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Eudaimonic Well-being and Narrative Scaffolds
The Creation of Later Life Happiness and Well-being through the Story of Self

Volume One

Doctorate of Philosophy Degree
Trinity College Dublin

Deirdre O'Donnell
2012
Declaration

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Summary

This doctoral research investigates the factors linked to eudaimonic happiness and well-being in later life through analysis of personal life stories and narrative identity. The study addresses two primary research questions: What is later life eudaimonic happiness and well-being? Furthermore, what role do narrative and storytelling play in the realisation of later life eudaimonic well-being? The first objective of this research is to develop an integrated model for later life eudaimonic well-being. This model is grounded in the emerging characteristics of the participants' personal narratives and it draws together the diverse understandings of later life well-being and life-satisfaction from the literature. The second objective of this research is to examine the personal, social and cultural contexts in which eudaimonic well-being and happiness are actively constructed with the support of acculturated narrative scaffolding.

Hermeneutic narrative analysis has been employed for this research and is supported by an ontological understanding of self and identity as emerging from the interpretive practices of everyday life. This emergent self, is in constant flux through discursive negotiation, and yet is knowable through the capacity of the self to generate meaning over time. This ontological understanding of the self requires the investigation of narrative as the means by which to examine the construction of self through active negotiation with discursive resources.

Extensive biographical narrative data was collected from twenty participants for this study. The sample consisted of ten men and ten women all aged over 70 and living within an economically and socially disadvantaged suburb of Dublin. The model of data collection employed for this study incorporated two interviews with each participant, one unstructured the other semi-structured. Furthermore, the participants were asked to complete a questionnaire which included demographic information as well as standardised scales measuring health and well-being.
The interview material was subjected to a four step transcription process which oversaw the transformation of the data from rough transcripts to re-transcribed narrative segments or stories (N=505). These stories were then subjected to categorical coding according to three narrative indices: Emotional tone, narrative complexity and motivational theme. This allowed for statistical comparisons between the male and female participants as well as exploration of the data as it related to the standardised measures of health and life satisfaction. Finally, in the fourth step of the transcription process each of the stories were reduced to their core plot and were structured according to their story function. This facilitated the construction of participant life narratives (see Volume Two) which provided the basis of the case studies presented in Chapter Four. A within and between gender analysis was undertaken which ensured the findings were informed by the life course experiences and concerns of men and women.

Exploration of the participants' narratives identified the component attributes of eudaimonic well-being as pertaining to two primary domains: inter-personal and intra-personal. Inter-personal attributes included socio-emotional connection, purpose, generativity, symbolic immortality and autonomy. These attributes were found to be motivated by a desire for communion. Intra-personal attributes included self-efficacy, self-esteem, control, integrity and self-realisation and they were found to be motivated by agency.

This research concludes that successful attainment of happiness and well-being in later life is predicated upon the selective combination of components of eudaimonia. In this way, individuals can optimise later life outcomes and compensate for age associated losses or decline. A further research finding established that individuals can achieve eudaimonic well-being through imaginative and creative dialogue with acculturated narrative scripts and interpretive schemas. Thereby, eudaimonic well-being is supported through the scaffolding structure of storytelling which provides the frame for individuals to create their narrative identity and interpret life experiences.
Acknowledgements

It is a pleasure to thank the many people who have supported me in realising this ambition.

To begin, I wish to thank and pay tribute to the participants for this research. I am incredibly privileged to have had the opportunity to listen and to learn from their immense wisdom. Their generosity, resilience and insights are testament to the journey and wonder of the human spirit. I hope that I have represented their voices and stories well and that future readers can learn from their remarkable lives.

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Table of Contents

Summary ......................................................................................................................... iii
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... v
Table of Contents .......................................................................................................... vii
Figures and Tables ......................................................................................................... xiv
Chapter One .................................................................................................................... 1
   Connecting eudaimonic happiness and well-being with the experience of ageing ...................... 1
   1.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1
       1.1.1 Well-being and happiness: Unpacking the terminology ......................... 6
   1.2 Social capital and later life well-being ............................................................... 12
       1.2.1 The role of social capital in later life well-being ...................................... 17
       1.2.2 The gendered life course and later life well-being .................................... 22
       1.2.3 Connecting social context and later life well-being ............................... 28
   1.3 Ageing, well-being and happiness ................................................................... 34
       1.3.1 Ageing and resilience ........................................................................ 39
       1.3.2 The meaningful Life ........................................................................ 44
       1.3.3 Connecting eudaimonia with narrative identity ................................... 51
   1.4 Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 58
Chapter Two ................................................................................................................... 65
   Epistemological statement ....................................................................................... 65
   2.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................... 65
   2.2 The ontology of self and identity ..................................................................... 66
       2.2.1 Origins of the 'social self' .................................................................. 66
       2.2.2 Possibilities and performance .............................................................. 69
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 Postmodern deadlocks and beyond</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4 Narrative and masquerade</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Epistemology</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1 Interpretive practice and narrative</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2 The 'storying' of identity</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 From theory to research design</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1 Biographical narrative research</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2 Experienced-based narratives: Definitional criteria</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Conclusion</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating theory to practice</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Introduction</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 The research sample</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Recruitment</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 The participants</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3 The community</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.4 Ethical considerations</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 The approach to data collection:</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Sub-session one</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 Sub-session two</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Sub-session three</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.4 The pilot</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Data exploration</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1 Transcription</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2 Analysis</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis level one</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis level two</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Four

Narrative exploration of eudaimonic happiness and well-being:
Presenting the study findings

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Participant overview

4.2.1 Demographics

4.2.2 Health and life satisfaction measures

4.2.3 Categorical narrative coding

4.3 Presentation of case studies

4.3.1 The case studies of the female participants categorised as having low well-being
Case study one: Aoife
Case study two: Bridget
Case study three: Gillian
Case study four: Kitty
Case study five: Una
Case study six: Jessica

4.3.2 The case studies of the female participants categorised as having high well-being
Case study seven: Debbie
Case study eight: Emma
Case study nine: Mabel
Case study ten: Sally

4.3.3 The case studies of the male participants categorised as having low well-being

ix
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study eleven: Luke</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study twelve: Jack</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.4 The case studies of the male participants categorised as having high well-being</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study thirteen: Alex</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study fourteen: Danny</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study fifteen: Eric</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study sixteen: Fred</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study seventeen: Mat</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study eighteen: Michael</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study nineteen: Philip</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study twenty: Tony</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Conclusion</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1 Connecting narratives and well-being</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.2 A within and across gender analysis</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Narrative scaffolds and storied lives: The creation of later life eudaimonic happiness and well-being**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Introduction</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 An integrated model for later life eudaimonic well-being</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 An exploration of the attributes of later life eudaimonic well-being</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1 Inter-personal well-being</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family connectivity and generativity</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generativity, purpose and symbolic immortality</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care provision and the implications for autonomy</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social connectivity and community belonging</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of autonomy for a sense of belonging</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social connectivity and positive emotion</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Friendship and the gendered life course ...........................................267

5.3.2 Intra-personal well-being ...........................................................269

Self-efficacy, Self-esteem and the gendered life course...................270

The role of control and efficacy in later life well-being....................273

External locus of control and well-being ........................................275

The role of attitude for efficacy and control ....................................277

Connecting self-efficacy, self-esteem and integrity .........................278

Integrity, self-realisation and maturity ............................................281

5.4 Realising eudaimonic well-being through narrative ....................283

5.4.1 Socio-cultural narrative accrual ..............................................284

5.4.2 Creativity and imagination in 'storying' self .............................290

5.5 Conclusion ...................................................................................296

5.5.1 Study limitations and avenues for further research ...............298

Appendix A .......................................................................................301

Participant Introduction Letter ......................................................301

Appendix B .......................................................................................303

Participant Consent Form ...............................................................303

Appendix C .......................................................................................305

Narrative Sub-Session One: The First Interview ..............................305

Single Question Aimed at Inducing Narrative (SQUIN): ...............305

Sample Prompt Questions: ..............................................................305

Appendix D .......................................................................................306

Narrative Sub-Session Three: The Second Interview Guide ..........306

Appendix E .......................................................................................309

Life History Self-Completion Questionnaire .................................309

Appendix F .......................................................................................319
Figures and Tables

Figure 3.1: A tripartite model for narrative interviews...............................100
Figure 3.2: Four transcription steps (Riessman, 2002)...............................107
Figure 3.3: Narrative analysis model for the four stages of transcription.................................................................109
Figure 3.4: The three narrative categories for analysis (McAdams et al., 2006).................................................................110
Figure 4.1: Bi-variant scatter-plot of SWLS scores and LSI scores with fitted correlation line..............................................124
Figure 5.1: The wheel of later life eudaimonic well-being .........................251

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics for central tendency and variation in the SWLS and the LSI scores.................................125
Table 4.2: Distribution of mean scores for the SWLS and the LSI according to subjective health status..........................126
Table 4.3: Participants’ scores for the life satisfaction measures, the subjective health measures and the three narrative indices..............................................................129
Table 4.4: Distribution of participants’ scores relative to the sample mean (M) for the life satisfaction indices, the subjective health measure and the three narrative indices..............................................................131
Table 4.5: Distribution of mean scores for self-rated health, narrative complexity and motivation theme according to gender and well-being categorisation...............................133
Table 4.6: A within and between gender comparison of the emerging well-being attributes....................................................245
Chapter One

Connecting eudaimonic happiness and well-being with the experience of ageing

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this doctoral thesis is to investigate the factors linked to eudaimonic happiness and well-being in later life through analysis of personal life stories and narrative identity. This study addresses two primary research questions: What is later life eudaimonic happiness and well-being? Furthermore, what role do narrative and storytelling play in the realisation of later life eudaimonic well-being? The first objective of this research is to develop an integrated model for later life eudaimonic well-being. This model is grounded in the emerging characteristics of the participants' personal narratives and it draws together the diverse understandings of later life eudaimonic happiness, well-being and life-satisfaction from the literature. The second objective of this research is to examine the personal, social and cultural contexts in which eudaimonic happiness and well-being are actively constructed with the support of acculturated narrative scaffolding. The creation of a coherent narrative identity through storytelling and dialogic exchange accounts for multiple personal factors which situate people in terms of cultural and social contexts. These factors are conditioned by life-course intersectional experiences of gender, social class, ethnicity, health, race, education, lifestyle as well as personality or character. An understanding of the conditions for the successful attainment of eudaimonic happiness and well-being must consider the process by which individual's modify and frame their sense of narrative self. By examining this process of self-representation and performance, this study investigates the importance of the narrative interpretation of lived realities for successful attainment of eudaimonic happiness and well-being in later life.

Eudaimonia has been interpreted as 'the meaningful life' and empirical assessments of this orientation to happiness have shown it to be
a key predictor of life satisfaction and later life well-being (Bauer & McAdams, 2010; Bauer, McAdams, & Sakaeda, 2005; Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005; Seligman, Parks, & Steen, 2005). This research is concerned with eudaimonic forms of happiness, most particularly the role they play in the creation and sustaining of later life well-being. In recent years, eudaimonia has featured in the discussions and reports of public social policy makers. These reports have argued for the inclusion of eudaimonic aspects of happiness in national measures and indicators for quality of life and well-being (Dolan, Layard, & Metcalfe, 2011; NESC, 2009). For the purposes of this research, eudaimonic well-being refers to a global concept of well-being which is oriented towards eudaimonic sources for happiness, life satisfaction and life quality. Eudaimonic well-being was understood by Bauer, McAdams and colleagues to be the balanced combination of two growth orientations; social emotional well-being and social cognitive maturity (Bauer & McAdams, 2004, 2010; Bauer, McAdams, & Pals, 2008; Bauer et al., 2005; Bauer & Park, 2010). This view of eudaimonic well-being considers not only how good one feels about one's life but also how complexly and integratively one thinks about one's life.

The experience of ageing provides the focus for this research. In particular this thesis is investigating the psychological, social and cultural resources for the storying of self which facilitate the realisation of later life eudaimonic happiness and well-being. This research takes as its starting point Erikson's model for ego development and in particular his positioning of integrity at the helm of human development and self-realisation (Erikson, 1959). Old age, according to Erikson's life stage model, is characterised by an effort to achieve integrity, or 'a sense of coherence and wholeness' for one's life (Erikson & Erikson, 1998, p. 65). Bauer and Park (2010) argued that older people's heightened capacity to create an integrated sense of meaning in life enhances their potential for eudaimonic resilience and well-being. In making older men and women the focus for a discussion of eudaimonic well-being, this research is premised upon the belief that those who have more past than future can offer insight into the human quest for meaning and purpose from the vantage point of a long life:
"...we suggest that human aging, the very process of living into old age, encompasses a general potential towards gerotranscendence. Simply put, gerotranscendence is a shift in meta perspective, from a materialistic and rational vision to a more cosmic and transcendent one, normally followed by an increase in life satisfaction... gerotranscendence is regarded as the final stage in a natural process towards maturation and wisdom." (Tornstam, 1994, p. 211)

The projected number of people in Ireland aged 65 and over for 2011 is 11.4% of the total Irish population and this is expected to rise to 22.4% in 2041 (Kamiya & Barrett, 2011). This trend in population ageing is expected to bring economic, social and cultural opportunities and challenges for policy makers and government over the coming years. Later life well-being and happiness, therefore, presents a particularly pertinent and exciting domain for social and psychological enquiry. This doctoral research is grounded upon the oral life stories of 20 Irish men and women aged over 70 and living within a particular urban and socio-economically disadvantaged community in Dublin called Ballyfermot. By focusing on those aged 70 and above, this study is tracing the biographical narratives of a group of Irish adults who belong to the first generation of an independent Irish Free State. During their lifetimes, Ireland has consolidated its independence through the establishment of a Democratic Republic in 1949. Furthermore, the participants for this study have experienced seismic shifts in demographic trends concerning marriage, mortality and emigration.

Until the 1950’s Ireland’s demographic trends were characterised by high emigration, low marriage rates and high marital fertility with the result that Ireland had the highest crude birth rate in Europe (Kamiya & Barrett, 2011, p. 24). A period of brief economic growth during the 1950’s and 1960’s saw an increase in job creation, a drop in outward migration and a consequent rise in the marriage rates. During this time the governments oversaw the expansion of a welfare state through the development of corporation housing schemes and the introduction of some welfare allowances. It was also during this time that the majority of the participants for this study married and obtained housing in Ballyfermot from Dublin.
Corporation. However, this period of improved economic conditions was short-lived. During the 1980s high unemployment and net emigration were once again a dominant demographic trend. During this time approximately 5% of the population emigrated from Ireland (Kamiya & Barrett, 2011).

In the 1990's a period of economic prosperity, dubbed 'The Celtic Tiger Years', emerged. During this time, Ireland obtained GDP growth rates of over 8% and, for the first time since the establishment of the Republic, there was net inward migration. The recent global and national economic crises have had a detrimental effect on the social and economic prospects of Ireland and emigration is once again a feature of Irish demographic trends (CSO, 2011). Therefore, this study is concerned with an exploration of the human experience of ageing and narrative self-construction in the context of national social, economic and cultural change. The focus of the research is on the life narratives of a group of people who have common experiences of community displacement and development, social and economic exclusion and disadvantage as well as welfare dependency. Therefore, the research is concerned with accrual of cultural and social resources for the narrative construction of lives within a particular context.

The method adopted for this study, outlined in Chapter Three, produced three different data sets for analysis. These data sets included participant scores for two life satisfaction measures and a subjective health measure. Furthermore, participant average scores for emotional tone, narrative complexity and motivational theme were obtained. Finally, life narratives were constructed for each participant, which were grounded upon the oral recordings of their life stories. These narratives are contained in Volume Two of this thesis and they provided the material for the participant case studies presented in Chapter Four. The participant case studies facilitated a within and between gender analysis. In this way, the research adopted a feminist analysis framework which accounted for the differing life course experiences of men and women and ensured that the concerns of both groups informed the research findings.

The research method adopted for this study was supported by a feminist epistemological understanding of self and identity, outlined in Chapter Two of the thesis. This epistemological position views self as
subject to continuous modification and change through processes of interpersonal meaning-making as well as dialogic exchange with social and cultural discourses. However, while locating the self within discursive and social structures, this epistemological position recognises that selves and identity are constructed as real and are endowed with moral and political consequences. Selves and identities both inform and are informed by particular social and cultural norms relating to age, gender and social class. Investigation of selves, as they are performed from within particular contingent locations, therefore, provides insight into those locations and their implications for lived 'realities'.

Narrative was employed in this research to investigate the relationship between the performance of self and the experience of ageing and eudaimonic well-being within particular social and cultural contexts. The ontological framework driving this research connected narrative with the construction and presentation of self, through the interpretation of life's events and the construction of meaning for the past. According to this ontology, the significance of narrative for the construction of self lies not in the establishment of biographical coherence or 'truth', but rather in the method by which individual's give coherence and meaning to their lives (Ochberg, 1994).

Individuals weave together the events and experiences of their lives into a complex life story. In doing so, they make sense of their lives and experiences and this allows them to function with some sense of unity of self (Bauer et al., 2008; McAdams, 2008; Shadden, Hagstrom, & Koski, 2008; Wilson, 2011). Narrative presents the scaffold upon which individuals can support a sense of self and adapt to change and interruption. Life stories and biographical narrative are, therefore, crucial to understanding the relationship between present day well-being and the interpretation of life course experiences. We select particular memories and life events for narration in the present and in doing so we actively fashion our past to fit our current needs. Biographical narratives provide access to our present through interpretation of our past in an active construction of self and identity:
Our perceived self is the product of an accumulation of life experiences and the meanings we have forged out of these experiences, the knowledge of our typical patterns of acting and reacting, our memories, the roles we play, our biographic realities, and our perceived status in the society. (Shadden et al., 2008, p. 4)

The review of the literature presented in this chapter draws from the disciplines of psychology, sociology and gender studies. This review expands upon key concepts within the study of well-being, happiness and the life course. In particular, the external and internal resources for life strengths, which are a product of the life course, are outlined. Furthermore, this review describes the impact of gender and social class on the availability of these resources. The role of social capital in later life is discussed in relation to current gerontological research on social contexts and well-being. Furthermore, the psychosocial resources for resiliency and coping strategies in the face of age associated decline are outlined. Particular focus is given to the concept of the meaningful life in a discussion of narrative identity and eudaimonic happiness. To begin, however, the key terms associated with quality of life research are unpacked in an effort to address a degree of conceptual confusion between studies investigating well-being and happiness. The purpose of this literature review chapter is to provide the context for this thesis and to outline the key research findings and theoretical approaches which have influenced the interpretation of the results.

1.1.1 Well-being and happiness: Unpacking the terminology

An exploration of well-being provided the motive for much research within the social sciences and psychology. Research investigated the factors which are important for overall global assessments of societal and individual wellbeing. These investigations focused on the personal and societal as well as objective and subjective components of life quality and well-being. These investigations included socio-demographic indicators (F. M. Andrews & Withey, 1976; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005), culture (Diener & Lucas, 2000; Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama, 2004), personality (Costa & McCrae, 1980) personal coping and adaptive resources (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Wink & Schiff, 2002) and affective well-being, or the balance between
positive and negative experiences of feeling or emotion (Carstensen & Turk-Charles, 1994; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). There was consensus among this literature that a high degree of individual subjective well-being is an indicator for optimal human functioning (Busserie & Sadava, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Therefore, subjective well-being is an important personal and societal goal. However, there remains ambiguity over how subjective well-being is structured and what is its relationship to life satisfaction and happiness (Bowling & Windsor, 2001; Busserie & Sadava, 2011; Veenhoven, 2000). It is, therefore, important to unpack this concept in order to address evident conceptual confusion. In particular, what are the component parts of subjective well-being, how can they be assessed and what is their relationship to each other?

Empirical investigations of the indicators for well-being generally focused on objective population characteristics and social indicators (F. M. Andrews & Withey, 1976; de Jong Gierveld, 2003; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005) or subjective variables such as personality and individual psychology (Costa & McCrae, 1980; Seligman et al., 2005). Research drew attention to 'the well-being paradox', or the presence of well-being despite objective indicators which would be expected to predict unhappiness (Bowling & Windsor, 2001; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). This research raised concerns over the ability of objective variables alone to predict well-being. A recent study found that while happiness was relatively independent of economic factors, for example income, life satisfaction was strongly dependent (Peiró, 2006). Awareness has been growing of the multi-faceted nature of well-being; it cannot be restricted to one construct such as life satisfaction nor can it be understood in relation to defined objective indicators.

