explored and confirmed by a number of researchers (Oakley 1981, 1999, 2000; Finch 1984; Richie and Lewis 2003; Bryman 2004). There is a growing literature base on research with children (Alderson 2000; Christensen and James 2000; Punch 2002; Clark 2004; Fraser et al. 2004; Holt 2004; Lewis et al. 2004). Punch (2002, 321) argues that ‘if children are competent social actors, why are special ‘child friendly’ methods needed’, that the same methods of research should be applied to children within a social study of childhood paradigm. However, as Fraser (2004) maintains, research methods should in fact be negotiated between the researcher and the researched so that all methods are ‘participant friendly’. In this case, part of the knowledge of such negotiation is based on previous research, which has shown that children prefer non-traditional research methods and especially the visual methods that are adopted here (Smith and Barker 1999; Young and Barrett 2001; Clark 2004). In addition, Young and Barrett’s research with children observed that ‘visual methods allow a high level of child participation in research, as well as providing a stimulus for eliciting further oral material’ (Young and Barrett 2001, 141). Visual methods will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.

It has also been demonstrated that using more imaginative research methods that are perceived by children to be ‘fun’ can overcome some of the power relations between researcher and researched and bring the researcher closer to understanding the lives of children, who may be used to communicating in this way (Backett-Milburn and McKie 1999; Christensen and James 2000; Mahon et al. 1996; Punch 2002). There is also a requirement in research of this kind, to acknowledge issues of power in research, especially when researching with children (Punch 2002; Backett-Milburn and McKie 1999; Christensen and James 2000; Robinson and Kellett 2004). As Robinson and Kellett (2004) contend it is also necessary to understand power relations in research with children as power is about the creation of knowledge as well as the use of force. It is recognized, however, that it is difficult to overcome these imbalances fully as they are part of the social construction of childhood (Mayall 2000).
The methodological approach therefore is inclusive of a belief that methods must be appropriate to the research participants and that children warrant particular consideration in this respect. It also seeks to capture data in a less bounded setting than studies such as Backen-Milburn and Harden’s (2004), which concentrated on the case study method to explore risk within the family. Instead it aims to use methods with the potential to explore distinctness between mothers and children as well as similarities, to attempt to explore children’s lives within their own definitions of childhood, risk and mobility. The approach therefore recognizes the ‘rise of childhood agency’ (James et al. 1998, 6) and the rights of children to participate in research as well as ‘be’ researched. It should be recognized that children can and should contribute to shaping the research design (Adams and Ingham 1998; Alderson 2000; Smith and Barker 1999). In line with contemporary sociological approaches to studies of childhood (Robinson and Kellett 2004; Fraser et al 2004; James et al. 1998; Punch 2002; Alderson 2004; Alderson and Morrow 2004; Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989) this is research ‘with’ rather than ‘on’ children.

Drawing from research on mobility and risk

The final theoretical frame that informs the methodological approach is based on research into mobilities and risk. Developing mobile methodologies is a relatively new research approach in the social sciences. There are a number of contemporary studies of methods that will enable researchers to explore everyday mobility and these are themselves mobile including video recordings (Laurier 2005) and mobile interviewing (Hurley Duprey 2006; Lashua 2006). These methods are predicated on research in context, within the physical and social space that the study relates to. In this way, it is argued mobile methodologies represent a ‘new approach to excavate and access the meaning of human constructions of the world’ (Anderson 2004, 254). Everyday activities are therefore so embedded in space that to carry out and interview in another space can limit the potential of the data as it removes the immediate relationship between the interviewee and the emotional and social space that is being discussed. The use of video methods in recording the journey to school in this research is therefore considered a mobile methodology and will be discussed more fully later.

Researching risk also raises a number of issues including the extent to which it can be determined, its complexity and the sensitivity surrounding the concept. This study takes a socio-cultural approach to everyday risk as set out in the preceding chapters and does not make any attempt to
quantify risk, recognizing the problematic nature of issues associated with quantification and construing risk in 'scientific' terms. As explored in chapters 2 and 3, risk is not objective but always subjective and requiring an approach that reflects this (Adams 1995; Douglas 1986; Fischoff et al 1980). For this reason, Tulloch (2000: 186) argues that qualitative techniques give a better understanding of risks experienced and perceived by individuals. He argues that most research is decontextualized and expert driven, asking questions that are 'too hypothetical and ambiguous'. These can lead to misconceptions of risk particularly as it can be a sensitive issue, bound up in people's emotional lives. Lewis (2005, 4) recognized the 'difficulties of conceptualizing risk' in her study of risk in intimate relations and avoided the use of the term. Following on from other research on risk with children (Lahikainen, Kraav and Taimalu 2003, 86), that also recognizes the 'sensitivity of the topic', the use of the term was avoided in this research.

This thesis takes account of this literature in approaching risk in a way that seeks to encompass the participants' interpretations of the concept. The approach here therefore recognizes the subjectivity of both risk and mobility and the complexity and interpretation of the concept of risk as discussed previously. It recognizes the need to explore everyday risk and mobilities in the context of broader social relations and cultural processes. As Tulloch and Lupton (2003) argue 'fine grained' empirical studies are useful in socio-cultural approaches to understanding ideas and experiences. The study therefore adopts a methodological approach that draws from similar and broadly socio-cultural approaches described above. Its ontological and epistemological positioning in relation to these is set out next.

Epistemology and ontology

It is neither possible nor appropriate to detail the myriad ontological and epistemological disputes within social science here (see Benton and Craib 2001 and Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 2000). Some social researchers argue that a feminist perspective, and in the same way a social studies of childhood perspective, necessitates a materialist or realist ontology as material conditions such as social, political, gender and cultural factors have major influence on people's lives (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Snape and Spencer 2003). However, it is also argued that feminist methodologies can be aligned with social constructivist approaches as gender is considered a socially constructed concept, rather than a biologically determined one (Stanley and Wise 1993; Maynard and Purvis 1994).
The ontological position taken here reflects both these views. In accepting the materiality of bodies in constructing the concepts of motherhood, childhood, risk and mobility, it is necessarily realist to some extent. It recognizes merit in realist positions, especially those that represent a synthesis of realist and idealist positions such as critical realism and subtle realism (Benton and Craib 2001; Hughes and Sharrock 1999; May 2001; Richie and Lewis 2003). In accepting this materiality, it is recognized therefore that external reality is meaningful only when meaning is attached to it through the ascription of beliefs and interpretation and that both are diverse and relational. Our state of being is dependent on our interpretations and ascriptions of meanings through social interaction. As May (2001) contends, subjectivity, our ‘inner world of experiences’ is about ascribed meanings given to the environment rather than environment itself. It is based on the premise that we can only be certain of our own interpretations of the outer world and the outer social world is therefore based on accumulations of people’s interpretations about it.

Similarly, the materiality of the body is significant in shaping social constructions of gender and childhood. As Stanley and Wise (1993, 196) argue we need to see the body in terms of ‘embodiment’, ‘a cultural process by which the physical body becomes a site of culturally ascribed and disputed meanings, experiences and feelings’. At the same time they do not accept that the body has no material importance outside discursive constructs, but they acknowledge that we can only understand bodies’ materiality through ‘socially constructed frameworks of understanding’ (Stanley and Wise 1993). So although gender is not defined by the body, the body plays a part in the construction of gender (Stanley and Wise 1993). James and Prout (1998) argue that the body is similarly significant in the construction of childhood.

The epistemological position is not purist as discussed, drawing from a range of influences. It is interpretivist, based on subjectivity and reflexivity (Hoggart, Lees and Davies 2002). The research is based on an interpretative search for meaning rather than truths. As discussed in chapters 2 and 3 the approach recognizes that each of the concepts under investigation is socially constructed, complex and multifaceted. It is reflexive in that both the approach and the role of the researcher within the approach are reflected upon in an iterative process of re-evaluation.

The overall approach is therefore weak constructivist (Bryman 2004; Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Richie and Lewis 2003). Constructivism is based on the belief that social phenomena and
meanings are constructed from perceptions and actions and that these are in a constant state of revision. The researcher is only able to present a specific version of social reality as all organization and culture is in a state of constant construction and reconstruction (Bryman 2004). Of course constructivist approaches - like all paradigms in social research - are contested, with various levels of constructivism based on ontological position. However, as Schwandt (1994, 125) argues 'we are all constructivists if we believe that the mind is active in the construction of knowledge'. The constructivist approach taken in seeking to understand meanings and interpretation leads to the use of qualitative methods as discussed in the following section.

Using qualitative methods

The qualitative approach taken here seeks to allow the exploration of the everyday meanings and co-constructions of childhood, risk and mobility. However, the potential value of quantitative methods, particularly in providing contextualizing data is also recognized. Maynard and Purvis (1994) argue that despite quantitative research being seen as masculinist, limited in analyzing 'the body and emotions' and based on the positivist traditions that are widely criticized by social researchers, it has scope to provide valuable supporting information for a feminist qualitative study. This approach is also adopted by Oakley (1999, 2000) who contests that quantitative methods are misunderstood due to their associations with particular cultures or paradigms. As Bryman (2004) argues, quantitative research and positivism are not necessarily based on the same ontological foundation, and that quantitative approaches have therefore potential in anti-positivist research.

Amongst qualitative social researchers, therefore, there has been an increasing recognition of when the use of quantitative methods might be valid, with a broader recognition of their potential contribution since the 1990s (Richie and Lewis 2003). The value of quantitative research often lies in its interpretation and analysis alongside qualitative methods. Overall, it can be of great value in addressing some more general research questions, whilst recognising that more in-depth concepts are more appropriately addressed with qualitative methods. The view taken in this thesis therefore is that the application of quantitative methods is limited to a supporting role as it is qualitative methods that provide the tools to explore issues, such as those under investigation here, that are fluid and constantly changing and to analyse the meanings given to particular social interactions.

This research, therefore, is based on qualitative methodology as the nature of the research.
questions demands an in-depth analysis of the meanings and perceptions that people attach to motherhood, childhood, risk and mobility. The reflexive approach that qualitative methods allows is particularly suited to this research. In recognising situated knowledge and negotiated positionalities, qualitative methods allow an exploration of the richness of everyday experience, beliefs and ascription of meanings (Richie and Lewis 2004). Qualitative methods also allow the analysis of the role of everyday ‘experts’ and of children’s agency in establishing meanings around the concept of childhood; a feminist examination of motherhood that recognizes gender roles and patriarchal control; and analysis of meanings and beliefs surrounding issues of risk and mobility. This approach can also encompass participant involvement, a critical issue when carrying out research with children. It also allows flexibility in research design, particularly important as this study is based on a combination of complementary research methods.

The methodological approach taken here, therefore, draws from a theoretical framework based on feminist approaches to motherhood, social studies of childhood, socio-cultural studies of risk and social studies of mobility. It is a weak constructivist approach, broadly interpretivist, and associated with qualitative methodologies that attach importance to interpretations and meanings. In summary the approach: views people as social actors giving meaning to everyday life; is about ‘lived experiences’ rather than positivist observations; takes into account the role of the researcher and their interpretations of the social world; and produces knowledge based on both deductive and inductive processes (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Hughes and Sharrock 1999; Benton and Craib 2001; Snape and Spencer 2003; Bryman 2004).

This theoretical frame, including the discussion of approaches to research taken in these disciplines as set out above, has both informed the development of the research methods described later in this chapter and the subsequent data analysis process. The methods have also evolved from a combination of philosophical inquiry and the matching of specific research methods to the research questions. They therefore are based on theory, philosophy and pragmatism. They are also significantly influenced by researcher positioning.

Researcher positioning and participant representation
The methodological approach here is reflexive, recognising that epistemological and ontological positions inform the research and that this is an iterative process. As Smith (2001) argues, however, there is a danger in reflexive methodology of over-reflection and over-justification and
therefore the study maintains an awareness of the need to be both philosophical and pragmatic as discussed. The approach here embraces one of the key features of feminist and constructivist research, its subjectivity and the corresponding importance of the positionality of the researcher within the research process (Limb and Dwyer 2001; May 2001; Oakley 1999; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002; Stanley and Wise 1993). As Oakley (1999, 155) states: 'paradigms are essentially intellectual cultures, and as such they are fundamentally embedded in the socialization of their adherents: a way of life rather than simply a set of technical and procedural differences'. May (2001, 15) also argues that 'our accounts of the social world must be 'internalist”, dependent on our own cultural beliefs. It is necessary therefore to outline an 'intellectual autobiography' (Stanley and Wise 1993), a personal history that situates the researcher in relation to the research. As Mohammed (2001, 112) argues 'the focus on self-reflexivity and positionality translates into the 'insider/outsider' border'. She discusses, from a constructivist position, the importance of recognising multiple truths through recognition of the complexities of the researchers' identities (Mohammed 2001). In the following, therefore, it is recognised that not only is this account a fraction of the biographical impact on the research process, but also that the notions of insider/outsider are problematic. Accounts of the researcher as 'insider' may only apply in certain contexts and in others the same account may construct the researcher as 'outsider'.

Personal biography: 'insider' or 'outsider'
The most important aspect of my autobiography in relation to this research is my position as a mother of two, with one of my children approaching the life stage when both of us will have to make a conscious effort to 'let go' in terms of spatial independence. It is my role as mother that enhanced and crystallized my own feminism more than anything else I have experienced. It is this that gives me some entitlement to the position of 'insider' in the research. I have found it is an identity that I have almost automatically shared with the mothers that have taken part in the research, and with some of the children. Not only have I been motivated by a wish to make my participants feel more comfortable in sharing their own experiences and beliefs of motherhood, but I have also felt that this will add assurance about the ethical use of the information they give (see Oakley 1981 and the later discussion on interviewing women). This is not to say that I started out with this strategy, it just happened as I reacted to the interview situation. Of course this is problematic in that there is a danger of 'using' an insider position to extract data from respondents in a potentially unethical way (Finch 1984). However, as I felt bound by ethical considerations in this research, given the participants involved, all efforts were made to avoid this.
Another factor that has affected my positioning is that I spent over 10 years before beginning the research, employed in urban/regional government as a transport researcher and transport planner. This not only developed my interest in the mobility of women and children but also ensured that I began the research with a more realist ontological positioning than I have now. It is difficult to take a constructivist approach when working in a culture where most often concrete 'evidence' of the relevance of a given issue is required before discussion of it even begins.

There are many other parts of my identity that make me an ‘outsider’ in the research process, including my own culture of mothering, which may be very different from the participants’. As Dowler found in her study of the IRA in Belfast, it is never possible to fully ‘shed [her] status as outsider’ (Dowler 2001, 153). Like every researcher, there is a need to confront the position as both ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ to identify approaches to interpretation of data and attach meaning. It is necessary to become an ‘insider’ to understand everyday experiences and in this study, the theoretical base and the depth of understanding of both motherhood and childhood gained from literature, along with being a women and mother, informs the process of becoming an insider.

It became increasingly evident during the data collection that my own risk landscape and mobility history was influencing my interpretation of both the interviews with mothers and the filming and interviews with children. I was aware of the need to step back from this to an extent, not in the hope of achieving an objective stance, but in allowing as much as possible of the participants’ stories to emerge. My risk landscape also impacted on my emotions when making journeys with the young people as in most cases I was more risk averse than the children and therefore fearful of situations, such as walking in a deserted area in the morning darkness. I was aware of my need to use coping strategies to deal with this and be able to complete my research.

Of course as well as my positionality during the research process, my research questions were developed from early ideas about the research area that was both predicated on and informed by my autobiography and this then underpins my entire approach to the research, including the research design, which is set out in the next section.

**Research design**

The key elements of the research design are: filming of journeys to school by children using video
cameras; in-depth interviews (between twenty and forty minutes in length), with children and young people using the film-elicitation method; and in-depth interviews (approximately one hour in length) with mothers. The sample of mothers and children was based on specific school catchments in suburban and inner urban Brighton. A key feature of the research design is the use of visual methods and the following section explores their use before considering the specific elements of the mixed-method approach.

Using visual methods

The use of visual methods in social research is still considered innovative, and therefore the following discussion includes an in-depth discussion of their development, use and limitations. As stated previously, imaginative ways of researching children's issues such as this have been advocated and used by a number of childhood researchers and are believed to empower children by removing them from a situation where the researcher asks questions and they simply provide answers (Punch 2002; Backett-Milburn and McKie 1999; Christensen and James 2000; Clark 2004; Roberts 2000; Walker 1993; Mehan 1993; Smith and Barker 1999).

Although the use of video diaries in research with children is a relatively new method, the limited number of studies that have used videotaping such as Takei's (2004) study of the acquisition of sign language in deaf infants have concluded that they are a very useful technique. A number of researchers (Aitken and Wingate 1993; Clark 2004; Punch 2002; Walker 1993; and Young 2001) have tested the closely related method of using cameras for photo diaries and found this also to be a valuable method in research with children. In addition, researchers such as Rassool (2004) have reflected that videotaping would have been a good method to adopt during their research.

The use of video diaries allows the researcher to glimpse the environment through the eyes of the participant, enabling a clearer view of what is more or less important to them. As Mehan (1993, 103), an educational researcher argues: 'when we listen and look at social life closely, which is what a videotape or film enables us to do, we see and hear a different version of social life than is otherwise possible'. Children communicate in a number of ways, both verbally and non-verbally and this approach allows us to analyse more of these than more traditional verbal approaches. The use of visual methods is also considered to complement feminist methodologies as a 'feminist practice of looking... acts to engage with and challenge conventional relationships of power associated with the gaze' (Kindon 2003, 143).
Discourses within visual methods

Although there is usually some form of visual description or observation in research, using visual methods as the primary method and considering the epistemological implications of this, has been little debated until the last fifteen years or so (Pink 2001a, 2001b, Emmison and Smith 2001). As Emmison and Smith argue ‘even though our social world confronts us above all as a visual experience, the social sciences have, with one or two notable exceptions, remained largely indifferent to questions of visual depiction’ (Emmison and Smith 2000, 2). In many ways the social world is becoming more visual as the boundaries of visual imagery on global and local levels are extended through, for example, television, internet and mobile phone photography.

Historically, visual methods - and particularly visual ethnography - have been associated with anthropology, and indeed much of the debate is within this field (Banks 2001; Emmison and Smith 2001; Pink 2001; Emmison 2004). Banks suggests that this is due to the familiarity of visual images within cultures that have more in common with our own and so video methods were used more often in less familiar cultures. Between the 1960s and the 1980s visual methods were criticized in social science for being too subjective, with visual anthropology associated with realist and positivist epistemologies (Pink 2001a). However, in the last fifteen years there has been, as Pink (2001a) describes, ‘a deluge’ in visual research publications and a new wave of discourse on visual methods, which represents a departure from the scientific-realist paradigm (Pink 2001a). Within this discourse Emmison and Smith have been critical of visual research that relies on recorded images. They argue that researchers should use and interpret visual images that they see rather than rely on the camera. They are critical of the view that ‘the features of the social world must be photographed before they become available as data for investigation’ (Emmison and Smith 2000, 10). Emmison (2004) develops this, arguing for a spatial dimension to visual research methodology that aims to contextualise social processes. Therefore, it is our interpretation of images that is important in these contexts (Emmison 2004).

However, Pink (2001) is critical of Emmison and Smith (2001), arguing that they look at visual images as data rather than representation and are too sweepingly critical of the use of visual images as a means of investigation. She argues that they are not reflexive in their approach and not interested in representation even though they maintain that they take a reflexive approach (Pink 2001b). She argues that most visual sociology is ‘scientific and experimental’ (Pink 2001a).
Debates within visual methodologies are therefore predominantly philosophical, ranging between reflexive approaches, where images have a range of meanings which are subject to varying interpretations (Pink 2001a, 2001b) and (more) realist approaches to visual data where the images are seen to represent a glimpse of ‘reality’ (Loizos 2000). It is useful, therefore, to look further at this apparent dichotomy to establish whether it is possible to draw from both approaches.

Looking inward and looking outward
Pink (2001a, 2001b) and Kindon (2003) argue for reflexivity in visual research, a reflection on the positionality of the researcher, and an emphasis on interpretation rather than observation. They advocate the continuous connection between the visual research methodology and the researcher’s epistemological position. Pink (2001b) argues that an ethical approach demands reflexivity as the researcher necessarily needs to be situated to represent ‘truthfully’ how the film is constructed whereas Kindon (2003) argues that it is necessary to avoid the reproduction of hierarchical power relations.

As well as reflecting on the factors that influence interpretation of film images, Pink (2001b) also stresses the importance of maintaining awareness of how different technologies impact on participant representation. For example, the use of a screen rather than an eyepiece allows the video-maker to view the overall scene as well as the scene being recorded. This obviously gives more scope than viewing only the recorded scene and also presents a choice of what to record (Pink 2001b). The actual process of filming also needs to be recorded as this may contain hidden meanings that require interpretation (Rose 2000). This is an important consideration in this research as the cameras used a screen and therefore allowed the processing of the dual image, the overall scene and its recording. Overall, Pink’s discussion of reflexivity in employing visual methods is an important one and has informed this research. However it is also accepted that this process is not only inward looking in terms of reflexivity, but that visual methods also allow an outward contextualisation of issues.

Emmison and Smith argue for a more outward looking approach; one that Pink is critical of but that nevertheless informs this research alongside a reflexive perspective. They argue that ‘the reliance on ‘the photograph’ as a form of data in its own right has prevented visual researchers from discovering a more fundamental level of analysis’ (Emmison and Smith 2000, 4). Emmison argues that visual research that looks at lived experiences is interpretative and qualitative.
The researcher must therefore look beyond the observed image and contextualise within lived experience. Banks (2001, 7) also talks of the need to interpret rather than observe as: 'seeing is not natural, however much we think it to be. Like all sensory experience the interpretation of sight is culturally and historically specific'.

Of course much of the discussion of epistemology and ontology in the previous section is relevant to the approach taken to visual methods here. Approaches based in feminism and childhood studies include reference to both reflexivity and contextualising on a broader scale.

There is therefore a requirement to look both inward, both to the positionality of the researcher and to the research process, and to look outward, to the external factors that may influence the knowledge process. In this research, therefore, interpreting the filming process and its context was about how the space, the contested space of the journey from school, is constructed to represent something and to have meaning; and how this can be observed visually.

### Power and control in visual methods

As discussed previously, researching with any marginalized group raises issues of power and control. Although the adoption of the methodological approach taken here should mitigate some of the consequences of imbalances of power, it is the responsibility of the feminist and social studies of childhood researcher to address issues of power not only in the research process but in wider society, as this forms the basis of these approaches. Banks argues that in film elicitation:

> ... by creating images of persons and their actions, the social researcher is intervening in the lives of those she works with, forging representations in which they have a variable degree of interest and over which they may have little control.

(Banks 2001, 113)

The researcher therefore has a particular responsibility in adopting visual methodologies to ensure that there is a continuous awareness of issues of interpretation and subjectivity, otherwise as Harper (1994, 409) argues, 'we will create visual information that will unconsciously reflect our personal taken for granted assumptions'. However the difficulty of avoiding this to some extent given the researcher's predetermined agenda is noted here. At the same time, however, research participants are empowered to self-represent in a unique way. Pink (2001b) argues that by giving people, especially marginalized people, a video camera it allows them to present their own visual truth. She cites a study by Barnes, Taylor Brown and Weiner carried out in 1997 where mothers
with HIV were facilitated in producing a video for their children to see after their deaths. This research followed a feminist approach where women are the originators and consumers of knowledge and is seen as important as it acknowledges the role of video method in producing a series of truths about mothering and how these need to be situated (Pink 2001a, 2001b).

The issue of empowerment is similarly significant in film elicitation with children as they are given the opportunity to become empowered through the process of constructing their own truth, in this case about their journey to or from school. This is irrespective of the degree of autonomy given in determining their journey, as they retain the ability to represent it in their own way. Pink (2001b) argues that asking participants to carry out a pre-planned part of the research design is empowering them to adopt known ways of making a video, for example, those based on the way they have seen video diaries made on television. Another issue linked to empowerment is the issue of performance in the use of visual methods. Smith (2001) argues that knowledge and self-representation are only fully possible through performance. Drawing on the work of Judith Butler she reiterates the idea that identity is an iterative process and is accessible only through performance as this includes the unknowable and the unconscious (Smith 2001). It could be argued that including visual methods is a way of accessing this as this identity is not just about what is said but also what is performed. As Smith explains:

what has drawn me to performance has been its relevance to conceptualizing creating and occupying not just 'the usual' political and economic spaces, but also emotional spaces - feelings and sensing that are both knowable and unknowable, but whose significance in shaping the world and its future is definitely underplayed

(Smith 2001, 36)

The researcher must therefore be aware of the context in which filming, as well as making the journey, is planned and the impact of the filming process on both the participants and their behaviour. In this research, participants were asked to comment on influences on the way they chose to film their journey to or from school and this formed part of the research process. Their use of the video and how it impacted on their journey was observed and this is explained more fully later in this chapter. The use of visual methods is therefore central to the research design and allows consideration of the key components of the approach taken here in drawing from feminism and social studies of childhood, mobility and risk. Using visual methods facilitates both reflexivity in the research process and the wider contextualization of the research both spatially and socio-culturally. The multi-method approach adopted here follows on from the issues
surrounding these visual methodologies as well as reflections on the theory, philosophy and pragmatism as well as researcher positioning. These are set out in the next section.

Using mixed methods

Within these theoretical and practical considerations, the methods adopted here were developed to provide insight into the research questions. As the need to research with both mothers and their children emerged from the research questions, it was decided that visual methods would be used with children in filming their journeys to school. During this process, children were briefed on the importance of maintaining the anonymity of other people in the films. However, it was decided that that this may not be an appropriate method in interviewing mothers and children as research has shown that the use of video methods is not necessarily favoured amongst certain groups of adults due to issues of confidentiality (Kindon 2003). In addition it was felt that giving ownership of this method to children is an empowering process. At the same time, a combination of approaches - both visual and more traditional - was adopted with children as this has been shown to overcome problems of underestimation of children’s competencies and at the same time address issues of specificity to children (Punch 2002). As Hoggart, Lees and Davies (2002, 67) argue, the complementary methods can facilitate 'a deeper insight on a research problem'.

The methods address the research questions as follows:

**Question 1:** To what extent does risk underpin mothers’ and children’s decision-making in relation to the journey to school?

The personal biographies of mothers and their children in relation to risk and mobility as well as the emotionality of the journey to school were examined through in-depth interviews with mothers and filming of journeys to or from school followed by film-elicitation interviews with children.

**Question 2:** How do mothers’ risk experiences and their perceptions of the risks experienced by children co-construct both their own and their children’s mobility?

Women’s risk experiences and their perceptions of risk in relation to everyday travel were examined through the in-depth interviews with mothers of the children. Women were asked about their risk experience before and after they had children.
Question 3: How are children's mobility decisions influenced by their own risk experience?

Children's risk experience in the context of everyday travel was explored through filming of their journey to or from school followed by interviews using film-elicitation. Attention was given to revealing participants' generalized experience and through this their experience and attitudes towards risk.

The sample

The overall approach adopted was *purposive sampling* (Bryman 2004), with relevant prospective participants purposefully targeted. There were then two courses of action within this overall approach, *theoretical sampling* (Denzin and Lincoln 1994) and snowballing (examples of both can be found in Bryman 2004). Theoretical sampling uses an inductive approach, based on iteration, to determine the sample from emerging theory, which is based on the literature review and the data collected to date. The approach taken was, therefore, both deductive, based on the theory explored in chapters 2 and 3, as well as inductive. This sample reflected the interaction between established and emerging theory. This was thought to be a necessary part of a reflexive approach to research, which allows the researcher to make decisions at every stage based on the research experience gained.

It was clear from the beginning of the research that although the aim would be for diversity in terms of the sample, as in all forms of qualitative research, the main interest is in the depth of the material rather than its representativeness (Maynard and Purvis 1994; Oakley 2000; Richie and Lewis 2003; Bryman 2004). However as Bryman (2004) points out, there is an academically acceptable minimum sample size of around twenty participants. It was therefore envisaged at the beginning of the project that the research would be carried out with a sample of about 20-25 mothers and 25-30 children. It was decided that the sample should target children between 8 and 13 years old to ensure that the period when most of the children reached travel independence was included.

It was decided at the beginning of the research that mothers and children would be recruited through schools. This was due firstly to the need for an element of co-operation from the schools to ensure that children and young people could be escorted on their journeys and secondly the ability to target specific year groups to recruit volunteers. As risk is found to be influenced by a number of factors including background and culture, the choice of schools approached was based
on the socio-economic background of the intake, in order to ensure that participants were drawn from a range of social and cultural backgrounds. Appropriate schools were identified in liaison with the University's School of Education, and Brighton and Hove City Council's School Travel Officer, as both have links with various schools in the research area. It was recognized that recruitment through schools would pose difficulties as parents would have to be contacted via children, which could lead to children volunteering and then their parents not agreeing to participate. It was decided to also use snowballing as a means of approaching parents directly, contacted through details given by parents that volunteered through the school. It was recognized in doing so that this approach is also problematic as it can lead to homogeneity of sample that may not reflect the characteristics of the sample area.

Although the sampling methods were ultimately successful in producing a richness of data that allowed theoretical saturation to be attained, there were a number of difficulties that had to be overcome. In conjunction with School Travel Plan officers from Brighton and Hove Council, a number of schools to be approached were chosen. Having approached six schools, including a number in socially deprived areas, it became clear that it would be difficult to get agreement from schools to take part in the research, mainly as schools perceived that participation would require resources that were limited. Two schools did agree, both in east Brighton in an edge of city location. It was decided that in order to ensure a contrasting geographical area, two schools in central Brighton would later be targeted for volunteers.

Arrangements were made with the two head teachers in east Brighton to send out a letter to parents, along with an information sheet for parents and an information sheet for children and young people, requesting volunteers. The schools were then visited and short presentations given including information about the research and how the young people could participate. A total of eight volunteers came forward after the visits. To expand the sample, parents were sought (via a university wide email) who were university employees and whose children attended the relevant schools in Brighton. This produced two more participants through an email distributed across the university. Ten more were obtained through snowballing via contacts made through schools and university colleagues. The university was used as it is a major employer in Brighton, with a diverse range of employees (administrative, technical, academic and manual) with access to email, and therefore fairly easy to contact.
The original aim was that the sample included about five children and their mothers/carers from each of the school year groups: 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. These school years include children between 8 years and 13 years old. Every effort was made to ensure that the sample would include equal numbers of male and female children, and children from a range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds to reflect the population of the area in which participants live.

The sample areas

Brighton was considered to be a good study area, not only for practical reasons, but because it is a diverse urban area in terms of living environment, social characteristics, levels of deprivation and culture. A limitation in terms of the factors that potentially influence mobility, and which is discussed in chapter 6, may be the lack of ethnic diversity. Brighton and Hove is a relatively ‘white’ city, with just over 5 per cent of residents (2 per cent in the suburban sample area and 7 per cent in the inner urban sample area) belonging to non-white ethnic groups compared with 9 per cent nationwide (Office for National Statistics 2004). However, this study did not seek to look in detail at the influence of social characteristics beyond gender and generation as discussed in chapter 6.

The sample areas are located in a suburban part of south east Brighton and an inner urban part of the city. Both the suburban and inner urban areas contain a range of super output area\textsuperscript{15} levels of multiple deprivation within medium levels of deprivation (Office for National Statistics 2004). The suburban area also includes a number of households that live beyond the normal school catchments and these are in areas of relatively high deprivation (Office for National Statistics 2004). The urban area is relatively densely populated compared with the suburban area. Both areas contain green spaces that form part of the spaces in which the journeys to school are carried out. In the suburban area the main primary school, which the majority of participants attend is situated in the middle of the area, accessible to all on foot with a journey time of between eight and twenty five minutes. The secondary school is also within walking distance for a number of the residents. In the urban area, the main primary school is within walking distance for most with journeys of between ten and fifteen minutes, but the secondary school is further from the area, involving walking for about 45 minutes, which was prohibitive for most of the participants, who travelled instead mostly by public bus. Public transport is more accessible in the urban area.

\textsuperscript{15} Geographical areas of consistent size created by the Office of National Statistics for statistical comparison. The average sized SOA contains 1500 residents.
The participants

In total, 18 mothers and 25 children took part in the research, 11 mothers and 15 children in the suburban area and seven mothers and 11 children in the inner urban area. Fourteen of the children were female and 12 male. All the mothers were white in terms of ethnic origin, with 25 ethnic origin white children and one ethnic origin mixed race child. One of the children was disabled. Table 1 shows the breakdown of children’s and mothers’ ages, with children spread fairly evening between age 8 and 14 and the majority of mothers between 40 and 44. The average age of mothers at the time of giving birth to the children involved in the study was 30, comparing with a national average age of women giving birth of 29.5 (ONS 2006). In addition, a number of the mothers had older children so this average would be lower if all births were included.

