**Parental Regulation of Teenagers' Time: processes and
meanings**

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Abstract

Parental regulation of teenagers' time is pervasive. Parents attempt to constrain, well into adolescence, what their children do with their time, when they do it and how long they do it for. This paper draws on interviews with 14-16 year olds in the UK to explore teenagers' experiences of parents' temporal regulation, and whether their perceptions are affected by the processes and meanings attached to it. Where values, meanings and rationalities around temporalities are shared, regulation can be relatively unproblematic. Sometimes however, there is a clash of frames, which impacts on teenagers' subjective experiences and can lead to strategies to escape parental regulation of time.

Key words: Sociology; Childhood; Time; Temporality; Family ordering; Teenagers; Parenting practices

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Perhaps more than ever before, the climate in which parenting is carried out in Western societies encourages a high degree of temporal regulation by parents. Firstly, to try to keep their children safe; and secondly to try to ensure their children are making 'good use' of their time. Social theories of contemporary Western life offer some explanation. Some claim that we live in a 'risk society', where people live with an increased sense of risk and personal responsibility for managing those risks (cf. Beck 1992; Giddens 1990; Beck-Gernsheim 2002). Studies certainly indicate concern about growing up in the UK. Adults feel that teenage life now is very different, and much of the change concerns perceptions of increased risks to young people and of young people's risk-taking behaviour (Thomas and Hocking 2003). Modern living is also associated with the idealisation of self-improvement and increased reliance on cultural capital. This has fostered

what Daly (1996) refers to as a 'moral economy' of time. Policy reports addressing childhood in the UK reflect such a perspective, strongly supporting the provision of supervised and structured activities for young people, and what they term 'constructive' and 'positive' activities (DfES 2006; HM Treasury 2007; Margo et al 2006). These issues have been addressed almost exclusively from adult accounts, and reflect an adult-centred agenda.

'Doing time'. 'Doing families'

Control over the use of time makes it subject to competing interests, and therefore political (Adam 1990; Daly 1996). Indeed, a valuable insight into the politics of temporal regulation in families can be gained from the consideration of parent-child interaction as a form of 'total institution'. Goffman (1961) bases the distinction between life in civil society and in a total institution on an inmate's freedom to choose, schedule and pace their activities. The same distinction could be made between life as an adult and life as a child. But perhaps more relevant to the study of family life is Bernstein's (1986) formulation of total institutions as being constituted not on their objective characteristics (as Goffman's were) but through inmates' perception of them as such.

The social production of roles within the family, or 'family ordering', is useful in explaining the processes behind this. Family ordering is a way of understanding childhood as a structural phenomenon that exhibits power

differentials (cf. Alanen 1998, 2001; Mayall 1994, 2001a, 2003). Family (re)ordering will influence what family members do, and their expectations of their own and each other's actions. So it is likely that children's views on the family order will mediate their experience of parental regulation of their time. In families, as in wider society we bequeath certain people in certain circumstances the right to make demands on our time to a certain degree. The subjective constitution of parental power may also help us to understand social interaction and cooperation in times of physical separation common between parents and their teenage children.

The family order, based on the processes of constructing family life, also has an agentic aspect. It can be described as an ensemble of embedded social practices, or a system, that both contributes to and is the outcome of social structure through a process Giddens (1984) calls 'structuration'. Systems often routinize action, but they do not prevent either deliberative agency or unintended outcomes of purposive actions from generating change in the system or structure. Such purposive actions include negotiation on any one of a number of levels (Solberg 1990).

Such negotiation frequently has a temporal dimension. Solberg points out that what childhood means in any given family is negotiated on different levels – explicitly on practical matters (which may include time), and more abstractly through conceptions of age and age-related activities. The state of adolescence itself presents an opportunity for a reconfiguration of the family order, both due to the agency of children and (since family ordering

is a mutually defined, relational concept) to changes in parents' view of their child's competence.