Well-being was understood in relation to three constructs; life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect (Busserie & Sadava, 2011). Research tended to focus on life satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Peterson et al., 2005) or affect balance; also called happiness (Carstensen, 1991; Carstensen & Turk-Charles, 1994; Diener, 2000; Layard, 2005; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). Busserie and Sadava (2011) undertook a review of subjective well-being
research spanning a 40 year period. They identified five prominent structural models each providing alternative conceptualisations of the three components of subjective well-being. The significance of Busserie's and Sadava's (2011) review was to identify the ambiguity in the conceptualisation of subjective well-being and to highlight the different interpretations of the relationship between life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect.

In response to a view of quality of life as an amorphous concept, Veenhoven (2000) devised a model of what he termed as the 'four qualities of life'. This model was constructed as a means by which life quality could be measured and understood. Crucial to this model was the distinction between life chances or opportunities and life outcomes or results. Chances and outcomes were positioned in the model in relation to their association with external or environmental factors, as well as internal or individual attributes and capacities. Veenhoven's four qualities of life were: 'Live-ability' or the circumstances of an individual's living environment including objective measures of social capital such as income, social support and network size; 'life-ability' incorporated the inner capacities of an individual related to their ability to cope with life. These first two qualities of life referred to life chances whereas the final two qualities of Veenhoven's model referred to life outputs and they included: The utility of life; or the relationship between a good life and a higher meaning; and finally an individual's subjective appraisal or overall evaluation of their life.

Veenhoven (2000) recognised the inherent difficulty in obtaining a satisfactory measurement of quality of life which would incorporate the four qualities identified in his model. Quantification of well-being based on scores for each quality or aspect described in the model failed to recognise the relationship between each quadrant. Veenhoven argued for example, a happy life cannot be valued higher when lived in an ideal environment by a well-equipped individual compared with an abject environment and a person with little 'life-ability' (Veenhoven, 2000, p. 32). Veenhoven concluded that the best summary measure of life quality rests in the last quadrant of the model; life appreciation or happiness:
“So, happiness is both a merit in itself, and indicative of good life-chances. Subjective happiness implies two things: firstly that the minimal conditions for humans thriving are apparently met, secondly that the fit between opportunities and capacities must be sufficient. Hence happiness says more about the quality of life-chances than the sum-scores do.”(Veenhoven, 2000 p. 33)

In a description of the model of the four qualities of life, Veenhoven (2000) portrayed life quality as a collection of different facets of general life conditions which contribute to an overall sense of well-being. Life appreciation and happiness, according to Veenhoven (2000), could be measured and analysed using two sources: intuitive affective appraisal and cognitive guided evaluation. The first source of measurement was concerned with reflections on experiences over time and an appraisal of positive or negative responses to these events. The second source of the measurement required cognitively evaluating one’s life by comparing it to notions of how it should be. The element of cognitive appraisal described by Veenhoven (2000) related to the work of Markus and Nurius (1986) on the importance of possible selves for the evaluation of life appraisal through comparisons of ‘actual self’ with ‘ought self’ or ‘possible self’.

In their discussion of different existing approaches to subjective well-being Kim-Prieto, Diener, Tamir, Scollon and Diener (2005) developed a framework for understanding subjective well-being as a unitary construct which changes and flows over time. This framework, which they termed the ‘time-sequential framework of subjective well-being’ (2005, p. 266), depicted subjective well-being as the product of a complex network of processes built on an individual’s reaction to particular events and circumstances as well as their recall and their evaluation of these events. Multiple events in people’s lives create multiple sequences, each interlinked at various points along the chain and each informing the interpretation of prior, simultaneous and subsequent events. Kim-Prieto et al. (2005) argued the appraisal of an event or circumstance in relation to its effect on major life goals or aspirations greatly influenced subjective well-being. They noted that global or overall well-being was not established by reactions to single or individual events but rather the accumulation of multiple reactions to multiple events.
Kim-Prieto et al. (2005) conceptualised multiple reactions to events during an individual’s lifetime as being aggregated in order to reflect people’s feelings of well-being over time.

Changing events or recent disruptions to a person’s life circumstances may often have immediate significance for subjective well-being. However, as events or circumstances become stable people tend to adapt to them and their direct influence on well-being diminishes over time (Kim-Prieto et al., 2005; Layard, 2005). The time sequential framework recognised that particular life events are not in themselves relevant to satisfaction but rather their importance lies in how they are interpreted by an individual. Kim-Prieto et al. (2005) observed the effects of present context and situation on interpretation and pointed to the fluidity of memory which is constantly shifting and being reconstructed according to the demands of present situation. An individual’s inherent beliefs about emotion, their particular cultural values and beliefs, as well as their self-concept all play a role in the construction of memory and the current appraisal of a particular event or circumstance. Life satisfaction judgments, according to Kim-Prieto et al. (2005) are based on the retrieval of emotional information formed during the sequential process. Similarly to Veenhoven (2000), Kim-Prieto et al. (2005) argued that people assess their life satisfaction through comparison with others or with notions of how it should be. Furthermore, particular life domains can be assessed rather than life as a whole. The relationship between life domains, goals or aspirations as well as context, influences a global evaluation of life satisfaction and happiness.

Crucial to the sequential framework that was described by Kim-Prieto et al. (2005), was the understanding of subjective well-being as an integral entity. This understanding presented subjective well-being as continually modified according multiple emotional responses to life circumstances. These responses interact with individual memory and personality as well as situational context and salience. The dynamic relationship between the particular sequential stages as well as between various sequences underpins the concept of an integral appraisal of life satisfaction which is constantly in flux:
"Our daily experiences are constantly shaped and modified by experiences from our past. This is especially true in the field of emotion and SWB [subjective well-being], because valenced evaluations of life can influence patterns of choice and behaviour, reactivity and evocation." (Kim-Prieto et al., 2005, p. 285)

In recent decades happiness provided the focus for much research within the resurging field of positive psychology as well as within the disciplines of economics and social sciences (Bruni & Porta, 2005; Costa & McCrae, 1980; Crossley & Langdrige, 2005; Diener, 2000; Layard, 2005; Luo, 2004; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Much of this work focused around three orientations to happiness: Hedonism; engagement; and eudaimonia. Hedonism or hedonic pleasure was understood to incorporate the prioritising of positive emotion or pleasure. This understanding of happiness tended historically to be the focus of much research on well-being (Bauer et al., 2008). The second orientation, termed engagement, was grounded in the work of Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and his concept of 'flow'. This particular element of happiness was reported to derive from the psychological state that accompanies highly engaging activities (Seligman et al., 2005). According to this research, happiness is achieved by pursuing gratification from an activity which absorbs the attention of an individual completely (Seligman et al., 2005, p. 279). Finally, eudaimonia provided the third orientation to happiness. This element was reported to incorporate the identification and cultivation of personal skills or strengths for the benefit of the greater good. This route involved the pursuit of meaning and purpose for life (Bauer et al., 2008; Peterson et al., 2005).

Peterson, Park and Seligman (2005) assessed the three orientations to happiness using an 18 item measure reflecting each of the routes. This measure was applied to a sample of adult respondents (N=845). The Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) was administered in order to establish the connection between each of the orientations with subjective well-being. The research authors concluded that whilst the three orientations were distinguishable from each other, they were not incompatible; all three routes presented different benefits and opportunities
to well-being and individuals differed in their tendency to rely on one rather than another (Peterson et al., 2005; Seligman et al., 2005). They observed that while all three orientations predicted life satisfaction, the pursuit of engagement and meaning provided stronger predictors of life satisfaction than pleasure or affect balance.

While happiness and well-being were treated as separate entities in the literature, their composite elements were capturing similar aspects of life quality. Hedonism was associated with affect balance in an emphasis on pleasure attainment and pain avoidance. Eudaimonia, 'flow' and life satisfaction shared similar attributes, in particular, the global evaluation of one's life in relation to meaning, purpose and self-realisation (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Kim-Prieto et al. (2005) argued that assessments of overall life evaluation were measuring something other than immediate emotional responses to events as well as inter-mediate recall of events. Satisfaction judgments were constructed on the foundations laid by other stages in the sequence and they reflected the final assessment of events in terms of life meaning or interpretation.

It would appear that overall global assessments of well-being account for the evaluation of the relationship between emotion and memory as well as the dynamic influence of present culture, norms and beliefs on the construction of emotional memory and life evaluation (Kim-Prieto et al., 2005; Veenhoven, 2000). The association between eudaimonic forms of happiness and life satisfaction suggest the importance of meaning and purpose for one's life to overall well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). It is the contention of this research that self-realisation and eudaimonia are particularly pertinent features of later life well-being and this is further explored in section 1.3.

### 1.2 Social capital and later life well-being

Features of social circumstances and environment play a significant role in generating or maintaining happiness and well-being throughout the life course. Veenhoven (2000) and Kim-Prieto et al. (2005) highlighted the importance of situational context and social environment in their integration of the diverse definitions of quality of life and well-being into a
comprehensive framework or model. Social capital may be understood as the aggregated effect of social and economic variables including: income and material wealth, education, employment status, marital and family status, religiosity, community involvement and support networks. All of these individual characteristics are conditioned by demographic factors such as age, gender, sexuality and ethnicity.

A large body of work from within the social and human sciences sought to determine the social and economic correlates of well-being and to identify the direct effects of social factors on subjective well-being when health was controlled (Arber, Davidson, & Ginn, 2003; Arber & Ginn, 1995; Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004; Bowling & Windsor, 2001; Crossley & Langdrige, 2005; Diener & Lucas, 2000; Easterlin, 1995, 2003; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Layard, 2005). Age was found to have a curvilinear U-shaped correlation to happiness indicating that when health was controlled, happiness was more common among the young and the old: While older people were more likely to suffer from bad health, when health was held constant across respondents, older people were more likely to report themselves as satisfied with their lives (Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Layard, 2005; Orsolya, 2008)

Research reported that among the very poor, money may buy happiness, however, the more people earn the less happiness was correlated with income (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004; Bruni & Porta, 2005; Easterlin, 1995, 2003; Layard, 2005; Layard, Mayraz, & Nickell, 2008). Helliwell and Putnam (2005) found that while income and economic circumstances correlated with well-being, their impact was limited. Those with higher or average incomes reported higher levels of happiness compared with the lower income earners. However, as the level of income increased, the predictive power of material well-being in relation to happiness levelled. Research reported that relative income was of primary importance in determining happiness and well-being (Easterlin, 1974, 1995; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Layard, 2005; Layard et al., 2008). This research concluded that when the income for all was raised there was little effect on overall well-being as happiness correlated positively with one's own income
and inversely with the income of others (Easterlin, 1995, p. 36). It would appear that, where income is concerned, happiness is relative; when income rises for all, the positive effect for well-being is offset by the negative effect of higher standards of living norms (Easterlin, 1974, 1995, 2003; Layard, 2005).

Education was found to be correlated with well-being however, the relative effects decreased among those within the upper range of education levels (Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Vaillant & Western, 2001). The predictive power of education was reduced when other variables were included suggesting that education played an indirect instrumental role in the fostering of well-being. In other words, education was important in terms of how it related to other variables which had a direct connection to well-being such as health and employment (Dupre & George, 2010; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Vaillant & Western, 2001). Unemployment was reported to have a negative correlation with well-being. This relationship was stronger than could be accounted for by loss of income alone. Factors associated with unemployment such as loss of self-esteem and workplace social capital may play a role in determining happiness outcomes (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005).

Dupre and George (2010) acknowledged a robust negative relationship between health and socioeconomic status, measured by educational attainment. However, they pointed out the degree of heterogeneity within socioeconomic strata whereby a significant proportion of disadvantaged people maintain good health into later life. Their study indicated that a combination of resources drawn from the three primary domains of socio-demography, behaviour and psychology, mediated the relationship between a low socio-economic status and health. Furthermore, the effect of this mediating relationship varied according to gender and life course circumstances.

Research highlighted the importance of marital status as an indicator for well-being (Arber, Price, Davidson, & Perren, 2003; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Scott & Wenger, 1995; Vaillant & Western, 2001). Marriage performed a protective role in safeguarding the well-being and happiness of individuals particularly as it provided access to both physical and emotional
support. Gender was found to be an important demographic variable determining the nature of support provided by marriage in later life. In their investigation of the role of gender and marital status on material and social well-being in later life, Arber, Price, Davidson and Perren (2003) found that marriage played a particularly important protective role for the well-being of older men compared with older women. They reported that the majority of older men remained married until they died compared with women; where widowhood was the norm. Therefore, older men could expect to be cared for by their spouse well into their later life. Women, on the other hand, were more likely to depend on their children for physical and emotional support in their later life (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; de Jong Gierveld, 2003).

Religiosity was found to be positively associated with well-being (Ferriss, 2002). However, this was tempered with debates on whether believing was more or less important than belonging in terms of assessing religiosity as a predictor of happiness (Ferriss, 2002; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005). Ireland is characterised by a high level of religious engagement, particularly among its older population. The first results of The Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing reported that nearly 80% of people aged 75 and over in Ireland attend a religious service once a week (Timonen, Kamiya, & Maty, 2011). As discussed in section 1.3.2., religiosity may provide an overarching interpretive schema which facilitates meaning and purpose in life particularly in the face of disruptive negative life events (Fry & Debats, 2010b). An external locus of control was found to be negatively correlated with life satisfaction (Rotter, 1966; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). However, evidence indicated that religiosity may provide a protective buffer to prolonged and profound decreases in life satisfaction in the face of uncontrollable negative life events (Specht, Egloff, & Schmukle, 2011).

Research investigating the social and economic correlates of well-being, identified community involvement and a sense of belonging as contributing factors to well-being (Chan & Lee, 2006; Cook, Martin, Yarns, & Damhorst, 2007; Davidson, Daly, & Arber, 2003; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Scheff, 2011). Scheff (2011) identified two primary components of social-emotional well-being: the degree of connectedness and emotions. He
argued that while the two components were separate entities they were closely connected whereby the degree of connectedness was both a cause and effect of most emotions. An important aspect of Helliwell and Putnam’s (2005) study on social circumstances and well-being was their discussion of community involvement and friendship networks in the development of trust. Higher levels of community involvement and participation were associated with higher levels of trust. The data collected by Helliwell and Putnam (2005) indicated that those who believed themselves to live among others who may be trusted reported higher levels of subjective well-being. Trust levels were found to be significantly higher among communities that reported higher social capital densities. Of further interest was their finding of modest or uncertain effects on well-being associated with society-wide increases in material or economic circumstances. By contrast, society-wide increases in social capital were significantly linked to increased well-being. Furthermore, all forms of social connectedness such as relations with family, friends, neighbours and community participation as well as trust were found to play an indirect protective role for physical health (Helliwell & Putnam, 2005).

Social embeddedness and wide social networks were found to play an important direct role in fostering well-being (Crossley & Langdridge, 2005; Kossinets & Watts, 2006; Scott & Wenger, 1995; Stephens, Alpass, Towers, & Stevenson, 2011). Fowler and Christakis (2008) examined longitudinal data collected under The Framingham Heart Study, which began in 1948, to investigate social networks over time and to evaluate whether happiness may be spread from person to person. Their study provided fascinating evidence to support a hypothesis that people’s happiness depends on the happiness of others with whom they are socially connected. Their study suggested that happiness was a collective phenomenon; spread via social networks. They provided evidence to indicate the importance of physical proximity to others and the strong influence of neighbours on an individual’s happiness. They thereby suggested that the spread of happiness depended more on frequency of contact with members of one’s social network than any deep social connection. They argued that people at the core of a social network were more likely to be happy whilst those at the periphery were more likely to be
unhappy. Fowler and Christakis's (2008) findings highlighted the crucial importance of other people for the happiness and well-being of an individual. They indicated that happiness and well-being must be understood as both a psychological as well as a sociological phenomenon:

Happiness, in other words, is not merely a function of individual experience or individual choice but is also a property of groups of people. Indeed, changes in individual happiness can ripple through social networks and generate large scale structure in the network, giving rise to clusters of happy and unhappy individuals. These results are even more remarkable considering that happiness requires close physical proximity to spread and that the effect decays over time (Fowler & Christakis, 2008, p. 8).

1.2.1 The role of social capital in later life well-being

The work discussed in section 1.2 explored the role that social capital played in the social well-being and quality of life of people in general. This section of the thesis concentrates on the aspects of social capital that are important for the safeguarding and maintenance of well-being in later life. In their presentation of findings from the Berlin Ageing Study, Smith and colleagues (1999) reported that, with the exception of subjective health, satisfaction with social activities had the strongest effect on overall later life well-being (J. Smith et al., 1999). Social embeddedness, in particular the functioning of an individual's support network, was found to be crucial for understanding life quality, well-being and happiness among older people (Davidson et al., 2003; de Jong Gierveld, 2003; Phillipson, 1997; Scott & Wenger, 1995; Stephens et al., 2011; Timonen et al., 2011). The composition and functioning of social networks and relationships would appear to play an important role in the social ageing process (Helliwell & Putnam, 2005, p.453). Research highlighted that the availability and the adaptability of networks were indicators of an individual's likelihood of relying on community health and social services, for example residential care, in later life (de Jong Gierveld, 2003; O' Luanaigh & Lawlor, 2008). Furthermore, the establishment and maintenance of social relationships was found to be vital for the prevention of low morale and loneliness among

It is important to distinguish between social networks in general and social support networks in particular. Social networks provide the link between the individual and society. These networks consist of all those with whom an individual has a continuous relationship (de Jong Gierveld, 2003; O’Luanaigh & Lawlor, 2008). Social support networks are made up of those whom an individual perceives to be available to provide emotional and physical support. Through a support network an individual is able to access instrumental help and advice. Members of a social network form an individual’s support network by providing varying degrees and types of support depending on the nature of the relationship and external constraints such as distance and abilities (Chan & Lee, 2006; de Jong Gierveld, 2003; Scott & Wenger, 1995). An individual’s support network is a sub-set derived from one’s social network and among older people this group generally consists of three composite elements; family, friends and neighbours.

Research within the disciplines of gender studies and sociology provided models to illustrate the composition and utility of various types of social relationships in later life (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; Phillipson, 1997; Scott & Wenger, 1995; Stephens et al., 2011). These models incorporated the varying degrees and types of support available to older people and provided a framework in which to categorise the network types of individuals. These network types included: those that consist of regular daily contact with key relatives who provided a high level of support to the individual both emotional and instrumental, as well as those which provide less direct support to the individual and contact is maintained generally with children through telephone or letters (Chan & Lee, 2006; Davidson et al., 2003; Phillipson, 1997; Scott & Wenger, 1995). Stephens, Alpass, Towers and Stephenson (2011) highlighted the importance of accounting for social context in an assessment of the network types that are available to individuals as they age. In particular they noted the effects of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status on network types. Furthermore, they identified the presence of social contacts outside of family as important for
the availability of emotional and instrumental support which in turn contributes to mental and physical health.

Scott and Wenger (1995) developed a model of five social support network types which described the varying types of support networks established and maintained by older people. The five network types were based on the proximity and availability of close kin as well as the extent of involvement with family, friends and neighbours. Furthermore, Scott and Wenger (1995) took into account the level of interaction with the community and voluntary groups. Significantly, in determining an individual’s network type, Scott and Wenger (1995) accounted for the gendered life course and circumstances such as marital status, proximity to family as well as tenure of residence.

Embeddedness within a personal or social network was found by research to be a crucial element in understanding the social support structures available to older people (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; Chan & Lee, 2006; de Jong Gierveld, 2003; O’Luanaigh & Lawlor, 2008; Phillipson, 1997; Scott & Wenger, 1995). The first results of The Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing indicated a positive correlation between quality of life among those aged over 50 in Ireland and the degree of social integration they maintained (Timonen et al., 2011). 6% of Irish women aged over 50 and 7% of Irish men were found to be socially isolated. Furthermore, those with poorer self-rated health were more vulnerable to social isolation (Timonen et al., 2011). High levels of embeddedness prevent social isolation and it is, therefore, an important element of social well-being. However, the degree of social embeddedness maintained by an individual is not a sufficient measure of social support alone (Murrell & Norris, 1991; Wiggins, Higgs, Hyde, & Blane, 2004).