Table 1 Age of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>At time of research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>At time of research</th>
<th>At birth of oldest child in research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 - 24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of family structures, in five of the households involved in the research, parents were separated with two of children living with single mothers, and four with their mother and their mother’s partner. About half of the children had older siblings and almost two thirds had younger siblings. Most of the mothers (15) were in employment or studied part time, with one mother not in employment, and two employed on a full time basis. Of the two full time employees, one worked as childminder and was able to care for her children at the same time. Table 2 shows the
type of employment mothers were engaged in.

Table 2 Mothers' employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of employment</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admin/clerical</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childminder</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness instructor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in employment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop asst</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching asst</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of backgrounds, ten of the mothers grew up outside Brighton, seven of whom lived in rural locations during their childhoods. Six of the mothers spent their childhoods in deprived areas of Brighton (Office for National Statistics 2004).

Visual methods in action

The 25 children who took part in the research made (mostly accompanied) self-directed films of a 'typical' journey to school. Their journey was made in the usual way, with whoever normally accompanies them if applicable. However, it was necessary to plan for the journey taking extra time due to the videoing process. The children were briefed about technical aspects of filming, how to use a video camera and film the images they wished to capture, before they filmed, having already had access to an information sheet detailing this aspect of the project (Appendix 1). The children used Sony Digital Handycam cameras with LCD monitors to film the journey. These cameras are relatively light and easy to use. They were given a wide brief; to identify the positive and negative aspects of the journey and any barriers to travel they experienced (Appendix 1). They were given freedom to film in whatever way they wanted and to record a commentary if they wished. At the same time, they had the option of continuing their journey as normal without reference to the camera.

In order to maximize safety and security and to provide a complementary method of recording
the journey the children were accompanied by me most of the time and I took notes based on my observations. The observations of the children’s journeys provided a further data source, facilitating triangulation of data. As Warren (2000) maintains a semi-participant observer is part of the field, and must consider both how their presence may influence events, and their positionality and narrative in the interpretation of events. The following sets out the results of observation and questioning of children specifically about their style of videoing, which also informs the analysis in chapters 5 and 6.

Reflections on the use of visual methods

For a significant number of children, it was evident that issues which are relevant when they are emotionally engaged with their mobility are less relevant when they are disengaged and static in film-elicitation interviews afterwards. A number of children mentioned fears they had, particularly about being on their own, during the process of videoing their journey but did not mention these when asked about their worries in the interviews, even when pressed on the issue. For two of the young people, this was the main reason for not wanting to be on their own when mobile, so it became evident that they feel differently and recall differently when they are not part of an emotional space. This is a significant finding in terms of the methods adopted here as it demonstrates the advantages of mobile methods. In particular the methods adopted allowed a range of factors that are part of everyday experience and that may influence the journey to be explored. This included an appreciation of the range of sensory impacts such as the impact of noise, especially as many of the journeys involved travelling along busy roads.

The way the children chose to film their journeys to school emerged as an important indicator of their relationship with space and their mobility. The children exhibited different levels of interaction with the camera and with space and the filming process had varying degrees of impact on their journey. Styles of filming fell into three main categories: video diary, documentary, and extension of gaze, although some of the children’s approach was based on more than one of these. This gave insight into the participants’ relationship with their journey as, through these different styles of filming, participants demonstrated varying levels of confidence, security, communicativeness, spatial awareness. The different ways of filming did not appear to be related to age, gender, mode of transport or location.

16 Exceptions to this included children who normally travelled with their mothers and did not want me to accompany them.
The *video diary* approach is based on a personal approach to filming where participants actively shared this part of their lives, they confided in the camera (sometimes introducing the camera to people), and the act of filming made no or little change to the journey. The children who used this method described their journey through their choice of film shots, through dialogue with the camera and through emotional responses to their environment. They described not only what they saw, but what this meant to them and how it made them feel. They looked and reflected, sometimes seeing things that they may have normally taken for granted. As Jimmy says: 'I can see better through the camera than with my own eyes' and Amber says: 'It's really weird videoing it. I never actually just like look I'm always just walking along head down. It's weird'. A number of children introduced the camera to their friends and one to some flowers along the footpath saying, 'can you smell this camera?' The video diary approach therefore represented a means of engaging with the children’s range of responses to their mobility in a way that may be distinctive and valuable in terms of findings.

The second method of filming was documentary in style, involving more of a performance17, with children acting out a journey especially for the camera. It was in part fictional as they used the camera to facilitate behaviour that was outside the norm in terms of their mobility. The films were created as something to be presented either at the time or to a wider audience after filming. On some occasions the camera was used as a barrier between the participant and their typical everyday mobility. The most significant example of this was George, whose journey to school by bus was made in part with his mother and in part independently. George began filming in a documentary type style, with dialogue typically de-personalised: ‘This is the bus garage... a new building. That lady in the blue jumper works for Sainsbury’s’. At one point, when he is on the bus without his mother he says ‘I’m making a documentary... Everyone act like the camera isn’t here’. When he is joined on the bus by a group of boys who he finds intimidating, his manner changes, but his filming method remains one of performance. The camera then becomes a barrier between him and the boys: ‘These boys are year 11s and 10s. They also think they’re hard. Let’s see what happens when they see the camera’. George indicates strongly that he feels empowered by the camera and his role in the research. Both observations of George on the bus and the film that George produces give a good indication of his range of emotions during his journey and the risk

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17 Performance is used here in terms of the children acting out something for the process of filming and in doing so, exaggerating their behaviour. This was more evident in groups and particularly when participants filmed with only the researcher present and then in a group context.
he experiences, even though he is not necessarily engaging with the camera in the same way as those using the video diary method.

There was also evidence that some of the children changed their journey significantly because it was being filmed. One of the mothers decided they should walk to school on the day of filming even though they had not travelled this way before, as first she thought it would make a better film and second she felt that this is the mode they 'should' use. Two other children chose to walk with me on their own as they thought the friends that usually accompanied them would be a distraction. The altering of the journey specifically for the research process is therefore an issue that requires some attention and this was discussed during the interviews. It remained paramount, however that the children should make decisions themselves about the journey they wished to make that day and the filming method they used.

In addition to the impact on the filming, performing or expectations of performance also impacted on the interviews with children. Some children were aware that they would present the video to be viewed afterwards and this was expected. However, less predictable were the expectations of parents with regard to their children's videos. It became apparent that many parents were eager to watch the videos as a shared experience, to take pride in their children's 'work', but also to glimpse a part of their children's lives that many did not have access to. In this way the process became one of surveillance, which raises ethical questions of children's rights to autonomy when participating in research. It could be argued that ethical procedures often overlook this aspect as they are based on protection of children within prevailing cultures of childhood that underestimate children's agency. This is related to the issue of parents' direct involvement in the research process in directing their children's participation, which became apparent during filming of escorted journeys. A number of mothers directed the filming over the entire journey, telling their children what to film and how to film it. For most this corresponded to mothers directing the journey also, mostly telling their children where to walk and where how to cross roads. This is interpreted as a finding in itself and relates to mothers' control of risks to their children in public space as discussed further in chapter 6.

The third style of filming involved the extension of gaze. This method of filming adopted the camera as an extended way of seeing and of looking. It allowed the researcher to get a participants' eye view of their journey. Participants using this method were more likely to ignore the camera and
carry on their journey as normal. Participants using this method either held the camera at eye level or by their side, without looking at the video camera screen very often. Some of participants said that they forgot that they were filming at all. There was little attention paid to the filming process in general, including to the researcher, with children apparently carrying on their journey as normal. Any dialogue was related to their journey, rather than the filming and with the family or friends accompanying the participants on the journey. Journeys made using this method therefore required further interpretation by the participants in their interviews and by the researcher both during and after the filming process. However the advantages of this approach are that there appears to be little performance around the research process and journeys were more likely to be typical. This presented the opportunity to see through their eyes and at their level, which allowed an ‘experience’ of risks that are not normally within the researcher’s risk landscape.

Overall, the visual methods adopted were found to greatly enhance the methodological approach and allow the explorations of issues that would not otherwise have been possible. They firstly attracted children to the research who would not normally have responded18. Visual methods allowed children who prefer non-verbal communication to fully participate in the research. For example, Loren has a disability that prevented her from fully engaging in the interview process. The filming of her video and observation and dialogue during this process then became the key method of exploration of her journey. Secondly, they empowered children to represent their own stories of their journeys despite their mother’s involvement with the process on occasions. Thirdly they allowed exploration of the emotionality of the journey while it was taking place. In particular the researcher’s presence and ability to appreciate the more intricate sociality and emotionality of the journey was somehow legitimized within this process and therefore the impact of this process was minimized. The journeys were followed by film-elicitation interviews, which are discussed next.

Interviews with children using film-elicitation

This study adopted the method of film-elicitation with children and young people, using a film in a semi-structured interview to provoke discussion and re-situate them in the space (see Banks 2001 and Bryman 2004 for examples of photo-elicitation). There are a number of reasons for using this type of research method, particularly with children and young people. Firstly, it allows

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18 I asked the young people in the research about their experiences during the research process and a number explained that they only volunteered because of the use of visual methods.
the participant to make choices themselves that will affect the direction of the research as they can choose how and when to respond to questions. Secondly, it provides a focus for discussion and in doing so has potential to reduce the awkwardness of the one-one interview situation. Thirdly, it encourages children to participate in the interview process who may not have chosen to do so if they were required to express themselves only in words. In addition, the film can contextualise the interview questions, both spatially and emotionally. As Banks states:

Film-elicitation, like photo-elicitation, can be a highly productive research tool for the social researcher, yielding insights and understandings that might otherwise be missed or not be discernible by other methods.

(Banks 2001, 99)

Following on from Banks’ (2001) view that traditional interview procedures may not be appropriate for this method as people have their own ways of watching film and different things may be important to them, this research adopted a flexible approach to interviewing. The participants were given the option of commenting on their video as they watched it as well as answering questions afterwards, or they could choose to watch in silence and make observations afterwards.

It is worth noting here Urry’s (2000) discussion of the visual in his sociology of mobilities as it has relevance to capturing the visual aspects of journeys. Urry argues in particular that the culture of ‘dwelling-in-the-car’ results in insulation from the outside world, in an externalisation of risks. Within this theory, children would be videoing only their view of the inside of the car as the outside world is beyond their visualisation and the senses relate only to the inside space. The extent of this shrinking spatial awareness, as it relates to the car but also to other modes, can therefore be examined using the film-elicitation technique.

Film-elicitation interviews took place in participants’ homes, with the video tapes of their journeys played for them on their televisions. Children then took part in a semi-structured in-depth interview using the videos as a focus and to prompt responses. Before beginning the research, it was envisaged that the children and young people would be brought together in workshops after filming and watch each other’s video and discuss them together. It became clear after the first few videos were completed that, not only would this be difficult practically in terms of arranging times

19 With the exception of two where technical difficulties prevented this and films were watched back on the video recorder screen.
and a place to meet, but the children were less interested in the other children’s videos and would quickly have become bored if they had been expected to watch a number of them. This is an example of quite a significant change in perspective during the research. It became clear from this - as will be discussed in a later section - that one of the most useful elements of the film-elicitation method is to put young people at ease and give them focus. As the reason for carrying out group work in the first place was to reduce the potential awkwardness of the one-one when interviewing younger children this became obsolete. The change was therefore a positive one as one-one interviews are a better gauge of individual beliefs and behaviour.

The interviews lasted between 20 and 40 minutes and addressed the following issues:

- the video and their journey on the day the video was made;
- why they chose to film in the way they did;
- why their journey is made in this way;
- how they would like to travel if different from the way they usually travel;
- the positive aspects of a journey as well as the barriers they may face; and
- their emotions in terms of the positive and negative parts of the journey.

The full interview guide is included as Appendix 2. However, this was only a guide, and children were allowed to talk about the video in a fairly ‘free’ manner. This was felt to be important to allow children as much autonomy as possible within the confines of the research methodology adopted. Film-elicitation interviews allowed this freedom and flexibility as children could choose whether they answered questions during the showing of their film, or afterwards and an equal number opted for each of these. The interviews also provided an opportunity to follow up on some of the issues raised during filming and were an opportunity for children to address issues in whatever depth they wished.

Inconsistencies between responses during the filming and interviews were noted with interest. On a number of occasions particular participants said they did not have any worries about their journey to school, even though they had raised specific issues during filming. The triangulation process, in line with Denzin and Lincoln (2000) was not one of seeking truths and so this inconsistency was not interpreted negatively. Instead it demonstrates one of the strengths of the mixed methods adopted here in allowing the emotionality of the journey to be explored alongside
more considered responses. The visual data allowed the strength of response to be gauged through not only the dialogue, but through gestures, facial expressions and the visibility of participants’ body language in relation to various contexts throughout their journey.

As discussed, a major problem when carrying out the interviews was the presence of other members of the participant’s family, often related to the ‘showing’ of the film, but also due to practicalities of finding appropriate interview locations. This was despite asking mothers for as much privacy as possible during the interviews. In these instances, possible risks were minimised through discussing the viewing with children and ensuring that they consented to other members of their family viewing their films. In all cases children appeared more than happy for their films to be viewed by their family and often actively sought such a screening. This was also a problem in the reverse, however with children present at their mother’s interviews. In both cases, interviews were often interrupted or the third party would join in with answering the questions. Although this presented problems such as distracting the interviewee, on many occasions it enriched the data and this is referenced further in chapters 5 and 6. Interviews, however, were generally most productive when conducted on a one to one basis with no-one else in the room. This applies to mothers’ interviews as well as film-elicitation interviews with children. The next section begins by considering the existing theory on interviewing women.

Interviewing women and interviewing mothers

When our attention turns to households and families, we need to be particularly sensitive to power relations between household members and how our presence (and that of our study) is contextualized within those relations.

(Aitken 2001, 74)

In the 1980s there was some debate (Oakley 1981; Finch 1984) about how a feminist approach to interviewing women should differ from previous approaches. In particular, Oakley (1981) argued that interviewing women should be less structured and informal in order to develop a ‘rapport’ with the interviewee. Finch (1984) argued that developing this rapport was potentially harmful for both the interviewee and for women in general. However, she agreed with Oakley that a woman interviewing another is particularly conducive to information flow, particularly mothers who are used to being questioned about personal issues. This was seen as particularly apparent when women, and particularly mothers (Oakley 1981; Miller 2005) are isolated and may therefore
welcome the chance to speak to someone about the gender constraints they faced. Of course there are likely to be other differences such as age, class, background and accent, which may lead to difficulties in establishing ‘rapport’ as discussed previously.

Hence, rather than the development of ‘rapport’, a notion that is problematic as described above, the relationship between interviewee and interviewer should be based on establishing a secure context for both the interviewer and interviewee, rather than seeking to maximise the quality of the data. Fundamentally, this entails putting participants’ welfare foremost, even if this involves adapting research methods. On some occasions this involved children or partners being present at interviews even though the research design was based on one-one interviews. It was established that despite Aitken’s (2001, 77) call for ‘prescribed privacy and anonymity’ in order to avoid the reproduction of inequalities or power relations, this is not always practicable. Overall, a reflexive approach to interviewing was adopted, with a review of the interview context, the relationship between the researcher and participant and the existing power relations (Hoggart, Lees and Davies 2002). This was based primarily on making detailed notes after each interview and analyzing the success of the interview according to ethical considerations and the value of the data collected. The process of interviewing the mothers in the study is described below.

In-depth interviews with mothers

In-depth interviews were held with the eighteen mothers of the child participants. Participants were asked to take part in a face to face semi-structured in-depth interview. The length of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 80 minutes. Participants were asked for their permission to digitally record the interview and all participants agreed to this. The interviews were held in the participants’ homes and they were asked about the following:

• their present circumstances in relation to their family, living arrangements and the locality
• their travel history before and after having children;
• their experience of the travel environment before and after having children;
• their perceptions of their children’s travel environment including emotions;
• changes in their perception of risk since motherhood;
• their children’s travel; and
• improvements that they thought would change their perceptions to children’s travel.
Appendix 3 shows the full interview guidance schedule. Participants were given freedom to discuss any issues they deemed relevant to the study. They were given scope to explore particular issues to whatever depth they felt appropriate. Most of the interviewees engaged with the semi-structured nature of the interview without problems and were able to develop their personal risk biography and mobility history with relative ease. Others had difficulty with some areas that they felt they had not thought about for a number of years, although gentle probing in these areas usually resulted in a more detailed response, or interviewees returned to questions they felt they had not answered adequately. The personal narrative that this research entailed called upon the recollection of memories from childhood. For both mothers and children, but more so for mothers, it was recognized that the distortions of memory mean that this ‘narrative is always a story about the past and not the past itself’ (Ellis and Bochner 2000, 745). However it is accepted here that it is the construction of meanings and beliefs around certain memories rather than any ‘accurate’ recollection that is important and informs current understandings. The problem of ‘faulty’ memory (Fontana and Frey 2000) in interviews is therefore less relevant here.

As discussed previously, it was felt that my position as a mother of younger children may have facilitated the smooth running of some of the interviews. Although maintaining a reflective and critical approach, it was recognised that there may have been a mutual understanding of some of the issues involved, even though responses to them were varied. As with other elements of this thesis, it is accepted here that there is diversity in terms of mothering identities as well as other social characteristics and that commonalities do not necessarily stretch beyond some mutual experiences of mothering. On reflection, in line with the current discourse on mobile methods, which is relatively new, the interviews may have more usefully taken place within the mobile space of the journey to school to allow full emotional and social engagement during the interview process. This is, of course, more difficult for mothers than for children as about half no longer accompanied their children and the mothers who did were responsible for their children’s safety during the journey. For this reason, participants’ homes were preferable as both a practicable space and one in which participants felt relatively at ease. The mothers in the study were given a choice of location for the interview and all chose their homes. As discussed previously the issue of rapport was developed as an ethical one with the mothers. The ethical issues that arose for both mothers and children are discussed below, with reference mainly to literature on ethical issues in relation to research with children as they are considered to be a particularly ‘at risk’ group. Therefore, addressing the wide range of ethical considerations covered in this literature
was considered the most rigorous approach to ethical issues overall.

**Ethical issues**

Considering ethical issues in research is not only a requirement of most funding organizations and academic institutions but is also a primary responsibility of researchers and part of a reflexive approach that allows researchers to understand positionalities in more depth. This research has been conducted with reference to a number of ethical codes and literature on research ethics (Finch 1984; Alderson 2004; Alderson and Morrow 2004; SRA 2003; Bryman 2004; Dench, Iphofen and Huws 2004; ESRC 2005). The research proposal was passed by the University of Brighton’s Research Ethics Committee in February 2004. Although ethics are important when researching any group, and the ethical guidelines and codes referenced have been applied to both the mothers and children taking part in this research, particular attention is given in the following discussion to researching with children, who are considered by many to be a group particularly vulnerable to potential harm during the research process. In addition, attention has been given to ethical issues that may arise as a result of the use of visual methods (Reavey and Johnson, forthcoming).

Among others involved in children’s rights in the research process, Alderson (2004; Alderson and Morrow 2004) led the way in promoting a more active consideration of ethical issues (James et al. 1998). In her work with Barnardos, Alderson (2004) developed a checklist of ten issues to be addressed. This has been used to ensure ethicality of this research as shown in the checklist in Appendix 7. It has been developed to explicitly demonstrate how each of the ethical issues is dealt with in this research.

Overall, the research was carried out with ethical considerations underpinning all decision-making in terms of methodology and methods, which included the researcher undertaking relevant Criminal Records Bureau screening. It was accepted that potential risks, however unlikely to occur, must be thought through to ensure their impact is minimized so that the welfare of the participants remains paramount. Parents were informed of these risks to the welfare of the children involved in the research during the process of gaining consent, with the understanding that the risks need not be overstated (see Appendix 4). The table in Appendix 4 shows how planning was undertaken to minimize risks. These issues, and others that may arise during the course of the research, were given careful consideration.
Benefits of the research for children

Overall, the personal benefits for children of taking part in the research are significant and include:

- developing skills in communication and organising ideas;
- gaining knowledge about and experience of their environment and especially the positive and negative aspects of the journey to school; and
- developing technical skills in using video equipment; and
- learning about how children can play an active role in society.

These benefits complement the children's formal educational requirements as they cover similar topics to those stated in the National Curriculum targets for Key Stage 2 and 3 (The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 2004), which cover the age groups included in the research. On a wider level, the research has the potential to benefit children by influencing policy makers and planners by contributing to the developing debate on the journey to and from school in education, health and transport policy. It will also be a significant contribution to the wealth of knowledge and understanding of childhood issues and childhood research.

Confidentiality, privacy, anonymity and consent

All potential participants were given one of the information sheets (Appendix 5), which explained clearly their role in the research and set out the approach to confidentiality and anonymity and was based on ethical guidance (Alderson 2004; Alderson and Morrow 2004). The research was carried out with the full understanding and consideration of issues of confidentiality including compliance with the Data Protection Act. All contributions from participants were treated with strict confidentiality, with all data anonymised using pseudonyms, following data collection. All hard data, both interview recordings, video recordings, and subsequent transcriptions, were stored in a secure lockable cabinet, with computerized data stored in secure, password protected files with all arrangements complying with the requirements of data protection legislation. In addition, all computerized data was anonymised, with no identifying information included in the transcriptions and a simple coding system used for personal identification purposes.
Written informed consent was gained from all participants – both adults and children – with consent for the children’s participation also gained from whoever had parental responsibility for them. The purpose, aims and methods of the research were made clear to participants before they were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 6). This was achieved through explaining the aims of the research and the research process to participants on a number of occasions. The mothers who took part were informed about the research firstly through the information sheets, which children took home from school. The researcher then fully explained both their role and the role of their children during the first telephone call, which was also based on arranging filming and interview dates. In total, mothers met with the researcher at least twice and consent was re-negotiated on these occasions.

Children were also informed of the research process on a number of occasions and consent was re-negotiated throughout their participation in the project. The language, methods and processes of the research were made accessible to the children so that they understood fully the nature and purposes of the research (see Appendix 5) and could base their consent on this. It was made clear to the participants that they could withdraw from the research at any time and that this would not be held against them in any way. Children were given the option also to withdraw from any part of the research as the filming and interview took place separately. Both processes were explained in full and children were given choices in relation to their filming and to the viewing of the film. In particular, the issue of others being present during the viewing of the film was discussed and children given the option to watch alone or with other members of the family. Both mothers and children gave additional consent for the footage to be made into a short film for dissemination of the research results.

It was decided, however, that there would be some limitations to the information made available to participants as providing the research questions could influence the outcome of the research by suggesting that the research only wished to concentrate on certain topics. As Holt argues: ‘To disclose exactly what is being observed would potentially influence research participants’ practices’ (Holt 2004). As discussed previously, children were not being asked to specifically discuss their risk experience but were asked about experiences in public space in more general

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20 Children of any age are regarded in English law as being competent to consent under the Gillick (1985) ruling, where competence is defined as having ‘sufficient discretion to understand what is proposed’ and sufficient discretion to enable [a child] to make a wise choice in his or her own interests’. This notion of competence can be applied to research with children (Alderson and Morrow 2004).
Analysis of the data

The tape recorded and video recorded data were transcribed and analysed, adopting a thematic approach, using the computer package QSR NVivo Version 2.0 (Richards 1999). This allows data to be coded to draw out themes within the data, which can then be analysed using the theoretical framework outlined in chapters 2 and 3. The use of NVivo allowed both a structured and creative analysis of the data, with the potential to maintain a fluid approach. The coding initially adhered to a loose framework developed from theory, with additional codes added as necessary. In this way, the approach was both deductive and inductive. Coding was carried out also during the transcription process and therefore the act of transcription became part of the analysis, allowing interpretation of not only what was said, but how it was said. In this way, in addition to the dialogue additional observation comments were included in the transcription that was then transferred to NVivo.

Analysing visual data

The visual data collected, in the form of films ranging in length from ten minutes to 70 minutes, were transcribed into text using a similar method to the in-depth and film-elicitation interviews. As Rose argues, when carrying out this process it is crucial that the criteria for selection of visual data must be ‘explicit and have a conceptual grounding’ (Rose 2000, 251). The data are interpreted, based on a number of factors including the researcher’s positionality with the awareness that the analysis of visual data is ‘translation and, usually, a simplification’ (Rose 2000, 261).

Every step in the process of analysing audiovisual materials involves translation. And every translation involves decisions and choices. There will always be viable alternatives to the positive choices made, and, what is left out is as important as what is left in.

(Rose 2000, 246)

Rose (2000) gives examples of different coding frames that have been used for different visual images such as TV images. It was important in this research that the coding frame developed through an iterative process, as data was collected and the theoretical framework developed and redeveloped. Banks (2001) argues that there is no set of rules that govern interpretation of images,
but all are context dependent. He argues that video cannot be read as set of single images as the whole has greater value than the sum of the parts. The images together possess joint meanings, and these, together with next sequence of images, may contain another set of meanings. In line with Emmison and Smith (2000, 155) the approach was based on 'decoding social and cultural values' through a series of visual clues. Emmison and Smith cite Hodge and Turner's (1987) study of the Australian suburban house and how this 'encodes cultural distinctions about private and public space and about the family and sexuality' based on where different rooms were located and the way people were guided around the house.

Pink (2001a) argues that the approach to analysis should not only be to translate visual images to words but to explore the relationship between the visual and other knowledge. However, it can be argued that even if the researcher is not translating image by image, or action by action there will still be some element of putting to text at some stage of the process. As relationships are explored and the video is put in the context of interviews and meetings and vice versa, text will almost inevitably result in a manner not dissimilar to that used by Emmison and Smith (2001). Pink (2001) is arguing that visual images are not valuable objects of research in their own right but can only be given meaning in context and through interpretation. Along with transcribing of the dialogue, therefore, observations were transcribed about the corporeality, spatiality and emotionality of the journeys made, enriching the data and adding insights that would not have been possible otherwise.

The data analysis process

The process of analysis, using NVivo, was based on drawing out themes from the data in line with existing concepts and ideas and on those that emerged from this process. The coding system was developed both during the transcription process, as themes emerged, once the data had been input into NVivo and a review of existing theory was completed, and then as an ongoing process during coding itself. This was considered to be a valuable result of the researcher themselves transcribing the data as not only could the process of coding be initiated but also data could be interpreted based on its non-discursive elements such as tone of voice and emphasis on certain words.

Once the transcriptions, which were originally typed into Microsoft Word (for greater flexibility), were imported into NVivo, each interview and transcribed video became a separate document to
be coded. The documents were organised into ‘Sets’ so that each family (mother and her child/ren) could be explored as a group as interrelationships are most apparent here. The coding system adopted was hierarchical, using NVivo’s ‘Tree nodes’ to organise the data into main codes with linked secondary and tertiary level codes. The coding system allows the flexibility to establish key themes and the concepts and ideas that relate to these in a structured way. Data available under each code can then be retrieved systematically. In addition, NVivo facilitates the creation of a ‘Document Attributes’ table, a spreadsheet of key data and participant characteristics, which can be explored within NVivo or exported to an Excel spreadsheet, the method adopted in this research. In this way, relevant data could be quantified, providing a breakdown according to participants attributes. It was found that although this process was useful for certain types of data, such as ‘mode of travel to school’, or ‘age travelled unaccompanied’, most of the data were treated in a thematic way and explored in depth rather than quantified. In these circumstances, therefore, NVivo acts only as a tool for the structuring of data rather than a tool for its analysis.

Limitations of the research

There were a number of limitations to the research methods, many of which relate to the timescale of the research, taking place over the three years of a doctoral thesis, and these have been addressed already in this chapter. It is also noted that the focus on one particular urban area and on specific parts of it, limits the research. The relative merits of both the chosen location and the sample areas have already been discussed in this chapter. It is understood that both are limited in terms of their representation. However, difficulties in accessing a representative sample are inherent in most research design and attention was given to ensuring that the sample was as diverse as possible. In this research it was also important to remain focused on the research aims, which centre on gender and generation issues. For this reason, although the sample may have been enhanced if it had been possible to target particular socio-economic groups, all possible efforts were made to include mothers and children from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Likewise, although the inclusion of fathers in this study may have provided useful insights, as would the inclusion of other family members, the focus was on understanding mothers’ interplay with issues of childhood and risk and these issues are situated within the family and other contexts by both the mothers and children in the study.

There are also problems associated with the use of a mixed method approach, and in particular the triangulation of results (Hoggart, Lees and Davies 2002). Awareness was given to problems
such as temporal and spatial differences but overall it was the highlighting of inconsistencies in
the data such as differences, in the experience of mothers and children that were most apparent in
this respect. It was found, however, that these added value to the research as a finding in
themselves, which is discussed fully in chapter 5.

In addition, the adoption of the specific methods has its limitations, some of which have been
discussed previously. It is recognised that both mothers and children may have been influenced in their
self-presentation by the discourses made apparent during the research process, such as those
related to 'good' and 'bad' mother, or by the nature of the data collection, such as the nature of
the filming process. Visual methods can lead to a number of problems that are not as apparent
with other methods and in this way limit the research. Practical problems can include logging
films, making copies of the films, and ensuring participants have equipment available to watch
films in their house. There are also the inevitable effects that the process of filming will have on
the outcome of the research. Some of these have been discussed earlier and it could be argued
that these impact on research in the same way as any methods that require interpretation.

The most difficult problems associated with visual methods, however, are ethical ones, including
consent to use images and the potential safety implications of using video equipment. As Reavey
and Johnson (forthcoming, 8) argue 'informed consent and anonymity have to be negotiated in
relation to key elements of visual research; presentation of the findings that might be in pictorial
form and ownership of the image'. A particular problem that arose in relation to this was that of
the inclusion of people in the videos without their consent. Despite briefing participants on this
issue, it remained a concern, particularly with their friends whom they assumed would be happy
to take part, even though this was not established. In these circumstances it is particularly
important to be aware of issues of security of the visual data.

Another limitation of this research relates to the level of participation of participants in co-
designing the methods. It was envisaged before the research began that participants would have a
greater input. However, this was not possible due to timescales and difficulties in recruiting
volunteers. It was important, therefore, that an awareness of the power imbalance this perpetuates
was maintained throughout, particularly given the degree of interpretation of results required.
Conclusion

This chapter has set out the methodological approach adopted in this thesis, as well as the research design and methods adopted, including reflections on their use. As discussed, the methodological approach that is most suited to the exploration of mothers and children risk and mobilities draws from feminism, and the social studies of childhood, risk and mobilities. It facilitates a broadly socio-cultural approach as explored in chapters 2 and 3, based on an ontological position that is realist but accepts that reality is only meaningful through meanings and interpretations in socio-cultural contexts. The epistemological position is broadly interpretivist, searching for these meanings and interpretations, rather than absolute truths. However in drawing from a range of traditions, some of which are argued to be contradictory, the approach to this study is a *bricolage*.

It is clear, however, that the theory, philosophy, pragmatism and researcher positionality leads to the application of qualitative methods and these are based on both the research aims and the participant characteristics. The methods adopted are therefore those deemed most appropriate to explore the research questions. The use of these methods and particularly the application of visual methods in research with children has resulted in both the production of knowledge in terms of appropriate methodologies as discussed in this chapter, and a comprehensive and rich set of data, which is analysed in the following two chapters. Chapter 5 sets out to explore the nature and context of risks experienced by mothers and children on the journey to school, making links with the literature explored in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 6 follows on from this contextualization by exploring the complex relationships between this data through the concept of mobility history.
Chapter 5  Experiences of the journey to school

Introduction

The preceding chapters developed a theoretical and methodological framework to facilitate analysis of decision-making by mothers and children about the journey to school. This is the first of two chapters based on this analysis of the interviews, video material and observations of the journeys. The primary purpose of this chapter is to identify the factors that scope the journey to school and provide a context for the interlinking of these factors using the concept of mobility histories in chapter 6. It sets out the everyday experience of the journey to school for the participants in the study, how the journey is made, how their experiences of motherhood and childhood influence the journey, and the nature, characteristics and influences of their risk landscapes. It identifies the key issues that emerged as influential in terms of mobility decision-making around the school journey and how these are experienced by the mothers and children who took part in the research.