It can be claimed that one of the primary goals of family practices is to achieve independent adult status for children. In trying to attain this goal parents use adolescence as a time to experiment with the boundaries of a child's dependence, and this involves re-negotiating control over time. The period of adolescence is when the 'being and becoming' nature of children's lives (Uprichard 2008) is perhaps most recognised, both within families and in wider society. The recurrent positioning of parents and adolescent children around issues of time may give us an insight into the processes involved in this 'slice' of family ordering. As Daly points out,

The manner in which time is controlled within families rests on an analysis of the 'interlacing' of values, norms, objectifications and dynamics of power that are associated with time. (Daly 1996:114)

In what follows I attempt such an analysis from an interpretive perspective.

Aims of the study

This study, at its most fundamental level, exposes the dimensions of parental temporal regulation in teenagers' lives. The use of teenagers' accounts also reveals how teenagers experience both the ways and the means of such regulation – the meanings they attach to it and their affective responses. It also looks at ways in which teenagers may act to limit or subvert parental regulation of their time. Teenagers occupy a social

and temporal position of transition between childhood and adulthood – positions in part defined by relations of regulation, temporal and otherwise. Their experiences therefore offer a unique window on temporalities in family life. At the same time, the study of adolescent temporality also exposes the processes behind the ongoing construction of family life.

Methods

This paper uses supplementary analysis of interview data generated for a study of perceptions of risk around work-life balance in families with secondary school-aged children (referred to as the ‘original study’). This was based on interviews with seventy-six 12-16 year olds living in London and the South-East of England, and both parents of twenty-six of theseⁱ. The processes and meanings behind the regulation of teenagers’ time had emerged as a theme during the analysis. However, not being central to the original research question this was left relatively unexplored. In order to explicitly address this issue I carried out in-depth analysis of sixteen purposively selected interviews with 14-16 year olds.

In selecting my cases for further analysis I focussed on the 14-16 year old age group since the younger respondents had little unsupervised time. I balanced the number of males and females and captured a range of ethnicities. It was never my intention to explore ‘from without’ the relationships between demographic characteristics and respondents’

experiences of parental temporal regulation. Although there were a number of other variables that I felt might relate to the experiences of temporal regulation, it had become clear to me in the original analysis that assigning cases according to these variables was extremely problematic. For example, parental occupation was often unclear from teenagers' accounts, and there were often step-parents to be added to the equation; cross-household living arrangements were highly complex, as were parents work patterns and shared time in households; the availability of public transport, even within London, varied enormously; the social profile of areas was also very varied. I decided to select across these variables taking an impressionistic view. In this way I felt I was accommodating the complexity of respondents' lives instead of imposing a strict categorization or homogeneity, which I felt would be a mis-representation.

This qualitative study tends to focus on the commonalities between the respondents, despite their demographic differences. However, where respondents themselves signal a factor as holding some significance (as with age and gender), then this is duly noted. In presenting findings I also draw from the original sample for purposes of contextualization.

Pseudonyms are used throughout.

Findings

Firstly I consider the interconnections between a number of temporalities, and their relationship to place. Next I deal with respondents' perceptions of the contributions of time that they make to the household. I then show how in prioritising certain activities and in dictating time limits for others, parents display a strong moral economy of time that may be at odds with the values of teenagers. Finally I consider the roles of negotiation, experience and trust as strategies used by teenagers and their parents to gain control over teenagers' time.

The effect of clock, calendar, location and age

Clock, calendar, location and age were part of a matrix of factors that influenced parental temporal regulation. For instance, parents did not use time of day in isolation as a parameter for spatial regulation. In the original sample rules around going out, including 'curfew' times, reflected a distinction between school days and other days. The exception was Morgan, a 16 year-old male who was in higher education and had a part-time job. On what the other respondents invariably referred to as "school nights" (Sunday to Thursday) they were frequently not allowed out, or had earlier curfew times. Nathan for instance, 15, wasn't allowed to go to any parties on school nights, to one party over a weekend and two a week in the holidays. 'Bedtimes' also reflected a school-night policy. However, it appeared that 'bedtime' for teenagers constituted an enforced move to bedrooms, rather than going to bed, which accords with other research (Moran-Ellis and Venn 2007).