Social isolation and loneliness emerged from the literature as two distinct entities whereby loneliness was more closely associated with the quality rather than the number of relationships (Masi, Chen, Hawkley, & Cacioppo, 2011; O’Luanaigh & Lawlor, 2008). Loneliness was understood as a subjectively experienced emotion based on the perception of unfulfilled
emotional or social needs (Masi et al., 2011; O'Luanaigh & Lawlor, 2008; Peplau & Perlman, 1982). In their review of research which examined the construct of loneliness in terms of measurement and health impacts, O’Luanaigh and Lawlor (2008) found that loneliness had strong associations with depression and was common among older people. Furthermore, they established links between loneliness and higher blood pressure, worse sleep, immune stress responses and worse cognition over time in older people.

In their study which investigated social isolation and loneliness in later life, Victor and Scharf (2005) highlighted the need to take a life course perspective which would enable comparison between later life experiences of social exclusion with earlier stages in the life course. They identified three different life course patterns which mediated the relationship between loneliness and social isolation. The three life course patterns of social embeddedness that were identified by Victor and Schaff (2005) were: a continuous pattern from earlier life phases, a new experience of social exclusion and finally a reduction from previous experiences. The authors emphasised that factors such as loneliness may vary according to the different life course patterns of social isolation. Therefore, interventions which target loneliness in later life need to account for these patterns.

In order to assess the level of social support among a sample of older people in their assessment of the social class distress relationship, Murrell and Norris (1991) employed the Louisville Social Support Scale. This scale was designed by Murrell and Norris (1991) in their study of depression and bereavement among older adults. The scale incorporated two subscales, one of which measured social integration or embeddedness within a social network. The second scale focused on the level of support which was perceived by the older individual to be available to them. The significance of the Louisville scale was that it recognised the importance of social networks in developing support structures. However, it also crucially acknowledged the importance of the types and quality of relationships developed within a network for the prevention of loneliness and the establishment of support networks.
Research indicated that social networks contract with age whereby older people tend to have fewer members in their social networks compared to younger people (Carstensen, 1991; Carstensen & Turk-Charles, 1994). Various social theories provided an explanation for this age related reduction in social networks, most notably disengagement theory (Cumming & Henry, 1961). Carstensen's theory of socioemotional selectivity took into account psychological processes that mediated changes in social preferences and behaviour across the life span (Carstensen, 1991, 1995; Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999). Carstensen and colleagues argued that social contact was motivated by many social and personal goals which may be classified into two broad functional categories: those related to the acquisition of knowledge and those related to the regulation of emotion (Carstensen et al., 1999). Socioemotional selectivity theory predicted that the salience of particular goals fluctuated depending on place in the life span and an individual's perception of time. This influenced an individual's choices and priorities in maintaining social networks. According to this theory, when time is perceived as limited individuals are more likely to focus on their present rather than the future and so their motivations shift from knowledge related goals to emotional regulation goals:

...socioemotional selectivity theory argues that the social changes that are reliably seen in old age are not determined by a set of biological changes and decrements that are unique to old age, but rather that these social changes reflect cognitive and motivational processes that have their roots early in development, and that operate to influence social behaviour in all stages of life (Carstensen, 1995, p. 152).

Carstensen's theory emphasised individual autonomy in relation to the composition of social networks whereby older individuals are motivated by emotional regulating goals. These goals incorporate a desire to find meaning in life, to gain emotional intimacy and to establish feelings of social embeddedness. These motivations and goals cause older adults to concentrate their networks to those people that are already familiar to them and with whom they have a close relationship.
1.2.2 The gendered life course and later life well-being

Peer relationships and friendships were reported to be crucial to a sense of well-being in later life and to the ability to adapt and cope with stresses or strains associated with ageing (Phillipson, 1997). Research indicated the importance of marital status to the degree of social interaction with kin and non-kin among older people and particularly among older men (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; Davidson et al., 2003; Phillipson, 1997). Marriage was found to have a positive effect on the physical, social and psychological well-being of older men (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; Davidson et al., 2003; de Jong Gierveld, 2003). In particular, research indicated that wives frequently form the link between older men and other family members, including adult children (Davidson et al., 2003; Phillipson, 1997; Scott & Wenger, 1995). Scott and Wenger (1995) suggested that due to the shorter life expectancy of men the majority could expect to receive their primary care and support from their wives. Women by contrast were far more likely to become widowed and therefore, much more likely to have to adapt to living alone in later life and to relying on the social and physical support of children. Their study concluded that for women, motherhood was critical in terms of the nature of support they may expect to receive. By comparison, Scott and Wenger (1995) argued for older men, marriage was more critical than fatherhood in determining the nature of their support.

Adult children were found to be very important to the network composition and social support of older people and particularly those older people living alone (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; de Jong Gierveld, 2003). According to the first results of The Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing, three quarters of all adults in Ireland aged 50 and over live in close proximity to at least one of their children. Over 70% of those aged 75 and older either live with their children or have at least one child living in the same county (Kamiya & Timonen, 2011). Furthermore, approximately 90% of older adults in Ireland visit with family and friends once a week or more. Of particular significance was the finding that the frequency of visits increased with age and women visited family and friends more frequently than their male counterparts (Timonen et al., 2011).
De Jong Gierveld (1995) assessed the weekly contact with network members among a representative stratified sample of older men and women living alone, surveyed by NESTOR in the Netherlands. They found that children made up a significant proportion of those network members contacted on a weekly basis by their sample (excluding those who had never been partnered). Among the sample members who had children, the variance in network contact was related to gender and partner history. Older men and women who were widowed had an average of 2.5 weekly contacts with children and/or in-laws. Widows maintained slightly higher levels of contact than their male counterparts. Among divorcees with children, De Jong Gierveld (1995) found that women maintained an average of 1.69 weekly contacts with children compared with 0.95 among their male counterparts. Among men, siblings and siblings-in-law formed an important component of the kin network members of never married men. However, divorced women were found by De Jong Gierveld’s (1995) to have more frequent contact with friends than widows. Furthermore, those women who never had a partner relationship maintained a higher frequency of contact with non-kin network members than both widows and female divorcees.

The nature of friendship among older people was the subject of research which found distinct variance by gender in the friendship patterns and networks of older people (Davidson et al., 2003; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Scott & Wenger, 1995). Research suggested that life course effects, in particular the gendered life course, play an important role in determining the nature of friendships maintained and created in later life (Davidson et al., 2003; Scott & Wenger, 1995). In their study of social support networks in later life, Scott and Wenger (1995) observed significant differences in the friendship needs of older men and women. Women, they argued, tended to form more conversation focused friendships which were felt to be more intense and extensive well into old age. For older women, the presence of a friend may have a significant impact on their psychological and mental health as well as their level of social support (Phillipson, 1997). Men, on the other hand, according to Scott and Wenger (1995), spoke less about their friends than women and tended to associate friends with activities and
sociability for example the golf club or the local pub. Phillipson (1997) pointed out that the wives of older men provided the main source of emotional support. Of further significance was the finding of Scott and Wenger (1995) that women’s friendships in later life were generally centred around their homes, by comparison men’s were external to the home. Furthermore, Scott and Wenger (1995) argued that men were unlikely to replace lost friendships compared to women who were more likely to continue to make friends throughout their life course.

The gender differences in the friendship patterns of older people were attributed to gendered socialisation and cultural norms (Davidson et al., 2003).

Cultural norms, differential socialisation and social structural constraints lead to gender differences in the range of friendships, particularly in the degree of self-disclosure and intimacy (Davidson et al., 2003, p.170)

The work of Davidson et al. (2003) characterised female friendship as tending towards 'emotional intimacy' and male friendship as typically being more sociable. This finding was supported by the conclusions of Scott and Wenger (1995) which highlighted gendered life course effects. These gender effects led older women, and particularly women who were or had been married, to create friendships associated with the domestic sphere and with child rearing. Older men, on the other hand, were more likely to associate friendship with the world extraneous to the domestic and to the home. Both Davidson et al. (2003) and Scott and Wenger's (1995) studies observed that the gendered categorisation of friendship tended to benefit women in later life, particularly as mobility and health limited older people in terms of social activities such as golf. Older women were more likely to form friendships based around their home and therefore, were more able to maintain these friendships throughout their life course.

A review of research indicated that within the social world of older people, the family and in particular spouses, occupy a central position. The family formed the basis for many older people’s support network and within family it would appear that spouses were often the most important source of companionship and well-being (de Jong Gierveld, 2003; Phillipson, 1997; Scott & Wenger, 1995). However, research highlighted that marriage was
more common among older men than among older women (Arber, Price, et al., 2003). Arber et al.'s (2003) study examined approximately 18,000 respondents aged over 65 from combining five years of data from the General Household Survey (GHS) in the UK. The sample size yielded for the study was sufficiently large to provide reliable estimates for small subgroups such as never married older women and divorced older men, within the UK. Their analysis of the data showed that nearly 75% of men aged over 65 within the representative sample were married; this figure decreased to approximately 50% of those men aged over 85. Comparatively, within the representative sample of women which was analysed by Arber et al. (2003) only 42% of women aged over 65 were married and this reduced to 10% of those aged over 85. It is evident from this data that, in the UK at least, gender plays a significant role in determining the chances of whether an individual remains married or becomes a widow/widower in later life. Divorcees represented a comparatively low proportion of the cohort of those aged over 65 which was chosen from the survey respondents. Arber et al. (2003) argued however, that as numbers of divorcees in later life increases sharply in the future this group is likely to become more salient.

Spousal care giving and receiving emerged from the literature as important elements of later life marriages. It was found that the majority of care work was undertaken by women, particularly informal or unpaid care work. Census results for 2006 found that in Ireland, 6 in every 10 carers were women and two thirds were recognised as full time, informal carers. Furthermore, 4% of informal carers were over 65 years of age (CSO, 2006). Life expectancy for women in Ireland in 2006 was 81.6 compared to 76.8 for men (CSO, 2006). The increasing life expectancy of older people in developed countries and the greater proportion of women over the age of 80 indicated that women were more likely to be providing spousal care in later life. Older adults as informal carers are more likely to be in poor health and their physical and psychological health at risk (Dahliberg, Demack, & Bambra, 2007; Lee, Colditz, Bergman, & Kawachi, 2003; Schulz & Beach,
Furthermore, their caregiving role may exert a considerable cost on their social and economic opportunities (Carmichael & Charles, 2003).

Feminist research examined the gender differences in care giving, in particular the negotiation of care giving roles and gendered identities (Calasanti, 2006; Rose & Bruce, 1995). Calasanti (2006) noted the many similarities between older men and women spousal care givers including: the amount and type of care provided, motivations for providing care and their devalued status as care giver. Rose and Bruce (1995) noted that spousal care giving men often fought against societal gender norms in order to reconcile their masculinity and their role as care provider. However, Rose and Bruce (1995) noted that men were far more likely to receive admiration from others in their role as care providers whereas women often viewed their work as a natural extension of their role within the home and family. Rose and Bruce (1995) argued that this view was shared by society and therefore, the work of women spousal care providers is often unnoticed and incorporated within gendered norms.

Research found a significant association between the risk of poverty and increasing age among women (Arber, Davidson, et al., 2003; Richardson, 2011). Arber et al.'s (2003) work on marriage and well-being in later life showed the significant relationship between marital status and gender with economic and social resources. In order to analyse the effects of gender and marital status on the distribution of material resources, the study focused on those older people within the lowest quartile (25%) of income distribution. Their study found that among this UK representative sample, only 16% of married men lived in poverty compared with 48% of divorced or separated women. The most vulnerable group among this sample were divorced women followed by widows. Arber et al. (2003) indicated that this finding was particularly significant in light of the fact that almost half of older women were widows. Their study indicated that there was little financial penalty associated with widowhood for older men. Among men, divorcees were the most at risk of financial insecurity. However, Arber et al. (2003) acknowledged that male divorcees on average maintained a significantly higher income than their female counterparts. Among the female respondents in the sample, those who were never married and had
been in the labour market were the most likely to have accumulated an occupational pension and were, therefore, far less likely to be living in poverty compared to divorcees and widows. However, they remained poorer than married and never married men. The category of the female sample which was least vulnerable to poverty in later life was married women.

In order to examine the relationship between gender, marital status and social well-being Arber et al. (2003) focused on a sub-sample of the GHS data to identify those older people who were relatively isolated in terms of contact with friends, family and neighbours. Their study concluded that there was greater variation in the extensiveness of social contacts among men according to marital status than among women. According to Arber et al. (2003) among the male members of their sample, married men were most likely to host friends and relatives in their home. Men living without a partner (never married, widowed and divorced) were far less likely than married men to entertain others in their home. Both married men and widowers however were equally likely to visit others. Those with the least social contact in relation to hosting and visiting were the never married men followed by the divorced. Among women however, Arber et al.’s study found no association between marital status and the likelihood of visiting. However, never married women in their sample were significantly less likely to host other people in their homes. Arber et al.’s (2003) study also identified chatting to neighbours as an important component of social well-being. Their study found little variation according to marital status among women in relation to the likelihood of rarely chatting to neighbours. Among men however, divorcees were the least likely to chat to their neighbours followed by never married men.

Arber et al.’s (2003) study concluded that older married men were the most advantaged group in their representative sample. The authors acknowledged the significance of this observation in considering that nearly 75% of men over the age of 65 in the UK were married. They also argued that the majority of men remained married until they died. Comparatively, widowhood was the norm for the majority of older women. Arber et al.’s
A 2003 study discovered that widows were materially disadvantaged compared to married women; in particular they were far less likely to have access to a car. This study found that the groups most vulnerable to social isolation and to be lacking in social support, both instrumental and emotional, were divorced and never married older men. Among women by contrast, those who were never married were more materially advantaged than other women living without a partner. Furthermore, they were more likely to maintain high levels of social contact in terms of visiting friends and relatives, but less likely to host friends or to chat to neighbours. Arber et al.'s (2003) study concluded that women who were never married were more reliant on mobility to maintain their social activities. Therefore, these women were more vulnerable to social isolation in advanced old age or with the onset of disability.

### 1.2.3 Connecting social context and later life well-being

The formation and maintenance of relationships with both family and friends and the creation of wide social networks was shown to have a profound influence on social well-being and happiness in later life. Gender, and particularly the gendered life course, was explored in section 1.2.2 in terms of the degree of social support that may be expected in later life. Gender was revealed to be an influential variable affecting the nature of friendship and relations with family members. Alongside the critical position of gender in determining social well-being in later life are social class and, more particularly, the social resources associated with material status.

Vaillant and Western (2001) reported preliminary findings of the Study of Adult Development. This interdisciplinary research began in 1940 by investigating a cohort of early adolescent inner Boston city male youth. The study followed the cohort throughout their lives until age 70 (or death) and was the world’s longest prospective study of health among inner-city ‘blue-collar men’. The sample consisted of 456 economically and educationally disadvantaged Boston youth residing in high-crime inner city neighbourhoods and who, when the study began, had an average age of 14. The research design incorporated follow-up interviews with the participants at ages, 25, 30 and 47 and from the age of 45 biennial questionnaires were administered along with a physical examination every
five years. Four domains of positive ageing were identified for analysis by Vaillant and Western (2001). These domains included: objective disability, subjective physical health, objective mental health and subjective life satisfaction. Analysis of variance was undertaken on the identified predictors of global health in order to ascertain the important variables affecting successful healthy ageing at age 70.

Vaillant and Western (2001) highlighted the importance of prolonged education, smoking cessation and the use of adaptive involuntary coping strategies for example stoicism or altruism, for healthy ageing. Of particular importance was the lack of significance that was attributed to parental social economic status or parental health. Vaillant and Western's (2001) study concluded that healthy ageing was less down to fate than may have previously been thought. Factors beyond an individual's control, such as tested intelligence levels as well as parental financial circumstances, did not determine later life outcomes such as income, health and adaptive coping. The study findings were encouraging; human agency was viewed as playing a potentially strong and positive role in the generation of successful ageing. However, the positioning of prolonged education in childhood and adaptive coping strategies as key components of successful ageing indicated the importance of social circumstances. These attributes are tied to social class and socio economic circumstances. Furthermore, research indicated that material resources as well as adaptive coping strategies in adulthood were strongly associated with social well-being in later life (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; Murrell & Norris, 1991; Ryff, 1991).

Income and financial resources were found to be particularly important determinants of an individual's probability of; socialising outside of their home, of visiting friends, buying presents for friends or family, as well as travelling and socialising (Arber, Price, et al., 2003). Furthermore, the first results of The Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing indicated the positive association between income and quality of life as well as the likelihood of having a positive perception of ageing (McGee, Morgan, Hickey, Burke, & Savva, 2011). Arber et al. (2003) examined material well-being and social involvement among a sample generated by combining five years of the
General Household nationally representative survey in UK. Three measures of household well-being were used to evaluate material resources; income, car and house ownership. The study focused on those sample members, aged over 65, who belonged in the first quartile (25%) of the sample distributed by income. Their study assessed the impact of material resources on levels of social contact. They concluded that material resources, and in particular access to a car, had a significant effect on the probability of regularly visiting friends or neighbours.

Differential material and educational resources were found to impact the formation and nature of social networks and therefore, social support throughout the life course (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; Murrell & Norris, 1991; Phillipson, 1997). The first results of The Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing found that participation in formal organised activities was greater among Irish adults aged over 50 with high levels of education (Timonen et al., 2011). Furthermore, research found that those in middle classes tended to have larger and more widely dispersed social networks and were less limited by distance from network members than those in the lower social classes (Scott & Wenger, 1995). These findings indicated that those in low social classes were more vulnerable to lack of social support, both instrumental and emotional, and therefore, to decreased well-being.

Murrell and Norris (1991) conducted a longitudinal investigation of the relationship between social class and psychological distress in older adults. The study found that social class was a significant predictor of social support; the lower the social class the higher the probability of an individual having a weak social network and of having a low perception of support available. Murrell and Norris (1991) determined this to be the resource deterrent hypothesis and their research identified this as a key factor in understanding the relationship between social class and psychological distress:

(s)ocial support contributed to the mental health of older adults in several ways. The pattern of results was similar for social embeddedness and for perceived support. Thus, strong social support is probably beneficial to older adults regardless of their life stresses or the level of their distress. Social support would also be beneficial in buffering current life stresses. Although the strength of social support is
clearly related to social class, its benefits are not limited to the lower class (Murrell & Norris, 1991, p.230)

The increased leisure time afforded by retirement as well as greater expectation for good health in later life provides opportunities for involvement with the community. This involvement includes contact with voluntary organisations as well as community-based social clubs associated with older people. Research indicated that both gender and social class influence the nature and type of community contact undertaken in later life (Cook et al., 2007; Scott & Wenger, 1995). In their UK-based study of social support networks in later life, Scott and Wenger (1995) found that older women were more likely to be engaged with the community than older men, particularly in rural areas. Their study found that social class was an important predictor of the nature of community activity. Middle class men and women, they argued, tended to be involved with age-mixed voluntary groups as well as other aspects of public life for example civic associations such as neighbourhood watch. Scott and Wenger (1995) observed that men were often reluctant to get involved in social club activities which were targeted at older people and which tended to be dominated by older women. The study authors attributed this to the higher proportion of women and particularly widows in the general population of older people. Furthermore, they observed that variances in the typical life course of men and women resulted in women being more likely to have developed relationships around their home and the community. Men on the other hand, according to Scott and Wenger (1995), typically formed relationships based on work and leisure activities not connected to the home or to the neighbourhood. The result was that men were more likely to find it difficult to adapt to a lifestyle focussed around the home or community after retirement or with advancing age.