The chapter looks at the experience of the journey by various modes of travel used by participants in the study in order to develop an impression of issues that may be exclusive to a particular form of travel. There is then a section each on motherhood and childhood, within which the examination focuses on how the theories and concepts discussed in chapters 2 and 3 relate to the empirical findings. In particular, the nature of everyday risks, experts, mothering and childhood identities and children's agency are explored. The nature of risks experienced by mothers and children on the journey to school is then analysed using the concept of risk landscapes, which focuses on their consistencies and ambiguities, levels of risk tolerance and frequently mentioned risks.

Firstly, however, the issues of school choice will be discussed as another contextualizing issue, which was raised by a number of participants. School choice is considered to be a potential factor in determining levels of mobility (Pooley, Turnbull and Adams 2005) and was therefore potentially a factor that could influence mobility decision-making. As discussed later in this chapter and in chapter 6, the choice of school made can impact on risk and mobility experience. The issue of school choice, and in particular choice of secondary school, is a salient one for many
of the families involved in the research (for discussion of current issues on school choice see Butler and Zanten 2007). The number and geographical spread of secondary schools is also considered to be a problem by the local education authority, which embarked on a lengthy review and consultation exercise to determine how matters could be improved (Brighton and Hove Council 2006) and then instigated a major overhaul of the admissions system (Brighton and Hove Council 2007).

The majority of participants felt that reducing distance to school was an important factor to be considered. As Carol said: ‘I’ve bought into this sense that I wanted them to be at local schools as they could walk to school and their friends are within a three mile radius’. For the suburban participants, this was less problematic as the nearest secondary school is about a mile from the main study area. However, for participants in the inner urban area, there were more limited options and a number of families had appealed against their allocation of school. As there are no secondary schools in the immediate vicinity, the travel options are limited. A number of the young people said that they would like to be nearer to their school so that they could walk rather than catch the bus. George would like to live nearer ‘so I only had to get one bus’. George and his mother, Karen, chose a secondary school based on maintaining friendship groups. However, as a result George has the longest journey of all the children in the research, taking over an hour and involving two buses. Karen describes this journey as ‘murder’.

Overall, however, choice of school does not seem to have had a significant impact on most participants’ mobility patterns. Although participants based in central Brighton were more susceptible to secondary school allocation problems, all had won their appeals. For these parents and children, the majority of whom have access to a car, the freedom of automobility did not open up choices as Jain and Guiver (2001; see also Urry 2000) contend, as the only secondary school pupil who travels to school by car attends his nearest school. In addition, school choice does not appear to have increased the distance travelled to school. In line with Pooley, Turnbull and Adams (2005) compared with the mothers who grew up in Brighton, the distance between home and school was fairly similar for young people in the research, with overall distance decreasing. The relationship between choice of school and mobility is however, not a straightforward one and for some, like George and Karen, it can have significant repercussions for mobility patterns.

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21 This includes a number of mothers who lived in rural areas.
School journey experiences

Table 3 shows the number currently travelling by different modes to and from school: half of the participants walking, followed by bus with car being the least used mode. This is in line with national statistics, which show that the majority of children walk to school, with an increasing number travelling by bus after the age of ten (DfT 2005). The majority of children travelling to school made a journey of between ten and twenty minutes, with a significant proportion, over a third, travelling for more than thirty minutes.

Table 3 Participants' current journey to school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of travel to school</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of travel home from school</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journey time in minutes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 30</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 40</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of independent travel to school</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Escorted to school 10*

N.B. Total number of children and young people: 25

*Includes Molly, who is now escorted to school, having travelled to school independently for a year.

The table also shows that the average age for independent travel is around aged 10, corresponding
to the first year of secondary school. Interestingly this is the same average age for the mothers who took part in the research and therefore represents a departure from a number of research studies (DfT 2005; Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg 1990; Joshi and McLean 1995; Pooley et al. 2005), which indicate that the age at which children travel to school independently is increasing over time. Compared to national figures of 79 per cent for all ages (DfT 2005) only 38 per cent of children in this study were escorted to school by an adult, in all cases by their mother.

Walking to school

If you’re running late there’s not much you can do except run which isn’t exactly very enjoyable, especially if you have a school bag on. Getting cold ‘cause you didn’t bring your jacket. The advantages would be meeting your friends, talking, clearing your mind before school. Try and remember things to do before school. It’s a casual way to get to school if you leave on time (Ben, young person)

As table 3 shows, the majority of young people in the research walked to school, some walking for over forty minutes each way. A number chose to walk in preference to taking a bus for a variety of reasons, including generally liking the experience of walking and not liking the bus journey. For some, walking is the only option other than the car and in this situation most are ambivalent. Joe mainly walks and ‘quite likes’ it but also likes the comfort of the car. Megan (young person) mainly gets the bus but occasionally likes to walk to school in the summer because: ‘It's just easier and you can go when you want instead of waiting for the bus... Sometimes if you catch the bus it can take the same time as walking’. Jasmine likes walking to school because ‘the bus would waste all our money and we might miss the bus sometimes.

Stanley likes the physical effort of walking ‘cause you use up energy so you’re tired when you get to school and you don’t have to do so much work’. Others like to be in open space and the ability to determine their own pace. Molly expressed the views of a number of the young participants, when she explained that ‘you can take your time and look at the things whereas if you were in a car and you were going really fast you wouldn’t have much time to look at things’.

The importance of this grounding in space that walking allows will be discussed in the next chapter. However, there were a number of problems identified with this mode of travel, not least

22 Reference to either ‘young person’ or ‘mother’ is given in brackets when it is not clear which of these groups the participant belongs to. A full list of participants (using pseudonyms) and their relationships with each other is given in Appendix 8.
the issue of distance from school which makes it ‘too far’ for a number of participants. Jimmy walks to school every day, the longest walk of all the participants. Although he felt that it was a long walk when he started school, at the time of the research he said that he was ‘used to it’, and both he and his mother, Hannah, have noticed a significant improvement in fitness, in line with existing research on this issue (Biddle et al. 1998; Department of Health 2004; Mackett et al. 2005; NICE 2006). However, Jimmy does not like having to carry ‘heavy loads’, which he is required to do a number of days per week. On the day Jimmy videoed his journey he was carrying three bags for various activities. For Chloe and Connor (siblings), walking unaccompanied has lost its initial novelty. This was evident during their videos as they complained a number of times about having to walk, as their mother explained: ‘they really liked the idea of walking alone but now they’re getting a bit lazy’. There are a number of reasons therefore why children like or do not like to walk to school. Those expressed by the young people in this study are based on practicalities, on its bodily impact as discussed in chapter 2 in relation to Bostock’s (2001) study, and on the nature of connection to space, rather than its riskiness. This will be discussed later.

Going to school by bus

Yeah usually in the morning but especially getting the bus home there’s spilt drinks and wrappers. Sometimes people smoke on the bus ... Sometimes the bus driver will come up and say stop smoking but the bus drivers don’t tend to look at their camera... The school talked about it once when a bus got trashed and the seats ripped up but it turned out it was another school. (Sean, young person)

Eight of the twenty five young people in the research catch the bus to school, all of whom attended secondary school. Only one participant takes a designated school bus contracted by the local council from the company running public buses in Brighton and Hove, which operate to certain destinations from both secondary schools. Most mothers and young people were content with some aspects of the bus service including bus timetabling, the frequency of services, and the access to buses from within school grounds. At the same time, however, it is evident that bus use was problematic for a number of child participants, who experienced it as both unpleasant and risky.

Participants in both areas cited a number of problems with bus use, and for some these were very significant including bullying, smoking, poorly kept and dirty interiors, unreliability, as well as cost. Most of the children mentioned some form of bullying behaviour on the school buses, as Ellie said her friends ‘get pushed around and get stuff chucked at them and can’t get seats’.
During Luca’s video he filmed a seat on the bus that someone had burnt with a cigarette to illustrate how unpleasant the school bus can be and one of Luca’s friends lifted the seat to show ‘how crappy they are’. Luca said that ‘quite often we have bad buses’. In fact, a few weeks before, Luca had been involved in an incident where one of the bus windows fell out, although no-one was injured. Despite this Luca said he prefers to get the bus ‘cause it’s quite fun’. A number of the participants felt that the buses could be cleaner, as Amber said they are ‘a bit disgusting sometimes’. Unreliability was seen as another problem as Megan has found ‘the bus isn’t always on time sometimes late and sometimes early’. In general, evidence both from children and from observations supports the House of Commons Transport Select Committee’s (2004) findings that some school buses are potentially unsafe.

Another issue, mentioned by both mothers and children is affordability. Fares applied to children travelling to school are the normal child fares in the city, which is currently 75p single or, for holders of a Brighton & Hove ‘Bus ID’ card, £1.40 return. There is also an option to buy a three month ticket at a discounted rate, the cheapest option. None of the young people in the research qualified for further assistance with the cost of travel. Lack of consistency in bus concessions across the country is seen as a major problem (DfT 2006). The high cost of fares is cited most often as a major obstacle to bus use and leads to, as Beth observed, the ‘temptation is to put her in the car cause that would be cheaper’. For some young people, bus problems were seen as an issue when choosing the car as an alternative form of travel. Sean, however, viewed the bus fares policy as an opportunity for increased mobility as he explained: ‘usually I get £6 to get a weekly saver cause I use the bus quite often... so it’s quite useful’. Apart from general problems of quality of the environment and affordability, the buses were also the site most frequently associated with bullying and this will be discussed.

The use of public transport of the young people in the study is therefore often a necessity but also not a particularly appealing option in terms of comfort and cost. Thus, despite findings that improving public transport could have a major impact on the use of the car for the school journey (Bradshaw and Jones 2000) and the conclusions of DfT (2006) research that young people experience problems in terms of cost, comfort and treatment by bus drivers, these issues are still not given prominence in terms of school travel planning. This remains adultist in approach, as discussed in chapter 3, and tends to focus on issues such as children’s road safety and transport sustainability. The following section examines the use of the car as an alternative mode for
Increasing automobility?

I don't like cars. Well... I like cars but I don't like going to school in cars. (Jimmy, young person)

Despite the degree of interest in the rise of automobility (for example Urry 2000; Sheller 2004; Jain and Guiver 2001) the car is not the most significant form of travel for the young people in this research. However, in line with other research (Tolley 1990; Root et al. 2000; Jain and Guiver 2001; DfT 2005) it appears that car use increased dramatically for the women in this study when they became mothers. This will be discussed more fully later in the next chapter. However, two of the mothers felt that the car was not an essential option for them and one did not have access to a car and did not have a driving licence.

For some young people, travelling by car allowed access to some personal, semi-private space. Megan needed to be in school earlier than usual during the research and welcomed the opportunity to travel by car during this period. However, she still favours the bus over the car as it is a valued social space and further demonstrates her ambivalence to the car by later criticizing it on environmental grounds.

I prefer going by car cause it's not as cold and you don't have to wait as long and just because it's more comfy and you're in your own car and stuff. It's warmer cause the bus is quite cold and it leaks and stuff. And also you don't have to stop at every stop and it gets you there quicker. That's why I get a lift in the mornings now... it's hard cause the thing I do most is catch the bus but that's on a normal school day when I'm catching it to school then on the weekend I catch it to town to the cinema to the beach so I would catch the bus quite often but I also walk to town and back and I do like to drive in the car. I'd probably say [I like] the bus [the best]... cause I like to see my friends... The petrol is pollution and it's good to cut down on fossil fuel so that what I'd be worried about. Cause some people get a lift to and back from school every day when they don't live that far away so it's quite excessive. (Megan, young person)

The young people, such as Megan, in the study mentioned sustainability issues more often than their mothers and this was raised as an issue during initial calls for volunteers when visiting school. There was some awareness amongst mothers of the issue of transport sustainability, which impacted on car use. In particular, Fiona, a committed car driver said she would like to use ‘less petrol and be environmentally friendly but it’s the convenience of the car’. However, others
like Kirsty and Christine said they have made a conscious effort to avoid using the car, including for use in driving their children to school.

There is a lot of ambivalence around car use amongst the young people in the research. Whilst the comfort, speed and shelter of the car is seen as important, there is a waverering when choosing a favourite mode that usually balances in favour of alternatives to the car. Like Megan, George maintains that his favourite mode of travel is by bus and he does not really like cars but then said that he liked getting lifts with his father home from school, which he does every day: 'I like it cause it's quicker. The bus takes ages. I like coming home in the car better than getting the bus to school cause its quicker and there's hardly any traffic'. This may of course, reflect George's relationship with his father more than a preference for the car. His mother and father are separated and George indicated in the interview that he would like to see more of his father, thus the journey home from school provides the opportunity for this. This supports the discussion in chapter 3 about changing family structures (Silva and Smart 1999; O'Brien and Shemilt 2003), and other research which focuses on family structure and dynamics in influencing issues of risk and mobility independence (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004). It is also an example of the school journey as a space in which children can act outside of existing family structures, where necessity results in children spending time with a parent where this may not otherwise be possible.

Joe (young person) felt he was able to enjoy the opportunities of home quicker if he got a lift with his mother: 'I just like getting in, sitting down after a hard day, opening the window for some fresh air and getting home quicker, getting out of my school clothes, then get something to eat and watch TV'. However, there is some evidence to support the notion of being 'cocooned' inside a car (Urry 2000), where children can suffer from reduced spatial awareness. As Lucy (young person) said 'you could see all the traffic and not much of the countryside'. During Lewis's video it was clear that this is particularly important for children due to their height, as his view was significantly restricted by the level of the windows. Perhaps for this reason, Lewis said that he does not feel very relaxed in the car. However, despite reservations, most of the young people were looking forward to getting a car when they are older.

In line with research which discusses the significance of the car in women's multidimensional lives (Hamilton 1999; Dowling 1999; Bostock 2001), a number of the mothers felt that the car 'bought them time', especially when it is considered to be precious. Fiona said that she 'can't imagine' life
without a car and that she ‘manipulated it’ so that she could drive to school on the way to somewhere else, rather than walk. Yvonne felt particularly time poor at the time of the research and explained:

I would like to walk up to school to fetch them at the end of the day but they don’t want me to do that and I haven’t pushed it. Because for them it’s a luxury that I’m at home and they want to get back and watch children’s programmes and I know that sounds bad but they can never normally watch children’s programmes because they’ve been at after school club so for them it’s a luxury to be home at 3.30. If it was just left to me then I’d prefer to walk and then I wouldn’t have to walk the dog again in the evening. (Yvonne, mother)

As discussed with reference to children, there is also ambivalence around car use with some awareness of sustainability issues and social issues. However, usually, practicalities and the logistics of everyday life necessitate car use at least some of the time for all of the mothers who drive. Overall however, the children in the study travelled by modes other than the car, with experiences of different modes varying. In terms of walking the issues were less about the riskiness of the mode and more about its impact on the body and its spatiality. Bus travel, however was more often associated with risks, such as bullying, which is explored later in this chapter. Firstly, however, the next sections will explore participants’ experiences of motherhood and childhood, as discussed in chapters 2 and 3; how mobility experiences can reflect motherhood and childhood and how they can contextualize participant’s risk experiences.

Experiences of motherhood and mobility

I didn’t suddenly go from party animal to earth mother. (Gill)

As discussed in chapter 2, motherhood is gendered (Gillies 2006; McDowell 1999; Miller 2005). Mothers’ everyday negotiation of risk landscapes is shaped by their gendered personal biographies (Tulloch and Lupton 2003) and their experiences of parenting, of risk and mobility, which are bound up in notions of culture and identity (Duncan 2005; Dyck 1990, 1996; Chase and Rogers 2001; Miller 2005). These complex issues around risk and mobility experience and how these relate to everyday mobility decision-making are considered further in chapter 6. This section explores evidence from the empirical data, which supports the idea that motherhood and mobility are co-constructed. Chapter 2 concluded that meeting the requirements of a ‘good’ mother involved avoiding blame by adopting appropriate approaches to risks and mobility. Firstly, this section explores the construction of motherhood, and the notion of a ‘good’ mother, according to
global and local ideologies as discussed in chapter 2, and how it is experienced by the mothers in this study. One of the ways this was approached was by considering how mothering cultures had changed according to the mothers in the study.

About half of the mothers think it is more difficult to be a mother now than it was for their mothers, and explained this through mothering roles and particularly their employment, reflecting Duncan and Edwards (1999) approach to mothering cultures as discussed in chapter 2. Most felt that they had to juggle more responsibilities as most of their mothers had either not worked before having children or had given up work completely when they had children, in contrast to the mothers in the study who had all been employed before having children.

I think I’m in a privileged position cause I don’t work full time and I think it must be so hard to bring up children and work full time. It’s been ill thought out how women keep their independence and keep their career paths and have children. We need to think about spaces, bubbles. I know women have the right to work full time of they want to and also the right to really suffer while they’re doing it. And women who want to go part-time don’t really have the right to do that. It’s a really difficult situation. My mother hardly worked at all when she had us and she’s a career woman. (Lisa, mother)

All except one of the mothers in this research have some childminding responsibilities during the day and most, 16 out of 18, combine this with either part-time (14 mothers) or full-time (2 mothers) employment. Only two of the mothers (those with very young children) in the survey worked on childcare responsibilities on a full time basis. A significant number of the mothers felt ‘torn’ between the roles of mother and employee, with feelings of ambivalence and anxiety, which, it will be demonstrated, is reflected in their mobility decision-making.

I think I’m very lucky getting a job in school... But there are times that I feel torn and can’t keep asking for time and feel loyalty to them. This is why I’m going down to 4 days a week so that I can do things at home and be around with them a little bit more. (Linda, mother)

The feeling that expectations of mothers were beyond capabilities was prevalent amongst the mothers. Beth would like to concentrate fully in her childcare responsibilities but feels the pressure to be employed outside the home. Of the 16 mothers who were employed, ten (over 60 per cent) felt pressurized either to work outside the home more or spend more time on childcare. As the following quotes show, these pressures are usually predicated on local discourses of mothering which tend to produce different and conflicting notions of the ‘good’ mother, as discussed in chapter 2.
There's more of an expectation that people work. Being a mother isn't enough and that's really hard. A lot of my friends think that cause I haven't been working... and think I have a soft option and there's been a bit of resentment actually like my sister in law who works full time and she thinks I don't do as much. (Beth)

Liz is deeply ambivalent about her mothering role. She wants to see her daughters more but also wants to work. She also feels extra pressures as a single mother, although there was no evidence of increasing mobility (Valentine and McKendrick 1997) or increased risk tolerance (Valentine 1997a) as a result of this.

I have a few friends who are very career minded, which I'm not. I want to work but I want to be in a job I want to do and feel... I want more time with my girls... it's about having choice... I want to feel fulfilled and I don't think motherhood would fulfil me completely. (Liz)

There was also evidence that mothers contribute to local cultures of mothering through their subjective experience and perceptions of 'good' mothering, in relation to childcare in particular.

Kirsty and Maria had particularly strong views on the role of mothers.

It's not easier now, it always going to be hard for as long as people imagine that being a mother isn't full time. If you said to mothers that they can balance a full time job and mothering then it's just impossible because you cannot put in what is needed. If you want your kids to go off the rails and feel unsupported and go and get the instruction somewhere else then fine but I don't agree with it. (Kirsty)

Others, like Cheryl were influenced more by economics and felt financial pressure to return to work even though they would have liked to stay at home with the children. Fiona, who worked full time for a few years after Loren was born, felt particularly pressured due to Loren's disability: 'I wonder of I'd been around when she was first at school if things would have been different'. Maria felt that the need 'to juggle lots of things' has led to mothers losing some of the skills needed to be 'good'. For her, changing practices, including mobility practices, of mothering have changed the nature of mothering itself as she feels she is 'always on the move', experiencing the hypermobility discussed in chapter 2.

A number of mothers felt that the responsibilities of motherhood and everyday life had made them time poor with resulting impacts on mobility. Yvonne, who said she is 'always stressed about taking time to do things' had altered her mobility behaviour to accommodate her lifestyle, travelling by car even though she would prefer to travel by slower modes: 'we don't often walk
because I would need to get home fast and I’d have to squeeze an appointment in and get back to do the tea or whatever’. Fiona felt similarly, using the car to compress time and space: ‘I feel I don’t have the time. For example her friend’s nan takes her to Brownies and it takes about 45 minutes and it take me about 2 minutes’.

Overall, therefore, there is a recognition that although there is more freedom for mothers now, parenting roles are still very much gender divided and this gender division has contributed to increased mobility. Contrary to Beck’s theory of reflexive modernisation (1992), gender roles are still very much in evidence amongst this sample of mothers and this is having specific impacts on their mobility patterns, in particular by increasing mobility. Only one of the mothers in the study felt that her gender role had become less differentiated and that conditions for mothers were better. For all the mothers the transition to parenthood was a highly significant one in their lives and was bound up in local cultures of mothering, to which they themselves contribute. The following section sets out how these mothering identities are shaped by risk and how they impact on risk and mobility.

Increasing risk in motherhood

Nearly all the mothers said that their risk aversion had increased in motherhood, in line with existing research (Tulloch and Lupton 2003; Valentine 2004). They gave various reasons, including having responsibility not only for themselves but for dependent children, as Miller (2005) describes, a need to meet the bodily needs of dependent children. Lisa felt that she has ‘to be there’; and Gill said ‘You have to preserve yourself because you’re needed by them’. For Carol, having her first child led to a reassessment of her risk landscape and resulted in her family moving out of an area that was considered to be risky. As Carol explained:

We very quickly realised we couldn’t carry on living in this area. First there was the mugging. Then our door was kicked in and then some poor asylum seeker set themselves alight in the park near us.

There was therefore an acceptable level of risk up to the point that Carol had a child, which then changed markedly.

Linda said the fact she was pregnant when she heard about an incident of child abduction and murder affected her more and changed her behaviour. She said hearing about the incident ‘really
stuck in my mind' because of this combination of factors. Having children affected the risk landscapes and mobility of all the participants. Cheryl who said 'I think I worry more about them than myself' also explained: 'I don’t go out at night anymore whereas before I had them I was quite carefree. I don’t go out really on my own now'. Nearly all of the mothers said that worrying about their children creates a general climate of concern and raises their risk awareness, reflecting Lupton’s (1999) theory on the spiralling escalation of risk discussed in chapter 3. It is also evident that risk increases through the participants lives generally, although it is not necessarily a linear or constant progression. This will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

Motherhood, identity and increased mobility

Participants described motherhood as not only identity forming but as creating a new risk landscape and mobility behaviour and choices. As Yvonne said ‘they’re very precious to us and it wouldn’t be worth us making a bad decision just to please them, if they then came to harm’. Increasing preciousness in the context of socio-cultural processes (Tulloch and Lupton 2003), as discussed in chapter 2, appears to give licence to apply restrictions even if the children are opposed to these. This is bound up in mothering cultures.

They were so precious when they were born. I don’t think it was different when I was single or with someone. I want to encourage self esteem and encourage them and let them know they’re unique and they can do whatever they want to. They’re beautiful and clever and go for it girls… It’s because they’re so precious and I love them so much. (Liz)

Like a number of mothers, for Kirsty and Fiona the life change of motherhood was about gaining their own identity through childbirth rather than a change in the way they lived. As Kirsty explained: 'It enabled me to achieve something'.

It [motherhood] gave me purpose. Before I had no direction after that I got more direction got a degree, a masters. It made me motivated when I wasn’t before. (Fiona)

Although mothers in the study spoke emotionally about their children and how precious they are, this is not necessarily a consequence of individualization (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Jenks 1996; Valentine 2004) as discussed in chapter 2. Although risk can be experienced on an individual level, this is set within socio-cultural contexts (Tulloch and Lupton 2003) including mothers’ experience of being mothered. Both Liz and Jane, who had unstable childhoods, wanted to give their daughters a better life in relation to her own childhood. Maria gave up everything else in her life, losing her job, to have children and take care of them. This was not through a need to
parent differently from her own experience of being parented, but related to her nostalgic view of childhood. These issues are explored further in relation to mobility histories in chapter 6. It appears, however, that a number of mothers in the research invested heavily in their children through their mobility practices in order to cope with risk. Karen and Cheryl’s mobility has not only changed in motherhood, but it reflects the level of personal and indeed bodily investment in their children. Karen explained her journey to work:

I get to work at 7.30 but I don’t need to be in till 9.00 but it doesn’t matter (laughs) ‘cause I can have a cup of tea. So if I didn’t have to travel with George I’d have another hour in bed. But we’ll do this for the rest of this year. And to be honest there’s no hassle about it...

(Karen)

Karen’s day is dictated by George’s mobility, including arriving in work an hour and a half earlier than necessary. Cheryl’s day is similarly dictated by her children’s mobility needs. Cheryl leaves at 7.30 in the morning to get Billy to school for 10 to 8 so that he can play football until 8.10 when school starts. She then drives to her eight year old daughter’s primary school, leaving her at the gate and watching her go into the playground. She said that she knows a lot of people in the school so feels it is ‘safe’ to do this. She then drives to work for 9.00. After finishing work at 1.30, she drives to Billy’s school, arriving at about 2.00 so that she gets a parking space as ‘all the buses come in and block the road otherwise’. She finally gets home at 3.45, having spent half of the time between leaving the house and returning home escorting her children to and from school. Her hypermobility is thereby both a product of her risk landscape and a potential cause of risk, in leaving her second child unaccompanied.

For some mothers, like Karen and Cheryl, their mobility has increased markedly in motherhood, although this is dependent on lifestage as the mothers found that initially their everyday mobility decreased as a result of parenthood, when as new mothers they found it ‘hard to get out of the house’ (Beth, mother). Motherhood then changes the nature of mobility, in particular increasing car use. As Lisa said: ‘I had twins (laughs) I couldn’t get on a bus. I didn’t drive so I couldn’t go anywhere I couldn’t walk to due to practicalities’. Lisa believed that she had no choice but ‘either not move or learn to drive’. Yvonne too began ‘using the car loads because it was easy and convenient’.

The participants in the study therefore demonstrated that in line with the exploration of

23 Mothers’ reference to childhood in nostalgic terms is discussed further in chapter 6. Nostalgia is defined here as an idealized vision of the past, in this instance, of childhood.
mothering issues in chapter 2, their risk and mobilities are dependent on constructions of motherhood. The majority of mothers felt that they had taken on a particularly gendered role and that this had a significant impact on their risk landscapes and mobility, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Having explored the experiences of motherhood in terms of risk and mobility, the next section examines the young participant’s childhood experiences.

Experiences of childhood and mobility

Children develop their own risk landscapes through both their own experience and knowledge and experience of their mothers and this will be illustrated fully later in this chapter. This demonstrates their agency in this process, in line with the literature discussed in chapter 3 (James et al. 1998; Holloway and Valentine 2000). As discussed, most children in the study travelled independently and this usually corresponded with starting secondary school. Some of the younger children expressed a wish to travel independently earlier than their mothers thought it appropriate, although they accepted that this was not possible. As Harry said when he thought he would travel to school on his own: 'If I’m lucky, Year 5. If not, Year 6'.

Outside school, most children said they were content with the amount of freedom they were given, although teenagers were more likely to be in conflict with their parents about this. Contrary to research on organised activities outside school (Valentine and McKendrick 1997; Valentine 2004), only a minority of children had regular after school activities and did some organised activity. Even these children had a mixture of organised and ‘free’ time when they could determine their own activities, ‘hanging out with friends’ watching television and using the internet. It was evident that this was negotiated through both parental (usually maternal) control of their time and a demonstration of their own agency. It was also evident that in terms of their mobility in general, children demonstrated this agency in both choosing to be ‘dependent’ and choosing ‘independence’.

Children’s agency on the journey

Choosing dependent mobility

Although most of the children challenged boundaries of independence in some way, a few seemed content to remain dependent on their mothers. Ruby explained that at the end of year 3 she had walked to school with a girl from her road who was in year 6, but had been happy to
return to walking with her mother the next day and has not asked to travel independently since. Overall, Ruby said she was happy with where she played, outside on the street in summer and inside on the television or internet in winter. She had developed her own ideas of freedom and felt that she had all she wanted. She was one of the five children who said they had no worries about their journey to school, possibly because their mothers take full responsibility for this journey and they are free to think about other things. Beth also chose to travel to school with her mother even though she walked with friends for a year and seems content to do so.

George has a definite input into his current dependent situation on his mother in the morning and on his father on the journey home from school. His father drives him home from school and George said that this will continue until he is in year 9, when he thinks that problems with older boys will be less of a worry for him. As discussed, however, the journeys are possibly bound up in issues relating to his parents’ separation. He said that he will start travelling on his own to school in ‘a couple of terms’. Even though George explained he could get a bus to school that would greatly reduce his journey time, his mother would not be able to accompany him on this and so he chooses to get a slower bus.

Both Chloe and Connor said they like walking with their mother rather than travelling with each other. Sally, their mother, will escort Chloe to school again next year when Connor starts secondary school and begins travelling on his own. Both Chloe and Sally are happy with this arrangement and Chloe showed no desire to continue to travel independently. A number of children are thereby choosing to be escorted to school and even though this is a dependent relationship, it is the result of children demonstrating agency.

**Choosing independence**

In contrast to Chloe, Lily said that if their circumstances change and she cannot walk to school ‘independently’ with her sister Jasmine, then she would still travel independently, although this would need to be negotiated with her mother. Like most of the children, Jasmine demonstrates agency in the negotiations and decision-making around her independent mobility (Maguire and Shirlow 2004; Valentine 1997a, 2004). Megan, too, has worked out the best strategy to maximize her independence, deciding when and how she gets to school within boundaries defined by her parents.
My mum and dad give me a lot of leeway. I have to ring them if I want to stay out later; otherwise they get really narked. 'Cause Amber just goes out and she wouldn’t ring them so they trust me now. They think I’m reliable so they let me do what I want... I like getting it [bus] 'cause I get to be with my friends and if there’s an assembly you can get there to do it. I did get it first in year 7 'cause I wanted to get to school early and also all my friends caught it. Now I catch the later bus 'cause I don’t want to be at school on time as much as I did in year 7. (Megan)

She maximizes her mobility options within the rules of the household and relative to her siblings as discussed in chapter 3 (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004; O’Brien 2000). Jimmy is another young person who has established significant autonomy in his decision-making. As his mother Hannah said, ‘he decided he was walking on his own and wild horses wouldn’t have stopped him’. This is particularly noteworthy in the light of Hannah’s risk landscape, which was overall risk averse at the time of the research. He continues to resist Hannah’s offers of an escort even when it means he walks on his own to school, a journey that takes almost an hour. Other children would like to demonstrate more agency in determining their own outcomes.

Overall, Harry is more risk tolerant than his mother and wants to be more independent than is being allowed. ‘I’d like to go on my own but mum doesn’t want me to yet because the cars go too fast... I would like to go on my bike but there’s nowhere to keep them safe’. Jake demonstrates agency in his form of imagined mobility, which although is relevant in this context has not been explored in this study.

My mum says I have to be a bit older, 10 or 11, well, 12 or 11. We end when we’re 11 so probably when I’m 12 or 13. If I’m in year 6 and I’m quite big 'cause I do Karate now and I’m nearly a black belt. I need to do two more belts... I’ll have 2 sharp daggers and I’d always probably carry my daggers in my bag... Probably if I asked them they’d let me go down to the shops on my skateboard. (Jake)

Children therefore demonstrate agency in both deciding to remain dependent in terms of mobility, as well as in choosing independence. Existing literature on independent mobility (Hillman et al. 1990; Joshi and MacLean 1995; Pooley et al. 2005; O’Brien et al. 2000) has tended to ignore this issue as most studies have not involved in depth research with children. In being both dependent and independent many children act out their agency through identification with the particular spatiality of the school journey.
Identification and belonging around the school journey

For many of the children, especially those who travel independently, the journey to school is identity forming, either through their demonstration of agency or through making the journey their own. Jake is proud of the route options on his journey even though he travels with his mother and defines the options according to her ability to negotiate the route:

We don’t have to go this way. We could also go the other way... If we’ve got the triple buggy we go that way (points to footpath long way round school) but if we have the double buggy we walk that way or this way (along path across playing fields) (Jake)

Similarly Jimmy and his friend have a long conversation about the various ways to travel to school during their journey including:

Jimmy: We’ve got about four ways to school. Through the Rec., straight down, up here left or right... This way seems to be quickest and we’ve got that secret path. Well it’s not very secret but that’s cool.
Jimmy’s friend: Joe copied us.
Jimmy: Yeah, their route’s exactly the same as ours now.