Respondents appeared to accept the school night / non-school-night distinction with equanimity. School-children experience the divide between school days and other days on a number of fronts: school days dictated when to get up, what to wear, when to leave the house; time at school is highly regulated; and homework reaches into home time during the school term. It is likely that perceptions of school nights' rules were influenced by this all-pervasive structure and that a differentiation in rules about going out and coming in were accepted as just another aspect of teenagers' social position as school-children.

Parents also appear to refer to age when setting curfews and spatial limits. The three 16 year-olds (Morgan, Aisha and Zoe) had much later curfews, or none at all, and appeared to be allowed anywhere they wished to go. Nicole, at 14, stood out as exceptional among the younger respondents for reporting having no curfews or limits on her whereabouts at least at weekends – a degree of freedom and independence she described as “too much”, since it made her feel that her mother wanted her out of the way.

When 14-15 year-old respondents were allowed out, another factor that mediated the impact of clock time on curfew rules was darkness, and this itself was dependent on the season. Rules based on darkness themselves varied according to where the children were, whom they were with and how they were getting back. Ruby for instance, 15, explained that she was allowed to go to parties after dark, but that she was not to travel alone, or

later than 11.00. After that time she had to be indoors, although not necessarily at home. It appears that this was another way in which temporal regulation reflected a differentiation between school nights and non-school nights. On the latter, respondents were expected to be 'indoors' (in other words in *someone's* home) by their curfew times, whereas on school nights they were expected to be 'at home' – in *their own* home.

On the whole, although they often attempted some negotiation, respondents in this and the original study were ultimately happy to comply with parents' rules about going out and about. Their understanding was that safety concerns were behind these rules. Furthermore, parental concern about their child's safety was seen as a sign of love. Making rules to keep their child safe, and worrying about their safety, were read as appropriate things for parents to do. Not causing their parents worry was a reciprocal sign of love, although didn't always lead to compliance (see below). Girls often said that their fathers worried about them being around boys. Not all of our respondents were in a position to make direct comparisons with male siblings, but only once was gender reported as a mediating factor in parental regulation about going out. Amy, 15, told us how her younger brother was allowed to go to parties at a younger age than she had been, which she attributed to her father's worry about boys. She affectionately said, "I think it's just a dad thing". The other factor that Amy's story highlights is of course sibling order. Other research has shown that this effects parental regulation as well as children and young people's

attitudes to it in complex ways (Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004; Punch 2008; Edwards 2008). It was evident that caring for younger siblings could impact on respondents' time (see below), but the original interviews did not pursue the ways in which sibling order could be used as a negotiating tool.

The contextual factors that parents used in regulating their children's time were often the same as those that influenced respondents' affective experiences of time and place. We were often told of places respondents felt uneasy about being – some at any time, others after dark, or on their own. Wherever the respondents lived, there were specific time-places they tried to avoid, whether it was a certain estate, an area of town, a specific street, bench or open space. These weren't *necessarily* places that were identified as risky by parents. Generally, the fact that adolescents' affective experience often accorded with parental regulation rendered such regulation understandable and acceptable. As Nathan said,

Mum doesn't want me travelling when it's dark if I can help it. [...] And I'm the same – I don't want to travel when it's dark either. I'm not saying mum's being unreasonable.

In fact some children whose parents worked nights worried about *their parents'* safety. Lydia's perspective as a 14 year-old carer for her disabled mother was also interesting. She said:

when she tells me she is coming back from my uncle's at 7 and they don't come back until like 7.30 or 8, I usually have to call them and say "Where are you?"

Household responsibilities and the regulation of time

An emphasis on parental regulation may unduly implicate teenagers as burdens, in constant need of coercion. In fact respondents in the supplementary analysis and in the wider study contributed to the household in a number of ways, and these contributions impacted on their time. Firstly, they claimed to follow parents' rules about time on the whole. Respondents also contributed to the smooth running of the household by doing housework, or caring for other family members. Sibling care was usually associated with a parent being out at work outside school hours.