Community resources and personal community networks around the home were found to act as buffers to losses of independence associated with old age (Cook et al., 2007; Gilleard, Hyde, & Higgs, 2007). Research investigated the complex relationship between environment and well-being in later life and found that the socio-demographic features of an area as well
as objective life conditions had little association with well-being or quality of life among older people (Gilleard et al., 2007; Rioux, 2005; A. E. Smith, Sim, Scharfe, & Phillipson, 2004). Gilleard, Hyde and Higgs (2007) used data collected under the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing to explore the extent and significance of the influence of 'age', 'place' and 'aging in place' on the attachment to place in a large representative population of English adults aged over 50. They found that a sense of belonging was strongly associated with age and ageing in place. Older people who had resided and grown old in a particular location were much more likely to feel attached to their community than younger people. This sense of belonging was found by the authors to be associated with a sense of well-being. A significant finding of Gilleard et al. (2007) indicated that overall well-being was correlated negatively with the degree of area deprivation. However, within those areas of greatest deprivation well-being did not vary among the youngest and the oldest groups of the sample. Furthermore, place; or rather the socio-economic status of the area where people lived, did not predict a sense of attachment nor did it influence levels of well-being among those over the age of 80 in the sample.

Research indicated that subjective variables, such as a sense of autonomy and control, attachment to place, loneliness and perceived vulnerability to crime, played an important role in the well-being of older people. These variables were found to be more important than variables which described the characteristics of the environment (Cook et al., 2007; Gilleard et al., 2007; Rioux, 2005; A. E. Smith et al., 2004). Smith, Sim, Scharfe and Phillipson (2004) investigated the determinants of quality of life among a sample of 600 older people aged over 60 and living within deprived areas in England. Their analysis revealed that perception of own health, perceived ability to cope financially, perception of poverty over time and loneliness were the key variables determining quality of life among their sample. Like Gilleard et al. (2007), Smith et al. (2004) concluded that objective life conditions and the socio-demographic features of an individual's environment were insignificantly correlated with quality of life.

A sense of autonomy over ones environment and one's relations with others were also found to play an important role in later life well-being
(Rioux, 2005; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Rioux (2005) found that well-being was strongly related to satisfaction with the home, neighbourhood and level of residential embeddedness or connection. Most significantly, Rioux (2005) argued that by living in their own homes, the older women in her sample, maintained control over their well-being by seeking out contact with others and by developing regular and frequent contact with neighbours and/or relatives. Rioux (2005) concluded that no residential or physical environment variable predicted enjoyment in the home. The author posited that the older women in her study attached less importance to the physical home because they could exercise autonomy in their homes and because they focussed on their social environments. Rioux (2005) posited that the women believed they could make independent decisions regarding their home and their social connectivity therefore, they perceived themselves to be in greater control of their lives.

The model of selective optimisation with compensation which was developed by Baltes and Baltes (1990) posited that individuals use resources to manage developmental losses, in particular to maximise well-being or successful ageing. According to this model individuals modify their behaviour and prioritise particular domains of functioning in order to create a balance between their abilities and the environmental demands and opportunities. This model relies on the availability of resources and choices in the environment which compensates for losses in independence associated with the ageing process. Cook, Martin, Yearns and Damhorst (2007) investigated attachment to place among older adults and adaptation to changes in community environments. Their study found that changes and perceived losses in the community had a profound impact on the possibility for optimisation in later life particularly when individual capabilities were impaired by advancing age:

Losses in independence and control are likely most keenly felt when changes in the community context occur as well. Coping with a sense of loss of place simply compounds, and perhaps magnifies, personal losses in health and independence. It seems likely that for some aging adults
these compounded losses might exacerbate feelings of fear, vulnerability and loneliness (Cook et al., 2007, p. 211).

Cook et al. (2007) argued that advancing age incurred a reduction in the social world of the older adult and in their influence over the near environment. The authors concluded that changes in communities, particularly as they related to social resources, had a profound impact on an individual’s sense of self and their ability to adapt to personal change and loss.

The ability to adapt to and cope with life course change and to disruptive life events emerged from the literature as significant indicators for later life psychological well-being and happiness (Dittman-Kohli, 1991; Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006; Murrell & Norris, 1991; Ryff, 1989). Murrell and Norris (1991) explored four hypotheses which attempted to explain the relationship between psychological distress and social class in later life. These hypotheses were formed from a continuity perspective which held that life course change and disruptive events had a greater impact on present psychological distress among older adults than more current disruptions or events. The study identified the differential exposure hypothesis as explaining the link between psychological distress and social class. They found that those in disadvantaged social classes were more likely to experience greater life change which in turn led to greater distress. This research highlighted the importance of considering strategies for adaptation and coping in later life and is discussed in section 1.3 of this chapter.

### 1.3 Ageing, well-being and happiness

It is important to account for the social, economic, psychological and personal life course circumstances of an individual, in any assessment of subjective well-being or happiness in later life:

> Quality of life is not reducible to one factor; rather it should be seen as the outcome of the complex interaction of the various elements present in a person’s life. (Higgs, Hyde, Wiggins, & Blane, 2003, p. 243)

In recent years feminists called attention to the failure within feminism to theorise age relations and to respond to concepts of ageing from the
A perspective of social power structures and a feminist framework (Arber, Davidson, et al., 2003; Calasanti, 2003; Calasanti & Slevin, 2006). Feminist gerontology has drawn attention to a youth oriented society which has at best, ignored conceptual interrogation of ageing and at worst, sustained stereotypes and normative prejudice in a marginalisation of the old (Biggs, 1999; Biggs, Lowenstein, & Hendricks, 2003; Calasanti, 2003; Calasanti & Slevin, 2006; Gergen & Gergen, 2010; Mitchell & Bruns, 2011; Woodward, 2003). The concept of 'successful ageing' has come under the interrogation of feminist gerontologists who highlighted its inherent privileging of the 'young' old and relegation of the 'old' old to the 'unsuccessful' margins (Biggs et al., 2003; Calasanti & Slevin, 2006). It is therefore, necessary to interrogate concepts such as well-being and happiness from the perspective of older men and women. What are the social and psychological components of later life well-being and happiness? How do older people's adaptations, priorities, needs and resources combine to sustain their later life well-being and happiness?

In their study of the personal experience of aging, Steverink, Westerhof, Bode and Dittmann-Kohli (2001) identified three dimensions of the ageing experience. These dimensions were physical decline, losses in the social domain, and continuous growth and personal development. Their study examined the relationship between these domains of later life experience and the personal and social resources available to an individual. Steverlink et al. (2001) concluded that those with better subjective health, higher income, less loneliness, higher education attainment and stronger levels of hope were more likely to experience ageing in terms of personal development and growth and less in terms of social loss and physical decline.

One of the overwhelming findings of the first results of The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing was the association between decreased quality of life and poor self-rated health. While health was the largest contributing factor to decreased quality of life, the study also indicated the importance of education and financial status (McGee et al., 2011). Low and Molzahn (2007) found that financial resources, health and meaning in life
had a positive influence on quality of life in later life. Furthermore, these resources, along with good physical environment and the availability of emotional support, indirectly affected quality of life through their impact on the formation of purpose for life.

Research investigating well-being across the life cycle found that well-being and life satisfaction had a u-shaped relationship with age. According to this curvilinear relationship, well-being was highest among the young and the old and reached its lowest level in mid-life (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2008). Lelkes (2008) examined data from the European Social Survey 2002/2003 using bi-variate and multivariate analysis in order to investigate the relationship between age and well-being. Lelkes (2008) argued that the u-shaped relationship between well-being and age may not be understood without considering control factors such as education, income and other personal characteristics. In other words, only when factors such as income and education were controlled, did the u-shape pattern describing the relationship between well-being and age emerge. Using a bi-variate analysis Lelkes (2008) provided support for a divergence between life satisfaction and happiness in old age. Lelkes (2008) found that happiness declined with age whereas life satisfaction declined and then increased after the age of 60, although it never reached the same level as among the young. Lelkes (2008) concluded that variation in the levels of life satisfaction during the life cycle were explained partly by changing preferences, which served to increase life satisfaction, and partly by changing circumstances, which served to decrease it.

The situational circumstances of an older person as well as their active agency informed much research which investigated quality of life and well-being in later life (Low & Molzahn, 2007; Steverink et al., 2001; Wiggins et al., 2004). Higgs, Hyde, Wiggins and Blane (2003) developed the CASP-19 scale pertaining to 4 domains in order to measure quality of life in early old age. The four domains were determined by a needs satisfaction approach. The domains identified by the authors were: Control, autonomy, pleasure and self-realisation. Control was understood as the ability of the individual to intervene in their environment. Autonomy was explained as the right of the individual to be free from any unwanted interference from others.
(Higgs et al., 2003, p. 244). Higgs et al. explained that these first two domains or needs were the basic prerequisite conditions necessary for an individual to participate freely in society. Once these two basic needs had been met the older individual could use them to pursue activities which gave them pleasure and/or were necessary for their own self-realisation. The significance of this framework of quality of life in later life was its departure from models which focussed on the functioning of an individual or which reduced quality of life to simple determinants separated out for analytical purposes. The CASP-19 model emphasised individual agency within particular circumstances and captured active responses to situations as well as perceptions of needs satisfaction.

The meaning of happiness was found to shift across the course of one's lifetime (Mogilner, Kamvar, & Aaker, 2011). Research indicated that the experience of high arousal emotions both positive and negative, for example excitement or being upset, decreased for older people while the experience of low arousal emotions, for example depression or feeling relaxed, increased (Mogilner et al., 2011; Pinquart, 2001). In their study of the relationship between happiness and age, Mroczek and Kolarz (1998) found that when well-being was defined by positive affect older people were happier than other adults. However the authors argued for the necessity of taking account of particular variables which alter the relationship between affect and age. They highlighted gender, marriage and extraversion as determining variables. The authors found that, among women, positive affect was associated with age in a nonlinear fashion compared with the linear association among men, although this linear relationship was influenced by extraversion and marital status. The significance of Mroczek and Kolarz's (1998) study was the highlighting of the complex factors that influence the associations between age and happiness. They argued for examining sub-groups within populations in order to fully understand the processes occurring and the relationships to socio-demographic, contextual and personality factors:

Age and affect do appear to be related, but only for certain groups as opposed to for the entire population. Particular
combinations of age, personality, and sociodemographic categories may maximize or minimize happiness (Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998, p. 1345).

The findings of Mroczek and Kolarz (1998) suggested that, for some groups of older people at least, positive affect may increase with age and in doing so they supported Carstensen's theory of socioemotional selectivity (Carstensen, 1991, 1995). Among Mroczek and Kolarz's (1998) sample, positive affect generally rose, although at different rates varying by gender, and negative affect generally decreased depending on gender and marital status (Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). This suggested that some older people, through life experience, were better able to regulate their emotions through the selection of goals which increased positive affect, thereby maximising happiness.

Research found that aspirations and attainments played an important role in shaping well-being throughout the life course, particularly as they reflected shifting domain priorities (Carstensen, 1995; Freund & Baltes, 1998; Plagnol & Easterlin, 2008). Baltes and Baltes' model of selective optimisation with compensation described a key strategy of successful ageing and life management whereby individuals cope with and adapt to age associated decline in order to maintain and safeguard well-being (Baltes & Baltes, 1990; Baltes & Smith, 2003).

...the life course consists of a changing script regarding the means and goals of life. These changes in means and goals require systematic changes in the allocation of resources. Overall, the primary investment of resources in early life is into processes of gain (growth). With increasing age, more and more resources are invested into maintenance and repair (Baltes & Smith, 2003, p. 132).

This model of successful ageing is similar to Carstensen's model of socioemotional selectivity in that it emphasises agency in the experience of ageing (Carstensen, 1995; Carstensen et al., 1999). Baltes and Baltes (1990) argued that those individuals who, in the face of diminishing abilities, optimised their functioning within a smaller 'select' group of domains as well as compensated for age associated losses effectively maintained their well-being and happiness into later life.
The importance of a sense of personal growth and the achievement of purpose in life was also highlighted in the work of Ryff and Keyes on psychological well-being in later life (Ryff, 1991; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Ryff and Keyes (1995) identified five dimensions of psychological well-being which included: personal growth and purpose in life; along with autonomy; environmental mastery; and positive relations with others. Ryff (1991) found that perceptions of improvement, maintenance and decline over a life span represented crucial components of psychological well-being. In this way, shifting self-assessments of the past, across the life-span, were being used by older people as the guide to evaluation of the present. This process of comparison between actual selves and possible or ought selves was developed by Markus and Nurius (1986) in their theoretical framework of an individual's cognitive self-defining structures. According to Markus and Nurius (1986), evaluation of actual self was undertaken by individuals through comparison with imagined alternative selves. Identity, therefore, was continually constructed through negotiation and dialogue between actual and possible selves. A significant finding of Ryff's (1991) study was the decreasing gap between comparisons of actual self with ideal self among the older participants of the study. This finding suggested the possibility of self-acceptance in later life and the reining in of personal ideals to better fit the real or actual self:

"...Thus, there appears to be a later life gain wherein the ideal self better fits the real self, warts and all, with whom one has become an accustomed traveller" (Ryff, 1991, p. 294)

1.3.1 Ageing and resilience

The concept of resilient ageing provided the focus of recent research concerning pathways to and resources for life-strengths and well-being in later life (Bonanno, 2004; Fry & Keyes, 2010). Resilience was understood by Bonanno as the ability to maintain relatively stable and healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning in the face of disruptive events and/or loss (Bonanno, 2004, p. 20). According to Bonanno (2004) resilience represented a distinct trajectory from the process of recovery where normal
functioning temporarily gives way to a period of psychopathology and then gradually returns to a base-line pre-trauma/loss level. In the context of ageing, resilience was understood as the ability to maintain optimal socio-psychological, emotional and cognitive functioning despite the challenges to physical and mental abilities inherent in the ageing process (Fry & Debats, 2010b; Gergen & Gergen, 2010; Kern & Friedman, 2010).

Research examined the various protective components and strategies which converge to facilitate resilient ageing. Resilience was understood to be a multidimensional concept whereby an individual garners enduring strength from a number of resource domains which impact positively on social, emotional and intellectual well-being. Research identified three primary domains from which resources for resilience and life-strengths were drawn: Personality, socio-economic, and cognitive (P. Martin, MacDonald, Margrett, & Poon, 2010).

Recent research identified a particular gene which may influence how individuals interpret and react to negative and positive environmental contexts (Fox & Standage, in press). From the perspective of personality a number of traits and characteristics were identified as indicators of later life resilience. Martin, MacDonald, Margrett and Poon (2010) reported findings from the Georgia Centenarian Study which noted that the centenarians in the study sample had higher scores in dominance, suspiciousness and shrewdness and lower scores in imagination and tension when compared to younger groups. Furthermore, retesting after 20 months revealed decreased scores in the centenarians on measures of sensitivity and higher scores on measures of 'openness to change'. Kern and Friedman (2010) reported findings from the Terman Life Cycle Study which identified the link between the five personality traits and health resilience in later life. Their research found that conscientiousness, agreeableness and extraversion corresponded to external socio-behavioural pathways to better later life health through the maintenance of positive social relationships, increased physical activity and the engagement with healthier behaviours. They found that neuroticism related to negative health outcomes through internally-based pathways such as negative interpretation of events, negative emotions and increased perceived stress.
A 'robust' personality was shown to be an important resource for later life resilience particularly in its potential to offset the effects of negative life events on stress and affect balance (P. Martin et al., 2010). Martin et al. (2010) identified the personality trait of competence, related to conscientiousness, as an important element of a 'robust' personality which may mediate the effect of negative life events on mental health in later life. The personality trait of hardiness was also identified as providing an important buffer to exposure to negative life events, disruptions and stress (Bonanno, 2004; Fry & Debats, 2010b). Hardiness was understood as consisting of three dimensions: a strong internal locus of control, the belief that all life's events, both positive and negative, represent a challenge from which one can grow and learn as well as a commitment to living through finding meaning and purpose for life, thereby staying connected to the world (Bonanno, 2004; Fry & Debats, 2010b).

A strong internal locus of control, or a belief that one may influence one's surroundings and the outcome of life events, was identified by research as positively related to well-being, happiness and health outcomes. In particular it was connected to life satisfaction, self-acceptance, individual, autonomy and environmental mastery (Fry & Debats, 2010b; Rotter, 1966; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Specht et al., 2011). However, other research provided contrary evidence. This research identified an association between a strong external locus of control and a smaller decline in life satisfaction after spousal bereavement compared with those with a strong internal locus of control (Specht et al., 2011). Specht, Egloff and Schmukle (2011) posited external locus of control may be a protective factor in coping with uncontrollable life events such as death of a spouse. Fry and Debats (2010b) argued that preference for control changes with age and voluntary surrender of control in the face of advancing old age may be facilitated by pre-existing high sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem. In particular, they argued that those with high self-efficacy, defined as a strong sense of one's ability to successfully exercise influence over one's environment, were more likely to select and mobilise psychosocial and socio-economic resources to achieve their goals.
Emotion regulation and the utilisation of positive emotion were highlighted by the literature as important facilitators and enablers of resilience in the face of negative life events (Bonanno, 2004; Ong & Bergeman, 2010). In a discussion of the multiple pathways to resilience Bonanno (2004) identified positive emotion and laughter as mechanisms for repressive coping and resilience. Through the use of this mechanism, levels of post event/trauma stress and negative emotion were reduced and support was mobilised from the social environment. Ong and Bergeman (2010) presented a case for positive emotion as a basic building block for resilience in later life. They argued that positive emotion promoted flexibility in thinking and problem solving, counteracted the effects of stress and negative emotions, sustained social resources and encouraged adaptive coping. Their research indicated that access to positive emotions was sustained through aspects of individual personality as well as social connectedness and engagement with support structures; both functional and emotional (Ong & Bergeman, 2010).

Cognition was identified by the literature as a further resource domain for later life resilience (Hertzog & Jopp, 2010; P. Martin et al., 2010). Cognitive resilience was understood as the ability to maintain effective functionality which preserved goal attainment in cognitively demanding situations despite declining or impaired cognition in advancing age (Hertzog & Jopp, 2010; P. Martin et al., 2010). In a discussion of later life cognitive resilience Martin et al. (2010) defined crystallised abilities as those skills which rely on accumulated knowledge and life experience. They presented a case for assessment of daily normal problem-solving as a measure of an older person’s ability to navigate everyday challenges through the utilisation of crystallised skills rather than fluid age-sensitive cognitive abilities. A discussion of cognitive resilience and coping in life is related to the concept of automaticity (Bargh, 1997). In particular, features of automaticity such as the repetition of behavioural and linguistic mechanisms, for example the use of mantras and routines to guide responses, may be relevant to later life cognitive resilience (Bargh, 1997; Bartlett, 1950; Logan, 1991). Hertzog and Jopp (2010) highlighted the implementation of meta-cognitive self-monitoring by older people which
enabled them to use behavioural repertoires, routines and external aids to achieve desired goals in daily living.

In the development of a framework for lifespan cognitive development, Hertzog and Jopp (2010) employed the model of selective optimisation with compensation (Baltes & Baltes, 1990). They argued that in this context selection referred to either elective selection, when individuals chose specific goals based on preference, or loss-based selection, where choices were triggered by decline or perceived loss. Hertzog and Jopp (2010) presented a case for the importance of accounting for the environmental and social context of ageing individuals. They highlighted the support networks and features of an older person's social context which were employed to mitigate some of the adverse effects of cognitive loss. Cognitive resilience and successful ageing was achieved through selecting goals and priority domains, optimising personal, social and cognitive resources for goal attainment and compensating for losses in functioning by utilising different strategies and approaches to goal attainment (Fry & Debats, 2010b; Hertzog & Jopp, 2010). Psycho-social as well as socio-economic domain resources are combined in the optimisation of successful functioning throughout the life course (Fry & Debats, 2010a, 2010b; Hertzog & Jopp, 2010; P. Martin et al., 2010). Kern and Friedman (2010) argued that resilience was not a personality trait but rather it emerged from a combination of predispositions, behaviours and socio-emotional circumstances.