For them it is very important that they decided on their route and that they have ownership of it. In the video they point out many of the landmarks, such as houses they consider to be particularly attractive, along their chosen route of the day. Like Jimmy, a number of children pointed out in their videos the highlights of their journey as they went along, for example, Lucy points out a list of such landmarks throughout her journey:

There’s the flats... There’s the park, more flats, Woodingdean Park. There’s lots of dogs, people walking... We’re going to go over the park... There’s the police station, the bus stop... There’s the big queue of traffic... That’s a nice house... There’s the zebra crossing. There’s a recycling truck. There’s a café people go there to eat breakfast. There’s the co-op. Some nice hanging baskets. There’s the big flats. There’s the greengrocers over there... There’s the new shop... There’s the library and here we are at our school. That’s our journey. (Lucy, young person)

Lucy obviously enjoys walking to school and points out all the things she has become aware of from doing this. This contrasts with Lewis’ video in the car where everything is blurred and his view restricted. Despite this, Lewis wanted to film the blurred journey and films out of the window of the car throughout his journey. It was apparent that children who had more autonomy were able to own the journey and could survey their ‘own’ space and mark it with personal preferences. However, most children pointed at something along the way, something that they see
every day that becomes familiar and important in mapping their journey, even if is dangerous roads.

That's the big house at the end of the road then you've got to cross the main road which is absolutely horrible. I like running across it. It gets warmer up here than down there. One of my friends lives in one of these houses... This is one of my favourite places to walk up. I like it 'cause its curvy... This is my favourite place to walk up here... This road is tiring to get up but it's a really nice road ... This is the road we have to cross as you can see it gets really busy to cross but when we get across it its my favourite favourite part of the journey... Here's another house I like and then we come to another house I really like that has a pond on it. We're really close to our journey ending. That's my house, I like the pond house. I bugseyd it. I bugseyed it the first time I saw it. It's a really pretty house (Lilly, young person)

Jasmine and Lilly explain that they pass a certain house every day and smile at the woman who lives there and she smiles back. They not only have marked the space but have initiated a social contact, perhaps to enhance personal security. They demonstrate extremes of emotion along the way, from really stressed when they encounter some older children from their school, to enjoyment of the houses and people they pass, and this is discussed in chapter 6 in relation to their mobility histories.

Mothers, too, map out their journey but this is more likely to be according to negative notions of risk, with risky landmarks and safe landmarks. They created mental maps of parts of journey, which they can recall when talking about it.

I have a real issue about one of the busy roads the girls cross and there no pedestrian crossing and it's really busy around there... It's such a small road and cars go so fast. It's ridiculous that there's not some form of crossing there (Lisa).

Exploring the experiences of motherhood and childhood has demonstrated that risk and mobility are bound up in these experiences. Mothering cultures, especially those based on feelings of ambivalence and anxiety facilitate a culture of blame, and risk aversion and these cultures are determined partly by mothers themselves. The conflicting roles of motherhood have also led to increased and 'hyper' mobility as the roles of mothering in meeting the bodily needs of children increases risk awareness. This approach to risk can be linked to an increasing preciousness of children as risk is avoided at all costs to protect them, which is itself linked with identity formation. There is also a bodily investment in mobility practices as mothers seek to cope with risk. At the same time, children demonstrate agency in their mobility choices. This can be both a
decrease in mobility as they choose to balance mobile and sedentary activities as well as both dependent and independent mobility. This chosen dependence has been under-explored in studies to date, as has the spatial mapping of children’s journeys, which are linked to both a sense of belonging and an increase their sense of personal security. The next section develops these issues through exploring the risk landscapes associated with this space.

Exploring risk landscapes

As discussed in chapter 3, a number of studies have attempted to build a hierarchy of risk to children, a hierarchy of reasons for school escorting (Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg 1990; McLean and Joshi 1995; Barker 2003; Pooley, Turnbull and Adams 2005), adopting a quantitative approach that does not allow full analysis of cultures of risk. In contrast, no clear hierarchy emerged in this study as risks were found to be based on socio-economic and spatial context, changing with this during the course of the research. Thus, although worries about road accidents is given most often as a main risk, further analysis reveals a lack of consistency in the use of terms such as ‘strangers’, which was often given as a secondary concern.

It is argued here that the notion of strangers in public space and its influence on mobility is problematized by this lack of consistency, as well as discourses of blame and paranoia as discussed in chapters 2 and 3. The gauging of people’s main risks in terms of the school journey is problematic and this study does not attempt to attach meaning to such a hierarchy for this reason. However, Table 4 shows the risks most frequently mentioned by participants as an indication of the issues explored in this chapter and to help build a picture of participants risk landscapes.

Risk landscapes are referred to in chapter 3 in relation to the intricate web of factors (O’Brien et al. 2000) that make up mothers’ and children’s risk experiences and perceptions in space. The following exploration of risk and the school journey is made up of the characteristics, features and influences of risk landscapes. It begins by analyzing the characteristics of participant’s risk landscapes, through their fluidity and ambiguity. The section then moves on to discuss the key features of participants risk landscapes: risky strangers, risky roads, bullying and a range of everyday ‘mundane’ (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004) risks. Finally the section explores the contexts of risk landscapes through the influence of a range of ‘experts’ on risk landscapes.
The characteristics of risk landscapes

Fluidity and changeability

Participants did not have a defined scale of risk but indicated that their risk landscapes were fluid and dynamic, even changing during the research process. For example, some of the young people indicated during the videoing that they were worried about travelling alone, but afterwards in their interviews they said they had no worries. There appears to be an awareness of social and political agendas in influencing how risk landscapes are described. Sally (mother) is aware of the discourse around risk and strangers, in particular paedophiles; although she still stated that her biggest worry is ‘probably weird adults... even though it’s probably the least likely but it would still worry me the most’. She said that she felt that this comes from ‘hearing odd snippets of news’, and is particularly influenced by this when it relates to local events. Lisa’s biggest worry is also related to
strangers and particularly 'with my son abduction is the biggest worry', although she firstly gave road traffic as her main worry so it was only after more thought that this was changed. She seems influenced by 'expert' discourses of risk as she stated that she 'knew' ‘the biggest risk is roads’ but felt instinctively more aware of risks of abduction.

Carol, on the other hand, explained that she does not 'buy into the stranger danger and weird men lurking round every corner...'. She feels that 'it is relatively safe these days'. For Carol, reflecting a number of other mothers, her main worries are related to road safety and bullying. There is also reference amongst mothers, to risks of a more ambiguous nature, as Liz said, a general notion of 'letting go'. For Liz, the issue is not only risk per se, but issues of ‘good’ mothering and identity: 'I worried mainly about the roads. Dodgy people as well. But letting go, I had a problem with it. I didn’t like it'. She is aware that letting go is incorporated into her surrounding culture of good mothering and that not adhering to this is problematic. She alludes to a tension between her own identity as a mother, based on her own experiences of bad mothering, the prevailing culture of mothering and her own ideas about good mothering. Risk and emotionality then become key elements in the construction of identities of motherhood as discussed in chapter 2 (Douglas 1986, 1992; Bondi, Davidson and Smith 2005; Lupton 1999; Gillies 2006), and in the previous section on motherhood and mobility.

In contrast to mothers’ risk landscapes, some children, especially younger children, did not appear to have experienced a range of risks or they were unable to articulate these. A number of young participants including Ruby, Sean and Billy, and Stanley, appeared to have few or no worries about their journeys. Billy said he has no worries about his journey: 'I cross the road a lot so I’m not worried. I’m not really worried'. However, this may be due to the nature of his journey. Billy is escorted to and from his secondary school by his mother every day. He has no experience of negotiating this space independently, or outside the privacy of the car. A number of young people gave different accounts of their worries during the journey and in the interview and this will be discussed later in this chapter. On the whole, in line with one of the central themes of this research (Tulloch and Lupton 2003), the young people thought mainly of risks as they encountered them, as part of an everyday experience. Therefore, the risk of a road accident, for example, is experienced as a busy, noisy, fast road, which the young people equate with road accidents through other experiences, such as through the media.
Another problem in ascertaining the risk landscapes of participants was their general ambiguity towards risks, which reflects the various meaning and beliefs associated with the term, as discussed in chapter 3. Risk is a concept that means different things to different people in different spaces and at different times. It is by nature difficult to pinpoint and dependent on social, emotional and political cultures (Douglas 1986; Adams, 1995; Tulloch and Lupton 2003). Many participants talked about risks in an ambiguous way, like they are something unknown that they were unable to explain or categorise. A few participants spoke unambiguously about their risk landscapes and those that did were usually the more risk averse. For example, Beth (mother) was the only respondent to mention rape as her biggest fear in certain public spaces at certain times. Similarly, Cheryl (mother) spoke about her fears for their children in a confident and certain way: ‘Neither of them is streetwise. I’d be worried about the roads ‘cause they’ve no road sense. And people taking them away they’re my main concerns’.

Beth and Cheryl were relatively risk averse but there is a degree of clarity about their major concerns. However, even within these, there are ambiguous terms such as ‘taking away’, without direct reference to paedophiles, which is the issue they are discussing and which appears to be surrounded by taboo. Yvonne is also ambiguous in describing stranger as ‘someone who might bring harm’. There is evidence here of the culture of blame that surrounds this (Furedi 2001; Valentine 2004), not only in the terms used but also in the manner in which they are used, often in a lowered voice.

Evie (young person) and Molly (young person) also discuss their fears of strangers ambiguously. Molly talks of ‘get[ting] a bit scared sometimes, whereas Evie said she was a ‘bit nervous of the park ‘cause there might be like strange men’. Both travel through the same park, although on separate journeys, and it could be that there are often strangers in the park or that they encounter the same strangers. An important aspect of Evie and Molly’s risk therefore, even though they travel separately is that it is shared or collective (Tulloch and Lupton 2003). It is a risk that is experienced in response to wider discourses, both local and global (Holloway and Valentine 2000) that results in their experience of the same space in a similar way. For example, they could be related to prevailing notions of the riskiness of ‘strange men’ (Valentine 2004).

This collectivity in risk response is also apparent in other spaces, such as locations that are not in
full daylight. As Ben said of the same space that he happy to travel in during daylight, after dark, ‘you can get frightened ‘cause of course someone could jump out of the bushes’. This is also linked to feelings of some of the mothers and young people risk around ‘getting lost’, of being out of control, not belonging, of being othered, of being somewhere separate and unfamiliar. These feelings can lead to risk aversion, which is associated with particular spaces. Although this term has been referred to a number of times in this chapter, it needs to be contextualized within the fluidity and changeability of risk to improve its understanding in the context of this study.

*From aversion to partiality*

Risk is usually referred to in terms of individual’s being risk averse or risk seeking (Lupton 1999; Mythen 2004). Although this is an indication of an overall risk landscape, it is argued here that it can also disguise the complexity and ambiguity around risk as discussed in this chapter. It has also been shown that to label in this way without this awareness is the basis of the paranoid parenting discourse (Furedi 2001). This will be discussed later in the chapter. For the mothers in this study, within the period of time they responded, 78 per cent mothers indicated that they were risk averse, compared with 28 per cent of the young people at the time of their interviews. However, this is changeable as discussed. So for George, during his journey to school, depending on who was present, he indicated that he was risk averse and then risk seeking.

That’s where the allotments are. I don’t like them. This bus is going too fast. I think the speed limit on this road is too fast ‘cause horses come along... I like it when the lights are green and we go faster. (George, young person)

It is useful, however, to use these terms in considering how social characteristics such as gender interact with risk. However in this study, it appeared that overall risk aversion, tolerance and neutrality, although distinguishable by gender and spatiality, generational and lifestage factors were as influential. This generational influence will be discussed in the next chapter in relation to mobility histories. An emerging characteristic of risk landscapes, therefore, is that the place and scale of risk that participants adhered to represents a snapshot of their lifestyle and spatiality in that instance. People can therefore be risk averse and risk seeking within a small timeframe, depending on sociocultural and spatial context.

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24 The participants in this study were not asked directly if they were risk averse but rather this was deduced subjectively from the degree of anxiety or worry they indicated about a number of issues in their interviews.
This also means that mothers and children, although they often share risk experience, can demonstrate inconsistency in terms of their risk landscapes. In viewing overall risk landscapes in this way, about half of the sample was consistent and half inconsistent at the time of the research. For example, Evie and Amber seem to have a risk landscape that is inconsistent with their mother. They are both most concerned about strangers. Like Evie, her sister Amber enjoys the walk to school with her friends but is worried about strange people on the way: 'I don't worry about crossing roads or anything ...just pervy people'. However for their mother, Carol, the risk from strangers is negligible compared to other risks such as road accidents. George and his mother have fairly consistent views on risk as both think bullying is the biggest risk for George and they have both experienced this. This issue will be discussed more fully in the next chapter in terms of mobility histories.

So far, therefore, it has been established that risk landscapes are complex. It is possible to represent them as snapshots, with indications that they vary between generations and with lifestage. They can be ambiguous, inconsistent and dynamic, with shifts in outlook occurring within very short periods of time. The next section continues to build a picture of risk landscapes by examining the features that participants identified as being important: risky strangers, risky roads, and bullies, demonstrating that these risks are constructed within a socio-cultural context and that they are fluid in nature. It will then examine the everyday risks that are more often a part of children’s risk landscapes.

The features of risk landscapes

Risky strangers

As discussed in chapter 3, and in previous discussions in this chapter, the concept of 'stranger' is one of the most difficult to determine in terms of risk landscapes. There is evidence here that despite research claiming that media amplification of risk is a crucial component in risk landscapes (Stanko 1985; Furedi 2001, 2002; Valentine 2004), local discourses surrounding the notion of strangers are more significant. Of course, cases of child abduction reported in national media have a substantial impact, especially when some details of the events, which tend to be reported from every angle, relate to the personal circumstances of a family. As Yvonne explains:
It's Jessica and Holly. Lucy is Jessica and Holly's age. They were ten and they were round at one of their houses and off they went out and never came back again and it's that sort of thing that makes you worry. There was that little girl called Lucy and she went missing. It was local near Pulborough. She was playing in a field and had a row with her brother or something and stormed off. So there's that as well. (Yvonne, mother)

Even though the media may amplify some issues relating to strangers, most mothers spoke of the impact of strangers on someone they knew, being involved in investigation of cases of child abduction through their employment, or awareness of local incidents through social networks. A number of mothers, including Maria, Sally and Lisa had heard of local sightings of 'strange men' in the areas around the schools, which had made them more cautious.

The school phone if they don't arrive but it's too late. You had that child and it wasn't too far away from here abducted and they didn't phone until the afternoon and it was too late. They need to phone sooner... Yes, every time something like that happens I feel really really nervous. Around the school some white van tried to drag a child in and they got away. There was a child abducted in Peacehaven and that was awful, about three or four years ago. A social worker friend of mine pointed out that if you live in a seaside town there so many more paedophiles around. I never thought that would be the case. (Lisa, mother)

For others, incidents of abduction in the Brighton area were seen as influential, even for mothers such as Christine who tend to underplay the issue of strangers.

Actually they did walk once, her and her friend and they rang to say they'd jogged along the lane which is a country lane and on which there was a famous murder in the 1960s but they were all right. I was a bit alarmed... Hearing about events (like the murder) would make me more worried. (Christine, mother)

The relative importance of incidents depended on the extent to which participants could relate personally to them. About half of the mothers referred to abductions of children in the local area.

There was those little girls that got murdered at Wild Park. Things like that freaked me out 'cause it was roundabout when I had children. It does change your outlook on everything. (Karen, mother).

The girls that went missing in Moulscoomb. I remember and a little girl in Whitehawk. A girl whose sister I knew was abducted and murdered in the area from where I came from and that's always stuck in my mind. (Kim, mother)

25 This is referring to the murder of Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells in Soham in 2002.
26 This is referring to the abduction and murder of Sarah Payne in West Sussex in 2000.
27 This is referring to the murder of 12 year old Keith Lyon in 1967 (BBC 2006).
28 This is referring to the sexual assault and murder of two nine-year-old girls, Nicola Fellows and Karen Hadaway, in Brighton in 1986 (BBC 2003).
Of course, the notion of strangers has many meanings. For most, it is connected with risk of child abduction by paedophiles but it is also significantly about fear of certain groups including young people. Fiona (mother) is not worried about adult strangers, but about teenagers specifically. She talks about being scared of certain teenagers on the bus: ‘Someone talking to me. People being... talking. Kids mostly because... kids and youth... There are some strange people about’. Similarly Maria (mother) has had problems with groups of teenagers while walking: ‘... just gangs of kids hanging around. It’s an era - for some reason you have to be screamed at by a 14 year old. I’m 41 and I have been intimidated by a teenager’.

A number of children, including Molly and Evie, as previously mentioned, have experiences with ‘strangers’ and ‘just pervy people’ (Amber, young person). Liz spoke of an incident involving her daughter Becca, which Becca had not mentioned when asked about bad experiences she had when walking.

She has had problems walking though. She was - a young man came and put his arm around her and started talking to her and she pulled herself away. She was in year 7. She got home and told me so I called the police. It wasn’t resolved. (Liz, mother)

Overall therefore, it is evident that too often notions of strangers are applied too rigidly and often related only to stranger-danger and abduction by paedophiles, which are adultist notions. Children, however, tend to view strangers within a broader frame, including adults and other young people who are not known to them. Discourse based on strangers needs to be broadened to enable a better understanding of its many meanings and better equip young people to deal with unfamiliar incidents when they are mobile. The next section explores young people’s experiences of ‘bullying’, which includes incidents involving ‘strangers’.

**Bullies**

Like strangers, it is difficult to gauge levels of concern about bullying as it is so subjective. For example, there were incidents observed on journeys that for the researcher constituted bullying but for the young people concerned was described as ‘a bit of fun, you just join in’ (Luca, young person). A relatively high proportion of mothers (over 30 per cent), compared with Joshi and McLean (1995), included bullying as a main risk, but a number felt that it was not a problem for
Sally made no mention of bullying, despite it being a bit worry for her son Connor and (less so) for her daughter Chloe. During videoing, when we reached a certain area in their journey, Chloe said 'I don't like it here' and Connor explained that we were in an area 'that's a bit dodgy'. When he was asked why, he said it was because 'there's boys with gold chains' and that he 'gets a bit worried sometimes'. When he was asked about going to secondary school he said that he does not have any worries except 'about getting bog washed'. Connor underplays the risk of bullying even though it is apparently a significant part of his risk landscape. He displays a certain amount of bravado that may be associated with masculinized notions of risk seeking (Lupton 1999). However, it is difficult to draw conclusions on this as risk seeking was not explored in depth in this study.

Jasmine (young person) is the most openly concerned about bullying of all the participants. This issue comes up a number of times along her route to school including an incident during her video when her route takes her alongside some teenagers from her school. She elaborated on her experiences with teenagers as she watches this clip back during her interview. Later in the interview, when she is fully removed from the incident, she talked in a less emotionally charged way about the incident.

There's more people from our school. Oh God should we walk on the other side... We go straight up this path and there's some chavs but I'd better not say or they'll beat me up... (Jasmine, young person, during filming)

When I walk past them they keep on swearing and they kept on swearing at me and drinking beer and smoking and there was one that when they were smoking they started to spit at us... Because we get scared of teenagers... I'm a bit... but once I know one... there these teenager that go pow pow to me but I hit them and it's so cool so now I like it. They're scared of me (Jasmine, during interview).

Although bullying was mentioned as a risk by a third of the mothers, a number of these mothers considered it a risk to be dealt with by children, unlike other risks where they took more responsibility. In this way, despite being more aware of this risk than other studies (for example, Joshi and McLean 1995) suggest, bullying is downplayed by the mothers in the study when compared with their children's accounts. This could be due to differences in risk biographies between mothers and children, reflective of their own experiences of being mothered, or based on established local cultures of mothering, which accept this risk when other risks are unacceptable (see Pain 2001). Indeed there is some evidence to support mothers accepting
experiences of bullying as a necessary risk to overcome in negotiating space independently. Kirsty feels that giving independence, not only from her but from ‘the pack’, although in quite a controlled way, is a means of combating bullying.

One thing I have taught Ben is not to be part of a pack. You should always be an individual. Always know when to remove yourself from a situation. He has people who want to fight him because he won’t fight. He’s been brought up not to hit out so people are attracted to that… I feel I’ve done a good job of letting him know what to look out for. (Kirsty, mother)

For Kirsty’s son Ben, bullying is a potential problem, particularly racially motivated bullying, although she feels that he copes with this adequately. Ben, however, underplays this, perhaps reflecting his ability to negotiate the risk. He said that he has not had major problems in Brighton just a few times ‘when I’ve had to avoid someone’ although he did when he lived in London. As Ben explained: ‘Well, if you’ve had trouble the previous day at school you could be worried about the person… seeing the person outside school before school. Apart from that it’s a pretty safe journey’. In the same way, Lindsey thinks that her son Sean’s social skills, his ability to ‘get on with everyone’ will help him avoid potentially harmful situations. This is consistent with Sean who feels that because he gets the bus outside the school, a public rather than school bus, and he knows most of the people on the bus, there are no problems.

There are significant differences between the two geographical areas from which the sample is taken, in relation to bullying on the bus. The five young people who travel to school by bus in the inner urban area had less experience of bullying, and this was less prominent in their risk landscapes than those in the suburban area, where the four children who travel by bus had all experienced bullying. However, on the whole mothers in both areas felt the same about the bus, that it was a risky mode of travel. Although, as discussed, some of the children are at risk from bullying whilst walking to school, the bus is seen to be the main site of bullying on the way to school, even by those who travel by another mode. For parents, particularly Hannah, Linda and Christine, it is viewed as risky as it is unregulated and unobserved. As Christine said: ‘We’re very unhappy about the smoking on the bus which happens every day and there is the possibility of bullying which I’m not happy about …’

Although some of the mothers underplayed problems on the bus as ‘sweet fights and stuff’, for Karen and her son George, it has determined their mobility patterns since George started school.
On the second day of school, George explained, his friend got ‘drenched with water’ and some pupils threw stink bombs. His mother described the situation:

We picked Downs Forest because we really wanted it and his best friend goes there. Not realising how far away it is. So what we did the first day, we went down and George got the school bus from St James Street his friend gets on it a few stops later. The first day just year 7, but the second day it was the whole school and George hated it. So now we get the bus before that one. To start off with I went right to the school but gradually I got off earlier and earlier so now I get off ... and walk down to my school. He really hated the school bus. (Karen)

As will be discussed in chapter 6, the element of both George and Karen’s risk landscape that relates to experiences of bullying is critical, and determining not only of their school mobility but also general pattern of mobility.

Riskyrads
A number of mothers had experience of road accidents, either directly or indirectly, two involving a death. A friend of Linda’s older son had been in a pedestrian/bus accident. As Linda explained the experience had a direct impact on his mobility as ‘he got to the point where he really didn’t want to walk, he wouldn’t get on a bus and wanted me to take him places for quite a while after that’. Maria’s experience occurred when she was a young person and involved her sister, whom she remembered ‘being devastated’, and her friend, who was killed in the accident. Maria’s experience affected her deeply, although it is not her biggest worry. Jane (mother) seems to worry most about traffic and this may be because she had accident when she was younger. Jane said the accident she was involved in influenced her, but overall it is Jane’s perception of Ellie’s (Jane’s daughter) competence that affects how much freedom she is given by her mother and the perceived ability to deal with situations like risky roads.

Ellie is aware that accidents she has had, and her mother’s experience of these, would influence her travel behaviour, in this case prevent her from being allowed to cycle to school. As Ellie explains with regard to cycling her mother ‘wouldn’t let me ‘cause I just fell off my bike and hurt my ankle’. This was not a major accident, but an everyday common event, which nevertheless had a major and potentially long lasting impact on Ellie’s mobility. Similarly, Beth experienced an everyday event, which changed her perception of risks to her daughter.
The other day I was pushing my younger daughter on her bike and I was down at her level and there was no cars coming and suddenly a car leapt round the corner and I realised I hadn’t seen it ’cause I’d been down low so that was a bit scary and made me realise that they don’t see those side roads (Beth).

Roads are part of everyday life for the young people in the study, whether as walkers or as car or bus passengers. There was a general consensus amongst the young people who walk to school that they all view roads as risky spaces. As a result, they learn a level of risk for each road and proceed with varying degrees of caution on that basis. This was evident from the young people’s video footage, where on a number of occasions, the degree of risk presented by each road was used as a tool to map out the journey. Five of the young people who took part identified specific roads as the most risky parts of their journeys.

Now crossing quite a busy road that I don’t like very much when I’m walking by myself. (Evie, young person)

This is the road I absolutely hate... This road is scary but the other one we come to is really quite scary. You just have to wait till all the cars go (Lilly, young person)

I hate the main road. We’re so scared of it... Now we have to dodge the cars and that’s not pretty (Jasmine, young person)

For a number of children, the risks associated with roads are bound up in experience of speed. A number of children spoke of cars or buses going too fast, with some identifying resultant factors such as the greater possibility of road accidents, and some viewing speed as a risk in itself without making further links. As Harry said: ‘When we cross roads some cars go really fast and it just feels like I’m going to get run over’. A number of mothers, too, said they worried about speed and this increased their anxieties about road traffic:

I worry about the speed that some people drive. Down the main road near the school it can be quite busy and the speed people drive at worries me sometimes (Linda, mother)

For most participants, although experience of traffic accidents was part of their risk landscapes, it is the everyday interaction with roads especially where traffic moves at speed that are most significant for both children and parents. In addition, for the young people in particular, there were other risks that are as everyday as traffic on the roads that were also a significant part of their risk landscapes.
Children's everyday risks

As the previous sections have demonstrated, the young people in the research experienced risks such as bullying, road accidents and strangers, as both significant unusual events and also as minor regular incidents that build up over time or space. These risky experiences can be linked to shared risk experiences with mothers. They also referred to a number of other everyday risks, which impact on their mobility including dog poo, uneven pavements, traffic fumes, dogs, cats, chewing gum, and drips of 'spit' in the railway tunnel. Ellie's experience on her journey is typical. She seems aware of what she likes about the journey and what she does not like, with particular concern about the traffic, the uneven pavement, dog poo and the school gate that's not big enough. She feels 'safe' in her street even though the cars 'zoom down' it sometimes. Her main worries are 'falling over and hurting myself' and 'getting hurt by a car'.

As discussed previously, young people's everyday risk is experienced in space and place. Although Lucy's journey mapping is not based on risk, she features some risks along her journey in her video. In particular, she points out the location of, and describes an incident when their pet dog was involved in an 'attack' by a stray cat. Both Lucy and her brother Lewis felt deeply emotionally affected by this incident, a reaction gauged from their tone of voice and body language as well as description, and refused to travel along the road where it took place.

Dog poo is seen as a significant problem with eight young people stating that this was one of the major concerns in terms of their journey. For many, this is an everyday 'mundane' (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004) risk to be negotiated alongside others that may arise in their particular social or environmental context as discussed in chapter 3 (Tulloch and Lupton 2003). These risks are far removed from Beck's (1992) technological risks in his 'risk society' but are as legitimate in shaping people's lives.

Well... I like going up Poo Valley. We call it that 'cause its got so, much poo on it. Its yucky. I've stepped in it in the past a couple of times but my brother stepped in it a few days ago. He's more likely to step in it. So you have to scrape it off in the class or in the pavement... 'cause my mums got the buggy and say she has three kids really early she would have to get the triple buggy and she has to dodge all the poo and the cars. 'Cause last week she knocked one of the wing mirrors. (Jake, young person)

As discussed in chapter 3 therefore, risk is experienced in the everyday and in socio-cultural and spatial contexts (Tulloch and Lupton 2003). Here risks are not necessarily experienced directly but
also indirectly with, for example, risks from road accidents being experienced as busy, noisy, fast roads. The final section in this chapter examines the contexts of risk in terms of how different risk discourses have influenced participants’ risk landscapes. These influences include media discourses of the paranoid parent (Furedi 2001) and more localized discourses involving everyday experts (Giddens 1994; Tulloch 1999; Tulloch and Lupton 2003).

The contexts of risk landscapes

Media discourses

As discussed, the media was more influential on participants’ risk landscapes when reporting related to a local event. A number of mothers and children said they were influenced by incidents covered in the national media, although a greater number said they were not influenced. The media is particularly influential when as Linda said ‘you hear all these things that happen to children it makes you stop and think’. Gill thinks that it is the increase in media coverage of events that has raised awareness and increased fear in motherhood:

Because things are more publicised. You hear more, ‘cause every time you put the radio on, the TV on, every time you pick the newspaper up. There doesn’t seem to have been as many when I was younger but I don’t know if that’s just because you are too busy to notice it. Whether when you become a mother, you become more fearful. (Gill)

Three of the young people said they watched Crimewatch and were influenced by it, George because it is ‘gruesome’ and he found it entertaining because of this. George is hereby displaying risk seeking behaviour despite his risk landscape being characterised by risk aversion. Ben, on the other hand, has learnt coping strategies from television programmes:

... there’s one when a man ... Crimewatch funnily enough... and a girl was being followed and a man grabbed her and she ran across the road to the nearest adult shouting ‘mum’ and the adult assessed the situation and said OK. That keeps me reassured. When I first went to school my mum would say if this happens blah blah blah. (Ben, young person)

George and Ben are, however, in a minority and most children did not watch coverage of crime on television or in the media. Most of the young participants are more influenced by experiences of local events, either through their direct involvement, or from local discourses of risk. For mothers, local discourses were also influential and included those centred on the notion of paranoid parenting. Almost all of the mothers indicated that they are aware of discourses of the ‘paranoid parent’, discussed in chapter 3 (Furedi 2001; Valentine 2004).
‘Probably I’m being overprotective but...’ (Fiona, mother)

‘Probably weird adults would worry me the most even though it’s probably the least likely but...’ (Sally, mother)

‘I try to keep that in proportion but ... ‘(Kim, mother)

However, this awareness does not necessarily alter their risk landscape, as Maria demonstrated when she talked about her need to keep her sons within close proximity of her, ‘I don’t want it to be scare tactics but I’m not going to lie’. Some mothers said that they would like to be able to change their feelings and behaviour and indeed attempt to do so, as Hannah said, ‘I do worry. But I have to stop worrying. Once they’re out the door I have to switch off’. Most mothers indicated that they operate within the discourse on parental paranoia and this adds another dimension to their risk landscape. Like many mothers, Yvonne weighs up risks of being paranoid against avoiding disaster and decides that the consequences of disaster are too difficult to contemplate.

They’re more likely to have a car accident than be taken away by a horrible person but it’s the horrible person taking them away that makes you more scared. Although it’s probably very very unlikely to ever happen but it’s such a dreadful thing that it becomes very important in your lives. (Yvonne, mother)

For most mothers’ therefore, it is the emotional investment in their children, as discussed in chapter 2, which overrides the risk of being considered paranoid. It is evident that this is not only a product of wider ideologies but also of local discourses of risk, which includes differential attitudes to risk within the home. A number of mothers were being told they are being paranoid/overprotective by their male partners, reflecting the paranoid parenting culture.

My husband would say don’t fuss or let them try. He feels I worry too much sometimes... my husband tells me to put it in perspective sometimes. (Linda, mother)

Based on discussions in interviews, it seems likely that this discourse prevented some of the mothers discussing their risk landscapes in full. As Christine said ‘I’m not too worried. I haven’t got any of the paranoia about paedophiles’ but she also described a number of worries and fears she has for her daughter, including risks from strangers. Liz, on the other hand, felt extra pressure as a single mother and thought that she was particularly cautious as a result and would be considered ‘paranoid’ because of this. When describing how she was worried about Becca’s safety especially in the dark she thought she ‘sound[ed] like a complete head case’. Despite the impact of
these dominant ideologies of risk, however, participants showed that they were more influenced by local discourses, which include those based around everyday experts (Giddens 1994; Tulloch 1999). They felt that this type of expert provides information and advice that was more specific to their situation, and therefore more reliable.

*Everyday experts*

In line with the discussion in chapter 2 (Giddens 1994; Tulloch 2000), there is little evidence that participants were influenced by institutional experts such as teachers and health professionals. Instead, many referred to non-traditional experts, such as their friends, colleagues and family members, particularly those they consider to be in a position that is more connected to the risk. For example, Maria was concerned when she found out that some offenders were located fairly nearby. Maria’s sister is a nurse and provides her with up to date information on specific risks: ‘She was working for child health and they had statistics and they had this figure giving where people had been placed... potential offenders’. However, there were a few mothers who had responded to official institutional ‘expert’ guidance. Christine, for example, said that the safety awareness information regarding seat belt has made her ‘anxious... when other parents give them lifts and there aren’t enough seat belts in the back...because that really frightens me’.