Multiple rationales emerged behind the undertaking of household responsibilities. Most obviously, some respondents gained financial rewards for their work (though the relationship between work and money was both complex and fluid). "Being helpful" could also be used to soften a parent up before a specific request about spending time. Less instrumentally, respondents could also see themselves as helping working parents. Reflecting other research on the impact of parental employment on children's domestic labour (Morrow 1996; Ridge 2007) respondents viewed parental employment as necessary and normal, and this appeared to contribute to their acceptance of its influence over their time. Help could be offered out of feelings of love and duty. Despite the frequent absence of clear sanctions, the fact that a parent would be cross or upset acted as an incentive for respondents to meet parental expectations. Furthermore, some of the *female* respondents described themselves as being "old

enough now” to take on a share of housework. This highlights the difficulties in differentiating between moral and instrumental rationalities. The demonstration of moral competence is a signifier of maturity, and of being “reliable”, which helped to build parents’ trust in their children and usher in greater freedom (see below). It was clear that respondents made moral choices about what their contribution of time to the household should be. In doing so they expected their contribution to be acknowledged in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual respect, as the following examples show.

Robert, 14, lived with his parents, his older sister and his eight-year-old brother. His parents (both professionals) worked full-time. Robert carried out a great deal of care for his brother: he got him showered in the morning and washed the shower; took him to breakfast club every day on the bus before getting another bus to school himself. Robert collected his brother three times a week from after-school club and, along with his sister, gave him tea and looked after him until his parents got back from work. He and his sister also looked after him all through the school holidays, though Robert said he did the bulk of care because he and his brother had a better relationship, and his sister tended to stay in her room. Apart from childcare, Robert frequently and regularly carried out domestic chores. Robert was remarkably sanguine about the responsibilities that he was required to perform. He was nevertheless resentful of his parents, and the chaffing point appeared to relate to two aspects of their behaviour towards him. The first was a lack of direct acknowledgement of his

contribution, or even a warmth that may have been read as such. For example he took it hard that he only ever got one present on his birthday; he felt his parents didn't spend enough time with them; and he described his relationship with his father as,

not how a father/son relationship should be. Like all the other people like their Dads take them to the park to have a kick about, my Dad doesn't like that.

The second point of contention concerned his parents' lack of trust in him, which appeared at odds with the responsibility he was given for looking after his brother. Despite being deemed responsible enough to carry out childcare and "too old to beat", Robert was not allowed to take his brother out of the house to the local park, so spent evenings and all of the holidays indoors:

it is like our parents don't trust us, so they don't let us out.

Ironically, his parents used his lack of street-wisdom to justify keeping him indoors. His parents also stopped him from going to the shops, saying that since he didn't have any money he may get tempted to shoplift.

It seems that for Robert it was not the responsibility, but the lack of trust despite the responsibility that was the issue. Similarly Lydia, whose mother had been severely disabled for many years, made a massive contribution to running the house and keeping her mother safe and well. The care that Lydia wanted to give her mother put huge restrictions on her time, though Lydia undertook responsibilities happily through feelings of love, duty and appropriate competence. However, recalling an incident where a relative

had been sent by her mother to spy on her in case she was spending time with a boy, Lydia said:

I was really angry with her because I was like - to think that it is my mum doing this to me she could have just asked me who he was instead of sending my uncle to spy on me.

Finally, Elizabeth (14) felt a responsibility to help her working mother with housework. But she resented her father's treatment of her as a 'skivvy', because she viewed his demands to fetch him the remote control when he was watching television, or switch on the light for him, as unreasonable.

Moral economy of time

In sequencing and temporally delimiting their children's activities parents appeared to operate a strong moral economy of time - certain activities were seen as a more valuable way of spending time than others. We have noted the spatial-temporal ring-fencing around school nights. Some parents would ground their children if they were given a bad report from school – an action reminiscent of Goffman's 'looping', where inmates actions in one domain are reflected onto another. Parents operated a 'work before pleasure' system in sequencing their children's activities at home. The majority of the respondents in the original study, irrespective of background, mentioned explicit rules about getting homework done first – before watching television, playing games or online networking. Parents also operated a moral economy of time by putting limits on less 'constructive' activities:

my mum never stops me if I am like using the computer, she just like she lets me – what's the word, like using my brain and being constructive. So it is only like TV [that's restricted]. (Elizabeth)

Actually the weird thing is I can do homework on my computer for as long as I want but if I'm on the internet then the clock starts ticking.