A review of research highlighted the dynamic interplay between an individual's self-resources and their social environment in the optimisation of successful ageing (Carstensen, 1991; Crossley & Langridge, 2005; Fry & Debats, 2010a, 2010b; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Higgs et al., 2003). Carstensen's (1991) theory of socioemotional selectivity depicted successful ageing as the product of a culmination of strategic adaptations older people make in their social relationships with selected groups of people from whom they derive a basis for self-identity as well as social identity. The literature indicated that adjustment and adaptation to changing abilities and roles as well as shifting cultural and social environments was
fundamental to resilient ageing. Access to psychosocial resources such as familial stability, stable economic resources as well as social engagement emerged from the literature as being key to protecting individuals in the face of age related decline or loss (Fry & Debats, 2010a). Martin et al. (2010) highlighted the importance of the domain of social and economic resilience among their study sample of centenarians. They found that satisfaction with finances as well as high levels of social interaction moderated the relationship between negative life events and negative affect. Thereby, those who were economically better off and who sustained high levels of social engagement and activities were better able to maintain positive mental health (P. Martin et al., 2010).

It would appear that to sustain optimal functioning throughout the life trajectory it is necessary to combine the constituent components of resilience whereby no one element is sufficient. Through the dynamic and imaginative combination and utilisation of personal, social and cognitive resources one can achieve successful optimisation and attainment of goals:

"...resilient aging involves a continual process of restructuring through which older individuals select their highest priority meanings for life, their highest goals and activities, and implement their most highly valued abilities and competencies to attain desired goals, and also to compensate for lost or diminished capacities." (Fry & Debats, 2010b, p. 48)

1.3.2 The meaningful Life

Developments within the field of positive psychology indicated that happiness is composed of three elements: Hedonic pleasure, flow or engagement and eudaimonia or the pursuit of meaning and purpose for life (Peterson et al., 2005; Seligman et al., 2005). While a meaningful life and a happy life are not the same thing it would appear that meaning is a necessary prerequisite ingredient for happiness and coping with life's events (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Fry & Debats, 2010b). Heine, Proulx and Vohs (2006) drew on the philosophy of western existentialism to argue that integral to the human endeavour is the never ending pursuit of meaning for life. This search for meaning was understood in light of the human need for order, stability and certainty in face of a malleable and uncertain life (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Heine et al., 2006). Similarly, Fry and Debats
(2010b) took an existential humanistic perspective on a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of resilience. From this perspective they defined personal maturity in terms of the depth of personal meanings and purpose for life as well as goals and aspirations for the future. They argued that the quest for personal meaning is of foremost importance for the cultivation of life strengths. This meaning may derive from spirituality or religious faith as well as personal growth, maturity and self-knowledge (Bauer & Park, 2010; Fry & Debats, 2010b).

Spirituality and religiosity were identified as important sources of meaning and indicators for resilient ageing and adaptive coping to negative life events (Fry & Debats, 2010a, 2010b; P. Martin et al., 2010; Specht et al., 2011). Fry and Debats (2010b) posited that religion and religious beliefs may influence emotional resilience through enhanced feeling of proximity to a powerful force as well as proscribing positive feelings and discouraging negative emotions. During exposure to uncontrollable negative life events, such as spousal bereavement, a strong sense of external locus of control was found to act as a buffer to prolonged and profound decreases in life satisfaction (Specht et al., 2011). Religion may provide an overarching interpretative framework or schema which is a powerful source of meaning and comfort in times of stress or in the face of negative disruptive life events (Fry & Debats, 2010b; Jung, 1986). Fry and Debats (2010b) argued that religion was proactive rather than reactive in that people foster religious and spiritual belief systems which sustain them on a regular basis throughout their lives. Therefore, people maintain a meaning reserve through active engagement with religion and this reserve may readily be accessed when or if adversity arises.

The essence of meaning was understood as the desire to draw connections and links between people, places, objects and ideas even if these things were physically separate entities (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Heine et al., 2006). Baumeister and Vohs (2002) identified three active processes whereby people engaged in meaning-making through revising or appraising a negative life event: Benefit-finding, sense-making and searching for significance. The first process, benefit-finding, involved finding
a positive aspect to the event. Sense-making incurred the search for attribution, for example, God. Finally the third process was divided into two aspects: Global meaning-making, whereby an event was linked to a long term belief system or orientation; and situation specific meaning-making whereby meaning was applied to a particular context. The authors illustrated the importance of meaning-making not only in the context of negative life events or suffering but also for general well-being and happiness:

...the desirability of a meaningful life goes beyond the fact that meaningfulness reduces suffering. Even in the absence of suffering, trauma, pathology, or misfortune, human life will fall far short of its best potential if it lacks meaning. By understanding how people seek and find meaning in their lives, positive psychology can enhance the human experience immensely (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002, p. 616).

Research found that perception of the external world as well as of the self was conditioned upon mental representations of expected relationships between people, places, objects and ideas (Bruner & Postman, 1949; Goffman, 1975; Heine et al., 2006; Minsky, 1977; Piaget, 1970). Through the application of interpretive frames individuals process information and events and thereby reconcile the external world to their personal interpretive schemas (Goffman, 1975; Minsky, 1977). Piaget (1970) employed the concept of 'schema' which was defined as the mental representation of the relationship between a complimentary set of perceptions, ideas and/or actions. He argued that an individual's schemas were important for their understanding of their relationship with the external world. When confronted with a life event or experience which challenged their interpretive schema an individual was presented with two options: The first option was to incorporate the event into one's schema without changing the structure of that internal schema. Piaget (1970) termed this option assimilation and an example of assimilation in operation may be evidenced in the formation of stereotypes or pigeon-holing. The second option in Piaget's (1970) model involved the internal schema accommodating itself to the confronting event or experience and thereby adapting. Piaget (1970) argued that as one ages this second option becomes more difficult and is often an emotionally and cognitively painful process. The ability of an
individual to challenge their pre-existing schemas through the process of accommodation was considered an indicator of cognitive maturity (Loevinger, 1966, 1976).

Heine, Proulx and Vohs (2006) developed the meaning maintenance model in order to explain the processes whereby people apply meaning through relational structures. They argued that there were three basic realms in which people seek or apply meaning: within the external world, within themselves and also between themselves and the external world. They identified two general responses to an anomaly which defied meaning and posed a threat to existing relational structures. The first response was to revise one’s system of relations so it may accommodate the event. The second, more common, response was to reinterpret the anomaly in such a way that it ceased to be an anomaly and it related to one’s existing relational structures.

The two responses described by the meaning maintenance model developed by Heine et al. (2006) resembled the two alternative processes of adaption described by Piaget in his theory of cognitive development (Piaget, 1970). The significance of Heine et al.’s (2006) meaning maintenance model was that it suggested a third complimentary response to an anomaly, termed ‘fluid compensation’. This response involved reaffirming alternative networks of relations, in other words, adhering more strongly to other schemas even if they were unrelated to the ones under threat from the anomaly. The four primary domains most relevant to people’s drive for meaning maintenance identified by the authors were: Self-esteem, certainty, belongingness and symbolic immortality. Heine et al. (2006) posited that fluid compensation can occur both within domains and between domains. For example, a threat to a relational structure, frame or schema relevant to self-esteem may be compensated for through reaffirming other networks of relations within or between domains.

Research within the field of positive psychology identified a connection between meaning-making and the satisfaction of needs or the search for happiness (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Dittman-Kohli, 1991; Ryff, [47]
Baumeister and Vohs (2002) identified four needs for meaning, the satisfaction of which may lead to personal and societal happiness. These needs were: purpose, value, efficacy and self-worth. The authors argued that while modern society was adept at addressing three of these needs, they viewed the need for values as representing the most pervasive problem in the modern quest for a meaningful life. Baumeister and Vohs (2002) identified a loss of societal consensus about values which led to a rising emphasis on the self and identity in the modern world and thereby a shift away from traditional moral systems. In her study of wisdom in later life, Mason (2009) argued that an understanding of the positive experience of ageing must be complimented with accounts of the importance of moral emotions and cannot be entirely focused on the satisfaction of needs and the elevation of the self. Mason posited that a focus on needs satisfaction limited an understanding of meaning in a 'deeper sense' whereby an event or item may be related to something outside of itself through moral emotions such as awe, elevation and appreciation:

The clue to wisdom in aging, if clue there is, is to be found in the idea that it is not only the satisfaction of individual biological, emotional and social needs that we have to consider to get a sense of wisdom, but an openness to a dimension of life that is not focussed on self at all, but on something entirely other, having life, vitality and meaning of its own. (Mason, 2009, p. 9)

The achievement of wisdom in later life was linked by previous research to the pursuit of meaning and a higher purpose for life and it was viewed as integral to successful ageing (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Erikson, 1959; Erikson & Erikson, 1998; Mason, 2009). Erikson developed an eight stage model of ego development encompassing the entire life course (Erikson, 1959; Erikson & Erikson, 1998). The seventh and eighth stage of his model incorporated the processes that are typically occurring in middle to late life. Adulthood, according to Erikson's model of ego development, was characterised by a period of self-generation concerned with identity development. Erikson termed this stage in his model as 'generativity' and he defined the virtue emerging from this stage as 'care' understood as:
"a widening commitment to take care of the persons, the products, and the ideas one has learned to care for. All the strengths arising from earlier developments in the ascending order from infancy to young adulthood (hope and will, purpose and skill, fidelity and love) now prove, on closer study, to be essential for the generational task of cultivating strength in the next generation. For this is, indeed, the "store" of human life." (Erikson & Erikson, 1998)

Erikson (Erikson, Erikson, & Kivnick, 1986) identified the final stage in his life span development model as ego integrity versus despair. Erikson used the concept of integrity as a main characteristic of the last stage of life whereby an older individual was called upon to view their lives holistically within the context of their life span. Erikson argued that this final stage in life span psycho-social development called for the older individual to assess and to accept their life, to develop 'a sense of coherence and wholeness' (Erikson & Erikson, 1998, p. 65). The successful completion of this stage of Erikson's model resulted in the attainment of wisdom the unsuccessful completion led to despair:

Much of their despair is, in fact, a continuing sense of stagnation [...] mourning not only for time forfeited and space depleted but also for autonomy weakened, initiative lost, intimacy missed, generativity neglected – not to speak of identity potentials bypassed or, indeed, an all too limiting identity lived.' (Erikson & Erikson, 1998, p. 63)

The concept of integrity that was developed by Erikson (Erikson, 1959; Erikson et al., 1986) was linked to the pursuit of meaning and purpose for life and he identified this as an essential component of successful ageing. Other models of ego and personality development also arrived at a similar concept of integrity associated with cognitive and social maturity (Loevinger, 1966, 1976; Maslow, 1943). Loevinger (1966, 1976) developed a seven stage model of ego development which was not tied to a specific age but rather a description of what people at each stage have in common. Her model was developmental and as such, like Erikson’s model, each stage built on the previous stage. The last three stages of Loevinger’s (1966, 1976) model were understood as the higher stages and associated
with increasing ego maturity. Her model culminated in what Loevinger (1966, 1976) called the integrative stage whereby:

"...the person proceeds beyond coping with conflict to reconciliation of conflicting demands and where necessary renunciation of the unattainable, beyond toleration to the cherishing of individual differences, beyond role differentiation to the achievement of a sense of integrated identity." (Loevinger, 1966, p. 200)

Loevinger (1966, 1976) pointed out that the successful attainment of the last stage of her model, integrity, was rare. Those people who reached this stage of development were considered by Loevinger (1966, 1976) to have achieved a higher state of being conducive to happiness and life satisfaction. Maslow's (1943) model of human motivation, which he termed as the hierarchy of needs, involved the progressive desire for and satisfaction of needs which were divided into basic and higher needs. The higher needs were separated into the social or love needs including the desire for love, affection and belonging. Beyond the social were the esteem needs which included the intrinsic desires for achievement, confidence, independence and self-respect and the extrinsic needs for reputation, recognition from others and appreciation. The pinnacle of Maslow's (1943) model was 'self-actualisation' which Maslow argued was the realisation of one's full potential.

While Maslow's (1943) concept of 'self-actualisation' was based on a model of need satisfaction and conceived of as a theory of motivation, it relates to Erikson's (Erikson, 1959; Erikson et al., 1986) and Loevinger's (1966, 1976) concepts of integrity. The positioning of integrity, self-actualisation and wisdom at the helm of models of human social and ego development depicts the life span as evolutionary: Humanity progresses towards a higher self-concept which demands greater cognitive maturity as portrayed in Piaget's model of successful adaptation (Piaget, 1970). These models have in common the depiction of the human progression towards finding meaning and purpose for one's life. Therefore, this doctoral research focuses on eudaimonic sources for happiness which include the pursuit of meaning and life purpose in order to investigate later life well-being.
1.3.3 Connecting eudaimonia with narrative identity

The connection between self-defining narratives and well-being was established by research which put forward 'story-editing' as a means by which to overcome traumatic or negative life experiences (Wilson, 2002, 2011). Wilson (2011) employed the concept of 'story-editing' or the reframing of one's personal stories of experience, as the means by which to change interpretation and assign positive meaning to life events. In this way, the construction of personal life narratives was considered by research to be central to an understanding of how an individual may demonstrate eudaimonic well-being. For example, Bauer and Park (2010) argued that eudaimonic resilience was facilitated by the capacity of individuals to make sense of loss through constructing a sense of continuity, connection and purpose in one's personal narrative and life story. They argued that resilient individuals interpreted their life events in an adaptive manner and integrated important life events, including loss, with their broader self-identity. They coined the term 'eudaimonic resilience' and described it as a framework for thinking about adaptation which incorporated affect regulation as well as meaning regulation. They argued that while hedonic resilience attended to the balance of negative and positive affect, eudaimonic resilience incorporated aspects of affect balance as well as the capacity to construct and reconstruct meaning for one's life:

"Eudaimonic resilience is a process that involves the qualities of hedonic resilience but additionally includes the quick rebound, maintenance, or growth of personal meaning in one's self-identity" (Bauer & Park, 2010, p. 77).

Research undertaken by Bauer, McAdams and colleagues, isolated narrative indices and categorised them according to facets of eudaimonia and growth (Bauer & McAdams, 2010; Bauer et al., 2008; McAdams et al., 2006). Bauer and McAdams (2004) linked these indices to two different types of personality development incorporated into a broad understanding of eudaimonic happiness. Social-cognitive maturity addressed the social cognitive structures through which individual organises their lives in increasingly complex ways. This aspect of eudaimonia was related to
accommodation in Piaget's (1970) model of adaptation and was measured by Loevinger's (1966) model of ego development and maturity. Social emotional well-being was concerned with the intrinsic concerns of meaningful relationships with other people and society as well as personal growth and development. This aspect of eudaimonia was related to Erikson's (1959) model of ego development as well as Maslow's (1943) concept of intrinsic motivational needs.

Bauer and Park (2010) defined growth narratives as personal stories which frequently emphasised some form of progressive development, learning, exploration and expanding. They identified two kinds of growth themes: experiential growth, which involved a deepening in the felt experience of one's psychosocial life; and cognitive growth, which involved integrating new conceptual perspectives on the self and others. Bauer and Park (2010) found that experiential growth themes correlated predominantly with well-being but not with maturity. Cognitive growth themes however, were found to correlate predominantly with maturity but not with well-being. The identification of these two growth orientations corresponded with the two alternative processes of adaptation described by Piaget in his theory of cognitive development (Piaget, 1970). Furthermore, they resembled the dual processes of adapting to life changes or disruptive events described in the meaning maintenance model developed by Heine et al. (2006).

Autobiographical memories were investigated to reveal the presence of two growth orientations; integrative and intrinsic (Bauer et al., 2005). Bauer, McAdams and Sakaeda (2005) explained that integrative memories were oriented towards concerns that theoretically fostered social-cognitive development such as conceptual development and learning. Intrinsic memories were oriented towards concerns that theoretically led to well-being such as humanist concerns. Bauer et al.'s (2005) study found that both orientations correlated strongly with eudaimonic forms of happiness, measured by Ryff and Keyes' (1995) multidimensional model of personal well-being. This was contrasted with their insignificant correlation with hedonic well-being, measured by Diener et al.'s Satisfaction With Life Scale (1985). In a different study of narratives of life goals Bauer and McAdams (2010) identified two kinds of personal growth; intellectual and
socioemotional. These types of personal growth were further differentiated into agency or communal motivational categories both of which considered respectively the intrapersonal and interpersonal facets of self-development. The authors concluded that people who could balance concerns for both intellectual and socioemotional growth in their major life goals could expect a balanced development and growth towards the two important facets of eudaimonic happiness; maturity and personal well-being (Bauer & McAdams, 2010).

Narrative and life story provided fruitful areas of enquiry for the exploration of personality psychology particularly in relation to meaning-making, identity and self-development (M. Andrews, 2009b; Bell, 1988; Brookman, Copes, & Hochstetler, 2011; Josselson & Lieblich, 1993; Opsal, 2011; Quigley, 1999, 2000; Shadden et al., 2008). McAdams and colleagues developed an Integrative Conceptual Framework for Personality Psychology which accounted for three separate expressions of individual personality: Traits, characteristic adaptations and self-defining narratives (McAdams, 2008; McAdams & Pals, 2006). The relationships between these three separate categories for self-knowledge were investigated in order to reveal the interconnectivity of these separate domains of personality (McAdams, 1982; McAdams, Hoffman, Mansfield, & Day, 1996). In studies which examined the links between characteristic adaptations and life narratives McAdams (1982) and McAdams Hoffman, Mansfield and Day (1996) found that people with strong power motives tended to construct personal life narratives that featured agentic life themes such as self-mastery, status, victory and achievement. They were also more likely to use an analytic narrative style when describing agentic events and to perceive more differences, separations and oppositions. Those people with strong intimacy motives tended to construct more communal life narratives which emphasised love, friendship, dialogue, caring for others and belongingness. They were also more likely to describe communal events using a synthetic narrative style which detected similarities and connections among different elements.
While research revealed the connection between characteristic adaptations and life narratives McAdams and colleagues argued that traits, adaptations and stories were three separate categories of self-knowledge and three separate discourses for making sense of self (Bauer & McAdams, 2010; McAdams, 2008). McAdams (2008) concluded that a full picture of personality may only be achieved when all three domains were accounted for. McAdams (2008) explored the role of culture in these three separate domains of self-knowledge and found that it had little effect on the individual expression of traits and a moderate role in the shaping of characteristic adaptations. However, culture and social contexts were crucial in determining the stories that were employed by individuals to give meaning to their lives (Brookman et al., 2011; McAdams, 2008). Culture, according to McAdams, provided the canonical narrative forms or narrative scripts which individuals chose from to interpret and provide meaning to their life stories (McAdams, 1996b, 2006b).

The role of culture in providing canonical scripts for meaning-making through life story was made evident by McAdams' coining of the term 'the redemptive self' to describe a particular narrative script employed by generative American adults (McAdams, 2006a, 2006b; McAdams & De St. Aubin, 1992). McAdams explained that this developmental narrative provided a coherent explanation for how an individual came to be who they were in the context of their whole life. In particular, the story of 'the redemptive self' celebrated the possibilities of second chances and the deliverance from suffering to an enhanced position in life. As such it allowed for the expression of resiliency and meaning in the face of difficult life events (McAdams, 2006a). This canonical script functioned to reinforce and sustain strong generative commitments which featured in Erikson's model of adult ego development (Erikson, 1959; Erikson & Erikson, 1998). The story of 'the redemptive self' was explained by McAdams to be concerned with the deliverance from hardship or suffering through growth and self-transformation. Of particular significance was McAdams' finding that redemptive stories were a much stronger predictor of well-being than happy stories (McAdams, 2006a, 2006b, 2008). It would appear that the cognitive processing of negative life events through a canonical script such as 'the
redemptive self may lead to insight and self-understanding which in turn may have positive consequences for psychological health and well-being.