A number of mothers associated expertise with their family members and especially with their mother. However, Sally feels ambivalent about her parental support as she is both pressurized and supported by her dad, who lives next door. She said that this greatly influences her risk landscape: ‘He’s very bossy and opinionated. He helped me decide to let them walk on their own. In a positive way ‘cause I didn’t know whether they should walk on their own or not. But he thought it was ok’. It is clear, therefore, that it is everyday non-institutionalized experts that are more influential than both media and institutional experts for the participants in this study. However, risk landscapes are not just individualized but also, and more significantly, shared with other members in a community.

As well as relying on their own expertise, mothers use local networks to gather information on potential risks, especially those associated with strangers. As Cheryl said, ‘we have heard that there’s quite a few paedophiles up on [a local] road and that’s on the route to their nans’. This seems to have particularly distressed her. For many of the mothers, the actual source of information such as this is unclear, as it is spread from person to person in the local area. Other networks are associated with particular institutions, like the school itself, or with mothers of other
children at the school. A significant number of mothers talk to other mothers to gauge acceptable levels of risk taking. This will be discussed further in the next chapter in terms of relational freedoms. As Christine and Gill explain:

It's useful to talk to other mums, especially Emily's friends' mums about how they feel about safety. Sometimes I'll exchange with Sonia's mum and say 'they're going out to town is that OK. She's very easy going. I mean, she's got an older daughter so she knows what kind of things are done at what age. I wouldn't like to allow Emily loads loads more freedom than her peers or loads loads less. So it's nice to keep in touch with what other people are doing... (Christine, mother)

Christine feels that Sonia's mother may have some expertise in relation to acceptable risk as she is a more experienced parent. Therefore, there is evidence of mothers establishing local cultures of acceptable risk (Douglas 1986), as discussed in chapter 2, and this includes both criticizing other mothers if they feel they take too many risks or seeking explanations for risk taking. Lisa has established an acceptable age of independence 'somewhere towards the end of year 6', and sought guidance in reaching this decision: 'I have talked to the mum of one of his friends who walks on his own and she said its because he's bigger which is fair enough if that's the only issue'. For some mothers, especially those living in the inner urban area, this culture of risk incorporates an understanding that abductions are less likely to happen compared with other risks. Beth readily accepted Molly's friend's mother saying that she was 'more worried about the traffic than someone snatching them' and this enabled her to give Molly more independence.

Overall, however, mothers, whilst recognising external influences, appeared to accept an individualised responsibility towards their children and feel that they can provide the best expert advice about their own children.

... I read a lot but it's mostly reading people that have an understanding of children as young adults not as children as in baby children. Their potential for understanding is greater than we give them credit for. We can talk about my experiences so that he understands why I'm saying something... I'm the expert of me he's the expert of him and they're the expert of them. All you can do is facilitate people to be their own experts. (Kirsty, mother)

Kirsty, however, like some of the other mothers, feels that she can easily dismiss the views of other parents if they do not agree with her thinking on a certain area of risk: 'I have an issue around alcohol and I'm very surprised that other parents allow their children to drink'. For Jane, her established views about acceptable levels of freedom, which will be discussed in the next chapter, necessitated a disregard for local cultures as she felt 'they let their kids roam about all
over the place so they have different views'. Similarly, Karen and her son George have 'already made up our mind about risks associated with bus travel despite talking to people who disagreed. Two of the mothers, Sally and Yvonne, have issues around community involvement and this seems to have impacted on their association with local cultures of acceptability.

I don't really talk to Chloe's friends parents in an in-depth way. The freedom they give their children would maybe affect me but I don't really know. If they were allowing them to do things that I didn't agree with then I wouldn't but if they were holding them back it would make me think I shouldn't let Chloe do such and such. (Sally)

I just think we would override peer pressure. For example, Lucy has a friend whose parents are split up and her dad's in Nottingham and Lucy's friend has tried to give her dad our number 'cause she wants her to go up and stay but it's a big no no - someone we don't know. There could be a lot of peer pressure there, but we would always override it and have to put up with tears and whatever but we're quite strict. (Yvonne)

It is evident, therefore that both mothers' and children's risk landscapes were influenced by both global and local factors, and that the discourse of the paranoid parent (Furedi 2001) had filtered through to mothers and impacted on not only their risk landscapes, but their ability to enter into an open dialogue about their risk landscapes. Mothers relied more on local discourses of risk in providing them with the coping mechanisms to deal with their risk landscapes, and this included experiencing and developing these coping mechanisms on an individual basis, although still within collective notions of acceptable risk.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the journey to school scoped by issues of motherhood and childhood, and participant's risk landscapes. It was demonstrated that the young people in the study travelled by various modes, which broadly reflected national statistics (DfT 2005). When discussed walking as a mode of travel, participants identified fewer associated risks compared with travelling by bus. Instead, they tended to focus on issues of distance and the impact of walking on their bodies. Broader risks, which are nevertheless a product of walking, were discussed in terms of the mobile space, and these include road accidents and strangers. Despite its risks, bus travel was accepted as a necessity for those children who lived too far from school to walk. This mode of travel was often associated with risks such as bullying and with discomfort and high cost, which reflects other research carried out with children (DfT 2006; Hood 2001; Imagine London 2000).
There is some ambivalence around car travel, with most of the young people preferring to travel by other modes where possible, whilst at the same time enjoying the comfort and convenience and, sometimes, the sociability of the car. For women, however, if they have access to one, the car continues to be a resource that enables them to cope with their increasingly multidimensional lives. In turn, this multidimensionality has impacted on their mobility, with some mothers demonstrating complex patterns of mobility in coping with risk and performing to standards of 'good' mothering. Children on the other hand, demonstrate agency in both seeking dependence and independence. Their independent mobility is based on a sense of spatial security, which will be discussed more fully in chapter 6, but includes mapping out their journey and imbuing it with their identity.

Risk landscapes differed between mothers and children, reflecting the generational aspects of risk in the everyday. However, it is evident for both that risk landscapes, even when viewed as a snapshot, are complex. They can be ambiguous, inconsistent and dynamic, with shifts in outlook occurring within very short periods of time. For mothers especially, there are three main elements within risk landscapes associated with the journey to school: strangers, bullying and road accidents, although within these there are variations in interpretations and meaning. For children, however, there is a range of everyday risks that are relevant to their mobilities and can have a significant impact on their journeys, despite appearing relatively inconsequential if considered within adultist notions of risk. These include dog poo, uneven pavements, traffic fumes, dogs, cats, chewing gum, and drips of 'spit' in the railway tunnel.

The aims of this chapter were twofold: to develop a context for the exploration of mobility histories, and to identify the most significant factors that constitute mobility histories. The context has been provided in setting out experiences of the school journey, motherhood, childhood and risk landscapes with their spatialities. However, the characteristics of risk landscape have been considered in terms of a snapshot, with minimal reference to past experiences. It was evident from this temporal snapshot, that generation and lifestage issues have a major impact on experiences and so the next chapter will consider how experiences from the past, the participants' personal biographies, influence their decision-making in the present. This chapter has set out the interwoven factors that constitute mothers and children's mobilities and to some extent considered how mothers' experience and perceptions of risk, and children's agency in shaping their own risks, determines their mobilities. The next chapter develops this conceptual exploration and interrelates the elements described here, through mobility histories.
Chapter 6 Mobility histories

Introducing mobility histories

The previous chapter explored issues of risk, motherhood, childhood and mobility and how risk landscapes are integral to mothers and children’s experiences and perceptions of the social and environmental aspects of the journey to school. This chapter seeks to assimilate the themes that emerged in chapter 5 and in doing so develop a singular concept: mobility history. It seeks to use mobility histories to synthesize the components of risk landscapes with issues of motherhood and childhood in the context of both time and space. The chapter also explores how different components that make up mobility histories become more prominent in these contexts.

The term ‘mobility history’ is not a new one, however, it is not a commonly used term in the social sciences, and has been applied mainly to studies of migration and tourism (Fisher and Hood 1988; Fuller et al. 1985; Hall 2005; Wingate and Alexander 2006). This research uses ‘mobility history’ to describe a complex accumulation, over a lifetime, of knowledge, experiences and emotions, which are relevant to decisions and experiences in the present. Some of these experiences and emotions become embedded at different levels within mobility histories and are recalled through emotional responses (Slovic 2004). Therefore, it is recognized that these histories are based on memory and recollections that are ‘constructed by current ideological forces’ (Tierney 2000). Drawing on Hall’s (2005) conceptualization of tourism mobilities, mobility histories are not a timeline of events that have impacted on current thinking, but a disordered compilation of meanings and understandings of interspersed events that shape everyday mobility responses. The term is used here mainly in relation to corporeal mobility, but also touches on issues of social and ‘imagined’ mobility. It could, however be developed further to link other forms of mobility.

Many of the participants were aware of the impact of their past experiences on their present outlook and decision-making, although as Kim said they affect her decision-making around mobility but ‘not consciously, there’s nothing consciously’. This psychological element necessitates the consideration of how individuals process and recall experiences. As chapter 2 discussed, Slovic recognizes that experiential behaviour and emotional responses are based on a
collection of images, metaphors and narratives over the lifecourse. Experiences become embedded in memory and it is through recall within socio-cultural contexts that they are relevant to the present as discussed in chapter 2 (Slovic 2004).

The idea that risk landscapes are crucial to everyday mobility emerged from the literature explored in chapters 2 and 3 and was developed through the exploration of the data in chapter 5. Risk landscapes are an integral part of mobility history, and can be both individual and collective. Developing the work of sociocultural theorists (Douglas, Lupton 1999, Tulloch 1999, Lupton and Tulloch 2003) this research is predicated on the everyday, exploring and expanding knowledge as decisions are made at a local level, but at the same time contextualizing in more global cultures. It considers decision-making in the context of a range of influential factors, using the everyday to explore and expand knowledge of these. However, it emerged from the data that risk is not always central to the decision-making process in terms of mobilities. It became apparent that although risk is a critical issue in everyday life and decision-making, mobility decisions are not always about risk. Mobility histories, which have emerged from both the theoretical foundations of this thesis and from the data, provide a framework to organize an exploration of the range of factors that influence the mobilities of mothers and children, some of which have been outlined in chapter 5.

Mobility history becomes a tool to explain decisions in the present, whilst referring to constructions of the past. As such it allows an exploration of the under researched area of generation and lifestage, and their impact on risk and mobility. Of course mobility experience is a multifaceted concept, and a multitude of factors will have an impact, from socio-cultural to spatial. However, a number of key experiences relating to risk, motherhood and childhood, freedoms, space and emotionalities, arose from both the theoretical framework developed in chapters 2 and 3 and from the data, and they are discussed in this chapter.

In addition, it allows a comparison of mothers and children not only interdependently, but also in experiencing separate mobility histories. This chapter does not therefore, separate the discussions of mothers and children into distinct sections, but in line with the social studies of childhood (James et al. 1998), considers them in parallel, treating children and young people as significant actors in their own right rather then a function of their mothers. Although chapter 5 introduced a number of these themes, they are explored here in relation to mobility histories with the aim of synthesizing and contextualizing in time as well as space. Mobility histories therefore provide a
means to incorporate experience from the past up to the present and analyse its potential impact on decision-making about the future.

This chapter therefore illuminates the key components of mobility histories that have emerged in this study: risk landscapes; personal biographies of childhood and motherhood; constructions of mobile space; the giving and receiving of freedoms; and emotionalities. It then considers more of the nature of mobility history, firstly examining the degree to which mobility histories tend to be individual or collective, and then exploring the layering of mobility histories with social characteristics such as gender, generation and class.

Risk landscapes: their role in mobility histories

The characteristics, features and contexts of risk landscapes for the participants in this study have been set out in chapter 5. This section explores participants’ risk landscapes in the context of mobility histories by investigating how they are determined by past experiences and how particular experiences come to prominence in terms of mobility histories. This process of distinguishing between different components of risk landscapes in particular times and particular spaces, is also explored through the mapping of risk landscapes.

More risky experiences, more risk aversion

For some, risk experience is based directly on personal and often powerful everyday events, which become critical to the composition of their overall landscape of risk. When asked about his biggest worries George is unequivocal, it is ‘other kids’ and particularly ‘year 11s’. It is very apparent during George’s journey to school that bullying is a major problem for him and that this emerged on the first day at secondary school. Although George gives examples of behaviour that could be considered to be a minor threat it is evident during his video of the journey to school that he also experiences direct bullying from specific individuals, who share his bus to school. Although there is an element of performance of bravado for the camera, as soon as a certain boy gets on the bus, George’s demeanour changes markedly and he becomes more reserved, choosing to stand and film from the front of the bus silently. It is also evident that George and his friends are excluded from the top deck of the bus due to this threatening behaviour. George’s risky experiences on the bus are not his only critical experiences as when George was younger he had a ‘frightening’ episode in a car.
When I was little I fell out of the car when it was on the motorway. My dad was driving. I didn't have my seat belt on and I went to get something and opened the door. The car behind saw me and skidded to a halt and luckily I managed to get out without a broken bone. It was in the early hours of the morning. It was when I was about seven. (George, young person)

This is a serious incident and obviously affected him. However, it did not emerge when asked about past risky experiences, but rather almost 'by accident' when he was talking more generally about going in the car with his father. More current experiences, such as bullying on the school bus, were recalled instantly, whereas this was embedded at a deeper level, but was nevertheless, as significant an issue in his overall mobility history. When questioned about this incident, it emerged that this accounts for George's worries about cars and his preference for travelling on the bus, even though he is currently experiencing risky events on this form of transport.

George and Karen have a shared risk experience and bullying is both Karen's and George's main concern about the journey to school. Karen indirectly and directly experienced George's problems on the first few days of school, firstly hearing reports about bullying behaviour and then witnessing this on the bus when she travelled with George. Karen's impression of George's risk landscape is therefore not only 'perceived' but experienced. For some their risky experience is set within the context of more general anxiety, of feeling 'a bit scared' and 'a bit lonely'. For Liz, one of the mothers, her experience was also in a specific spatial context.

At primary I felt a bit scared and a bit lonely, and also if I got the bus I had to walk up an alleyway to get to the school, which I wouldn't dream of letting my kids do now. And that was sometimes a bit scary. Secondary - I walked more with people but we had to walk across a golf course so when you were coming home and it was quite dark, again it could be a bit scary, which is probably why I don't let mine walk around. (Liz, mother)

For these participants, a number of relatively minor risky experiences had accumulated into an overall risk aversion in their risk landscapes. In addition, over half of the mothers had risky experiences that appear to have been significant in shaping their risk landscapes. Some like Carol, had threatening experiences but did not feel affected, but for a significant number, their experiences had a major impact on their risk landscape, though not necessarily on their mobility choices. A number of mothers, like Gill, had experiences involving strangers and still consider this a major risk to themselves and their children.

30 Appendix 8 shows the how participants are related.
At primary school, I used to have to walk through a cricket field and down a little alleyway and my friends and I noticed that there was a car stopped there every morning and I don't think it was anything particularly sinister but we told our parents and they got the police involved. It made us scared. Part of it was that we thought it was a bit strange and I remember it was a Jag and it seemed very odd that it was always there. (Gill, mother)

However, even though Gill was involved with this incident and feels 'abduction' is the greatest risk to her son (Luca), relative to other children his age, he had been given substantial amounts of freedom from an early age. Gill appears to have made a conscious effort to overcome her risk aversion in relation to this, to the point that she endures different risky experiences when her son goes beyond established boundaries.

It's a fine balance because I've always been of the opinion that you have to give freedom and independence so that they can learn it at appropriate times and that sometimes you have to take that little risk. I always allowed him to play out with friends from about 6 or 7, go down to the green or on the street. He'd come back every hour or so and there were friends living in houses. There were times when me and a friend of mine were driving around trying to find them, panicking, heart stopping to find they've quite innocently gone off like I did when I was a child and gone off to some hidden passageway. And you have to say don't do that but then other kids do it and I always wanted them to have that experience of childhood of making dens. (Gill, mother)

Gill seems to be able to separate her risk landscape from her decisions about Luca's freedom and mobility, demonstrating that for some, it is more important to recreate experiences of childhood freedom than concede to risk. Later in this chapter, the connections between parents and children's risk landscapes and mobility histories are discussed. However, they are often divergent due to the constant flux of risk landscapes.

**Ever-changing risk landscapes**

As discussed in chapter 5, risk aversion is fluid and changeable over the life course. However, there is evidence that the more risky experience and in particular, critical past risky experience, leads to risk aversion. Kirsty, for example, had a bad experience when she was younger that affects her notion of trust, and therefore her perceptions of risk.

I did have an experience but it wasn't on transport that changed my attitude to trusting people. So if I wanted to go out in a short skirt it would have to be in a car. It was from my own bad experience from what happened at home, not from a family member (Kirsty, mother)
Yvonne was considerably risk averse at the time of the research and worried about a range of risks to both herself and her children, who do not currently travel independently. Yvonne said she has had a 'few bad experiences' while living with her family on a farm when she was a child, and particularly on the way home from school. Having taken a bus from school, she had to walk down a long lane before reaching her home.

Vehicles that might come down and I didn't know them so if I was offered a lift being scared to take the lift and being scared to say no, I didn't want a lift. I remember once being persuaded to get a lift in the coal lorry, which I wasn't very happy about and I remember once the driver asking me to steer while he did something and I didn't like it. Another thing was one time I was with my sister and we got off the bus later and it was November and it was getting foggy and we'd missed the stop. We realised we'd gone past and we were scared 'cause we were on the main road... but we'd been told of the dangers that might await us - stranger danger and all that. Not the traffic but people that might stop along a relatively quiet road. (Yvonne, mother)

Her experience of the walk home seems to have been compounded by hearing about what could possible happen with regard to strangers, and the awareness of this was a risky experience in itself. This contrasts with other mothers who could not recall any memorable risky experiences and indeed had not had any indirect experiences through their children. However, even amongst this group, a number of the participants felt that risks were increasing, that society is becoming more risky, but not necessarily in the sense of Beck's (1992) predictions for the 'risk society'. As the previous chapter discussed many of the risks are associated with changes, such as risks increasing due to gendered roles in motherhood, which contradict Beck's theory of individualization. Beth, Hannah and Linda believe that risks from traffic have increased over time. In line with Lupton and Tulloch (2003), when mothers talk of increasing risk, they are more likely to refer not to potential global disasters but to risks that are tangible in the everyday. For others, the factors that make up risk landscapes are still in the everyday but are increasingly intangible.

Things didn't seem to be so big and busy in those days looking back to my childhood. I think it's just big and busy (Hannah, mother)

Although Hannah alludes to major changes in terms of social and physical space, she cannot specify these beyond being bigger and busier. Everyday experience of risk is thereby changing in a way that is indistinguishable from other socio-cultural and spatial changes. It is part of a wider process and in this way it is a shared experience (Tulloch and Lupton 2003).
Shared risk landscapes

As chapter 2 discussed, some of the mothers talked to their children about risk and their approaches to controlling it, but it was also apparent that most of the mothers did not discuss these issues explicitly. About half of the children shared their concerns about the journeys to school with their mothers, although these may have been experienced in different ways. As discussed in chapter 5, this shared experience may be due to risks being passed from one generation to another (Lupton 1999). Mobility histories are not, therefore, individualised but are dependent on both individual and collective experience.

However, there are limits to the extent to which risk can be shared between mothers and their children, and these are sometimes related to cultures of blame as discussed in chapter 2 in relation to mothers. It is evident that children too are keen to avoid blame, often to comply with their 'community' norms (Douglas 1986). Luca was involved in an incident on the bus when the upper deck window fell out when he was leaning against it. Although Luca shared this experience with his mother Gill, he didn't report the incident any further. He explained that he was afraid of getting blamed, perhaps feeling disempowered by attitudes towards school children on buses. This supports research with children which found they did not complain about issues on buses even though this was identified as a significant issue (DfT 2006). This did not change Luca's view of the bus and he still prefers to travel in this way. There are therefore more important elements in his mobility history that can override problems associated with travelling on the school bus and these will be discussed later. For others such as Lisa and her daughter's Lilly and Jasmine, there may be a shared risk experience within their risk landscapes with different outcomes in terms of mobility history. As Lisa and then Lilly explain:

They had a boy threaten them with a pistol. He held it at my daughter's head. The police got involved and they were found and apologised. They were at the school. I did walk up and get them for a bit after that about two days. It was just pointless to do it [escort them] for longer 'cause it ended up me standing there while they chatted to their mates. They didn't care at all after that. They had been really scared at the time and because they found the boys... (Lisa, mother)

Somebody threatened us with a gun, a BB gun, to shoot us. We phoned the police. It was near [our friend's] house... We stayed near Jade's house and phoned the police from a mobile. The police came and me and my friend walked down further and the police came

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31 This was gauged by comparing the issues given when participants were asked about their main worries and concerns.
and they were jumping fences and everything. But they never caught them but they have
now and they've put them on a list so that if they do another thing wrong... They go to our
school... When we went back to school I had pictures of it shooting 'cause they put the gun
to our head. I had a picture of the gun. We walked to school on the Monday. (Lilly, young
person)

Lilly and Jasmine remain fearful of other children, both appearing agitated during their filming
when older children walked near them and Jasmine articulating her emotional response saying
'Oh God should we walk on the other side?'. This is a critical issue for them in their mobility
histories. However, for Lisa the issue has been resolved and she does not see bullying as a
significant risk to her daughters. The notion of shared risk experience (Tulloch and Lupton 2003)
is therefore sometimes problematic. Lisa’s, Lilly’s and Jasmine’s mobility histories reflect this
incident with similar outcomes in that they still travel in the same way, despite their risk
landscapes becoming more risk averse in response to this experience, particularly for Lilly and
Jasmine.

Following on from chapter 5, risk landscapes are therefore mapped out through a combination of
personal biography of risk and accumulation of knowledge, including emotional knowledge on
risk from 'experts' and through local discourses. They can also be characterized by risk aversion,
risk seeking, risk tolerance or risk unawareness at different times and on different issues,
depending on circumstances. Mobility histories incorporate these risk landscapes and the extent
to which they are significant elements is dependent on particular socio-cultural interactions in
space and time as this chapter describes.

Thus, risk landscapes can change significantly over the life course. There is evidence that risk
seeking behaviour was a feature of an earlier part of the mothers’ life history, as Hannah said of
an earlier period in her life: ‘At the time there were no bits [areas] I would have avoided but I’d
feel differently now. It was all an adventure’. Other research (Lupton 1999) has argued that risk
seeking may be attributable to the masculine 'adventurer' culture, however, this research indicates
that it is more likely to be associated with gender constructs like motherhood as discussed in the
last chapter, and with changes in risk landscapes according to generation. Various coping
mechanisms, adopted at different stages in the life course, allow different levels of risk to be
Risk coping strategies

The majority of mothers discussed the range of coping strategies they adopted, the precautions they took during different stages of their lifetimes from carrying defensive weapons to walking in an assertive way.

Walking with an immense amount of anger. It was a very protected way of walking around. I would walk quickly, possibly jogging, pretending I’m having a conversation with someone on the mobile phone. Waving at someone who’s not there (Kirsty, mother)

Some mothers employed strategies to enable children to negotiate risk and develop coping strategies. Karen is taking precautions with George, enrolling him in a judo class to give him more confidence to deal with other children. There is also evidence that children developed their own coping strategies. Joe said that ‘If I was on my own I’d walk quite fast to get home quicker and safer’. This was the only indication that Joe has any worries about his journey during the research. Overall, two main strategies, adopted mainly by mothers, were based on the use of mobile phones and on travelling with other people.

In line with existing research on children’s use of mobile phones (Pain et al. 2005), it was found that rather than impacting significantly on mothers’ overall risk landscapes, they add another coping mechanism to those already in place. As Pain et al. (2005, 826) contend, they are ‘reshaping, rather than reducing, parents’ concerns’. Beth said that Molly (her daughter) having a mobile phone not only makes her feel better about her travelling alone, but is a prerequisite: ‘I said to her that she had to put it on if she wants to walk on her own ‘cause there’s been a few times I’ve tried to call her and she hasn’t had it on’. The use of mobile phones can, however, be a contentious issue for children and parents. A number of parents said their children did not take their mobile phones with them when they went out or did not turn them on and that this caused tension and stress. The mothers had adopted a certain strategy to deal with risk, but then their children had not applied it as planned. This is a demonstration of agency in not conceding to adultist notions of risk coping.

I don’t really like phones... My mum will ring me if its after about 4.15 but actually sometimes I meet my friends at the bottom of the road and I stay there for... a couple of minutes. (Jimmy, young person)

Jimmy explains that the reason for his dislike of mobile phones is based on issues of surveillance
and loss of independence. Jimmy is intent on maintaining his hard fought independence and
resists the use of the phone in undermining this. The young people were understandably more
content to adopt their mothers’ other main coping strategy of travelling with friends.

Mothers felt less worried about children in ‘big crowd of people’ going to school and with ‘lots of
doors to knock on if there was any problem’ (Carol, mother). Parents discussed how as part of
their personal biography, they too preferred to travel in groups, which allowed them to cope with
risks. As Linda said: ‘I would always go in a group. I preferred to be with other people, felt
safer...’ This may then have impacted on their feelings about their children travelling in this way.
Two of the young people, Ruby and Molly, who now travel with their mothers, have walked to
school independently with other children. Becca likes going with friends as otherwise you ‘might
get mugged or something’ Evie said: ‘I’ve been allowed for a while ‘cause I have some friends that
are older than me so they can take me to the park’, and Molly said she does not worry on her
journey as ‘there are so many people going’. When asked why she likes travelling with friends,
Ellie said ‘If I get hurt they can help and get help’.

Another emergent theme in this research, therefore, is related to children’s agency in determining
their own notions of risk. Following on from the discussion in chapter 5, it is evident that
children have their own risky experiences that can lead to a risk landscape as complex as their
mothers, and which can therefore impact on their mobility histories in a different way. George,
for example has had his own critical path towards risk aversion, developing his own risk
landscape, based on being bullied on the school bus and on falling out of a car when he was
younger. However, in line with Brannen (1999) and Jackson and Scott (1999), children’s agency
must be considered within socio-cultural and political contexts. Within this context, much of
children’s independence is based on mothers’ abilities to cope with risk. Children develop their
own risk landscapes and these are incorporated into their own mobility histories.

Risk landscapes are therefore an integral part of mobility histories. Risk experience can be based
on an accumulation of relatively minor risky experiences or one or two particularly critical risky
experiences, or both. Some experiences can be overridden with others and with other elements of
mobility histories, and these are built up and given relative importance throughout the lifecourse.
For example, Gill had a relatively risk averse risk landscape but her conviction that children
should be given independence is a dominant element in both hers and Luca’s mobility histories.
Although there is evidence that shared risk experience is incorporated into mobility histories, there is also evidence that the mobile outcomes may be different, as with Lisa, Lilly and Jasmine. These differences can be attributed to the impact of other factors within mobility histories, including experiences of motherhood and childhood.

Personal biographies of childhood and motherhood

The next component of mobility histories to be explored is participants’ personal biographies of motherhood and childhood. This includes their experiences of being mothered, of mothering and of being a child, and how this impacts on their current mobility horizons.

Mothers’ experience of childhood

Often inextricably linked to their risk experience, mothers’ general experiences of both motherhood and childhood, and children’s experiences of childhood can impact on their mobility outcomes. This is particularly relevant in relation to views of freedom and independence, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Jane grew up in a socially deprived part of Brighton and she feels that her experiences of both the space and of the socio-cultural context were profoundly influential in determining her general outlook in terms of mobility. Overall she feels strongly that she would like to give her children the opportunities and the boundaries that she felt were missing from her childhood. For Jane the investment in her children and the degree of preciousness of her children originated in an adverse reaction to past socio-cultural circumstances. In particular, Jane feels that she had ‘too much free time’ and too much spatial freedom when growing up, although this is only apparent in hindsight.

... if we just said such and such house, she would never really know. That’s why I felt she wasn’t really strict ‘cause she didn’t know what we were getting up to but she was always working so it was difficult for her. I’m the opposite now with my kids where they are, where they’re going. But they have their mobile phones now, so that makes a big difference. She wasn’t strict enough actually. At the time I enjoyed the freedom (Jane, mother).

People’s parenting biographies, their experience of being mothered and fathered, can therefore impact not only on their mothering culture but on their risk landscapes and mobility behaviour, and those of their children. Like Jane, Cheryl’s culture of mothering is based on avoiding a

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32 According to measures of multiple deprivation compared across all area in England, Scotland and Wales (ONS 2004).
parenting style that she now sees as risky. Overall, therefore, her approach, reflected in her mobility history, is to avoid her children having the same experiences as she had. Her mobility history is thereby relatively negative.

... my mother and her sisters and they’ve turned out to be wrong’uns and I’ve turned out to be the best of the bunch ‘cause I work and look after my kids so to that respect to a certain point I let them get away with more so I let them away with a bit more than their dad. I’m a little bit more lenient than their dad. (Cheryl, mother)

In contrast Sally’s mobility history is relatively positive. She felt that she was given a lot of freedom to do ‘all sorts of things’. Although she recalled a local child abduction and murder case when she was a child that has had some impact, she appeared to be relatively risk tolerant at the time of the research. Her background contrasts in some ways with the other mothers in that she does not recall any negative experiences that may have shaped an aversion to risk. On the contrary, she was given a lot of freedom when younger without major incident. Lisa too feels that she had a very ‘free’ childhood, playing freely on the South Downs. However, unlike some of the other mothers, whose childhood spaces are still presented as being risk free, Lisa now constructs the Downs as a ‘risky’ space. Her risk perception here seems unrelated to her own childhood experience and more about global and local cultures of risk in which open spaces are constructed as risky.

There was evidence of the need to place experiences in childhood within a wider picture, within socio-cultural contexts. Jane, who now has particular negative views about her childhood said that at the time she was content and it is only in hindsight that it is constructed as problematic. In contrast, Kirsty felt stifled by her childhood experiences at the time and sought strategies to cope with her restrictions. However, she did not realize the full extent of this until later, when it was set within a wider context.

I grew up in a very snotty middle class way I never could breath and it’s affected my uni. experiences. It was ages until I realised I’d had a completely different education than everyone else. (Kirsty, mother)

Thus, even though childhood and motherhood experiences can be significant in mobility histories, their significance changes over the lifecourse, as they are contextualized by prevalent socio-cultural conditions, and within changing risk landscapes. As Hall (2005) argues mobility histories are not therefore based on a series of sequential experiences, but each component changes over time and in relation to other components. Some mothers felt that their experiences...
of childhood were outside of family norms and this seems to have been a significant factor in their mobility histories.

**Deviant family histories**

Family history is of course integral to mobility histories with family characteristics reflected in mobility histories and particularly in issues of independence. This is particularly true for the mothers whose childhoods did not fit with ideologies of a good, nurturing family structure as discussed in chapter 3 (Duncan 2005; Duncan and Edwards 1999; Hendrick 2003; Wyness 2000). These deviations from established norms can directly impact on negotiations of independent mobility. Liz remembered that her early childhood was fairly unrestricted and that she began travelling independently before she was nine. However, her family context changed, as she became aware of both parents’ alcoholism.

> When I was older my family life was unusual. Both my parents were alcoholics so we didn’t have consistency. One day you would be told off if you go in at 9 and the next day it wouldn’t matter of you got in at five in the morning. I didn’t recognise it as inconsistency at the time I was confused because yesterday I could come in at a certain time and today I’m getting told off. I didn’t bring any friends home. I always went to them (Liz, mother)

Kirsty too feels that she had a difficult family life when she was younger. Even though she was given relative freedom, as with Liz, this was construed as negative. Nevertheless, it appears to have contributed to her needing to ‘escape’ and feel unrestricted.

> My father left when I was three. I thought we were going to someone’s for tea and we ended up staying there eleven years and he wasn’t very pleasant and his daughters weren’t very pleasant and there were three of us so that was five women and my mother and him in this house with two very different ideas of what was OK and acceptable. We used the front door and these older step sisters were only allowed to use the back door. So it was quite a clash and quite difficult. And I was at the bottom of the pile because I was youngest so I was either let off everything and on the other hand really resented by everyone for being let off. Age wise, I was really removed from the rest of them. (Kirsty, mother)

As discussed previously, Cheryl feels that her individual beliefs about mothering have enabled her to meet standards of ‘good’ mothering, which her mother failed to meet. She lived with her grandparents from an early age due to a breakdown in her family. Cheryl feels that her freedom was directly related to her living with her grandparents.
I was brought up by my grandparents so I had a little bit more freedom and also at that age we did have more freedom that what you do now. I used to play on the green and walk over the field. From about ten 'cause we moved here just before my 10th birthday. I have a brother but he didn't live with me so it was just me. (Cheryl, mother)

Of course it is not only past family contexts that influence mobility histories, but current family structures also.