(Craig, 15)

Access to technologies could also be limited because of cost or the need to share with other family members, which reflected a socio-economic context. These rationales were uncontentious, perhaps because they were seen as objective and 'unloaded'. On the other hand, limits set from a parental perspective on the 'appropriate use of time' were more problematic. Craig clearly saw the imposition of his father's time-use values as signifying a lack of trust and respect in his own autonomy and decision-making capacity:

I don't think they give me enough credit because they won't let me stay alone for too long because they think that if I'm alone I'll actually not be able to look after myself at all and that's why they time me when I'm on the Playstation ... and that's what I don't like because it doesn't make me feel independent.

Frequently respondents' time sovereignty at home was only possible in the absence of parents or siblings, perhaps accounting for their enthusiasm for "time to myself". Siblings provided competition for access to technologies,

with older siblings taking precedence. Younger siblings sometimes required care. Parents not only regulated what their children did, but the order in which they did it, and for how long. Elizabeth told us what she liked about having the house to herself after school:

I am able to like watch TV and then do whatever I like or call my friends and then do my homework later. But then if my parents are there they are like “No, do your homework first” and then ask you to eat and then you go on the phone but not more than for like say thirty minutes.

Even sixteen year-old Aisha, who was given a lot of freedom, still liked the fact that her parents were usually out at work when she got home from school. One reason for this was that she enjoyed being able to pop out and, although she informed her mother by phone when she did so, she felt that,

If they’re here it’s easier for them to say “No”.

Activities commonly seen as a valuable use of time by adults are often future-oriented. It is possible that the actual divide in opinions on the value of time-use is between future-oriented and present-oriented people, and that these camps may *tend* to divide along generational linesⁱⁱ. Despite the comments favouring greater leeway in exactly when they did their homework, the respondents in the supplementary analysis were approaching, or in the midst of, public examinations, and appeared to appreciate the need to put in time on schoolwork. Craig described taking responsibility for his homework as a key signifier of his independence. Others clearly saw a role for their parents in making sure it got done.

Tellingly, respondents often portrayed themselves as either that they “needed nagging” to do their homework or that they “didn’t need telling”, as if the need for a parent to monitor homework was a given point around which they positioned themselves.

Around half of the seventy-six respondents in the original study chose to take part in what adults often term “constructive activities” (regular, structured, adult-supervised, extra-curricular activities) often music or sport. Those taking part in such activities came from all backgrounds, although private tuition was concentrated in the higher socio-economic groups. Nevertheless, respondents did not always hold the same valuation of time as their parents. Instances of time-use that seem to hold less value for respondents (times referred to as “just sitting” or “sitting around”) were about having a sense of nothing to do (as opposed to nothing ‘useful’ to do) *in conjunction with* no-one to do it with.

Negotiating temporal regulation

Time was subject to a degree of ‘negotiation’ between adolescents and their parents, and there were several factors used in this process: age, competence, discussion, bargaining, experience, experimentation, authoritarianism, ‘noblesse oblige’ and dis-information.

In accordance with Solberg (1990) parents and teenagers in this study used biological age as a marker for regulation. Belief in a child’s competence was also key, although here parties to the negotiation could

take different views, as we have seen throughout. Teenagers might attempt to 'prove' their competence by assuming responsibilities. In the light of these factors issues such as curfew times after specific occasions (gigs or parties) tended to be discussed on an ad hoc basis. Time spent away from parents out of the home was achieved by way of an undertaking that respondents of all ages would keep their parents informed of their movements. Once again Morgan, the 16 year-old apprentice, was the exception. Although he was still in the habit of telling his mother where he was going (as anyone sharing a house might) he was no longer required to update her on his plans throughout the evening.