Negative events were found to demand a great deal of storytelling work and the ability to find meaning and to transcend hardship may lead to greater psychosocial maturity and psychological well-being (McAdams, 2008; Wilson, 2011). A key consideration in the *storying* of negative life events is the meaning that an individual was able to derive from the event rather than the actual event itself. This transformation of hardship draws on resources of both cognitive maturity and social well-being. McAdams' (1996b) work on the cultural myths and *storying* of the self, revealed that this process was facilitated by culturally embedded narratives. These canonical scripts facilitated coping strategies by which individuals may find meaning and thus resiliency in the face of hardship. McAdams located his narrative prototype in the social and cultural contexts within which it was generated (McAdams, 2006a, 2006b). 'The redemptive self' was viewed by McAdams as a product of a specific American cultural and social theme of redemption and second chances in life. McAdams (2008) drew on theories of identity in a development of a Life Story Model of Identity which referred to an individual's internalised, evolving and integrated story of the self. It was within this realm of narrative identity that McAdams illustrated how personality was intricately related to culture and society (Adler & McAdams, 2007; McAdams, 1996b, 2008). This concept of narrative identity and in particular its connection to psychological well-being and psychosocial maturity has significance for the exploration of happiness in later life, in particular eudaimonic forms of happiness and well-being among older adults.

A review of research revealed that narrative reminiscence and autobiography presented key routes to evaluating subjective well-being and more particularly, eudaimonic forms of happiness in later life. Autobiographical memory was shown to be unreliable in terms of establishing the validity of past events or reconstructing the experiences of an individual's past (Baddeley, 1989; Sternberg, 2004). However, life stories and autobiographical narratives emerged as fruitful areas of socio-
psychological enquiry in terms of what they reveal about an individual's current schemas and their construction of memory from current expectations and experiences. Sternberg argued "We construct our memories from fragments of realistic events, according to our own pre-existing schemas." (2004, p. 261) Narrative identity was revealed to be crucial in understanding how individuals construct themselves in relation to their social worlds. It is also emerged as a critical component of eudaimonia. At its heart lies the conception of one's life as an integral narrative as well as the situating of particular events and circumstances in that narrative. This may lead to the assimilation of life events and circumstances into the construction of identity and self and ultimately to the appraisal of life appreciation and satisfaction:

"People use narratives to try to derive some measure of unity and purpose out of what may otherwise seem to be an incomprehensible array of life events and experiences" (Bauer et al., 2008, p. 84).

The connection between well-being and integrative forms of life narrative was central to the work of Wong and Watt (1991) and their development of a taxonomy of reminiscence in later life. Wong and Watt (1991) sought to explore the effects of different types of reminiscence on psychological well-being among older people. In particular, they identified the types of reminiscence which may be linked to successful ageing. They undertook content analysis of reminiscence data collected from a sample of older men and women (N=171). The participants were divided into four subgroups according to whether they were deemed to be ageing successfully and whether they lived in the community or in residential homes. The purpose of the content analysis was to identify the dominant type of reminiscence undertaken by each participant. Wong and Watt (1991) developed a taxonomy of six types of reminiscence: Integrative, instrumental, transmissive, escapist, narrative and obsessive.

According to Wong and Watt (1991) integrative reminiscence was associated with a coherent sense of self-worth and a reconciliation to one's past. This form of reminiscence involved an acceptance of negative life events as well as resolution of past conflicts. Importantly, integrative reminiscence may incorporate feelings of guilt or failure. However, the
achievement of self-understanding and personal meaning through the acceptance of one's past may lead to increased self-esteem and satisfaction. Wong and Watt (1991) concluded that their data provided significant evidence to support the hypothesis of a strong tie between integrative reminiscence and successful ageing. They argued that the process of life review in itself was not conducive to well-being, but rather it was the output of reminiscence which was important, in particular, the achievement of integrity.

Eudaimonia emphasises integration in life and the pursuit of meaning and growth (Bauer & McAdams, 2010; Bauer et al., 2008; Bauer et al., 2005). According to Bauer and McAdams and colleagues the exploration of narrative identity promised greater understanding of how people internalise life stories in order to integrate interpretations of their past with an imagined future (Bauer et al., 2008; McAdams, 2006a, 2008). This integration, represented through life narrative, is crucial to the construction of eudaimonic happiness and well-being. Bauer and colleagues argued that life narratives assisted in the development of meaning and they focused on the growth story as a personal narrative which illustrated development (Bauer et al., 2008; Bauer & Park, 2010). Such growth narratives were closely correlated with eudaimonic forms of happiness and well-being as they assimilated and made sense of the varied experiences of life. This function of growth life stories was particularly evident in narratives which were dealing with difficult or traumatic life events. Bauer et al. (2008) acknowledged that difficult events or circumstances may potentially damage or threaten well-being. The interpretation of events and the enduring meaning assigned to these events, through life narrative and growth stories, is crucial in the protection or fostering of global eudaimonic well-being:

"(W)hile resolved positive endings in general may help to heal emotional pain and enhance hedonic well-being, it is only those positive endings that also fully acknowledge the negative impact and incorporate exploration and a sense of accommodative change in response to the difficult life events that are predictive of eudaimonic well-being..." (Bauer et al., 2008, p. 94)
1.4 Conclusion

This doctoral research is concerned with investigating eudaimonic happiness and well-being in later life through analysis of personal life stories and narrative identity. Two primary research questions were identified at the outset of this chapter: What is later life eudaimonic happiness and well-being? Furthermore, what role do narrative and storytelling play in the realisation of later life eudaimonic well-being? In order to address the first of these questions it was necessary to integrate the diverse understandings of later life eudaimonic happiness, well-being and life satisfaction from the literature. The second research question necessitated a review of previous research in order to develop a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the role of narrative in the construction of later life eudaimonia through the story of self. In this way, this chapter lays the foundation for an investigation of the psychological, social and cultural resources for the *storying* of self which facilitate the realisation of later life eudaimonic happiness and well-being.

While happiness and well-being were treated as separate entities in the literature, their composite elements were capturing similar aspects of life quality. Hedonism was associated with affect balance in an emphasis on pleasure attainment and pain avoidance. Eudaimonia, ‘flow’ and life satisfaction shared similar attributes, in particular, the global evaluation of one’s life in relation to meaning, purpose and self-realisation. Global assessments of well-being emerged, from this review, as accounting for the evaluation of the relationship between emotion and memory as well as the dynamic influence of present culture, norms, beliefs and social values on the construction of emotional memory and life evaluation (Kim-Prieto et al., 2005; Veenhoven, 2000). The association between eudaimonic forms of happiness and life satisfaction, made by previous research, suggested the importance of meaning and purpose for one’s life, to overall well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). For the purposes of this research, eudaimonic well-being refers to a global concept of well-being which is oriented towards eudaimonic sources for happiness, life satisfaction and life quality.

The review of the literature in this chapter highlighted the internal and external resources for life strengths. These resources were connected to a
sense of well-being, vitality and confidence in later life. The formation and maintenance of relationships with both family and friends and the creation of wide social networks was shown to have a profound influence on social well-being and happiness in later life (Davidson et al., 2003; de Jong Gierveld, 2003; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Phillipson, 1997; Scott & Wenger, 1995; Stephens et al., 2011; Timonen et al., 2011). This research highlighted that the establishment and maintenance of social relationships was vital for the prevention of low morale and loneliness among older people (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; O' Luanaigh & Lawlor, 2008; Scott & Wenger, 1995). In their study which investigated social isolation and loneliness in later life, Victor and Scharf (2005) highlighted the need to take a life course perspective which would enable comparison between later life experiences of social exclusion with earlier stages in the life course. A life course perspective is employed by this doctoral research in an investigation of the role of personal life story in the creation of later life eudaimonic wellbeing.

Social capital was revealed to be consolidated throughout an individual's life course and influenced by situational factors such as gender and social class (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; de Jong Gierveld, 2003; Phillipson, 1997; Scott & Wenger, 1995). These factors operated to position an individual in relation to socially available sources for well-being. Furthermore, different social and economic contexts were shown to both disadvantage and advantage an individual in terms of resources for well-being. The gendered life course, for example, was found to deprive many older women of the material resources for well-being and this was shown to be greatly influenced by marital status (Arber, Price, et al., 2003). Older men, on the other hand, were found to be advantaged in terms of material well-being through gendered life course norms. However, this research indicated that they were denied access by these same gendered social structures to the support networks and resources crucial for coping with age associated decline in mobility (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; Davidson et al., 2003 de Jong Gierveld, 2003; Phillipson, 1997; Scott & Wenger, 1995).
As well as gender, the social resources associated with material status were identified by the literature as being critical determinants of social well-being. The review of research indicated that material resources as well as adaptive coping strategies in adulthood were strongly associated with social well-being in later life (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; Murrell & Norris, 1991; Ryff, 1991). In investigating the negative correlation between social class and psychological distress in later life, Murrell and Norris (1991) found that those in disadvantaged social classes were more likely to experience greater life change which in turn led to greater distress. Cook et al. (2007) argued that advancing age incurred a reduction in the social world of the older adult and in their influence over the near environment. The authors concluded that changes in communities, particularly as they related to social resources, had a profound impact on an individual's sense of self and their ability to adapt to personal change and loss. In focusing on a group of men and women living within a socially and economically disadvantaged community, this doctoral research contributes to an understanding of the impact of gender and life course disadvantage on later life eudaimonic well-being.

The research reviewed for this chapter highlighted the importance of considering strategies for adaptation and coping in later life. Two models emerged from the review as being particularly beneficial to this doctoral research. Carstensen's (1991, 1995) theory of socioemotional selectivity emphasised individual autonomy in relation to the composition of social networks whereby older individuals are motivated by emotional regulating goals. This model depicted successful ageing as the product of a culmination of strategic adaptations older people make in their social relationships with selected groups of people from whom they derive a basis for social and self-identity. The model of selective optimisation with compensation which was developed by Baltes and Baltes (1990) hypothesised that individuals use resources to manage developmental losses and to maximise well-being. This model of successful ageing is similar to Carstensen's model of socioemotional selectivity in that it emphasised agency in the experience of ageing. Baltes and Baltes (1990) argued that those individuals who, in the face of diminishing abilities, optimise their functioning within a select group of domains as well as
compensate for age associated losses may maintain their well-being and happiness into later life. Through analysis of personal stories of self, this doctoral research investigates the operation of these two models of successful ageing. In this way the research arrives at a conceptual understanding of later life well-being and strategies for adaptation and resilience.

The literature reviewed for this study indicated that life course resources for happiness and well-being were derived from the personal and the social domain and related to inter and intra personal exchanges. Research highlighted the importance for optimal functioning and later life resilience of developing strong internal locus of control, regulating emotion through the deployment of humour as well as cognitive adaption (Fry & Debats, 2010b; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Specht et al., 2011; Bonanno, 2004; Ong & Bergeman, 2010; Hertzog & Jopp, 2010; P. Martin et al., 2010). In the context of ageing, resilience was understood as the ability to maintain optimal socio-psychological, emotional and cognitive functioning despite the challenges to physical and mental abilities inherent in the ageing process (Fry & Debats, 2010b; Gergen & Gergen, 2010; Kern & Friedman, 2010). A 'robust' personality was shown to be an important resource for later life resilience particularly in its potential to offset the effects of negative life events on stress and affect balance (P. Martin et al., 2010). In particular, hardiness was identified as being an important personality trait for coping with exposure to negative life events, disruptions and stress (Bonanno, 2004; Fry & Debats, 2010b). In focusing on both the inter-personal as well as the intra-personal aspects of well-being, this doctoral research contributes to an understanding of the dynamic interplay between an individual’s self-resources and their social environment in the creation of eudaimonic well-being and resilience.

The importance of a sense of personal growth, self-realisation and the achievement of purpose in life emerged from the review as crucial domains for quality of life and life satisfaction in later life (Bauer & McAdams, 2010; Bauer et al., 2008; Higgs et al., 2003; Ryff, 1991; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Different models for ego development were outlined which
described the incremental processes by which people attained a notion of self-actualisation. In particular Erikson’s (Erikson, 1959; Erikson & Erikson, 1998) model of life-span psycho-social development was highlighted as of being of foundational relevance to this doctoral research. The positioning of integrity, self-actualisation and wisdom at the helm of models of human social and ego development depicted the life-span journey towards a higher self-concept which demands greater cognitive maturity as portrayed in Piaget’s model of successful adaptation (Piaget, 1970). These models have in common the depiction of the human progression towards finding meaning and purpose for one’s life. Therefore, this doctoral research focuses on eudaimonic sources for happiness which include the pursuit of meaning and life purpose in order to investigate later life well-being.

The review of research indicated that meaning is a necessary prerequisite ingredient for happiness and coping with life’s events (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Fry & Debats, 2010b). Schema theory was identified as pertinent to an understanding of the human meaning-making processes. This theory suggested that through the application of interpretive frames individuals may process information and events and thereby reconcile the external world to their personal interpretive schemas (Goffman, 1975; Minsky, 1977; Piaget’s, 1970). Religion and spirituality, for example, were identified as important sources of meaning and resilience in later life in that they provide an interpretive schema for meaning-making (Fry & Debats, 2010a, 2010b; P. Martin et al., 2010; Specht et al., 2011). The meaning maintenance model developed by Heine, Proulx and Vohs (2006) was identified by this review as contributing to an understanding of the cognitive processes by which people find meaning through adaptation and compensation of relational schematic structures. These conceptual understandings of meaning-making processes were particularly pertinent for this doctoral research which provides a conceptual framework to describe the role of narrative in the realisation of eudaimonia. Central to this framework is an understanding of how schematic interpretative frames are deployed to integrate the events of one’s life through the narrative construction of self-identity.
An understanding of narrative and the storied self as an expression of personality was explored in the review of literature in terms of the realisation of self-actualisation and the ability to find meaning and purpose for one’s life (Bauer & McAdams, 2010; Bauer et al., 2008; Bauer et al., 2005). According to Bauer, McAdams and colleagues the exploration of narrative identity would facilitate greater understanding of how people internalise life stories in order to interpret life events and arrive at an integrated vision of their past, present and future (Bauer et al., 2008; McAdams, 2006a, 2008). McAdams' (1996b) work on cultural myths and storying of the self was concerned with culturally embedded scripts which provided interpretive frames for meaning making and resiliency. In this way, the construction of personal life narratives was considered by research to be central to an understanding of how an individual may demonstrate eudaimonic well-being. An exploration of narrative identity is therefore considered by this doctoral research to be critical for understanding human agency in the strategic deployment of personal, social and cultural resources for later life eudaimonic happiness and well-being.

By deploying models of human ego development and psychosocial maturity in the analysis of personal stories of self, this doctoral study benefits the field of research investigating meaning, purpose, ego integrity and self-realisation. The focus this research is on the life narratives of a group of people who have common experiences of community displacement and development, social and economic exclusion and disadvantage as well as welfare dependency. Therefore, the research is concerned with accrual of cultural and social resources for the narrative construction of lives within a particular context. In this way, the doctoral research makes a significant contribution to a deeper understanding of the psycho-social and socio-emotional dimensions of eudaimonic well-being. This research contributes to an understanding of the conditions for the successful attainment of eudaimonic happiness and well-being by considering the processes by which individual’s modify and frame their sense of narrative self. By examining this process of self-representation and performance, this study investigates the importance of the narrative
interpretation of lived realities for successful attainment of eudaimonic happiness and well-being in later life.
Chapter Two

Epistemological statement

2.1 Introduction

This research investigates the construction of self and identity through biographical narrative in order to theorise on the factors which are linked to the assessment of eudaimonic happiness and well-being in later life. In undertaking this study I critically engaged with biographical narrative in order to arrive at a theoretical understanding of how social and cultural context as well as psychology interacts with individual identity construction in relation to later life well-being and happiness. The emphasis of the study remained with the practical experiential knowledge of the research participants and was grounded in their interpretations and narratives. However, in order to critically engage with the narratives supplied by the participants it was necessary to provide a theoretical framework which positioned me as researcher in relation to the participants; to their knowledge; and to the analysis that I provided. This chapter provides the ontological and epistemological position which informed this research project. It explores existing theoretical frameworks relative to this study drawing on the disciplines of gender studies, sociology and psychology.

This chapter is concerned with a theoretical understanding of emergent socially situated selves whereby the self is framed by categorical characteristics such as gender, class and age. These variables interact with each other as well as with personal history to position an individual in relation to multiple possible identities. These identities emerge from social contexts which are framed by socially defining characteristics and variables. However, they are continually being reformed and revised by active human agency which operates within shifting social horizons and interpretations. This concept of an emergent socially situated self is presented in this chapter through an historical tracing of the theoretical evolution of the social self from its conception by the early twentieth century American pragmatist
philosophers. The thread of this development is traced through the postmodern ontological schism which radically altered the basis upon which self was conceived and explored. The effect of this postmodern revolution was to dramatically shift critical thinking concerning the self and identity towards the concept of performativity and social flux. However, this chapter shows that socially situated selves are rescued from postmodern nihilism through the interpretative practices of hermeneutic enquiry. The thread of the evolution of the social self is traced to a phenomenological conceptualisation of self-construction as an emergent process rather than a fixed entity. The chapter ultimately arrives at an epistemological argument for accessing the emergent and socially situated self through hermeneutic analysis of biographical narrative. Consideration is given to an explanation of biographical narrative, and in particular the experience-based narrative, which provided the definitional criteria for the narrative enquiry undertaken in this research.

2.2 The ontology of self and identity

2.2.1 Origins of the ‘social self’

...individual identity is the basis for all manner of choices and decision-making that affect our lives. Cradle to grave, we perennially refer to our selves to make sense of our conduct and experience, and to guide related actions. The self, in other words, is not only something we are, but an object we actively construct and live by. (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000, p.59)

Holstein and Gubrium’s (2000) historical and theoretical exploration of self, depicted a modern interpretation of self as emerging from the early twentieth century pragmatist philosophies of James (1909), Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934). According to Holstein and Gubrium, pragmatist theories conceptualised identity and self as grounded in experience and based on interpersonal relationships. In particular, Cooley’s (1902) Looking Glass Self had a startling impact on the conceptualisation of self. This resulted in a move away from the transcendental ‘true self’ associated with 19th century philosophers such as Descartes. Cooley’s (1902) work illustrated how the social self is interactively constructed in everyday practices. Thereby, a particular social self is constructed by an individual as they imagine how
they are perceived by another person. The significant development of these theories was to locate the construction of self in the everyday practices of individuals, in particular their experiential or empirical interrelations. Mead (1863-1931) was influenced by Cooley in his theoretical exploration of self as socially interactive. He saw the empirical self as a social structure which is continuously formulated in relation to the circumstances or conditions to which it responds. Mead (1934) focused on the construction of meaning and its implication for the interaction of self with the social. In this way, Mead became a forefather for a philosophical and social theoretical movement that was to become known as symbolic interactionism.

The sociological and theoretical work of Blumer (1969/2007) was associated with the development of symbolic interactionism and the theorising of the self in relation to the construction of meaning. Blumer, a student of Mead in the University of Chicago, took his lead from the theories of his teacher and mentor by conceptualising individuals as responding to the meanings they construct as they interact with one another. In particular, the symbolic interactionist movement saw selves as constructed both by the culture and society in which they are located but also, most significantly, they actively construct this culture and society in turn. Blumer was highly influential in forming what became known as the Chicago school of thought. He put forward first-hand qualitative observation as the methodological tool for exploring how human beings respond to objects and things on the basis of meanings that they have constructed. These meanings arise from social interaction with other individuals in relation to these objects. As such, according to this theoretical development, the self is a social structure which must be observed in action in order to be understood. Furthermore, as construction is on-going, meanings are continually modified through interpretive processes as humans are incessantly involved in meaning making.

A critical examination of the role of the social self in the representation and in the production of knowledge was influenced by postmodernist concepts of power, language and reality. Postmodernists and poststructuralists debated whether reality or truth can ever really be known
outside of its socio-historical and ontological position. As a result of the theoretical discussion relating to the social self, attention shifted from the emphasis placed by the enlightenment movement on truth and reality to an examination of how a particular reality was constituted and what effect this had in relation to power, knowledge and identity. The sociological work of Foucault and in particular his theoretical discussions of discourse engaged with the socially situated self in relation to the production of knowledge and power (Foucault, 1977/2007, 1981/1998). Foucault conceptualised discourse as a way of producing knowledge whereby power is upheld by discourse through its ability to name and thereby create a particular reality:

Each society has its regime of truth, its “general politics” of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1977/2007, p. 207)

Recognition of Foucault’s discourse incurred a rejection of any one truth and a celebration of multiplicity whereby no one claim to knowledge can be privileged or valued over another (1977/2007, 1981/1998). The impact of poststructuralist theory, such as Foucault’s, was to locate relations of power as immanent in all relationships including: the relationship between state and citizen; and relationships based on sexuality, on economics and on medicine. According to Foucault (1981/1998) however, the strategic or tactical function of any discourse is not stable nor is it uniform. There is no one relationship between power and knowledge that can be assigned to the multiplicity of discursive elements operating within various strategies. A discursive function or strategy, such as patriarchy, contains many disparate elements operating within multiple social and personal domains. Foucault argued that the relationship between power and oppression within these domains is never straightforward or singular. Society is ‘not divided into accepted and excluded discourses or between the dominated and the dominant’(Foucault, 1981/1998, p.170). Where there is power there is always resistance.