Current family structures

Over a quarter of the mothers are separated from the fathers of the children who took part in the research. On the whole, these mothers were reluctant to discuss the details of birth fathers' involvement, however current partners generally adopted the role of birth fathers in terms of mobility decision-making. Loren's mother Fiona and Becca's mother Liz all live with different partners now, all of whom have a role in determining their children's independence. As Fiona said:

Loren knows he's not her real dad but he's always been around since she was little so she sees him as the person who does the discipline - the father type role. She doesn't mind unless she thinks it's really unfair and then she doesn't like it.

This demonstrates the role of the family in contextualizing risk and mobility, and particularly how children negotiate within these structures. Fiona's current family structures are now similar to those she grew up with, as she said 'mum was so kind to us and never criticised and my dad was the last resort, the strict one and it's very much like this in our family'. In general, it appears that negotiations with social parents were no different from negotiations with birth parents with no evidence of conflict between mothers and birth fathers in families where they are separated. Instead it was more apparent in this research that children responded to the new family structure by adopting the same negotiation tactics as other children.

... I think they know our weaknesses. They know who to come to for what. Being out longer she'll go to both of us and not tell. And then go with whoever said the longest. (Liz, mother)

Experiences of being mothered and being a child are significant in mobility histories, although they are not necessarily represented in the present as they were experienced in the past. Instead recollections of past experiences are dependent on the type of socio-cultural filters, similar to the cultural filters that Adams (1995) discussed in relation to risk. Here prevalent socio-cultural
contexts, including the family, are important and can lead to the prominence of certain recollections over others at different times and in different places. Of course, at the same time, other elements of mobility histories, such as risky experiences and influences of the media within risk landscapes can override them. Another aspect of personal biographies of childhood in mobility histories is that of transition, which Douglas (1986) argued is risky in itself. As chapter 3 discusses, within universal notions, childhood itself is in transition (Hendrick 2003; James et al. 1998; Valentine 2004; Wyness 2000). Of course it is argued here that childhood is more than a stage in the transition to adulthood, as children are seen as social actors in themselves (James et al. 1998). Nevertheless, childhood involves some significant transitional periods and these are discussed in the next section.

Childhood transitions

Childhood involves a series of transitional periods and transitional spaces. In particular, moving from one school to another can be a particularly crucial transition in mobility histories. This was an important issue for all of the young people in the research as they had either experienced this in the last few years or were approaching this important transitional period. This transition is critical to this research as first experiences of independent mobility usually occur during or leading up to this period. It is for this reason that children in the last few years of primary school and the first few years of secondary school were included in the research. However all of the young participants in this research gained independence before this transition period. For those young participants who had already negotiated the transition to secondary school, issues relating directly to this transition did not appear to impact significantly on their experiences of the school journey, although issues often associated with the transition such as negotiations of friendship groups and bullying (see Humphrey and Ainscow 2006; Zeedyk 2003 for an explication) are discussed as part of these experiences. In addition, the emphasis in this research is on the journey to school and, although recognizing that children and young people's experiences of primary and secondary may be significantly different, more prominence is given here to the spatial and social variations in the journey to school, which will reflect this transitional period in a broader sense.

This was also the case for the mothers in the study, in their own transitions from primary to secondary school. For a small number of mothers their transitions were uneventful, but for others they were either an 'exciting', 'very positive experience' - due to the sudden increase in risk and freedom - or for the same reasons 'scary', 'difficult' and 'frightening'. At times, this transition can
therefore be full of ambivalent emotions around risk as it can be both frightening and exciting, and this is evident when some of the young people talk about moving to secondary school. Connor recognizes risk in his prospective transition to secondary school and is excited about this; he ‘can’t wait’. Even when he talks about potential ‘bog washing’ he does so with air of excitement, although there is obviously also some reservation around this potential bullying experience. Joe, who is the same age as Connor, refers to being a ‘bit nervous’ because he ‘might get lost’, reflecting that transitions usually involve some form of ‘unknown’ and this in itself can be deemed as risky.

It is not only individual’s feelings about their own transitions that are relevant here but also how mothers perceived their children’s transitions. Of course this is often bound up in their own experiences of a similar transition. Mothers who experienced their transition to secondary as mostly positive were more likely to view their children’s transition positively. Some of the mothers were concerned mainly about friendship groups. Lindsey adopted coping mechanisms such as ‘he will be alright ‘cause he’s quite gregarious and sociable’ and because he had a controlled trial run on the bus. The transition, however, was a big step for Kim and she perceives it to be a difficult time for her children.

It was an issue going from a small place to a bigger place. And I was probably happy where I was. I didn’t like having to move onto something bigger and a bit more scary. (Kim about her own transition)

It’s just making the step from primary to secondary and having not gone on their own before. (Kim about her children’s prospective transitions)

The othered, marginal space of the transition can therefore be viewed as a positive or negative risky space. It can also be a space for holding on and not ‘letting go’. Cheryl wants to remain in Billy’s transition to independence for as long as possible: ‘We’re in that transition. I don’t want him to go on his own. But the time is coming that he’s got to’. Billy had been attending secondary school for five months and was still escorted there by his mother. Both Cheryl and Billy seek ‘safety’ in this transition, as there is no need to make a definitive decision about independence.

Therefore, although, childhood experiences can impact significantly on mobility horizons, for some they are more important than for others. For example, Lisa enjoyed her childhood and having the freedom to play on the Downs, but she would not allow her children to do the same
thing due to wider notions of risk. Liz, on the other hand, seeks to reverse her experiences of childhood in giving her children the boundaries of risk aversion she now associates with ‘good’ mothering as opposed to the deviant family context that she grew up in. Thus mobility history can be based on avoidance of experiences of childhood and mothering, or on replication of these. Most of the recollections of childhood and mothering are filtered through socio-cultural contexts and often important only in hindsight. Transitional periods in particular are important childhood contexts and can often evoke ambivalence towards risk and mobility, as Cheryl and Billy demonstrate in seeking refuge in their transition and avoiding the confrontation of issues of independent mobility.

It is evident, therefore that personal biographies of motherhood and childhood are significant in mobility histories, and that the spatiality of these biographies is also significant. Spatiality is indeed a key underlying theme throughout mobility histories and is relevant to all elements, including risk landscapes and this is considered during their exploration. However, the spatiality of risk also justifies independent consideration as this was specifically referred to by participants, and thereby emerged as a theme in its own right.

**Constructing mobile spaces**

Identity and place were recurrent themes throughout the interviews with mothers, and had a significant bearing on risk and mobility outlooks. Both risky experience and discussions of childhood are firmly embedded in place and space. The spatiality of mobility is therefore an important component in mobility histories. The following will explore the construction of mobile spaces by mothers and children, both in general terms and in terms of the specific space of the journey to school. It was apparent from interviews with mothers that constructions and reconstructions of mobile spaces, and particularly constructions of risky space, occurred at various times during their lifecourse and were dependent on the spatiality of particular life stages. These notions of what makes a space risky then accumulate into a generalised construction of public space as risky.

**What makes a space risky?**

A number of the mothers had lived in London in previous lifestages before they had children, and constructed certain parts of the urban area as risky depending on their experience there. Lisa
spoke of places in London where she felt out of place and would not venture into, so this is clearly part of her risk landscape. Beth had similar experiences in London and describes a particular situation when she felt out of place and intimidated because of this.

I was on a bus with a whole lot of black people and me and I felt a bit intimidated. Up until then I never really thought about black and white and those issues but I couldn't help feeling intimidated but nobody on it was being intimidating. (Beth, mother).

This quote is relative not only to issues of race but also to spatial and cultural familiarity. Beth's space with more black and minority ethnic people than white people was considered risky as it is beyond her socio-culturally constructed familiar.

Space, therefore, is constructed as risky particularly if it is not familiar. More often, however, risky space is also based on risky experiences. In terms of the school journey, it was the mapping of hazards by both mothers and their children, throughout the space and at different times of the day, as described in chapter 5, that lead to constructions of risky space for particular mobile spaces. Chloe and Connor (young people) had worries on their journey based on a certain area, as they had experienced fear there due to risky encounters with other children. In some circumstances, mothers had no direct experience of hazards such as these, but nevertheless built them into their own mental risk map of the journey.

For mothers this mental risk mapping is compounded by their own experiences of the journey to school in childhood, with a number of mothers encountering specific risky spaces on their journey to school. Like many of the mothers, Liz's experience of walking to both primary and secondary school when she was a child is embedded in place and the construction of 'risky places'. She talks of being 'scared' while 'walking up an alleyway' and 'across a golf course' on her journey to and from school. Again, this is often reconstructed as risky at a later point in their lifecourse. Maria walked to secondary school, which entailed walking up an alleyway 'that you wouldn't dream of walking up now but I was never worried, only when I think back'. This is demonstrated particularly by mothers who now live in the same place as they grew up. Fiona made direct links between her surroundings when she was growing and her situation now as she grew up in the same area and had problems with children in the same place her daughter Loren now plays.
We used to come down to this park but sometimes we had problems with other children. It’s normal to have problems with other children but these things stick in your mind and that affects me. The children that live around here seem to knock on each other’s door and then go to the park. I take her over there and leave her there. If there are older children in the park there can be problems. They get annoyed with her and I have to tell them off and then I get scared that their parents are going to tell me off. (Fiona, mother)

Fiona has direct experience of spaces where she felt intimidated and therefore is now applying these to Loren not only in terms of the kinds of spaces, but in terms of specific spaces. In contrast to Loren, Yvonne’s children never play unsupervised on the street. Yvonne feels that her street is particularly isolating, which seems to compound Yvonne’s risky experiences as a child. Yvonne’s family is isolated by both their spatiality and lack of local social network. This appears to be linked with the local space being constructed as risky.

As discussed in chapter 5, communities form the context for local discourses of risk and this was evident amongst the participants, although perhaps less so for those, like Sally, who felt particularly isolated as their isolation ‘protected’ them from community blame. Sally said that she is ‘anti-social’ and does not speak with anyone except her father about her children’s risk or mobility. Thus, mothers and children’s experiences in space map out the journey to school according to risks they have previously experienced, which are predicated on socio-cultural and spatial contexts, as well as other experiences they have at different stages in their lifecourse. In addition to the wide range of spatial experiences that heighten risk in these spaces, a number of other overarching themes emerged in the data in terms of risky space: risky public space, risky dark space, and mobile space in general.

This research found that risky space was related to socio-cultural divides of private and public as discussed in chapter 2, despite arguments that this division is so blurred it is non-existent (Sheller and Urry 2003). The notion of public and private space is evident in terms of the school journey, as most mothers discussed the increased risk to their children outside the ‘privacy’ of the home. Carol said she worried more about her older daughter because she has a longer walk home than the others. However, this is mitigated by the presence of some friends along the way and ‘she’ll go into their house and ring us to pick her up’. Carol presents the home as a safer place with risks
increasing as her daughter travelled further from it. In addition, as the journey was longer there were more opportunities to be in a risky space. This reflects other mothers constructions of the home as safe and public space as risky. This divide is also indicated, although less explicitly, by the young people in the study who spoke of wanting to get home quickly to ‘relax’ and ‘chill out’, which suggests that more public spaces are generally more risky for them also. The public/private dichotomy is therefore useful in contextualizing risk in different physical and social spaces.

Another significant dichotomy to emerge in characterizing risky space was that of nighttime/daytime, darkness/daylight. All of the interviews with mothers touched on this, with even those mothers who were more risk tolerant, being worried about their children travelling in the dark. Night time is a socially constructed and embodied space. The participants had particular reactions to being in public space at night based on how this space was constructed over their lifetimes and their embodied mobile experiences at night.

Liz does not like her children getting the bus in the dark and this results in her giving them a lift in the car when this situation arises. Kirsty also feels that there are added risks in the dark as ‘at night there’s more hiding places so it’s less easy to see. In daylight I feel fine ‘cause I can see’. The body therefore behaves differently at night than in daylight and the mothers in the study felt that their children - like themselves - need all their senses to cope with risk. Beth did not travel on her own at night in London before she had children, and ensures that Molly, her daughter does not travel in darkness independently. For Beth the degrees of darkness have a great bearing on whether Molly travels independently or not and again it is based on being visible and there being more people around in public space:

It feels they’re more vulnerable. When there’s not so many people around. At the minute when she goes to school there’s hundreds of people around who would recognise her. (Beth)

Even when mothers such as Gill talk of being ‘pretty fearless’, they go on to say they would not travel at night to avoid ‘unnecessary risks’. For Liz (mother), part of her journey home from school involved walking across an open space in darkness and she would now avoid certain areas in the dark, such as alleyways. Liz is aware, however, that the increased riskiness of ‘darkness’ and ‘night’ is psycho-socially constructed.
I would be worried because psychologically nasty things happen in the dark and they can't
be seen so easily. People hiding round corners. I sound like a complete headcase. It's the
same as her playing out in the evenings and I think it must be about 9.30 and it's only 7.
(Liz, mother)

Different attitudes to travel in the dark was the greatest contrast between mothers and their
children. As opposed to all of the mothers, only a small number of the young people expressed
concerns about travelling in the dark. Sean, Lindsey’s son, contradicts his mother in saying that he
travels in the dark. Lindsey said her children ‘never travel at night’ but Sean said I do it on my
own’. Some children travel in the mornings in the dark, including Luca and George, and were
unconcerned about this. George was more troubled by the cold than the dark, although he
associated one with the other.

It just seems colder. It’s not so bad when you get on the bus ‘cause there’s normally some
sunlight. But up here there’s nothing – just pitch black and it’s cold. (George, young
person)

For the mothers in the research, darkness means lack of people and being out of control, not
knowing if it is too late for their children to be out. It is about constructing public space at night
time (and sometimes in the morning also) as a risky space, and changing mobility behaviour to
cope with this risky space. Following on from discussions in the previous section on childhood
including significant transitional periods, it can be argued that mobile space itself is risky as it is
transitional (Douglas 1986).

Mobile spaces are transitional spaces as they are neither settled nor secure and this is risky. Being
or feeling ‘settled’ for some was a prerequisite for coping with their risk landscape and then being
able to enter into ‘free’ negotiations on the mobility independence of their children. This is
particularly the case for those mothers who felt ‘out of place’ or unsettled at a crucial stage in their
lifecourse.

Mum travelled quite a bit. She was married at 18. I was four or five when my dad left home
so she was alone a long time. Then she remarried and had my brother but in between she
was travelling around the country. We travelled with the fair for about a year. We would
have gone all over the place but I don’t really remember travelling a lot. We went to other
schools but I only remember one school. I thought it was good then but looking back it
wasn’t as I was very unsettled. We’ve been in this house eleven years and I’ve never wanted
to move. It’s made me want to stay settled. So it must have affected me. (Jane, mother)

For Jane it is very important that after a childhood of travelling around a lot, she wanted to
'ground' her family and remain 'immobile'. She said that feeling settled has then enabled her to
give Ellie, her daughter, mobility independence at a relatively young age. Of course the school
journey is thereby a risky space as it is mobile. However, this risk is constructed differently within
different socio-cultural and spatial contexts, by mothers and children. Spaces that are constructed
as risky often need to be reconstructed to take account of other experiences. When Lisa’s
daughters had a risky experience on the way to school, she subsequently reduced their
independence by walking with them in an attempt to cope with the risks. However, she soon felt
very out of place in what had become her daughters’ space, which Jasmine and Lilly had very
carefully mapped with social encounters, landmarks and claims of ownership, ‘bugseying’ different
parts of it as explained in chapter 5. Feeling out of place in mobile spaces can therefore impact on
individual’s mobility, on the one hand increasing the independent mobility of children through
excluding their mother from their space, and on the other by restricting mobility to areas that
evoke a sense of belonging as the next section describes.

Less risky spaces – nostalgic and green

In contrast to these risky, transitional spaces there are nostalgic spaces, which are settled and ‘in
place’, but also relatively free; most importantly they are less risky spaces. They are the less risky
spaces that mothers in the study referred to as they sought to create a less risky portrayal of the
past, even when socio-cultural notions of these spaces may have changed. They are also spaces
that have some emotional meaning, usually associated with particularly happy and carefree
lifestages of childhood.

... the close we lived in there were quite a few children of the same age, boys and girls and
we tended to all stick together. We used to go out in the summer and ride our bikes, sounds
idyllic really but everyone always knew, the rules always were that you would all stick
together and nobody wondered off on their own (Linda, mother)

Linda’s nostalgia is associated with a particular place and way of life: ‘We lived in a close that had
a really nice green in the middle and we used to play out in that and we’d be in and out of each
other’s houses’. She feels very similarly about where they live now, a quiet cul-de-sac, and admits
that she chose to live there to replicate the living conditions of her childhood. Gill also explained
that part of the reason she has encouraged Luca’s independence is based on her wanting to
reproduce a time when she felt able to act out a childhood idyll, which included exploring ‘hidden
passageways’ and she used this to justify her risky experience of travelling around searching for
Luca when he stayed out past his curfew.

Karen too has a particularly nostalgic view of her childhood: 'Because I had a nice childhood I would hope that I could make their childhoods as nice', but feels unable to recreate this due to changing socio-cultural and spatial contexts. Karen constantly references her ‘idyllic’ childhood and contrasts this with George’s risky experiences getting the bus to school. When she talks about George’s experience of bullying she contrasts this with her own childhood in which there was no trouble or bullying. The emotional recreation of idealized spaces, therefore, gives a sense of belonging and a sense of knowing that are associated with a less risky space. Nearly all of the mothers, including mothers who had both rural and urban upbringings, experienced childhoods that they believe involved greater use of public space for play than their children now have.

Following on from the discussions of risk landscapes in chapter 5, the most talked about space for children, in contrast to their mother’s risky spaces, was open, green space. Most of the children who had an opportunity to walk through a green space on the way to school, said that this was their favourite part of the journey, even those young people who also identified risks in this space. So, although for this minority the space was risky, it was not defined as such in an overall evaluation, as it presented opportunities for enjoyment and excitement, emotions more often associated with risk seeking for pleasure. One of the youngest children attached importance to this type of risk as he challenged himself to cross the monkey bars in the park playground on his way to school every morning. For most however, the open space represented a calm and peaceful transition to or from school.

You can turn off here to go to school. No, we’ll go this way. It’s very peaceful. I like walking through the park better than the roads because you get to see all the... in the morning all the dew on the grass and stuff. We’re going past the tennis courts and we go along that lane and then we get to the school. (Molly, young person)

These spaces seem to have the therapeutic quality that Conradson (2005) describes in terms of the emotionality of space, representing tranquillity and relaxation, whilst also representing a potential for challenge and excitement.

Spatiality is therefore a significant specific component of mobility history as well as a theme that runs throughout the other components. There are two main reasons for this, the representation of space as risky and as less risky and the relative impacts the construction of space in these ways
has on mothers’ and children’s mobility. Risky space is often space that is unfamiliar, or that has been constructed as risky due to past experiences. It is often constructed and reconstructed as risky according to different stages in the lifecourse and the prevalent socio-cultural contexts of these lifestages, with nostalgic spaces important for some of the mothers. Space that is public, dark or in transition is particularly associated with risk and although this seems relatively constant through different lifestages, children seem less aware of these differentiations. Space can therefore be constructed according to both lifestage and generation. In addition, space can be less risky and this is often a result of the experience of particular emotions and memories, which will be discussed in more detail later. Firstly however, the notions of freedoms and in particular the factors that lead to the giving of freedom, will be discussed.

Freedoms

As the preceding sections have shown many of the pathways of mobility histories are linked to risk, childhood and mothering experience and are embedded in space. They also demonstrate that each of these elements of mobility history is bound up in notions of freedom and independence. This section therefore explores different cultures of freedom and their influences, drawing from Sheller’s (2006) work on freedom and mobility. Sheller categorizes different types of freedom including personal and relational. Personal freedom is individual and based on everyday mobility and migration. Relational freedom is based on the freedom to restrict and extend the freedom of others. It is enabled and disabled by the social and built environment, which ‘empowers some to be more mobile at the expense of others’ (Ibid, 6), in this case children.

In terms of mobility, mothers most often discussed personal freedom in terms of their gendered roles. This was not based on escaping, but on coping with mobility demands. For the majority of mothers who could drive a car, it represented literal freedom, not in the representational or metaphorical sense discussed by Cresswell (2006), but in a tangible way. Mobilities here are socially produced and this is a reflection of societal inequalities. For some mothers, the car is freedom from the transport disadvantage that arises as a result of unequal gender roles as discussed in chapter 2 and chapter 5.

However, much of the discussion of freedoms in this thesis relates to relational freedom (Sheller 2006), the giving or receiving of freedom from another person often in relation to their experience of freedom. As discussed previously, some mothers sought ‘fixedness’ as a result of
too much freedom given in their childhood. Jane feels she gives her children ‘the opposite’ to her experience of freedom as a child as she felt her unsettled childhood freedom was linked to a degree of lack of care. Jane however, feels a deep ambivalence, on the one hand understanding why her mother gave them an excessive amount of freedom, but not wanting to repeat this pattern with her own children. In contrast, Maria links the restrictions on her movement as a child, when they were not allowed to play outside their garden, with ‘good’ parenting. She was therefore very accepting of this: ‘I just took it that we never did [have spatial freedom] really’. Maria here focuses on the sense of security that her restrictions signified, tying in with her nostalgic views of childhood.

In contrast, other mothers like Kirsty felt restricted as children and now seek to remedy this through their children. Kirsty said she ‘loved the idea’ of playing in the street. She explains, however: ‘I spent a lot of time in my room. I felt totally restricted’. This sense of restrictedness is very important to Kirsty. She now very much has relational freedoms in mind when deciding about Ben’s freedoms: ‘Whatever restrictions he has I have the same. I’m not saying one thing and then me going out all night dancing’.

For others, there is less correlation between feeling free in both childhood and adulthood (before having children) and the provision of freedom to children in the present. Despite having a number of negative risky experiences, Yvonne felt that she had substantial spatial freedom when she was a child. She also describes her time at university as ‘really free... It was amazing, the amount of freedom’. However, her children are now restricted to supervised play only outside their home and are escorted to school. For Yvonne, like a number of other mothers, risky experience is more prominent in her mobility history than notions of freedom. Again there are some critical issues of freedom at both ends of the scale between ‘fixedness’ and complete freedom. There are a number of mothers in the middle, who had about the same amounts of freedom as their peers and are giving their children about the same amounts of freedom as their peers, as discussed in chapter 5 in relation to the impact of local discourses on risk landscapes.

Just as there are acceptable levels of risk, there are socio-culturally constructed notions of acceptable freedom and of course, these are interrelated. Only a few mothers said they give their children less freedom than their friends, based on local discourses of risk and freedom. Even where mothers are not engaged in local discourses, they observe the behaviour of other children and decide on their own children’s freedom in relation to this. As Fiona said: ‘Nobody else
[travels to school independently] around here so even though they let them play in the park they don’t let them walk up and I’m using them as a kind of barometer.

Children were more likely to discuss freedom rather than risk in relation to their independent mobility. Children are aware of differentials in levels of freedom and seem happiest to have about the same levels of freedom as their friends. As Joe said: ‘Not all my friends are allowed to walk home on their own... Some people are allowed out more then me and some aren’t, I’m in the middle’. For children who have less freedom it is evident that they would like to have more even if they do no articulate this directly. Lucy indicated that freedom could be an issue when she talks about other children who have more: ‘My friend Phoebe is allowed to go on her own but her mum can see her from the kitchen window playing in the park... Some year 6s and Year 5s who live near the school walk’. The young people were therefore aware of their boundaries and viewed them in relation to other children. These boundaries can, however, change in relation to both children’s agency and, more often, adultist notions of childhood, which are often based on spatial as well as temporal boundaries.

Creating boundaries to freedom

Setting up or adhering to physical boundaries of freedom was common amongst the participants and could include ‘the end of the road’, ‘out front down our road’, ‘just round the block’ or ‘as far as a certain tree down there’. They usually marked out areas that were well known to the mothers and usually within their range of vision. Temporal boundaries were often based around eating times or bedtimes but most often night time as discussed previously.

Before the lights come on ‘cause mum doesn’t like me being out after dark. They have limited places. If it’s late I’d have to stay around this area but in the daytime I’d be able to go up to my friends, who lives ten minutes away. (Ellie, young person)

Boundaries can also be based on mothers’ experience and perceptions of their children’s competencies to negotiate risk in public space, as discussed in chapter 3 and this often correlates with age.

Harry has been asking if he can go to school on his own. Its not that I don’t trust him. [To Harry: Its not that I don’t trust you]. It just that I think the roads aren’t safe enough at his age. I have suggested he walks a little bit ahead. But I like to still be able to see him .... If I hadn’t been working there it would have been different. Possible year 5 we would have started it off. (Kim, mother)
Of course boundaries are not usually based on either age or competence, but are a combination of a number of factors. Nearly all of the young people, with the exception of some of the older children were content with remaining within established boundaries of freedom. Evie, for example, feels unrestricted, even though she has a time limit on staying out and didn’t see this as a set time as it was negotiable. A common theme with regard to all the boundaries established is control, and particularly control of risk. The mothers needed to know where their children were so that they could develop their risk landscapes accordingly and apply coping measures if appropriate. These measures, such as having a mobile phone and being with other people as discussed previously, were a means of defending themselves against attacks from strangers. Although Liz said: ‘The phone has completely changed what freedom they can or can’t have’, phones were generally part of a wider arsenal of measures of surveillance and control that mothers adopt in order to negotiate their risk landscapes.

Negotiating boundaries

There is evidence of intense negotiation of freedoms amongst all the participants in line with Backett-Milburn and Harden (2004) and Valentine (2004). For a number of mothers, they are clear that although this will take place, they have the ultimate control. As Carol said:

There would be disagreements and discussions with them. We often have to do the ‘this is what we say and that’s how it is’. We will lay down the law... My eldest would prefer more freedom. She wants to stay out later and we just say no.

Amber (Carol’s daughter) also talks about disagreements with her parents about issues of independence, although she does go on to say that she has a lot of freedom, like most of the young people.

Quite a lot of stuff with my mum sometimes... and my dad. ‘Cause I’m not allowed to stay out as late as I’d like to. Like all my friends are allowed to stay out till midnight and I’m only allowed to stay out till 11-11.30. I’m not allowed to sleepover if I’m too tired. But mostly I’m allowed to do what I want. (Amber, young person)

In contrast to all the other mothers, Carol is less worried about risks to her children than their father but nevertheless makes decisions about their freedoms. For Carol it is the increased familiarity with her children’s behaviour that enables her to make a better informed decision. In
all cases, mothers were the ultimate decision-makers and at the same time, were less likely to extend boundaries. Only one young person, Jimmy, felt that he had the ultimate sanction in terms of mobility freedom, although it did appear that he was relatively powerful in terms of negotiations. As Hannah said ‘We did discuss it, but he was adamant, he knew what he wanted’.

For most mothers then the reason for their decision-making is that they are, as Lisa said, ‘stricter and more worried’. Both Lisa’s daughters, Lilly and Jasmine, agree with this.

I tend to go in at the very concerned end and he will talk me down. I will give in to a certain extent. If my husband had made the decisions he’d be playing on the street with nappies. He points to the freedom that we had but I say we did live in [a small town] and there weren’t so many cars about or so many people. He had more freedom than me. (Lisa, mother)

All the young participants, including Carol’s children, generally think that it is their father who is more likely to say yes to requests for boundary extensions.

Dad’s like they can go on their own and mums like no they can’t and mums like fine you can’t go on your own and we’re like ‘why you always take mums side and he’s like just do as you’re told. (Lilly, young person)

Gender is therefore highly significant in terms of freedoms for children and this appears to be based on different risk landscapes and the notion that this is part of the mothering role. So although children have developed their own risk landscapes and have their own mobility histories, it is this process of ultimate decision-making that is most problematic in terms of the positioning of children’s agency. Some children, like Jimmy, demonstrated agency and had a role in negotiations but ultimately decision-making is based on adultist notions. Although there is an inevitable tension between mothers and children in relation to this, all the young people said they were happy with the amount of freedom they had. However, despite negotiations with children - which have some impact - ultimate decision-making in terms of freedoms is based on gendered notions of mothering and risk.

As well as risk coping strategies identified previously, surveillance through use of mobile phones or through other people watching can extend boundaries of freedom and independence.
They don’t really play on the street. It depends who’s out... when they do go out they’re told to stick between lamp posts in the summer and the doors open... so I like to keep an eye out ... I told a couple of neighbours to look out for him’. (Hannah, mother)

The young people seemed very aware of this and like Luca, joking with his friends that the filming he was doing as part of the research was an extension of this, seemed to accept surveillance as an everyday occurrence. Surveillance is a ‘normal’ part of their lives as they seem aware of the numerous television programmes that are based on it. Only a small number of mothers, such as Yvonne and Maria, still watched their children when playing and these were all mothers of younger children. Yvonne’s children would therefore be further restricted if they were not watched, as she explains: ‘only if we’re in the front ... otherwise they wouldn’t be allowed out there’. Surveillance can therefore extend boundaries and, in this respect, appears to be less insidious than Fotel and Thomsen (2004) argue when they claim that children are excluded from mobility due to increased surveillance by parents and other agencies.

A more important restrictive issue is the direct control of journeys by mothers and its impact on the development of skills by children during journeys with their mothers (Kegerreis 1993) - an issue that has been discussed since Hillman et al.’s study of independent mobility in 1990. Most of the mothers accompanying children to and from school directed their travel on the way to school asking them to ‘watch out’ and cross the road in particular places. This coincided with children being less spatially aware and apparently free of worries. Lewis, in his video, asked his mother for directions about where to cross the road and Yvonne constantly gave directions and advice throughout his journey to school in a form of risk management that pervaded their journey, becoming the main talking point.

It is journeys that are less able to be controlled by mothers that are seen to be more risky and this may account for the extent of worries about bullying on the school bus. The bus is a confined space, which mothers feel is uncontrolled and uncontrollable. As Carol said: ‘When Amber first went off I was anxious about any bullying on the bus’. However Carol was able to employ a coping strategy: ‘we made sure amongst the mothers that there was a little group of them going from the same place’.

As discussed previously for children in transition to increased freedom and independence, mothers are more aware of the need to relinquish some control, but also a need to maintain a
level of risk management. Issues of control in order to cope with risk arise in all the boundary setting issues in this research. In line with discussions in chapter 3, boundaries are not usually based on age but on a complex web of issues (O’Brien 2000), although age is a useful guide in terms of the overall outcomes and is used by mothers in this way. For example, the young people were aware that their freedom would be extended automatically when they reached certain ages. As Sean said: ‘curfews get extended when I’m fourteen’. For other mothers, whose children travel independently, there is a sense of disempowerment, of being unable to manage the risks their children may face. As Liz said: ‘you feel like you want to protect them and you can’t’.

 Freedoms are thus both gendered and generational. They are also personal to the extent that children determine their own, which is limited, and in terms of mothers’ restricted personal freedoms in relation to their mothering role. However, in this study, they are more often relational freedoms, based on mothers giving freedom to their children, often on the basis of freedoms they received when they were children. Indeed mothers justified the creation of boundaries by referring to their own experience of ‘too much’ freedom and lack of boundaries, which they associate with ‘bad’ parenting as discussed previously. However on the other hand, freedoms were also given if mothers felt restricted in their childhoods.

 Overall, there are acceptable levels of freedom and these are, in part, defined by local cultures through freedoms given to peers. Children demonstrate agency in relation to freedom, both directly through negotiations of boundaries and also through the acceptance of existing boundaries. These were often extended through the employment of risk coping strategies and through surveillance, which again, many children accepted as the norm. Although, children are seen to demonstrate agency within adultist norms in relation to freedom. It is through the next element of mobility histories - the emotion and social aspects of the journey to school - that children’s agency is most apparent and less influenced by adults. There is a sense of children making the mobile space of the school journey their own.