The back-catalogue of experience appeared to be as important as a sense of age-appropriateness in changing the boundaries of parental regulation. A loosening of the reins occurred gradually over time, although there were 'pulses' that broke new ground. Nearly all in the original study had started travelling on their own, usually by public transport, when they started secondary school. This laid the foundations for independent travel, which tended to range further away over time. New milestones, such as going to the local town or to London's West End had to be negotiated, since parents saw them as holding inherent dangers (drunks, paedophiles, terrorists). These new events were more closely monitored and time-limited, but if all went well could also become part of the repertoire of what young people were allowed to do.

Respondents' parents could concede ground to their children, and the sense of having 'won', 'been granted' or 'having successfully negotiated' (or not) a new boundary for parental regulation of their time, had an impact on young people's attitudes to regulation. Several respondents gave accounts of parents handing over to their teenage children responsibility for regulating their own time. Fifteen year-old Ben's experience around bedtimes was common. His parents maintained the right to resume control if they felt he was not handling this responsibility wisely:

I don't have a strict bedtime anymore, they go "Right, you know when it is practical to go to sleep and if we don't think you are going then we will set it."

Conversely, we have seen how Craig, also 15, found his parents' failure to hand over responsibility for allocating his time particularly frustrating.

Solomon et al (2002) have raised the question of whether negotiation is merely one strategy of control. Parents in the original study, in trying to achieve independence for their children, became less directive as their children got older. Nevertheless, the power to grant or withhold permission rested with parents. Elizabeth recognised that her mother still held the trump card:

I can't say to my mum "Well you can't use your phone" or whatever, but she can restrict me from doing things, that's why I would rather her be happy than [me].

Some parents (whether strategically or not we cannot say) had rendered their regulation almost invisible. This lack of overt authoritarianism appeared to enhance the young people's sense of autonomy while still accomplishing compliance with temporal regulation:

Don't really have any restrictions really. I have to be off the computer at a certain time to get ready to go to bed or whatever. I don't have any restrictions. We always have to do our homework before we can do anything like going to watch TV or go on the computer, they tell us to do that first. But that's all it really is really. I mean we would have to do some like cleaning or doing some things around the house because people aren't there to do it. So that's it really. (Libby, 15)

It was important to respondents that they were trusted. I have already noted the *emotional* response to a perceived lack of trust. Respondents also displayed an *instrumental* approach to trust: they understood that sticking to the rules increased their parents' trust in them and so brought greater freedoms. Trust can be viewed as a currency with which 'own time' can be bought or surrendered. Respondents knew that if they broke their parents' growing trust in them they could be grounded, and so lose valuable 'own time'.

I wouldn't feel like I could just go behind them and say "Yes OK, you said 'no' but I am going to do it anyway" because otherwise if they find out then they wouldn't trust me, and I need them to trust me for me to be able to do the things that I want to do. (Libby)

Furthermore, the negotiation over 'own time' could take place over time present and time future. Sebastian's comment was not untypical:

If I break the trust it's not going to be there anymore and it's going to ruin a lot of other things. Mostly you can negotiate stuff. It works quite well actually that way. If you think about it long term you kind of go through a lot more than if you're just breaking rules and then shouting all the time. (15)

Although overt two-way negotiation between parents and children often increased with the age and experience of the child, what was also evident, given the power inequality between them, was adolescents' 'negotiation' of terrain mapped out by their parents. Work emanating from the sociology of childhood has highlighted the role of children in avoiding or subverting systems of adult or parental authority (Hutchby and Moran-Ellis 1998). As Williams and Williams (2005) have noted, the use of mobile phones has increased the temporal and spatial freedom afforded to teenagers by their parents, while simultaneously extending the parental reach into periods of separation. Respondents in this study sometimes used mobile phones to elude the parental gaze – to say they were one place while being in another. Elizabeth, for instance, having recognised that her mother had the upper hand, would bend the truth about where she was and with whom. This perhaps allowed her greater freedom to allocate her time, particularly in the light of her parents' moral economy of time.

Sometimes I will say "Ah, I am going to the library" but I actually stop at the library but I don't stay there, I just go to other people's houses or I just go shopping or something [...] like if I told her ... they will start

carrying on, “Where have you been? bla, bla, bla” and it is not like – I just don’t want to have to tell my parents everything kind of thing, like I feel like there is some part of me that I should keep to myself, that they don’t need to know everything.