According to poststructuralist conceptions of self, the individual is responsible for constituting meaning from their own standpoint and this
meaning is assigned to the objects of everyday "reality". Meaning is expressed in terms of opposition and differentiation. In other words, an individual may understand his/her self in terms of what it is not. This echoed the work of the American pragmatists who conceptualised the construction of self as an interpersonal meaning-assigning process. Ultimately, however, the shift in postmodern theories of self was towards social analysis on the level of language (Derrida, 1966/1988; Foucault, 1977/2007, 1981/1998). Reality or truth may not exist outside of an individual's idea of it and the meanings they assign. Hence truth or self may only be represented by the language of the situated 'knower'. The postmodern approach assumes that nothing may be understood outside of the language that defines it or the culture that constructs that understanding. Truths, reality and selves are reduced to the level of stories and accessed through analysis of language, representation and performance.

2.2.2 **Possibilities and performance**

Postmodern and poststructuralist understanding of the social self as located in the continuous process of inter-personal meaning making and assigning, highlighted the importance of situation, context and interpretation for identity construction. The deconstructionist linguistic theories of Derrida (1966/1988) depicted language as a code which is historically constituted as a fabric of differences; therefore it is constantly changing according to the context in which it is constructed. Accordingly, there is a continuous dialogue between the origin and the assigned meaning or interpretation; one which can never be concluded. Derrida's linguistic deconstructive criticism sought to show that any text ultimately undermines its own claim to determinate meaning: "Language bears within itself the necessity of its own critique" (Derrida, 1966/1988, p. 113). Derrida (1966/1988) argued that any event or representation of that event incurs the invention of new grammatical rules, a new text and a new sign which in turn will be challenged. Derrida theorised that any representation of events or experiences involves betrayal and any 'following' must occur with simultaneous 'not following':
There is a moment that I betray them. Within the experience of following them there is something other, something new, or something different which occurs and which I sign. (Derrida, 1966/1988, p. 110)

The implications of Derrida's linguistic concepts for theories of identity were to acknowledge the continuous interplay between an origin or 'true self' and its representation or interpretation. Furthermore, if multiple selves are determined by the location of the individual within society's meaning assigning discourse, then self is not only social and empirical (experienced) it is also circumstantially realised (Goffman, 1959/2007; Markus & Nurius, 1986). This realisation of multiple possible selves according to the demands of particular meanings assigned to different situations led to the conceptualisation of self as performance. In the work of Goffman (1959/2007), multiple selves were constituted according to the particular social situation in which they are placed. Expression of any 'self' is undertaken via rhetoric which is appropriate to the demands or specific circumstances in which an individual is located.

The implications of Goffman's (1959/2007) theories were to emphasise the critical importance of appearance to the construction and maintenance of selves. In particular, Goffman highlighted the theatrical language of self and a performative element of self-construction. His theories emphasised the surfaces where identity is played out via the dramaturgic or scenic features of the social self:

To the degree that a performance highlights the common official values of the society in which it occurs, we may look upon it [...] as a ceremony – as an expressive rejuvenation and reaffirmation of the moral values of the community. Furthermore, in so far as the expressive bias of performances comes to be accepted as reality, then that which is accepted at the moment as reality will have some of the characteristics of a celebration. To stay in one's room away from the place where the party is given, or away from where the practitioner attends his client, is to stay away from where reality is being performed. The world, in truth, is a wedding... (Goffman, 1959/2007, p. 59)

Goffman's theories were concerned with the performance of self through language and appearance and thus he called into question the existence of a stable 'true self'. Markus and Nurius (1986) developed the concept of the
fluidity and malleability of the self in their work on possible selves. They developed a theoretical framework for understanding individual's cognitive self-defining structures. This framework depicted the self as being continuously in dialogue with possible future selves and conditioned upon present circumstances. According to Markus and Nurius "(P)ossible selves represent individual's ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming, and thus they provide a conceptual link between cognition and motivation" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954).

The concept of a fluid and malleable self in dialogue with multiple possible selves was highly influential in the work of Butler (1990) and in particular her feminist theory of gender as performance. Butler (1990) conceptualised the mechanisms by which both body and psyche are composed through social practices and strategies of discursive power. For example, the range of possible selves from which an individual can choose is conditioned upon personal fears, goals, hopes and expectations (Markus & Nurius, 1986). These conditioning factors are in turn shaped by dominant social discourses concerning the ideal self, or in feminist terms, 'the normative self' (Chodorow, 1995; Gilligan, 1982; Haslanger, 2000). Butler drew on the deconstructionist linguistic theories of Derrida (1966/1988) in order to illustrate a method of resistance to this dominant discursive power. She focused on gender identity which, she argued, is constructed by the discourses into which individuals are born and which they learn to appropriate and perform (Butler, 1990). Butler saw the meanings which are assigned to a naturalised gender identity as supporting a heterosexist discursive power.

In theorising gender as a performance Butler's socio-political theories sought to subvert and resist the normalising power of this heterosexist discourse (Butler, 1990). In acknowledging Foucault, she recognised that the power of discourse lies in its ability to name and assign meaning. By linking the discourse of gender to Goffman's theories of performativity, Butler described a new strategy which subverts the power of dominant discourse by depicting gender as being played out through the theatrical
language and the dramaturgic features of the self (Butler, 1990). Therefore, if gender is a performance, the power of discourse to name and thereby naturalise gender is undermined. Identity is therefore in a state of continual flux moving between its origin and its representation or indeed misrepresentation:

Whether an honest performer wishes to convey the truth or whether a dishonest performer wishes to convey a falsehood, both must take care to enliven their performances with appropriate expressions, exclude from their performances expressions that might discredit the impression being fostered, and take care lest the audience impute unintended meanings. (Goffman, 1959/2007, p. 62)

2.2.3 Postmodern deadlocks and beyond

The postmodern and poststructuralist theories of the social-self resisted the fixedness of the prevailing essentialist assumptions of the body and self. This resistance was formed by interrogating the ways in which multiple and fluid identities are performed and regulated within dominant social discourses. Individual, subjective experience was examined in order to better understand the operation of flux in personal identity. Baudrillard's (1994) theories on the nature of social relations and the negation of social reality are associated with postmodernism and in particular with poststructuralism. Baudrillard (1994) conceived of the world as in a state of hyper-reality; composed of references with no referents. In this sense Baudrillard (1994) took the discussion of the social self one step further in denying the existence of any reality and celebrating multiple possible representations of the self. Biggs (2004) argued that this relativist postmodern position offers a separate threat to identity and ultimately leads to the denial of self in favour of unending possibilities and multiple representations:

Identity flux refers to the degree to which it is fluid, a subject of choice and desire, and as such seems on first encounter to be an attractive alternative to fixed roles and attributes. However, flux includes a second assault on identity. This arises from the fragmentation of standpoints from which to resist dominant constructions, increasing uncertainty and making personal coherence difficult to maintain. (Biggs, 2004, p. 47)
In applying Baudrillard’s frameworks to ageing Biggs traced how the signs or representations of ageing are disguised in a contemporary quest for agelessness (Biggs, 2004). In this process ageing becomes an artifice or a mask which hides an absence of meaning or a core reality. The end result of this theoretical framework, for Biggs, was that ageing was reduced to one of many possible and contingent identities, none more meaningful than the other. Biggs compared this experience to theoretical explorations of gender and the presentation of woman as the absent ‘other’ located at the centre of personal experience.

Butler’s (1990) linguistic and discursive theories, as influenced by Derrida (1966/1988), offer a potential counterbalance to the relativist postmodern dilemma. Butler (1990) showed how a resisting agency can operate within discursive power relationships. By conceptualising gender identity as performance, Butler presented a means of perverting dominant heterosexist discursive power. However, Biggs (2004) identified a contradiction which lies at the core of Butler’s theory: He noted that Butler’s theories have shed light on the complexity of taking an oppositional stance which is implicated within the discursive power relations it is resisting:

We are the same people who will age or who have been young, and yet we are encouraged to think of this continuum as a binary opposition. We are left with little option but to identify with and simultaneously resist the ageing process. Adult ageing rarely provokes a rejection of the cult of youth but often colludes with it. We thus oppose the power of age as it is socially defined, whilst also being implicated in the definitions of age that we oppose. (Biggs, 2004, p.49)

By performing age in a particular way, for example by donning the mask of youth, one can defy social categories or assigned meanings of age. However, Biggs (2004) pointed out, this discursive act remains implicated within power dynamics. In performing agelessness, again ageing is relegated as the absent ‘other’ located at the core of identity. Biggs (1997, 2004) argued, an over emphasis on postmodern fluidity and the celebration of identity as performance, ultimately exposes an underlying shallowness at the heart of the experience of self.
In her discussion of the evolution of feminist developmental psychology Greene (2003) highlighted the inherent dangers of a postmodern theoretical framework which concludes with the nihilist obliteration of personhood. She illustrated how postmodern theories depict a self wholly consisting of discursive constructions and saturated by a myriad of possible ways of being. Thus any essential core self or identity is obliterated. Greene argued that postmodern shifting identities, premised on absence, deny any underlying reality or truth and thus they obliterate any grand political narratives of oppression and emancipation. Both Greene (2003) and Biggs (2004; Biggs et al., 2003) concluded that the postmodern position threatens the viability of feminism or any political movement committed to shared identity and emancipation. Similarly Holstein and Gubrium (2000) argued that the value of postmodern theories lie in their creative disruption of meaning assigning discourses. However, they also warned that this relativist theoretical framework led to a denial of any core reality or any possible shared identities.

Postmodern theories denied the existence of an authoratative 'knower' and celebrated relativist subjectivity in a rejection of grand meta-narratives such as patriarchal oppression. This position offered feminist gerontology the means by which to critically reflect on how knowledge is produced. However, feminism is a grand meta-narrative which unifies people from diverse social backgrounds and circumstances in a common aim of emancipation from subordination. There is a danger for feminism if we travel too far down the pluralist and relativist route offered by theories of identity flux. This danger presents itself as the obliteration of standpoints and the denial of human experiential agency. While rejecting the essentialist preoccupations with fixed truth, feminist gerontology must remain politically and ethically engaged (Spivak, 1988). Feminism is informed by a particular belief concerning gender and age relations as well as a desire to effect change. This is premised on the concept that there is some form of shared or collective identity. Thus this realist theoretical position is located within what Greene termed the 'middle ground' (2003, p. 103). This positioning is informed by an understanding of human identity as a dynamic, constrained and highly contingent process that is however, constructed as real and endowed with moral and political significance (Spivak, 1988):
People live in real bodies, in real social relationships, in a real world. These realities cannot be reduced to the language in which they are expressed, or discourses through which they are constituted. (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 134)

### 2.2.4 Narrative and masquerade

Biggs, Lowenstein and Hendricks (2003) argued that the value of feminism to critical theory building within gerontology lies in the ability to reflect upon a reappraisal of self and therefore old age identity. This can be undertaken by combining postmodern theory with narrative autobiography and critical theories of embodiment. In examining the relationship of narrative with age identity, Biggs (2004) recognised the significance of the past as a means of building a serviceable identity in the present. Importantly, Biggs pointed out that whilst narrative identity is performed with an awareness of the current auspices under which it is being constructed, it envelopes a prefiguring influence of socio-historical context. Where masquerade contributes to this theoretical positioning of ageing identity is to highlight the layered nature of self and identity. In particular, Biggs noted that the process of ageing includes multiple layers of experience both in relation to the body as well as personal integration (Biggs et al., 2003). Biggs described a battle between the experiences of physical decline, as reflected in outward appearance, with the subjective 'real' self which remains 'young'. In effect, he highlighted that this battle is centred on the desire for self-expression thwarted by the ageing body.

In theorising the masquerade, Biggs drew attention to the means by which the self is performed, via language games, body language as well forms of dress and adornment. However, he drew from feminist theories of discursive embodiment and social inequality. Therefore, he positioned this conceptualisation of performance in a politically engaged framework and moved away from the extreme relativist postmodern position offered by Goffman (1959/2007). Biggs recognised that in theorising age, gender and identity one must engage with both social and personal constructs of the self and thereby recognise the operation of power and social inequality (Biggs, 2004, p. 47). Through his conceptualisation of the masquerade,
Biggs identified a means of using postmodern theories of performance to identify the tension between personal and structural identity. He observed that the performance of self within specific contexts is in fact a strategy employed to protect subjective self. This strategy is employed at the cost of presenting a self that is externally focused and legitimised over an inner personal identity:

...whilst a masque conceals signs of ageing, the very act of hiding alerts the performer and audience that something is being hidden. It therefore tells us something truthful about an act of deception. The fact that we almost always go along with the performance of agelessness, or active or productive ageing, fools no one. Its power lies in that very social convention which varies depending on the intended audience (Biggs, 2004, p. 52).

Biggs described the strategy of masquerade as protective. He viewed the process by which one performs ‘agelessness’ or ‘productive ageing’ as a manoeuvre used to negotiate social constraints and ageism. According to Biggs, masquerade is used to hide or protect socially unacceptable aspects of ageing which are nevertheless, parts of an evolving maturing ‘self’.

According to Biggs, both narrative and masquerade offer a means by which to negotiate social structures in which identity is framed. Furthermore, they protect an inner self from exposure to the censuring controlling agents of the external social world. However, the crucial distinction between the two is that masquerade offers a dialogic process whereby the fluidity and multiplicity of the inner self is continuously dialoguing with the external social world. Thus, in employing the strategy of masquerade the self can avoid the danger of fixedness and can remain within communicative exchange with the social and collective world:

The way in which the self ‘make sense’ of itself and how it holds together as a believable narrative fixes identity at a certain point and in a particular configuration. This can form a basis for action. But it can become equally an occasion for denial of the same, unless some form of connectedness to the social and to personal and collective memory is maintained (Biggs, 2004, p. 55).

Both narrative and masquerade function to create ‘safe’ psychological spaces in which to harbour inner self or selves. However, the danger of
narrativity is that the spaces created through narrative and story making will become too isolated and cut off from other social beings and opposing viewpoints, thus meaning becomes rigid and fixed. The benefit of employing masquerade as a theoretical framework in conjunction with narrative is that the construction of self can be seen as a dialogic process that is under continuous negotiation with the external. The mask itself becomes a bridge between the world of the inner self and the self that is externally performed.

The significance of masquerade, as theorised by Biggs (2004), is the recognition that while individual identity is framed within socio-cultural contexts it is not reducible to these contexts. Local convention and the narrative resources available for self-construction condition, but do not determine, the way individuals think about and present who they are. It is important to recognise that members of any particular culture use the resources and auspices within their socio-historical context to designate their identities; it is not the other way around. The practices or conventions of socio-cultural location both enable and constrain the emergence of a reflexive identity. However, in analysing emergent identities it is vital to recognise the operation of agency within these constraints.

Humans develop as psychological beings by virtue of their embeddedness from birth in sociocultural contexts and practices that constitute particular forms of personhood and identity. However, once emergent within sociocultural contexts that include practices of self-reflective agency, human psychological beings and their actions and experiences are not entirely determined nor constrained by such contexts. (J. Martin & Sugarman, 2001, p. 194)

In recognising the dialogic process between the past, present and the future as well as the critical importance of lived experience and interpretation of identity as emergent, a hermeneutic approach complements the deployment of masquerade. In their presentation of hermeneutics in relation to psychological enquiry, Martin and Sugarman (2001) emphasised the importance of life experience as a lived reality against which individuals are able to perceive and comprehend themselves. Crucially, hermeneutic enquiry recognises the value of interpretation in the
construction of human identity. In constructing and presenting individual identities, people are constantly engaged in on-going interpretation of entities which surround them within their social world. In particular, self-understanding is achieved through the dialogic process between the past and the present. The events of our lives combine with cultural and socio-historical resources to provide the raw ingredients of narrative. Identity however, is constructed through the interpretation of lives through narrative. "The meaning of life cannot be determined outside of the stories told about it" (Widdershoven, 1993, p. 2).

2.3 Epistemology

2.3.1 Interpretive practice and narrative

Recognition of the inevitable nihilism of postmodern conception of discursive self as socially constructed does not necessarily entail a rejection of the social self. Holstein and Gubrium (2000) argued for a transformative approach to the postmodern dilemma by which an empirical self can be grounded in everyday life whilst retaining the postmodern characteristics of decentredness and diversity of meaning. In essence, this approach entails turning to the interpretive practices of everyday life. By accounting for the self in everyday social life, interpretive practice, as advocated by Holstein and Gubrium, would examine the myriad of procedures, conditions and resources by which reality and self is apprehended, understood, managed and represented in everyday life. In particular, their theoretical positioning calls for an exploration of discourses-in-practice. This would entail not only attending to the methods by which individuals negotiate social structures (i.e. discursive practice) but investigating the contingent possibilities for these methods as they are integrated with historically or institutionally available discourses.

In her work on the psychological development of women, Greene (2003) also advocated an alternative position to the modernist and postmodernist divide. She argued for a phenomenologically real mode of organising experience which conceptualises self-construction as an emergent process rather than a fixed entity. What is particularly significant about Green's position is the recognition of the crucial importance of time, in
particular the examination of change over time. Green's depiction of an emergent identity which is subject to change across time is connected to Marcia's (1966) understanding of self-development across the life span. Marcia elaborated on the model of ego development created by Erikson (1959) by depicting identity as continually being revised and reformed through a series of crises which result in the negotiation of identity status across the lifespan. Greene (2003) persuasively argued for the central positioning of theoretical explorations of the relationship of time to personal identity and in particular to the capacity of self to generate meaning over time:

Challenges to the notion of the fixed and unitary self have resulted in an understanding of personal identity and selfhood as processes which are always under way, never achieved [...] The sense of self preserves continuity within the normal dynamic flux of experience, mainly by dint of the active interpretation of experience and its meaning in place and time. (Greene, 2003, p. 112)

Greene (2003) highlighted the significance of spatiotemporal fluidity or the ability to move from the present to the past or the future. This capacity enables the human mind to escape from the constraints of the immediate context. Greene (2003) considered the importance of memory and imagination as the gatekeepers to spatiotemporal fluidity. This human capacity to exist in time is, according to Greene, in danger of being obliterated by postmodern denial of the active agency of the individual within discursive constraints. Echoing Greene's call for an emphasis on time, Biggs (2004) showed how relativist postmodern privileging of fluidity in contemporary space introduces fixity in time. He argued that the theories of Baudrillard (1994) and of Butler (1990) which creatively play with meaning assigning discourses ultimately trap identity in an unending present. In particular, Biggs illustrated how ageing is the 'other' of postmodern fantasy which is disguised and ultimately obliterated by a mask of youth, played out in an unending present:

We select and refashion our memories and plans to fit our current purposes. This is a powerful way in which we can
resist time, by selective use of memory and imagination [...] most of the time our memories and our anticipations assist us in keeping a level of optimism and self-worth which sustains our personal equilibrium and motivation. We need, it would appear, to fashion a life story that we can live with and which makes sense. The story may not necessarily flatter us but it usually excuses us. (Greene, 2003, p. 135)

Both Greene (2003) and Biggs (Biggs, 1997, 2004) drew attention to the relationship between narrative and the past, noting that the past provides the material from which a serviceable identity can be constructed in the present. This concept has crucial implications for history itself. Biggs (2004) observed that in the performance of one’s own life story, historical truth must give way to narrative truth. Therefore, the validity of one story over another is determined by the present circumstances in which the narrative is produced. History, in other words, is in the service of present need. Herein lays the critical importance of narrative as a means of exploring age and gender identity. Each individual actively constructs their own vision of their ageing and gendered identity with awareness of the expectations of the social and personal forum in which they are situated.