 Mobile emotionalities and socialities

 As outlined previously, risk cannot explain all aspects of decision-making around the school journey. There are aspects of childhood and motherhood biographies, freedoms and space, which operate outside risk landscapes. Emotionalities and socialities emerged as significant elements of mobility histories and although emotionality in particular, can be associated with risk, these
elements are more often experienced separately from risk. Emotional mobilities are not only an emotional response to risk but also an emotional response to moving, socialising, and being free and independent. Participants, both mothers and their children, use a range of emotive language to describe their journeys including 'freaked me out', 'alarmed' 'really really nervous' ‘absolutely horrible’ and ‘absolutely hate’, ‘love this part’, ‘feel really relaxed’, ‘very calm’ and ‘very peaceful’.

The journey to school is about freedom and risk in many forms. It is about having the space to play, about coping with risks and gaining mobility independence from parents, and involvement in decision-making. It is also about feeling free to engage socially and it is apparent that this is an important part of the journey to school. The following explores the significance of the emotional and social aspects of the school journey and experiences that are related to it.

Positive emotional experiences: pleasure and relaxation

I like... every time I go up it I say welcome to poo valley. If I'm sad or I'm crying I stop it and say welcome to poo valley. It makes me feel happy walking up there. I like to balance on the squares. I never do it on the way back. Sometimes I step inside the lines, not on the cracks. It's a game where you're not allowed on the lines. (Jake, young person)

As discussed previously there is evidence that mobility behaviour is often replicated through children, particularly if mothers favour a particular mode and this can be due to a particularly positive emotional experience as well as a risky one. A number of the mothers recalled enjoying all or particular aspects of their own journeys to school associating these experiences with positive emotions, and this has impacted on their children's mobility. For some, this results in risk tolerance as the positive elements of their mobility history take precedence. In turn this is bound up other elements. For Maria, her positive experiences of walking are part of a nostalgic view of her childhood and the association of 'good' mothering with her escorted journeys.

I remember my walks as being perfectly pleasant. I remember my mam pushing my sister in the pram, one of those old fashioned ones. She used to cut through the cemetery and she agree to meet us at the bottom of the steps and we’d all walk back and she always had something for us we used to talk and play on the way home. We had to get cake for dinner but it was always pleasant. (Maria, mother)

Fiona’s positive experiences are in the car where she felt ‘safe and relaxed’. She still feels the same and experiences difficulty using other modes including walking. She now finds excuses to use the car rather than walk. As well as having positive experiences of the school bus herself, Gill’s
experience of Luca's travelling is very positive, including an effective walking bus at primary school and reports of enjoyable school bus journeys to secondary school. For some mothers therefore, the positive aspects of their mobility history are critical and override their risk landscapes in decision-making.

For most young participants, there were as many positive emotional reactions to parts of the journey as negative ones, suggesting they do not necessarily consider it a risky space. These were usually based on relaxing, 'chilling out' feeling calm and contented. As Lucy said 'you can relax into the car', especially on chilly days' and about walking that it 'blows the cobwebs away and you're ready for a hard day at school. For many the journey is an opportunity to either emotionally prepare themselves for school or to de-stress from the day at school. During Joe's journey observations include: 'overall a very calm walk' and 'very peaceful', especially so compared with the bustling space near the school. On Ellie's journey she also seemed 'very relaxed', especially as we walked further from the school and got closer to her house, and on Harry's journey he 'sings and chants rhymes and appears very happy en route'. For Harry, his journey is fairly risk-free as he did not pay much attention to the roads as his mother took responsibility. There is evidence that in doing so, some mothers felt the journey was stressful.

Negative emotional experiences: stress and anxiety

The school journey was with my stepfather he would put radio 4 on really loudly and the speakers were in the back. I'd get to school with a huge headache every morning and he didn't really care. Or with these other girls we had to share they had a big Cadillac and they were huge girls and we weren't and when the Cadillac hit the bottom of the road, it was our fault for being extra weight. It was not a nice enjoyable experience at all. (Kirsty, mother)

Kirsty remembers her car journeys to school as a representation of an unhappy situation at home and now favours other modes, although circumstances necessitate the use of the car on occasions. At the same time, therefore participants had particularly negative associations with a mobile experience that became an important element in their mobility history.

Irrespective of risk landscapes, mothers and children can experience negative emotions, which are often based on stress and anxiety. Maria's journey is stressful due to her role as mother and childminder. She usually makes the journey to school with either a double or triple pushchair. On the day of filming Maria had a particularly stressful time as she was picking up a friend of Jake's brother, who decided he did not want to go home with Jake's brother after all. Maria had five
children in total accompanying her on the journey home, one of whom was sobbing uncontrollably, not an unusual trip as far as Maria was concerned.

Particular spaces on the journey can be emotional, with the area outside school - outside each of the entrances/exits and beyond - emerging as a particularly contested and emotional space. There has been little study of the tensions that emerge here both for children and their parents with the exception of the recent study by Schwanen (2006a, 2006b), which found it was also a particularly gendered space as mothers and fathers react in different ways to picking up their children within certain temporal and social margins. The school pick-up zone can be a site for intense emotional reactions, based perhaps on cultures of mothering, people's own experience of school and their aspirations for their children. Fiona explained that she favours one of the school entrances as this involves less confrontation with these issues and she avoids certain parts of the zone that she considered to be particularly contested.

Also the people that use that entrance are nicer. At the other entrance there tends to be little gangs, there's a lot of gangs and I'm sure they wouldn't have any interest in me whatsoever but they're intimidating because people are when they're in gangs (Fiona, mother)

As Linda too explains 'it's a lot more competitive and you can either go along with it. You don't have all these clubs and you can get into this circle. All our friends are based around our children'. The intensity of this affiliation and the issues at stake in relation to cultures of mothering and risk make the school journey a powerful emotional space. It is also considered by a significant number of participants to be a particularly risky and for that reason a moralizing space. There are strong emotional reactions to parent's automobile behaviour around the school gates, even from mothers who drive to pick up their children themselves.

I've seen stand offs between people. I've seen people park in the middle of the road and lock their car and walk away. All to get those 50 yards closer to the school... The school have had to put poster up on the gate to try and stop people driving into the school grounds. People are very selfish. And that worries me (Linda, mother)

As Kim said 'it's not just the cars that are causing the problem but the parents who aren't supervising heir children. Both those get me quite worked up. I think there's a lot of selfish people'. Often blame is deflected in an intense emotional way if it is considered that others have crossed a line of acceptable behaviour, such as double parking outside the school gates.
For the young people too, the journey can involve different emotional responses at different stages and at different times and these are often related to their risk landscapes. A number of the children say they are ‘scared’ on different parts of their journey, from feeling uneasy when they are on their own, to having a strong emotional reaction to a busy road. As Jasmine said during her journey to school ‘I hate the main road. We’re so scared of it’. It is evident from Jasmine’s video that she is visibly stressed as she crosses the road. During Jasmine and Lilly’s journeys there was a number of indications of their emotional response to the roads and to older children. This may have been due to their risky experience being attacked with a pellet gun on the way to school.

Karen and George’s journey is also typified by negative emotions, from feeling a ‘bit stressed’ as they leave the house to apprehension when Karen has to get off the bus and leave George to make the rest of the journey to school unaccompanied. Of course these emotions are bound up in the other elements of their mobility histories, their risky experiences, their childhood contexts and to a lesser extent their notions of freedom. As well as generalized positive experiences, mothers and children also viewed their journey to school as a particularly social experience, reflecting discussions in chapter 3 of the potential of the school journey to be an unregulated space.

**The journey as a social experience**

Mothers recognize the sociality of the journey to school as most recall the social aspects of their own school journeys. As Lisa said ‘It’s lovely that they walk ’cause they see kids and some of them aren’t in their class so they all chat’.

It became clear through the young people’s films and observation of journeys, that socializing is a defining aspect of the journey to school for many of the young people, particularly those who travel independently. Buses were not only a means of transport from home to school but a key social space for establishing, maintaining and breaking friendships. They are a social gathering, with young people moving around, mingling, sharing stories, looking at books and magazines, listening to music, eating and performing. Amber travels on a bus route that involves a doubling of her walk time to the bus stop but uses this route as she prefers to travel with friends. She meets up with five friends on the bus and they chat, go through each other’s bags, share make-up and discuss plans. It is very apparent that it is a significant social event.
It is not only the bus that provides the context for socializing. Like other children who walk to school, Jimmy and his friend talk for the entirety of their journey to school about their lessons, about their route, and about their friends. Both Lilly and Joe give the opportunity to be with their friends as a reason for walking to school and Ellie walks home with her friend every day and chats with her the whole way, saying it is the ‘best part’ of her journey.

However, socialising involves contesting friendships as well as forming and maintaining them. Friends and acquaintances are a very important part of Luca’s journey. He begins by walking for about ten minutes on his own, then calls for a friend and walks to the bus stop with him. He seems very relaxed and content with this part of his journey. At the bus stop he meets six or seven other boys and the atmosphere and his demeanour change markedly, as the social and physical space becomes highly contested. This continues on the school bus, with different levels of performance from the young people on the bus to the point that the behaviour becomes intimidating. Amber has experienced friendship problems on the bus, giving an account of an argument between two of her friends resulting in one of them not getting the school bus anymore. Similarly Lilly had ‘fallen out’ with a friend that she walked to school with between her filming and her interview. This had changed the nature of her journey to school as this friend had been a major feature and her house a landmark. Social disputes can and it seems regularly do, not only overspill to the school journey, but emanate from this space as some children have the opportunity to demonstrate their agency through social interaction.

Sociality also has a distinct impact on the emotionality of the school journey. Some of the young people, such as Becca seemed so preoccupied with social and friendship issues that this affected their awareness of the space around her as well as her journey. Becca allows three buses to pass, all going to her school before she chooses one with an acceptable mix of friends. Sometimes socialising can be excluding not only for other children but for their parents. As discussed previously children ascribe identity to their journey, making it their own, a young people’s space where adults may feel out of place. As Lisa said: ‘when I did walk them I was so totally in the way. It was getting in the way of my daughters really’.

The journey, therefore, can be a time for play, for relaxing on the way home, an emotional bridge between home and school, and a socialising space. In this way it represents an unregulated space.

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33 Although Luca did not say he was intimidated, this was evident from observing him and his group of friends.
as opposed to the controlled spaces of home and school, as discussed in chapter 3 (Holloway and Valentine 2000; James et al. 1998; Mayall 1994). There have been few studies that have treated the space of the school journey in this way. This is an area where visual methods were most rewarding as they enabled a glimpse of children’s emotional states that few other methods allow. It is therefore positive emotional experiences as well as risk experiences that become part of the embedding of experiences in mobility histories. These experiences, like risk landscapes are recalled and reconstructed depending on their relationship with other factors in mobility histories and according to socio-cultural contexts.

The journey is also an emotional space for mothers as they experience both positive and negative emotions, which have an impact on, both their own, and their children’s mobilities. Positive emotional experiences can be associated with particular modes of travel, which their children are then encouraged to adopt. However, there are also negative emotions associated with the stress and anxiety of both risk landscapes and the demands of mothering. This is particularly the case in the area outside school, which mothers felt is particularly contested. It is also a site of deflected blame as mothers behaving outside acceptable norms are rebuked as ‘selfish’ and ‘lazy’.

Mobility histories – contingent and collective

Mobility histories are therefore comprised of the interactions between risk landscapes, experiences of motherhood and childhood, spatialities, notions of freedoms, and emotional and social experiences of the school journey. All of these components are inextricably linked in a complex layering in space and time. They are a spatial and temporal matrix of interconnected experiences and emotions that form the basis of mobility histories. They are also contingent on a number of factors, which are, to varying extents, inherent in the discussion of different elements in this chapter and include generation, lifestage and gender, and to a lesser extent class, race and disability. In addition, like Tulloch and Lupton’s (2003) everyday risk experience they are not just individually constructed but are also collective, based on shared and relational experience and local discourses.

The impact of social characteristics

Although, due to the characteristics of the sample, it is difficult to draw conclusions on class, race and disability issues, this section outlines some of the finding that emerged and that evidently
require more research. The issue of class arose throughout the literature in relation to risk and motherhood in particular (Bostock 2001; Dowling 1999; Gillies 2006; Kelley et al. 1997; Miller 2005; Valentine and McKendrick 1997). As outlined, although the research was originally aimed to represent a range of socio-economic groups, the practicalities outlined in chapter 4 prevented this. The socio-economic status of the two areas studied therefore is very similar according to the government’s deprivation indices (ONS 2004). There are a number of mothers, however, who lived outside the main study areas, in areas that are considered to be socially deprived (ONS 2004). It is interesting that it is both these mothers who are still escorting their children to secondary school and investing heavily in dependent relationships.

As discussed previously both Cheryl and Karen spend a significant part of their day escorting their children to and from school and are amongst the most risk averse. This is perhaps reflective of Gillies (2006) discussion of motherhood, class and emotional investment where working class mothers were seen to invest in a more tangible way than middle class mothers. It does however, contest research which questions the investment of working class parents (Ahmed 2002) and other research that indicates the propensity of working class parents towards risk tolerance (Dowling 1999, Kelley et al 1997, Valentine and McKendrick 1997), which is discussed in chapter 2.

Racial issues emerged as a contributor to risk landscapes and to negative mobility experiences. In particular, Kirsty raised the issue of attitudes of transport staff towards young people and young black and minority ethnic people. This echoes research with young people on their experiences of the transport system (DETR 2000; DfT 2006; Hood 2001, Imagine London 2000).

I think the bus driver and people in services like that should have more respect for young people and not tar them all with the same brush. Ben felt it was a racial thing. They would up the fare up and he wouldn’t have enough and they’d tell him to get out. I’ve been very angry and taken it up with bus companies... There is an attitude to black kids especially black males. (Kirsty, mother)

One of the children in the research is disabled and her mother’s risk landscape appears to be significantly influenced by this. Although Fiona feels that teenagers are more of a threat to Loren than other strangers, and she identifies teenagers as a threat to her own safety in public space, she does not see teenagers as a major risk for Loren. Even though she is fairly risk averse and worries about a range of issues, she does not mention these with respect to Loren. Her main and only real
concern is road traffic. It could be that Fiona’s concerns for Loren are based around her disability are demoting other concerns she may have. Loren’s anxieties are not related to the space she occupies but coping with everyday events. She gets anxious about getting to school late and upsetting her routine and is consistent with Fiona’s perceptions of her. It is evident from the contribution of participants for whom class, race and disability are issues, that further research is needed to extend knowledge in this area. However, this study’s focus was on gender and generation, which have to be consistent threads throughout this chapter, and are discussed more specifically below.

Generation and lifestage

Like risk landscapes, mobility histories are dependent on generational and lifestage factors as demonstrated throughout this chapter, where generation relates to the different perspectives of mothers and children and lifestage to any particular period in both mothers’ and children’s lives. Children tend to have different mobility horizons and less power to determine their mobility histories. More recent everyday experiences seem to be more important for children. Their mothers have longer mobility histories and experiences embedded from the past, which may have a critical bearing on everyday mobilities at certain times.

Some children felt that the transport system was not designed to meet their needs. Evie said her vision is often obscured at road junctions and traffic lights because of her size. In addition she refers to a culture of driving that she feels respects children less than adults.

There’s a zebra crossing but it’s a bit annoying ‘cause when I’m not on my own they stop for us but when I’m by myself sometimes they don’t actually stop for me even though it supposed to be a zebra crossing. ‘Cause I’m a child. (Evie, young person)

Based on the account of mothers, particularly those who have remained in the same place since childhood, it seems that the opportunities to experience spaces that are considered less risky are diminishing. The more public spaces over time become constructed as risky, there is less available as training spaces; spaces in which young people can develop their own strategies to cope with risk and allow more positive aspects of their mobility histories to become critical determinants.

Adultist perceptions of children’s competencies are a function of generational issues. A number of mothers felt that their children were not well equipped to deal with potential risks such as
strangers, in the same way as others felt their children were particularly 'streetwise' or particularly grounded.

... she has her head in the clouds, I wouldn't trust her (Beth, mother)

Neither of them are streetwise (Cheryl, mother)

She’s different from the others I can tell that... She doesn’t think... She’s in the cloud most of the time. (Jane, mother)

I don’t think he knows how to deal with situations like other children ‘cause he’s not been allowed to be out playing or down the park on his own. (Maria, mother).

Although Maria discusses her sons' different abilities to their relative competencies, she also recognizes that this is determined by their levels of experience in public space. Ironically, this is then leading to a decreasing ability to be independent and learn the necessary skills. For children with siblings, and particularly older siblings, these opportunities are greatly increased.

It’s makes a difference that there is two of them. I’m worried ‘cause Luke’s in year 6 and he wants to walk to school on his own and I won’t let him. He just looks so fragile and vulnerable and little. (Lisa, mother).

It was apparent from the videos that a number of children had more risk coping skills than their mothers were aware of. Although Jane feels that Ellie is less 'aware of things around her' than she should be, Ellie seems very spatially aware while filming and was capable of handling the camera and herself, remaining aware of her surrounding, and gives a competent commentary on her journey as she travelled. This was the case with most of the young people who travelled independently, contrasting with those who travelled with their parents and especially with those who travelled by car. As Lilly said: 'I like to look at everything around me and when you're in the car you don’t get to really look at things'. Urry's (2000) theory of shrinking space in the car seems applicable here. It appears therefore that competency, amongst the young participants, is based on adultist notions of negotiating space as well as being linked to all the other elements in mobility histories.

In addition, different elements of mobility histories may be critical at different stages in the lifecourse as, for example, mothers may have had a different risk landscape or different coping strategies before they had children. Inevitably, due to its temporality, lifestage is an important
determinant in mobility histories for both mothers and children.

I felt more worried when I was travelling about on my own and I still do now. I feel more nervous because you’re more aware that you’re responsible for people, especially when I was single. I never used to be nervous of flying but now I am unless they’re with me (Liz, mother).

One of the features of mobility history is that the accumulation of experience, emotions and knowledge over time changes the nature of both current experience and perceptions of other people’s experience. This can best be witnessed through the increased caution or increase risk aversion of the mothers in the research as described in chapter 5. Of course this is not only a temporal matter but also a function of social constructions of risk, mobility, freedom and mothering, which have been discussed throughout this chapter. Familiarity and control, which are related to time spent in a given context, can offset this increasing caution but this is more likely to occur over a shorter time period. A number of the young people in the research reported that their risk aversion in certain situations had diminished over time as they become familiar with certain situations.

Children are also undergoing different life stages as they get older and raised the issue of ‘getting used’ to coping with risks and these then becoming less important in their risk landscapes. For them incremental changes in their lifecourse has an impact on their risk landscapes. As Jimmy said, ‘you get used to roads’. Similarly, Sean is not worried now but did have worries before, ‘probably when I was younger in year 7. For Amber the issue of bullying is in her past history and is no longer a problem as she is older. When asked about a potential problem with bullying she said:

No... not really at all... I mean like the little kids are sometimes annoying. But not big kids. I would have been scared in year 8 but not in year 9. I would have been scared of the roads more when I was younger than I am now (Amber, young person).

Gender

Like generation, gender is obviously a critical issue in this study, which has explored the impact of mothers’ gendered roles on, both their own, and their children’s mobility. As well as the importance of gender on a broader level, as discussed throughout in relation to mothers, it is also used by mothers to distinguish relative levels of mobility. It is clear that the participants in this study perceived risk to their children according to gender, five being more worried for girls and four for boys. As Valentine (2004) argues this appears to be less skewed towards freedom for
boys as other studies found in the past (Sibley 1995) and is moving towards increasing complexity. This is most apparent where mothers have both girls and boys in the family and have therefore experienced the different emotional responses to risk according to gender. Linda talks about her older daughter saying she felt differently about her than her sons: 'She's the one that had to break the ground and being a girl you are a little bit more nervous'. Linda said that this could be linked to her knowledge of a particular case of abduction and murder involving young girls in the local area, which took place when she was pregnant with her daughter. Hannah, too, feels more worried about her daughter.

But with the boys, I don't know why... I trust them to handle...no that's wrong... they know what's what and they travel in little groups ... They've always been told don't stop and talk to people. But with Ruby once the time comes that would be my main worry... I don't watch but my own experience of knowing that feeling of someone behind you and you can't run fast enough. I do think about that. It's because she's a girl and I experienced that. (Hannah, mother).

Hannah said she is not presently particularly worried about strangers but this will change when Ruby travels more independently. Hannah, herself links this to her gendered mobility history and identifies better with her daughter because she has experienced fear in a way she expects Ruby to experience it.

Gender is therefore an issue here, both in terms of mothers' experiences of gendered roles and gendered space and mobility, but also in their interpretation of their experiences of gender in relation to their children. Both gender and generation are central to this study, with life stage emerging as a crucial issue also. Mothers' and children's mobilities of the journey to school are dependent, therefore, on notions of gender and generation and experiences, emotions and recollections of these throughout the lifecourse. These notions are explored here through mobility histories and the final section of this chapter summarizes some of the key characteristics of this concept.

The layering and collectivity of mobility histories

Like the collectivity of risk landscapes (Tulloch and Lupton 2003), mobility histories can also be shared, and the two become interlinked. In line with Tulloch and Lupton (2003) mobility histories are not solely individualistic. They are socially constructed and based on collective as well as personal experience, influenced by social characteristics such as gender, generation, class, race and
disability as discussed.

As outlined earlier, this may result in a mother’s mobility history resulting in very different responses than her children’s. Lilly and Jasmine’s risky experience involving being threatened with a pellet gun became a critical part of their risk landscapes, whilst their mother Lisa did not seem overly concerned about her children being bullied. For Lilly and Jasmine, however, this event was coupled with the enjoyment they get from walking to school and meeting up with friends along the way. It is this positive and emotional aspect of her daughter’s mobility history that is Lisa’s focus and has become a critical part of her own mobility history when linked with her own experiences of walking to school, which were positive. Other families, such as Gill and Luca share this common preference for a particular form of transport, in this case the bus, and so Luca travels this way, coping with the risks and remaining emotionally positive. In the same way, Joe has a similar mobility experience as he seems to share his mother’s dislike of the bus: ‘Not much point [getting the bus] when you can walk’. The dislike of the bus is then part of Joe’s mobility history even though he has no direct experience of it.

There can be different emotional responses to the journey that can include both fear and enjoyment as Evie expresses when describing her journey: ‘I sometimes get a bit nervous of the park ‘cause there might be like strange men but there’s a lovely café over there called the garden café where we have our lunch sometimes at weekends’. Here Evie expresses two opposite emotions about her journey in the same sentence, during the same moment within her journey. This is part of Evie’s complex mobility history where different elements together inform responses to spatiality and decision-making in the everyday and in the context of socio-cultural processes.

For others it is about making lifestyle choices that involve half their day being consumed with escorting children to and from school. Here the critical issue in mobility histories is mothering roles and responsibilities, as demonstrated by Cheryl’s and Karen’s investment in their children’s mobility. Critical elements of mobility histories are attached to particular modes of travel and on emotional experiences of these modes. Maria is not completely sure why she does not like the bus but it is clear that she had an intense emotional reaction to a particular experience.

If I could get there without going on a bus I would walk it. I just don’t like buses. I feel quite trapped... I’m not scared of going on a bus or train but its being in there with all
those people and not being able to get off when I want and not being able to stop when I want... It's quite a recent thing that I don't like the bus. When I worked in Lewes I used to ... get two buses home. Then one summer I got turned off a bus ... 'cause it had lots of exchange students on it and another bus came and I couldn't get onto it. I asked the driver to squeeze me on 'cause most of the people would be getting off half way up the hill. But he wouldn't let me on. The third bus came and did the same thing and I just got on the bus and wouldn't get off. Everybody on the bus was tutting at me and it got a bit heated. He did drive up... and... most of the students that were standing got off and I just went 'see' and then I learnt to drive. That's not the 'cause of it, the reason for not liking the bus is about feeling trapped in and not being able to get out and move around. It's worse since I had children. (Maria, mother).

In terms of bus use therefore it is not necessarily Maria's or Jake's risk landscape that would determine whether or not Jake travelled to school by bus, but a particular mobile experience. For Maria this experience is embedded in her mobility history and may not emerge until she is faced with a choice about a school bus and then is relative to all other elements of mobility histories. This is similar to Jimmy, although his equation appears much simpler in that he just does not like the bus: 'it's [the bus] quite noisy and there's a lot of people and I just don't enjoy taking transportation to school'.

Conclusion

Mobility history is not therefore a simple concatenation of events, but a complex and fluid layering of interpretations and emotional responses. It is a layering of elements within the complex matrix described previously, where meaning is attributed to these dependent on the relationship between the elements in space, time and within socio-cultural contexts. The subjective experiences of mothers and children are processed and embedded within individual and collective mobility histories, at different levels of consciousness.

The key components that make up mobility histories have been explored in this chapter, all in relation to gender, generation and lifestage. Risk landscapes are based on the accumulation of both individual and shared risky experiences, with some being more important than others and this is dependent on socio-cultural contexts. The contribution of personal biographies of motherhood and childhood is based on either the reproduction or avoidance of childhood experiences and is dependent on family contexts. Spatiality of experiences is another significant component and one that is evident throughout the explorations in this chapter. Space is constructed and reconstructed as risky at different stages in the lifecourse, with mothers' nostalgic
images of childhood spaces being particularly influential. Like the other components of mobility history, freedoms are gendered and generational, with freedoms given with reference to mothers’ experiences of receiving them in their childhoods. In addition children demonstrate agency in the negotiation of freedoms, but this is set within the context of ultimate adultist control. The most apparent context for children’s agency was in relation to the final element explored, the emotionalities and socialities of the school journey. Where other components are bound up in risk, it is most evident here that that positive and negative emotional mobility experiences can be made irrespective of risk landscapes and that socializing is a key function of the journey for many young people.

Of course all of these themes are interrelated in some way and particularly through the impact of lifestage factors. Individual and shared experiences related to all these components can be particularly vital in hindsight, recollected and reconstructed through socio-cultural filters, with potentially different outcomes in terms of individual mobility histories. As well as socio-cultural and spatial contexts, these differences can be attributed to the impact of other factors within mobility histories, including experiences of motherhood and childhood. Thus mobility histories are highly complex and it is difficult to attribute decision-making to any particular element of them as other studies have tried to do (Fotel and Thomsen 2005; Hillman et al. 1990; Joshi and McLean 1995; Pooley et al. 2005). Instead, the evidence presented here suggests that it is necessary to explore the myriad and interconnected elements that make up both mothers’ and children’s mobility histories in order to understand how they experience and make decisions about this mobile space.
Chapter 7 Conclusion

This final chapter sets out the conclusions of this thesis, reviewing previous chapters and specifying how the research questions have been addressed. This is structured into five main themes: the impact of everyday risk; mothering cultures; children's autonomy; mobility histories; and the value of visual methods. These main conclusions are followed by the policy implications of the research and ideas about how the findings could be built upon in future research.

The impact of everyday risk

The notion of everyday risks is crucial in this study as it was found, in line with Tulloch and Lupton (2003), that it is everyday risk experiences and everyday discourse around risk issues that shape risk landscapes. These experiences and the nature of the discourses are dependent on a range of factors that are socio-culturally determined. The study concentrated on everyday risk through asking mothers and children about their worries and fears, about the things they liked, and the things that did not like about the journey to school. It emerged, in chapters 5 and 6, that participants' risk landscapes are fluid and dynamic, changing significantly during the lifecourse and in space. Mothers and children demonstrated risk aversion, risk neutrality and risk seeking during the research process, representing a snapshot of their risk landscapes at that time, with general patterns of risk characterized in space and time, according to both gender and generation.

Risk is instrumental in defining mothering cultures. Chapter 2 argued that mothers are marginalized due to their gender roles and the gendered constructions of space (Chase and Rogers 2001; Duncan 2005; Phoenix and Woollett 1991; Valentine 2004). Mothers whose approach to risk does not match acceptable levels are marginalized further and are constructed as 'bad' 'risky' mothers. The chapter set out the most appropriate framework in which to analyse gendered impacts on risk, based on socio-cultural approaches to risk, as opposed to Beck's (1992) 'risk society' within which gender divisions are considered to be diminishing in an increasingly individualized world. It was illustrated, in chapters 2 and 3, that socio-cultural approaches (Douglas 1986) allow the exploration of the impacts of both gender and generation on risk outcomes. In addition, theories of everyday risk (Tulloch and Lupton 2003) recognize the biographical nature of both individual and collective risk landscapes, including the coping
mechanisms that form part of these landscapes (Pain 1997; Tulloch 1999, 2000; Tulloch and Lupton 2003; Valentine 1989). Psychological approaches to risk (Slovic 2004) were shown to have some significance here as they focus on individual responses to risk - how experiences, emotions and images form part of this risk biography and are recalled both 'rationally' and affectively.

This exploration continued in chapter 3, which centred on generational factors in constructions of risk and mobility, particularly around the journey to school. Both childhood and everyday spaces of childhood, it was argued, are constructed as risky within socio-cultural and political contexts, particularly the family and the state (Hendrick 2003; James et al. 1998; Valentine and McKendrick 1997; Valentine 2004). Indeed the state is giving increasing responsibility to families in the nurture and security of children and this intensifies family negotiations around risk (Hendrick 2003). In contrast to studies that have concentrated on childhood risks in the context of home and school (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004; James et al. 1998; Holloway and Valentine 2000; Kelley et al. 1997; Mayall 1994), it was contended that the mobile space of the journey to school is a distinctive space for children. Despite adultist constructions of this space as risky, it is potentially a less regulated space than the spaces of home and school.

The concepts of risk, motherhood and childhood in relation to this space were explored in chapter 5, which considered the experiences of the school journeys that were being made by the young people and mothers in the research. It firstly contextualized the study by describing how the young people travelled to school and who they travelled with, indicating that most either walked or travelled by bus. Ten of the young people were still escorted to school, with most gaining independence around the age of ten, similar to the average age of independence for their mothers. Although only four of the young people travelled to school by car regularly, there was some less regular car use and a lot of ambivalence around this occasional use, especially in relation to the comfort and convenience compared with walking or travelling by bus.

The chapter then explored the experiences of motherhood and childhood and their impact on risk and mobility, demonstrating that they are intertwined with these experiences. For mothers, a culture of blame, linked to local and global ideologies of 'good' mothering and a need to attend to the bodily needs of their children and partly determined by mothers themselves, encourages risk aversion. The complexity of everyday risk landscapes were then examined in chapter 5, their characteristics, features and contexts. It was established that risk landscapes are dynamic to the
point of being in constant flux, each representation being only a snapshot in time and space. They were found to be shared in terms of mothers and children experiencing and responding to the same risks in a similar way, but also through shared contextual influences, such as local discourses of risk. However, this was shown to be in tandem with inconsistencies between mothers and children, which represented lifestage as well as generational differences in risk outlooks. All of the mothers in the study had at some point in their lives, mostly after leaving home and before becoming mothers, sought risk. Risk aversion had increased in motherhood, with an awareness of the needs and dependence of children. Although there was some evidence of a perception of everyday spaces becoming more risky, this is a reflection of the influence of more global ideologies of risk and motherhood that seek to portray the escalation of risk and an increasing 'parental paranoia' (Furedi 2001).

The first research question asked: 'To what extent does risk underpin mothers’ and children’s decision-making in relation to the journey to school?’ and the findings showed that risk is fundamental in determining mobilities. Important risks that emerged for mothers in the context of the school journey include ‘strangers’, road accidents and bullying. Although these risks were experienced on an everyday level by mothers, children’s risks were more directly experiential in terms of the space of the school journey. Children’s risks were distinctive in that, within adultist notions of risk, they could be considered more mundane. However for children, risks such as dog poo and uneven pavements can be critical within their risk landscapes and their mobility histories. It was found that although these risks are highly significant in shaping mobility, there are other factors that are also significant, not all of which are directly related to risk. However, before moving on to a discussion of this through the concept of mobility histories, the following considers how mothering cultures and children’s agency have been found to shape mobilities.

**Mothering cultures**

Chapter 2 argued that the journey to school for mothers, the largest group of people making this journey, besides school students, is dependent on cultures and ideologies of motherhood and how they interrelate with risk and mobility. There are two main theoretical strands within this. The first is the changing nature of mobility in coercing mothers, as well as the remainder of the population, to engage in highly flexible and adaptable lifestyles (Urry 2000). Second, is the argument that the changing nature of motherhood, where mothers are expected to both work full-time and care for their children full-time, as well as adhere to increasingly rigid standards of mothering. This is
leading to mothers to assume mobility patterns that are potentially deleterious to social and emotional health (Bostock 2001; Hamilton and Jenkins 2000: Skinner 2005).