So the desire to maintain their parents’ trust could prompt compliance with regulation. But trust could also be maintained by not getting caught breaking it. Aisha and Zoe, both sixteen, told how they used to lie to their parents, but now that they were trusted more and given more freedom they no longer felt the need.

Conclusion

The use of teenagers’ accounts of their everyday lives has provided an insight into the workings of both time and regulation in family processes. Equally, the study of temporal regulation is a useful lens through which to study the lives of teenagers. The findings throughout demonstrate the recursive processes of protection and enablement, connectedness and autonomy that are the heartbeat of everyday family life, particularly in adolescence.

In contrast to the rhetoric over teenagers’ use of time, particularly when unsupervised, this study shows that teenagers’ time is highly regulated by parents. This regulation appears to operate on three temporal levels, and these levels interact. At micro-level parents regulate when and how often their teenage children undertake various activities, and also for how long

and in what sequence. At meso-level parents distinguish between school days and non-school days, and between time at home and time away from home. On a macro-level parents use their child's age and experience in setting rules about time. Older children are given greater time sovereignty on both the micro- and meso-levels, with a particularly marked age differentiation around time away from home.

In families, temporal regulation in circumstances of separation relies on trust. Teenagers understand that breaking such trust can usher in greater infringements on their time, and can slow down the evident progress towards greater autonomy over time. However, it is not only compliance with parental regulation that keeps trust intact. Not getting caught breaking the rules can also preserve a parent's trust, and the greater degree of time sovereignty that accompanies it.

Ideals and practices around appropriate roles within the family exert a strong influence not only on specific rules about teenagers' use of time and the way that regulation is allocated between parents, but also on the meanings teenagers attach to such regulation. In subjectively constituting the family order teenagers actively delegate a regulating role to parents, principally in terms of efforts to keep children safe and of supporting educational endeavour. However, rules themselves, and children's attitudes to them, were expected to change over time, and teenagers tended to see it as a rite of passage to push the boundaries of such regulation, to challenge or even escape it. In fact some of the older

respondents appeared to be living proof that as long as one was not caught, then such a policy could pay off.

Teenagers' emotional response to regulation was mediated by the degree of congruence between their and their parents' framing of a situation. In particular, a difference in values about the proper use of time can create varying amounts of friction, a degree of non-compliance, and contribute to teenagers' desire for some time alone. Conversely, the high degree of temporal regulation that accompanied time away from home was not only seen as a sign of natural parental concern (reminiscent of family ordering), but also often accorded with respondents' own sense of danger attaching to time and place. Similarly respondents accepted the tighter regulation of their time on school days as part of their social position as schoolchildren, and in keeping with their own educational ambitions.

The age of 14-15 seems to be a key time of transition in temporal regulation. Parents begin the processes of deregulating their children's time, and 14-15 year olds want greater autonomy. The two sides may not always align, and a sense of claustrophobia was almost palpable in some respondents. During this transition parents' lack of trust in their children's ability to manage their time can be a source of frustration for teenagers, especially when this is seen as being at odds with the degree of responsibility given to them. Negotiation can win concessions for teenagers, but may also disguise the degree of parental power. By the age

of sixteen, the processes of experience, negotiation and perhaps attrition, appear to lead to a change in family ordering and in temporal regulation.

This study indicates several areas that could usefully be explored in future research: the impact of teenagers' future-orientation on their experiences of time and regulation; the ways in which teenagers create 'time to themselves' when with their parents. An understanding of family ordering would benefit from more exploration of the role of siblings and a more detailed picture of family ordering in 're-ordered families' and across family households. Finally, while this study has explored direct regulation of time in families my broader research with multiple family members indicates that deliberative organisation of time is not the only conduit through which the patterning of time in households emerges. My continuing interest lies in explicating the ways in which (gendered) generational ordering both influences the patterning of time in families and is implicated in such a patterning.

ⁱ Further details of the original study can be found in Lewis et al (2007) and Lewis et al (2008).

ⁱⁱ Mayall's (2001b) study of younger children indicated that ethnicity may also be a mediating factor.

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