It is argued in chapter 2 that there is potential in both these theories, but that overall mothers are being forced into a hypermobility that is specific to their gendered roles as mothers, and this is dependent on the multidimensional roles they are obliged to adopt. Mothers are not only increasingly corporeally mobile but are assuming the role of mobility managers for the family (Skinner 2005). As specified in chapter 5, a number of the mothers in this study said they were time poor and this was a highly significant and negative part of their life experience. The car is both exacerbating this hypermobility in that it enables it, and also facilitating a better quality of life and redress of time poverty as it 'buys time'. However, this raises equity issues as mothers without access to a car are denied this coping strategy and restricted to modes of travel that are often problematic in meeting their needs, as shown in Bostock's (2001) study of mothers whose only choice was walking.

The second research question asked: 'How do mothers’ risk experiences and their perceptions of the risks experienced by children co-construct both their own and their children’s mobility?' and chapters 2 and 6, in particular, addressed this. It was established in chapter 6 that mothers view themselves as being 'expert' at negotiating risks to their children and therefore assume the role of decision-makers in this regard. Risk aversion follows from this as they seek to legitimize this position of expertise within local cultures of risk acceptability, or indeed to distance themselves from these cultures if they feel excluded from the local community. The cultures of mothering in question are based on both global and local ideologies (Duncan 2005: Duncan and Edwards 1999; Phoenix and Woolett 1991; Holloway 1998), which construct and reconstruct the 'good' and the 'bad' mother. It was argued that these cultures are based on mothers’ approaches to risk within cultures of blame, where standards of mothering are based on acceptable levels of risk taking and mothers are blamed if they adopt practices that are outside these levels. As Douglas (1986) argues, this protects the 'community' in which standards are constructed by ensuring that individuals are controlled and adhere to the ideologies of that community.

It has been argued (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Valentine 2004) that mothers are increasingly investing in their children through the process of identity formation. In line with socio-cultural theories of risk (Douglas 1986; Tulloch and Lupton 2003), it is claimed here that
this process is not individualized but the result of collective notions of risk and blame, where the most risk averse mothers are investing more heavily in order to attain local levels of acceptability. The emotionality of mothering and the negativity of their risk landscapes account for some of the ambivalence around giving freedom as mothers want to 'let go' but feel the consequences are often too risky. In addition, mothers' risky experiences can be meaningful in shaping their own mobilities as is demonstrated in chapters 5 and 6. They adopt appropriate coping mechanisms at different life stages, with motherhood associated with risk aversion and a decrease in independent mobility, particularly voluntary mobility that is considered to be outside of their mothering roles.

A space for autonomy

Young people have the capacity, on their way to school, to act autonomously and demonstrate agency. Childhood was explored in chapter 3 through the social studies of childhood approach developed by James et al. (1998), which incorporates children's agency as social actors within both adultist constructions of childhood and children's determination of their own notions of childhood, as well as the spatiality of these constructions. It is contested here that the journey to school is distinctive as it represents a potentially unregulated space compared with home and school (James et al. 1998, Kelley et al. 1997, Mayall 1994). Young people, therefore, have the opportunity to demonstrate agency and develop their own risk landscapes and mobility histories within prevalent socio-cultural and spatial contexts. Young people's risk landscapes are different to their mothers and reflect more everyday experiential relationship with space. These risks may be regarded as mundane within adultist notions of risk, but for young people, experience of these risks is highly significant. Young people must therefore adopt their own coping mechanisms in order to remain mobile and become independent. An emerging tension in the decision-making process around mobility independence is the need for young people to develop these coping strategies and their own mobility histories, in the context of ideological pressures on mothers to become increasingly risk averse.

Thus, although children establish their own risk landscapes, there are indications, presented in chapter 6, that their independence is ultimately determined by boundaries established by their mothers. This supports Brannen's (1999) contention, discussed in chapter 3, that children's agency must always be viewed within adultist power structures. Mothers' boundary setting is based on socio-cultural factors and is relative to their own freedoms in childhood (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004, O'Brien 2000). Boundaries can be extended through negotiation and
demonstration of adequate risk coping strategies by children (Valentine and McKendrick 1997), and the young people in this study demonstrated their own strategies for negotiation as illustrated in chapter 6. However, this negotiation was not always based on boundary extending and seeking independence. Chapter 5 showed that for children experience of childhood incorporates dependence as well as independence, hence they demonstrate agency in their approach to both. As the young people illustrated, childhood is about balancing different leisure activities and therefore combining sedentary with active pastimes. Thus the young participants appeared to have more autonomous time than previous studies have suggested (Valentine and McKendrick 1997, Valentine 2004), with only a minority pursuing regular organized activities that may prevent this.

An element of children’s demonstration of agency in this study is based on maintaining levels of mobility that are considered to have a negative impact on children’s wellbeing (Backen-Milburn and Harden 2004, O’Brien 2000). There is evidence that young people are becoming less mobile. However, there is no evidence that this is having a deleterious impact on their physical and emotional wellbeing, in contrast with their mothers’ hypermobility. The question of whether children are as hypomobile as some studies suggest (Backen-Milburn and Harden 2004; Hillman et al. 1990; Kegerreis 1993; Mackett 2005) has not been demonstrated in this study. This issue needs more research, involving children, to explore in more depth the range of social and emotional consequences of more sedentary lifestyles: the extent of the corporeal hypomobility of children.

The third research question asked: ‘How are children’s mobility decisions influenced by their own risk experience?’ and it has been shown here that children determine their own mobility in the context of adultist notions of childhood. This research has enabled the analysis of children’s demonstration of agency in the relatively unregulated temporal and spatial context of the school journey as well as the in-depth exploration of the complexity of mothers’ past experience and the current impact on this space. This thesis, in exploring children’s and mothers’ mobilities in tandem, has set out to interrelate the issues of these groups, in response to the shortcomings of existing literature. Therefore, neither mothers nor children are considered in isolation, the result being an enhanced understanding of the mobility experiences that underlie their decision-making. These experiences were analysed here through the concept of mobility histories.
Mobility histories

Existing studies of the journey to school and children's declining independent mobility, as described in chapter 3, have explored these within adultist contexts, through examining the journey primarily in relation to parents, rather than children. Previously research, although with noted exceptions (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004; Maguire and Shirlow 2004; O'Brien et al. 2000), has tended to underplay the complexity of the factors that determine risk and mobility for both parents and children. Most often quantitative methods are used to explore the subjective and fluid concepts of risk and parenthood, when it is apparent that such an exploration requires more in-depth qualitative analysis that can incorporate and interpret the different meanings and constructions of these concepts. This thesis disentangles the myriad factors that contribute to mobility decision-making through its application of the concept of mobility history, which incorporates theories of mobility and risk through a gender and generational perspective. As chapter 6 proposed, mobility histories are complex, and layered with risk landscapes, childhood and motherhood experiences, spatiality, freedoms, sociality and emotionality. Mothers and children's mobility histories include critical elements, which determined decision-making in a given time and place. Thus, for a number of participants, the positivity of significant mobility experiences was crucial and could override particularly risky experiences.

Mobility histories enables consideration of a range of factors, including risk landscapes as a central and often dominant theme, but also exploring other factors which can operate irrespective of risk. It is a conceptual tool that recognises both the complexity of these interrelationships and the role of mothers', and more significantly, children's agency in defining their own mobility outlooks. As well as looking at how risk landscapes merge into mobility histories, the themes explored included personal biographies of motherhood and childhood, the construction of mobile space, freedoms and boundaries, and mobile emotionalities and socialities. Risk landscapes are, however, an integral part of mobility histories, predicated on the accrual of a number of risky experiences or on one or two particularly critical risky experiences. Like other elements of mobility histories, risk landscapes change in time and place, with different risky experiences being overridden with others and with other elements of mobility histories depending on social and spatial contexts. Personal biographical experiences of motherhood and childhood had more of an impact for some participants than others, with some seeking to replicate and others to avoid experiences of childhood, which were usually constructed in space. Spatiality is a central theme throughout the research, but was explored in chapter 6 in terms of the riskiness of the mobile space of the school.
journey, and how interpretations and experiences of space in the past can significantly influence mothers’ provision of freedom to their children in the present. In particular, chapter 2 contested Sheller and Urry’s (2003) claims that the public-private divide is becoming obsolete. Chapter 6 illustrated that, although it is constantly shifting, this dichotomy remains valid in representing differential risk and mobility responses in space, as mothers and children relate to the relative safety of the home and riskiness of spaces outside it. The relational aspects of freedoms were shown to account for the ultimate sanction of mothers acting within adultist notions of acceptable freedoms, as well as acceptable levels of risk. However, particularly important in the context of the research is the emotionality and sociality of the journey. This emerged as crucial in terms of distinguishing the autonomous constructions of the school journey by young people. As chapter 6 described, young people identify with space on social and emotional levels, mapping out landmarks of risk and security in relation to this. Indeed there was evidence from one of the mothers that such constructions, primarily a space for socializing, exclude adults. It is this finding that expressly justifies the use of the visual methods adopted in this research.

The value of visual methods

This research used visual methods, which are a relatively underused tool of research in the social sciences, to capture and analyse both affective and experiential responses to everyday risk. As risks are constructed in sociocultural contexts, so too are emotionalities. However, this does not negate the individual experience of these emotions (Slovic 2004). Mothers and children have affective responses to risk, which are both highly significant and difficult to recall. The use of visual methods in this research is considered fundamental to the exploration of this emotionality as well as the sociality of the school journey for young people. They provided a means of gaining a direct and contextualised insight into the emotional responses of children (and accompanying mothers) to the social and spatial contexts they were in, such as the joy of young people seeing their friends at the bus stop on a Monday morning or the embodied anxiety of young people who are bullied on the school bus.

For mothers, in-depth interviews can illuminate emotional responses in particular contexts. Through the in-depth interviews this study found that a number of the mothers involved had strong emotional attachments to ideas of place, particularly in relation to nostalgic recollections of their childhood spaces. This was often a critical factor in their mobility histories and determining of, both their own, and their children’s mobility as a result. However, similar in-depth interviews
are more difficult with children (Barker 2003; Fraser 2004; Lewis et al. 2004). The use of interviews with young people would not have produced the richness of data nor resulted in such varied sample of participants in this research. Many of the young people explained that they had volunteered as the research presented the opportunity to use a video camera. Interviews can disadvantage and dissuade young people, some of whom tend to communicate visually rather than verbally.

As is noted in chapter 4, visual methods encompass both reflexivity and contextualization (Emmison and Smith 2000; Pink 2001). The research was reflexive in that the methodological approach and methods, along with the researcher’s positionality and impact on the research, were evaluated and re-evaluated throughout. It was argued to be contextualizing as participants’ positionalities in space and time could be effectively explored though this method. As a result, the young people’s engagement with the visual methods provided additional insight into the relationship between the research process and its participants. The young people demonstrated agency in formulating their approach to the filming of videos, ranging from a predetermined emotional and social connection with the camera, to a ‘fly on the wall’ type disengagement. The film-elicitation interviews that followed the filming of the journeys allowed participants to illustrate and explore their relationship with the journey further, and provide great insight in doing so. The approach to triangulation of interviews, visual data and observation, was based not on seeking consistency, but on giving spatial and social meaning to inconsistency. Hence, inconsistencies that arose between data collected during filming and film-elicitation interviews, was considered as particularly interesting as it enabled the distinction between emotional and more thought through responses in different spatial and social contexts. Differences that emerged between mothers’ and children’s accounts of the journey were meaningful as they provided an insight into their subjective and often divergent experiences in similar contexts. The result was a set of data of both diversity and richness, revealing the intricate and entwined social, emotional and spatial aspects of the everyday experiences of the journey to school.

Mobility futures – policy implications

A number of broad policy implications emerged from this research, which can be divided into three main themes: the complexity of the interplay between mothers, children and risk on the journey to school, the distinctness of the space created by the school journey, and the lack of awareness of children’s agency in determining their own mobilities.
Firstly, therefore, the complexity of the relationship between mothers and their children’s risk and mobility should be acknowledged and policies that encompass the gendered nature of this relationship should be pursued. There are certainly no easy solutions, as this thesis argues; issues of gender are based on wider scale ideologies of motherhood and risk. The concept of mobility histories enables influential social characteristics such as gender and generation, as well as others that have been given less prominence in this thesis such as class, to be understood in terms of both individual and collective mobilities. Mobility histories allow the range of spatial and temporal factors involved in mobility decision making to be better understood. A general movement towards recognising the gap between knowledge producing and policy-making is therefore needed. More specifically, policy-makers should acknowledge the importance of mothers in determining their children’s spatial freedoms.

Secondly, this thesis has revealed a number of elements of the school journey that construct it as a distinct space, in which children have experiences that are different from those in other key spaces, such as home and school. Children and young people use the space of the school journey to: develop their own risk landscapes; experience diverse local environments using their full range of senses; socialize and enjoy some ‘free’ time outside of the constraints of home and school; and provide the opportunity to make choices for themselves about their everyday lives. This study has found that the school journey is a key space in which young people engage socially and emotionally. It is more than a space in which they travel from home to school. Transport planners and policy makers should work more closely with schools to facilitate the social and emotional aspects of both walking and travelling by bus. In addition, the need for less risky spaces, where children can develop skills to negotiate more complex and riskier mobile spaces should be recognised.

The school journey needs to be understood by policy-makers in this context, rather then the limited vision presented through School Travel Plan policy. The basis of school travel planning needs to be critically re-evaluated in order to both address the problems that are identified within its narrow remit, and to broaden its remit to incorporate the needs of both children and mothers. Indeed few of the children in this study were aware of the implementation of School Travel plans in their schools, despite all the schools involved having attempted broad involvement and interest. If the model of school travel planning is to remain, then it needs to be extended and re-focused on the welfare and involvement of schoolchildren, rather than adultist notions of safety and
sustainability.

Overall, it is evident from this and other research that the current transport planning system does not adequately encompass the views of young people, particularly on issues of direct relevance to them, such as the journey to school. Although young people were incorporated in research leading to the recent Department for Transport report: Young people and transport: their needs and requirements (2006), there is a need to both involve young people in research that adopts methods appropriate to them and to directly engage with them at a local level. Issues that have been raised before by young people, such as the state and the cost of buses (DfT 2006; Imagine London 2000) are still not adequately addressed in transport policy-making and planning. The research has shown that everyday risks identified by children and young people may be overlooked within adultist notions of risk. Therefore, problems that could be relatively simple to tackle, such as cleaning up the areas around school, could have a significant impact on walking for young people. There is a need to incorporate and acknowledge young people's autonomy in shaping their journey to school and a good place to start in seeking this is to ask young people themselves.

Lessons and future research

This thesis focused on the impact of gender and generation on the mobilities of the journey to school. As discussed on page 126, there are a number of limitations to this research, both in questioning this focus and on theoretical and practical issues associated with the research project. In hindsight, the emergence of the importance of class issues in this research may have altered the strong focus on gender and generation issues. Hindsight would also have enabled a fuller understanding of access issues, especially in negotiating with the multiple layers of gatekeepers. In turn the sample could have been extended to incorporate areas of more extreme socio-economic conditions, such as areas in Brighton that are deemed to experience multiple deprivation.

As a result, a number of issues that have emerged in this research and that warrant further research and some of these have been indicated in the text. These include the impact of class, race and disability on mobilities of the school journey; the potential hypomobility of young people; and the factors associated with risk seeking behaviour. In addition, wider spatial issues, such as the impact of living in areas of social deprivation, merit further consideration. Although these issues appeared significant in influencing risk and mobility, the impacts were not fully apparent without interrogating the data further and this was beyond the scope of this thesis. This research
focused on mothers in studying aspects of gender and lifestage. Further research could
beneficially incorporate the role of fathers and the impact of their mobility histories. Indeed, the
concept of mobility history could be applied to a number of mobility outcomes.

In terms of research methods, there would be value in exploring further the use of visual data in
research, and specifically research with young people, particularly as a tool for dissemination of
research findings. It was often difficult to translate participants’ emotional and social responses
into words within this study, and the young people especially, would benefit from the visual
dissemination of the findings of this research. Although it was not possible to develop the visual
data in this way during the lifetime of this doctoral thesis, the young people’s footage will be
compressed into a short film, aimed at communicating the results and key themes of the research,
to both participants and policy-makers.
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Appendix 1 Briefing for participants – young people

University of Brighton Research project Young people’s school travel

Videoing your journey to school

Who am I?
I am a student at the University of Brighton, studying the journey to school. Previously, I worked for Transport for London and worked on a project with children and young people in London to produce a video of what it is like to travel around London as a child or young person. The video was shown in London’s City Hall.

The research
The research will look at what young people think about their journeys to school, and how their mothers/carers may affect how they travel. You can pull out of the research, or any part of it, at any time. You will:

• Film a journey to or from school
• I will ask you questions about it afterwards

Planning for filming your journey
We are going to film a journey and the parts you may like to film. You can film nearly all of it if you like, as long as you can film and travel safety. Think about your journey beforehand. I need to know in advance if you are going to travel by school bus or another form of travel that I will need to get permission to use.

There are different parts to a journey and it would be helpful if you film a bit of each of these. They might include:

• Walking to the car/bus stop/railway station
• Buying tickets
• Waiting for the bus/train
• Travelling along on the car/bus/train
• Walking to the entrance of your school

How to use the camera
• I will show you how to use the camera and record sound and then you can have a go at using it yourself.
• The camera will be set on 'automatic' so you do not have to focus it yourself
• You can zoom in and out of shots so that things seem closer or further away
• You can record your voice on the video camera and describe things you see or how things make you feel.

What to film
• You can film whatever you would like to best show your journey
• Would like commentary if possible and especially think about the good and bad parts of the journey and anything that makes the journey more difficult – maybe point these things out when filming.

Filming other people
Some people may not like to be filmed and you should respect this. If you need to film someone like the person you usually travel with, remember to ask their permission first.

Don't forget!
• Don't forget to take off the lens cap!
• I will check that the camera is set up properly
• Count to 3 after you have pressed record before the action starts and keep recording for a count to 3 afterwards
• Don't cut peoples legs off from the film
• Try to hold the camera steady
• Don't use too many zooms. Keep camera moves slow
• Try to use still shots and let the action happen in them

Once filming is finished I will slide the protective tab over on the cassette. This is to stop any accidental recording over your material.

Contact numbers:
Lesley Murray, University of Brighton 01273 644558
Appendix 2 Interviews with young people – topic guide

Questions from video

1. Did you enjoy your video?

2. What do you think you decided to film the journey in this way?

3. Did you have any problems with the filming?

4. Can you think of another way you may have filmed it?

5. What do you like about this journey?

6. What don’t you like?

7. Is there anything that you are worried about on your journey?

8. What is the worst thing about your journey?

9. What changes to make you like more?

10. Is there anything you would like to change about this journey to make it easier?

Journey to school

11. On the day of the filming how did you travel to school?

12. Do you ever travel to or from school a different way? Is the other journey to/from different?

13. Would you like to travel from school a different way
14. What do you think stops you from travelling this way?

15. When did you start travelling to school on your own?

16. What could be done to make travelling to school easier?

17. Who do you think could make things easier?

18. Have you ever had a bad experience travelling to school?

19. Anything would like to add about travelling to school?

**General**

20. What other kinds of transport do you use?

21. What is your favourite way of travelling?

22. Where do you play mostly?

23. Do you play outside? Where? Who with?

24. Do you have a set time to come home?

25. Do you generally agree with your parents about travelling around?

26. How you felt about taking part in this research?

27. Anything would like to say about the research?
Appendix 3  In-depth interview with mothers - topic guide

Introduction

Would like to ask about childhood travel and some other personal background information to help understand what has influenced how you and your children travel.

- about your present circumstances,
- about your travel history and background,
- about motherhood and
- about your perceptions of your children's travel.

Present circumstances

1. Can you describe your household and what are you (and your partner) doing at the moment in terms of work, looking after the children etc.?

2. What are your childcare arrangements?

3. Can you give me a general picture of how your family travel over a week?

4. What kind of support do you have locally?

Travel history

5. Can you describe your general travel behaviour when you were at primary and secondary school?

6. Can you describe any particular good and bad experiences of travelling to primary and/or secondary school that come to mind?

7. What do you remember about the time when you were leaving primary school and
starting secondary school?

8. Can you describe the street/s you lived in and where you played?

9. When you were growing up do you feel you were able to do everything you wanted to do?

After secondary school and before having children

10. Generally, describe how did you travel around during this time?

11. Can you give examples of particular experiences – both good and bad?

Motherhood

Experiences of motherhood

12. How did having children change the way you live?

13. How much freedom would you say you give your child in the house – to watch TV programmes that they want to, to use the Internet, to use the telephone?

14. Has your childhood affected how you mother your own children?

Travelling with children when they were younger

Now thinking about travelling with your children when they were babies/toddlers

15. How did you travel with the child/ren when they were babies/toddlers?

16. Can you describe any particular good and bad experiences you had travelling with babies/toddlers?

17. Is there anything else in particular you remember about travelling with children before I move to their travel now?
Children's travel now

Thinking now of the present and how you and your children travel

18. Describe how your child/ren travel to school and who they travel with?

19. Do they go to classes outside of school - do you take them - How?

20. How would you describe their route to school in terms of the roads, the pavements, any open space?

21. Where do your children play?

22. Who makes decisions about how the children travel?

23. What makes travelling around now for children different from when you were a child?

Decisions about travel

24. What are the issues that you think about in terms of your children travelling and which are more important?

25. Are there any particular events/experiences/people that have affected how you like your children to travel? Did any of the events you have talked about affect how they travel?

Potential help and support

26. What do you think could be changed to make it easier for you and your children to travel?
   - improvements to environment, information, organization of transport

27. Is there anything else you would like to add?
### Appendix 4  Minimization of risk during the research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible risk</th>
<th>Action that was taken to minimize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The time involved in taking part in filming, interviews and pre-filming meetings.</td>
<td>Participants were kept informed of the time commitments of the research and if these changed during the course of the research, Interviews did not last beyond the pre-arranged time without agreement from participants. Pre-filming meetings for the children were time-limited and were made as enjoyable as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing journey time to school due to the practicalities of filming.</td>
<td>The additional time required for filming was taken into account in journey planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassment of speaking in a group, showing films to others and fear of admitting negative aspects of journeys and anxieties.</td>
<td>This was minimized by creating a research environment in which all participants contributions are valued by the researcher and others taking part in the research. Children were asked if they consented to others watching their films and any anxieties were discussed with the researcher until potential problems were resolved. It was made clear that children could withdraw from all or part of the research at any time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure of abuse or any other information that may cause distress</td>
<td>It was decided beforehand that if issues of abuse were revealed by a child then the school would be notified and the school’s normal procedures for child protection would be complied with. This case did not arise. However, a number of participants raised issues that were potentially distressing or which had caused them distress including family breakdowns or alcohol misuse, attacks on pets, and an attack with a pellet gun. The researcher’s social skills were employed and participants de-briefed to ensure that discussion of these did not cause ongoing distress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk to personal security of children being targeted with expensive video equipment</td>
<td>This was minimized due to the researcher’s or another adult’s presence during filming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk of harassment from other children due to the filming process, both during filming and afterwards.</td>
<td>This risk was minimized by ensuring that responsible adults, including teachers, headteachers and parents were aware of when filming had taken place. In addition this issue was discussed with children, who were asked to report any harassment to either the researcher or another responsible adult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible risks of accidents while filming.</td>
<td>These were minimized due to the researcher’s presence with the children. Children were asked to stop filming in potentially dangerous circumstances such as crossing the road or boarding a bus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestibility – children filming what they think the researcher wants</td>
<td>This was minimized by explaining to children that they should film their journey in a way that represents their usual experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative impact of filming process on the research</td>
<td>My observation of the filming, and the role this plays in the research minimized the risk of collecting invalid data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks to researchers wellbeing during interviews and filming</td>
<td>The researcher adhered to the Social Research Association’s Code of practice (date unknown) for the safety of social researchers, which details how risks associated with fieldwork can be minimized.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5  Information sheets

University of Brighton Research project  Young people’s school travel

Information sheet for parents

About me
My name is Lesley Murray and I am studying for a PhD at the University of Brighton. Before this I worked for 10 years as a transport researcher, most recently with Transport for London. I have worked on a number of projects involving young people and have been cleared by the Criminal Records Bureau. Through this research I am hoping to improve the understanding of the journey to school from the young person’s and parent’s viewpoint, which have often been ignored in the past.

The research
The research will look at how young people feel about their journeys to school, and what influences their mothers/carers decisions about how they travel. To study this, I am working with young people from years 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 and their mothers/carers. The young people are filming travel diaries of their journey home from school and I will carry out an interview with the young person’s mother/carer. I will travel with the young people when they are filming. I hope that the research will be fun as well as educational for all those who take part.

Why is this research being done?
I think that we need to better understand how young people travel and why they make certain choices about how they travel. Once we know more about this it will be more possible to provide more information for the organisations that plan and manage our transport system: organizations that run buses, improve roads and pavements, and put pelican crossings on busy roads. The information collected will be used for my PhD thesis and academic publications.

What will volunteering involve?
1. Young people taking part in two one hour workshops with other young people.
   The workshops will take place at the end of the school day and last for one hour. At the first workshop we will talk generally about the research how a journey could be filmed. At the second workshop we will look at the finished video diaries and discuss them. The workshops will be tape recorded, with permission from the young people and additional notes will be taken.

2. Recording a video diary of a journey to school.
   The young people will be lent a video camera to film parts of their journey home from school. I will accompany them on this journey, both for safety reasons and to take notes and how and what they
choose to film. The journey will be made in the normal way and young people will be accompanied by parents, other adults or young people, if this is how the journey is usually made. I have carried out this type of research before for Transport for London and the young people reported that they had really enjoyed it and felt they gained new videing skills. I have planned carefully to minimize risks and ensure your child will be safe. My methods have been approved by the University of Brighton’s ethics committee. Possible risks to young people while filming, such as accidents and targeting of video equipment will be minimized by my presence during filming.

3. Mothers/carers taking part in an interview

The interviews will take up to one hour and will be tape recorded, with your permission. We will talk about the travel experiences of you and your children and how you feel about your children’s travel.

Protecting your privacy
All the information collected will be treated in strict confidence and will be kept in a secure place. Tape recordings of interviews and workshops, the video recordings and any notes taken, will be locked in a secure cabinet. Information that is then put onto a computer will be coded so that it is not traceable to you and kept in a secure place, with password only access. All images of the young people will be erased from the video-tapes when the project is completed.

Who will benefit from the research?
Along with informing my PhD and academic publications, the research findings will be made available to transport planners. Young people and their parents will benefit from any action taken based on a better understanding young people's travel and its influences. Many of the issues that are important to young people are also important to other groups in society, so any improvements will have positive effects on other members of society.

Feedback
You will be sent a summary report containing the main findings of the research and have the opportunity to give feedback based on this and your experience of the research process.

Lesley Murray, University of Brighton, Telephone number: 01275 644558. Email: lm19@bton.ac.uk

If you have any problems with the way the research is being done, there is a group in the university that deal with problems like this, called the Research Ethics Committee. They can be contacted on 01273 642612.
Information sheet for young people

My project
I need your help to look at how you travel from school and what you think about your journeys. This is part of my studies at the University of Brighton.

About me
My name is Lesley Murray and I have worked on research like this before. I worked on transport projects for young people for Transport for London, who plan and run London’s transport system.

Why am I doing this?
It is really important that we know more about how young people get to school so that we can make it easier and safer. Through my studies I’m hoping to help people understand why young people travel to school the way they do.

What I am asking you to do?
I hope that taking part in this project will be fun. You will be asked to do three things:

1. Take part in a workshop lasting about one hour with other young people about the same age as you. We will talk about the project and how a journey to school could be filmed.

2. Video your journey from school - You will have a video camera to film parts of the journey. I will be with you when you do this and take notes.

3. Take part in a second workshop also lasting about an hour. We will look at the finished video diaries and talk about them. The workshops will be tape recorded, if you agree to this, and I will take notes.

You can pull out of the research, or any part of it, at any time by telling me, your parents/guardians or your teacher.

Keeping the information you give private
Your videos will be kept in a locked cabinet. I will later write out a description of what you filmed, but your name will not appear on this.
Appendix 6  Consent forms

University of Brighton Research project  Young people’s school travel

Consent Form for parents

If you agree with what is written here, please tick each box and sign below.

I agree to take part in this research and give my permission for my child to take part in the research, which is looking at travel issues for women and young people.

The researcher has explained to my satisfaction the purpose of the research and the possible risks involved. I have had the principles and the procedure explained to me and I have also read the information sheet. I understand the principles and procedures fully.

I am aware that I will be requested to take part in an interview and my child will be requested to take part in workshops, video-record a journey and have a discussion about this afterwards. The video recordings will be viewed by the other young people involved in the research, but otherwise will not be used for other purposes without the prior permission of both myself and my child.

I understand that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, as is my child.

I understand that both my own and my child’s contributions will be anonymous and neither of you will be named in the research.

I understand that the research will form the basis of a PhD thesis and articles/books for academic publication. The results will be available to me and all other participants in the research.

Name (please print)....................................................................................................................

Signed ...........................................................................................................................................

Date................................................................................................................................................
Consent Form for young people

If you agree with what is written here, please tick each box and sign below.

I have read and understood the information sheet about Lesley Murray's project. I understand that Lesley will not talk about what I have said with anyone else, and that no-one will know who I am if they read the project.

Lesley Murray can show my video to the other young people involved in the research so that we can all talk about what I have filmed. But the video will not be seen by anyone else without my agreement.

Lesley Murray can use what I have said in her report and academic publications. I will not be named in the research.

I understand that I can pull out of the research at any time and do not have to take part in sections of the research if I do not want to.

Name: ..................................................................................................................

Signature: .............................................................................................................

Date: ...................................................................................................................

Name of witness: ...................................................................................................

Signature of witness: .................................................................................................
Appendix 7 Ethics checklist (based on Alderson and Morrow 2004)

1. The purpose of the research
The purpose of the research is stated clearly in the research questions and includes seeking benefits to children and young people and mothers in creating knowledge and understanding of their everyday lives.

2. Costs and hoped for benefits
The costs to the children involved could include those listed in the table in Appendix 4. As the table shows, these were minimized through the action of the researcher, and are thus outweighed by the benefits of this research, both to the participants and to the wider community.

3. Privacy and confidentiality
All participants were assured privacy confidentiality and anonymity. Contributions were collected, analyzed and published with strict confidentiality and remain secure. All computerized data was anonymised and any further published data will be anonymised. Consent for use of visual data to make a short film, within strict controls to maintain anonymity, was obtained from most participants and the visual data from the remaining participants will not be used in this way.

4. Selection, inclusion and exclusion
Recruitment of children was carried out through schools and through their mothers (via snowballing). In the case of recruitment via mothers, children were given the opportunity to decline from taking part at anytime. Children took part in the research on a voluntary basis and no children and young people who requested to take part were excluded.

5. Funding
The project was funded by the ESRC, a body that advocates ethical considerations in research. The ESRC does not stand to gain in a commercial sense from this research, and therefore there is no conflict of interest between the funder and the research.
6. Review and revision of the research and methods

Children were involved in the research design as the research process was reflexive, allowing refinements based on participants’ views which were sought during the research. In addition, the researcher reviewed methods to reduce negative impact on participants, for example, by carrying out interviews with others present.

7. Information for children, mothers/carers

The children and adults involved were given clear and accessible information about the nature and purpose of the research, as well as practical information about their/their children’s involvement. This information was updated, and consent re-negotiated, throughout the research process.

8. Consent

Informed written consent was obtained from all participants. This consent was re-negotiated throughout the research process. Participants were made aware that they could withdraw from all or part of the research at any time.

9. Dissemination

The children and adults will be sent short reports detailing the main research findings and how this information will be used. In addition, a short film will be produced based on the children’s video footage. The results will be disseminated as widely as possible within both policy and academic arenas, to ensure its maximum impact.

10. Impact on children

Negative impacts on the children in the research were minimized as set out in Appendix 4. As well as the positive impacts on the children involved in the research, it is intended that the research will benefit a wider group of children through influencing decision-makers involved in transport and related fields, and through increasing knowledge about childhood issues, and about research methodology.
### Appendix 8  Relationships between participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Child 1</th>
<th>Child 2</th>
<th>Child 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Molly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>Evie</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl</td>
<td>Billy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine</td>
<td>Emily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiona</td>
<td>Loren</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gill</td>
<td>Luca</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>Ruby</td>
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<td>Jimmy</td>
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<td>Karen</td>
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<td>Yvonne</td>
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