2.3.2 The ‘storying’ of identity

Holstein and Gubrium’s (2000) theoretical positioning placed narrative practice at the heart of self-construction. In interpreting narrative they highlighted the necessity of concern with the active spontaneity of performance alongside awareness of the context in which stories are told and the resources available and used in their narration. According to Holstein and Gubrium (2000), the significance of narrative in relation to identity and self lies not in whether biographical coherence is obtained but rather the method by which individuals give coherence to their lives. It is the sources of narrative coherence which are important: What are the events people choose to relate? Furthermore, what are the underlying ideologies that influence their narration?

Narrative resources which derive from an individual's personal life history as well as their social and cultural situation provide the scaffolding upon which a serviceable identity can be constructed. This is related to cognitive theories of developmental psychology and in particularly the work of Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1970). Both Vygotsky and Piaget developed
theories which concerned individuals' cognitive adaptation to their social and cultural relational structures or schemas through a process of assimilating or accommodating cultural norms, rules and language. Thereby the creation of a narrative of one's life and the telling of one's life story involves cognitive processes which adapt one's personal relational structures to the social context. Cognitive development, according to Vygotsky (1978) cannot be separated from its social context which influences not only how we think, but what we think:

The public credibility of any story depends not only on the facts it reports but also on the narrator's skilful deployment of those local rules of discourse that make storytellers and audiences intelligible to each other. In turn the response of the audience determines both the success of the story and the identity of the narrator [...] life stories are a way of fashioning identity, in both the private and public sense of that word. (Ochberg, 1994, p. 114)

In his examination of the relationship between life and story, Ochberg (1994) drew attention to the role of cultural context. Like Holstein and Gubrium (2000), Ochberg saw narrative as key to understanding identity both on the level of the individual and also culture. He argued that, the resources available to construct narrative are determined by the situational context and the mutual discursive references which are shared by both the listener and the teller. By highlighting the role of the listener in narrative construction of identity, Ochberg (1994) drew comparisons between oral biographical narrative and literary narrative. He turned to an explication of how the work of performing one's life on a day to day basis accomplishes the same work as performing a story. Bruner (1991) identified narrative accrual as a core feature of narrative which is critical to understanding not only how narrative is constructed by cultural resources and context, but also how narrative itself constructs culture. Bruner argued that what we call history, culture or tradition represents the amalgamation of stories or the accrual of collective narrative contributions (1991, p. 18). Bruner observed this operates not only on the macro level of history and culture but also in personal accounts of our own lives:
Even our individual biographies, as I have argued elsewhere, depend on being placed within a continuity provided by a constructed and shared social history in which we locate our Selves and our individual continuities. It is a sense of belonging to this canonical past that permits us to form our own narratives of deviation while maintaining complicity with the canon (Bruner, 1991, p. 20).

Ochberg (1994) described the primary features of life and story in relation to their functions in the process of identity construction, performance and persuasion. This implies a shift from the discursive techniques of written language to the actions and events described in oral histories. In other words, the shift is from life stories to storied lives. Ochberg argued that the structures or sequences of action which are presented in a description of one's life are similar to the structure of a traditional narrative plot. These plots, he argued, are performed for a particular audience within a particular cultural frame of reference. Crucially, Ochberg highlighted that the audience to which these narrative plots are addressed are not simply those who are listening to the story but also those audiences described in the narrative itself (Ochberg, 1994, p. 137). Identity is determined by the response of the audience. Ochberg (1994) observed that the performance of one's life justifies a particular self-image of the narrator. Similar to the creation of literary story, there is always the risk present that the audience will not be persuaded. Story, both literary and oral, engages continually with its possible alternatives:

...a story brings to a head the possibility of being undone – and then attempts to rescue itself [...] As a plot a story exposes its protagonist to the possibility of defeat. As a performance a story risks the disbelief or disinterest of its audience. As an argument a story risks being supplanted by an invidious alternative. This much is true of stories in the ordinary, literary sense. Storied lives run the same risks. The lives we perform expose us to the same dangers of negation. In turn, our self-idealizing identities depend on our success in meeting and overcoming the possibility of our being undone (Ochberg, 1994, p. 117).

In his exploration of hermeneutic perspectives on the relationship between narrative and life history, Widdershoven (1993) emphasised that life and story are internally related and intertwined. According to his analysis, there is no meaning prior to or without narrative. The meaning of
life and cultural or personal identity is dependent on the stories told about it, and on interpretation. This is the key to hermeneutic enquiry and to what has become known as the hermeneutic circle (Bruner, 1991, p. 7). Story consists of its constituent parts that is, the stuff of life (experience, events, objects). However, these parts in themselves have no meaning in isolation of each other and without story. In interpreting storied lives, and thereby establishing a meaning or identity for the whole, we must appeal to the partial expressions or to the constituent parts. These parts however, have no meaning in and of themselves; their meaning can only be understood in relation to the whole:

We not only live our lives in such a way that we can tell stories about our experiences and actions. We also, in telling these stories, change the meaning of our experiences and actions (Widdershoven, 1993, p. 7).

Bruner's identification of the joint human process of narrative accrual is key to understanding the hermeneutic dialogue between culture and identity, between life and narrative. In particular, self-understanding is achieved through the dialogic process between the past and the present and between the constituent parts of the story and the whole. The transformative properties of this process are crucial. In recollecting or narrating past experience or indeed future possibilities, the voice of the 'other' can be heard as making a truth claim. The significance of this claim for identity construction in the present is the ability of the other to transform the horizon of the present.

2.4 From theory to research design

2.4.1 Biographical narrative research

It is common for individuals to weave together life events and experiences into complex life stories. In doing so they make sense of their lives and experiences, this allows individuals to function with some sense of unity of self (Phoenix, 2008; Shadden et al., 2008; Squire, 2008). In terms of the cognitive developmental theories of Vygotsky (1978), narrative presents the scaffolding upon which individuals can support a sense of self.
and thereby adapt to change and interruption. Life stories and biographical narrative are thereby important for understanding the relationship between the past and the present. Individuals select particular memories and life events for narration in the present, in doing so they actively fashion their past to fit current auspices. Biographical narratives are an important tool for any understanding of social and psychological well-being because they provide access to an individual’s present through interpretation of their past in an active construction of self and identity:

Our perceived self is the product of an accumulation of life experiences and the meanings we have forged out of these experiences, the knowledge of our typical patterns of acting and reacting, our memories, the roles we play, our biographic realities, and our perceived status in the society. (Shadden et al., 2008, p. 4)

An individual’s life stories are not constructed in isolation of the conditions and context in which they are told, both in terms of the local context as well as the social discourses (M. Andrews, 2008b; Bruner, 1991; Ochberg, 1994; Shadden et al., 2008). Analysis of biographical narratives must account for the social and personal forum in which they are situated. The life events combine with cultural and socio-historical resources to provide the raw ingredients of narrative (Bruner, 1991; J. Martin & Sugarman, 2001; Phoenix, 2008). An ontological position which depicts self as grounded in everyday experiences and performed within particular contexts implies an awareness of the auspices under which life stories are told. In theorising age, gender and identity one must engage with the social as well as the personal constructs of self. An individual actively constructs their own vision of an ageing and gendered identity with awareness of the expectations of the social and local forum in which they are situated (Biggs, 2004; O'Donnell, 2011; O'Donnell & McTiernan, 2010, In Press).

The importance of situated contexts has informed the research design and analysis of this study. An awareness of the conditions under which the narratives were produced has informed their analytical interpretation. My role as interviewer and collaborator in the construction of narratives was taken into account when designing the research method as well as during the analytical process (O'Donnell & McTiernan, 2010, In Press). Narratives are not created within a vacuum and so the stories that
are represented and interpreted in this study are treated as the product of
dialogic exchange between the participant and I. This dialogic exchange is
conditioned by our situated realities which inform both the production and
the representation of knowledge.

Riessman (1993, 2002, 2008) discussed the importance of
interpretation at five stages during the process by which life events are
translated from the primary level of experience to their final representation
in a research report or thesis. Riessman pointed out that the way in which
an event or life episode is experienced by an individual is mediated through
their resources of language, culture and context. This experience is
subsequently related to a researcher or interviewer through narrative. Again
issues of representation are important as this narrative is produced in
dialogic exchange between the receiver of the story and the teller.
Riessman (1993, 2008) also discussed issues of representation and
interpretation as they affect the transcription and analysis of narrative data
which transforms the oral account into a written text. Attention was drawn to
issues of selection and exclusion as well as the arrangement and display of
the text which influences the interpretation of events. The analysis of data
creates a meta-story for the research which shapes what is told and the
significance of particular events and narratives. Finally, the reading of the
research report was understood in the context of a dialogic relationship in
which the reader collaborates with the author or researcher to produce an
interpretive narrative. Each text produces multiple readings which are
conditioned by the social and local forum in which the reading takes place
and is affected by issues of language, context and culture (Riessman, 1993,

process of narrative interpretation reflects the deconstructive criticism of
Derrida (1966/1988) (Section 2.2.2). Derrida sought to prove that all texts
ultimately undermine their own claim to fixed meaning and he argued that
all representations of events or experiences involve a betrayal of that event
and an invention of something new. Issues of representation and
interpretation were accounted for in this research through recognition of the
hermeneutic role of the research participant in translating life events into a narrative which is constructed in collaboration with the researcher. This hermeneutic role is then transferred to the researcher who transcribes the oral narrative into a written text and subsequently produces a meta-story in dialogue with the text based data. This meta-story represents the experience of the data as another narrative which is open to further interpretations and multiple readings. Andrews (2008b, 2009a) pointed out that it is the human experience to be continually engaged in negotiation and reinterpretation of the past through narrative:

Thus we are forever re-scripting our pasts, making sense of the things that happened in light of subsequent events. This is true not only as narrators of our own lives, but also as narrators of the lives of others. This process of reinterpretation of events is one which is ongoing throughout our lives, as different parts of our pasts reveal themselves to hold increased importance, or to be void of meaning, depending not only on who we are, but critically, on whom we wish to become (M. Andrews, 2008b, p. 95).

The analytical procedures adopted in this study are informed by an awareness of the various phases of representation and interpretation in the process of transferring the original experienced event into a final research thesis.

Narratives are interpreted with an awareness of the social constructs that they are dialoguing with as well as the context in which the stories are created. Social and cohort norms and values are the absent other located at the core of narrative self-construction. They both inform and are informed by an individual's self-construction through discursive dialogue which engages with social contexts. The creation of a coherent narrative self through storytelling and dialogic exchange accounts for multiple personal factors which situate an individual in relation to their local and social contexts. These personal factors include age, gender, class, health, race, educational background, personality or character, lifestyle, coping styles as well as social and professional background (Shadden et al., 2008). Any understanding of quality of life and the conditions for the successful attainment of happiness and well-being must consider the process by which individuals modify and frame their sense of narrative self. By examining this process of self-representation and performance this study investigates the
importance of the narrative interpretation of lived realities for the successful attainment of eudaimonic happiness and later life well-being.

2.4.2 Experienced-based narratives: Definitional criteria

A useful starting point for my approach to narrative analysis was provided by Labov's (1972, 1997) model for structured analysis of oral narratives of personal experience. Labov's model for analysing narratives involves extracting temporally ordered sequences from a transcript and separating these sequences into numbered clauses (Labov, 1972, p. 360). These clauses are then assigned a function according to Labov's six-part model. These six narrative functions are:

- **Abstract;** this introduces the story by telling the listener what it is about
- **Orientation;** this tells the listener who was involved in the story, when it happened and where
- **Complicating action;** these clauses relate the events of the story and are typically in chronological order
- **Evaluation;** this mediates the crucial point of the story revealing the narrator's perspective on the events being told.
- **Result;** this resolves the story by telling the listener how it all ended
- **Coda;** finally the coda occurs at the end of the narrative and allows the narrator to return to present time thereby linking the past world of the story to the present world of its telling.

Labov's analysis framework is particularly useful in that it provides definitional criteria for identifying important narratives within the transcript and it allows comparison between different narratives (Patterson, 2008). However, the framework has been criticised as being normative in its presentation of a particular type of event-based narrative to the exclusion of other narrative forms which do not conform to Labov's strict criteria (Patterson, 2008; Squire, 2008). Much of the criticism levelled at Labov's analytical model focused on how the model isolates event-based narratives
from the surrounding text through the application of strict analytical criteria. This process de-contextualises the narratives by assuming they have an autonomous existence. As a result there has been a call in recent years to broaden the definitional scope of narrative to include both event-based narratives as well as experiential narratives (Patterson, 2008; Squire, 2008). This broadened analytical approach to narrative recognised the primary importance of context, both the local contexts in which the narrative is performed as well as the broader social or cultural norms which inform both presentation and interpretation (M. Andrews, 2008b; Phoenix, 2008). Patterson (2008) provided more inclusive definitional criteria for narrative which, she argued, is broad enough to include all aspects of personal experience narration without being so broad as to suggest that everything anyone says may be counted as narrative:

...texts which bring stories of personal experience into being by means of the first person oral narration of past, present, future or imaginary experience (Patterson, 2008, p. 37).

The experienced-centred approach to narrative allows for the inclusion of narratives which are sequential and meaningful and which address themes rather than clauses. Squire (2008) provided a detailed description of experience-centred narratives which, she argued, account for any talk which is significant for the narrator's story of who they are and how they engage with the human process of sense-making. This understanding of narrative allows for the analyst to account for the hermeneutic properties of narrative whereby stories can have multiple meanings and are never the same when told twice. This perspective considers narrative accrual which occurs in the relationship between the teller and listener and between the story and its cultural and social contexts. Squire defined narratives by theme rather than structure whereby they represent personal changes or transformations that go beyond the formal resolutions that are described by Labov's approach to event narratives (Squire, 2008, p. 45). The experienced-based narrative, as discussed by Patterson (2008) and Squire (2008), provided the definitional criteria employed in this research. This understanding of narrative as representing personal experience allows for the identification of story types or themes. Analysis of narratives thereby
involves the identification of particular themes which are used by individuals in the human process of sense making. Therefore these definitional criteria for narrative are conducive to an assessment of the narrative processes through which ageing individuals can come to terms with their life experiences and events.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has established hermeneutic analysis of experienced-based narrative as the mechanism by which to investigate the construction of socially, culturally and psychologically situated identities. In order to do this it was necessary to outline the ontological understanding of self and identity which informed this research. This ontological position depicted self as emerging from the interpretive practices of everyday life. This interpretive practice accounted for the multiple resources, mechanisms and strategies by which reality and self is understood, constructed and performed in everyday life. This emergent self is in constant flux through discursive negotiation, and yet it is knowable through the capacity of the self to generate meaning over time. This ontological demanded the production and investigation of narrative as the means by which to examine the construction of self through active negotiation with discursive resources.

Once emergent within historical and sociocultural context, the subjectivity of the individual psychological person is not reducible to these sociocultural origins, even as it continues to be shaped by contemporary sociocultural practices and activity (J. Martin & Sugarman, 2001, p. 201).

Hermeneutic enquiry combined with the epistemological tools of narrative and masquerade make possible the analysis of emergent identities which both constitute and are constituted by particular social worlds. The dialogic process emphasised by hermeneutic narrative interpretation is critical in understanding the on-going and unending process of identity construction. This is crucial for the study of gender and age in relation to possibilities for happiness and well-being in later life. This is particularly true as individuals interact and negotiate with the socio-historical
circumstances and the categories to which they are ascribed. Ultimately, this theoretical platform from which we can view the self as emergent, changing and yet knowable, offers a vision of reality and identity within flux, yet not in chaos. The interpretive self can be rescued from the nihilist obliteration of personhood and yet can remain in communicative exchange and dialogue. A theoretical exploration of narrative and masquerade in relation to continual dialogic exchange is, I believe, crucial to understanding identity formation and the construction of happiness in later life. This theoretical positioning is radically transformative, particularly in relation to dominant ideologies and attitudes towards ageing in western societies. This theoretical frame fosters the investigation of agency as it is wielded by individuals within specific cohorts, historical and cultural contexts. This is transformative as it recognises that identity is an on-going process that is never complete, even in the final phases of life.
Chapter Three

Translating theory to practice

3.1 Introduction

This research investigated the factors linked to later life eudaimonic happiness and well-being through an exploration of narrative and the identification of the psychological, social and cultural resources for the *storying* of self. In Chapter Two an exploration of experience-based narratives was determined as the appropriate epistemological approach by which to ascertain the resources for narrative construction of self and the relationship between identity and well-being. This chapter translates this epistemological position into a robust narrative research design. More specifically, the chapter outlines the procedures for the production, collection and analysis of the narrative data. An account of the evolution of the approach to data collection from the pilot stage to entry into the research field is provided. This is followed by a presentation of the procedural steps of the two core pillars of data exploration; transcription and analysis. Particular attention is paid to process by which the stages of the transcription and the analysis of data overlap and are mutually informing. To begin, the research participants and community context are introduced. This is followed by an explanation of the method by which the narrative data was obtained; in particular the three sub-sessions of the two interviews are described.

3.2 The research sample

3.2.1 Recruitment

Participant recruitment for this study began in September 2009 and the interviews were on-going until March 2010. The first gatekeeper to participants was a community development partnership organisation which co-ordinated a senior citizens forum in the community. My project was advertised in the newsletter which was delivered throughout the community
targeting those over the age of 55 and living in the area. I regularly met with the community development worker with responsibility for senior citizens in the community. This development worker facilitated access to different groups of older people meeting in the community. Through this connection I met with the local bingo groups as well as the bowls group and the library club and held discussions about my research. These group discussions were fruitful not only in terms of advertising my research project but also as a means of meeting with older people in the area and discussing some of my research questions. Being able to demonstrate that my research had the support of the local community development partnership also gave credibility to my research and helped to offset any trust issues that may have inhibited participant recruitment.

Advertisement of my research project was also facilitated through a local community radio station. I was invited to participate in two day-time chat shows run by and for the senior citizens of the community. One of the chat shows was an older women’s discussion group and the other was an older men’s music and chat show. The stations were run from the local community civic centre and broadcasted all over the west Dublin area. This was a great opportunity for me to introduce myself and my research project to a broad spectrum of older people. I designed posters with research project information and contact details which were posted in the community library as well as in the parish halls and the leisure and fitness centre. Advertisement of my project was deemed very important for the recruitment of participants. The higher the frequency with which potential participants came into contact with my project via newsletters, discussion groups, radio chat shows, posters and word of mouth the higher the likelihood they would agree to participate and would trust me as a researcher.

I was also keenly aware of the need to access those participants that could be considered vulnerable to social isolation and who may not have contact with community based activity groups such as bingo halls or development forums. Two day-care centres located at either end of the community facilitated access to older people considered at risk of isolation. These centres were funded by the health service executive (HSE) and catered for senior citizens who were put in contact with the centres by
community based social workers. They provided older people with transport to the community based centre, a hot meal for lunch as well as activities such as bingo and, in one case, an exercise class. The managers of the centres granted me access to their clients and I held general group discussions on some of the topics of my research. I regularly attended the centres to meet with the clients and to build up a rapport with them to encourage study participation.

Previous research has found that older men are less likely to be involved in community based activities, such as bingo clubs, which have a predominantly female membership (Arber, Davidson, et al., 2003; Arber & Ginn, 1995). The experience of recruiting participants for my research supported this finding, as male participants were particularly difficult to access. My own gender may also have been a contributing factor in this, particularly as I conducted the majority of the interviews in the home of the participants. One male study participant, for example, expressed his willingness to take part in the study but was uncomfortable with the idea of me visiting his house, where he lived alone, on account of my relatively young age and because I am a woman. This issue was overcome by arranging for the participant's son to come to the house while I visited. While in this instance the problem was resolved, it was an indication of one possible explanation for the barriers to male participant recruitment that I encountered. In order to overcome my difficulty in locating older men for my study I approached the community based local Credit Union chairperson. The Credit Union was a well-established institution in this community and was highly respected among the residents, particularly among the older population in the community. The board of the Credit Union consisted of local residents and therefore it was well networked within the area. As a result, the Credit Union proved to be particularly helpful in identifying older men for my study.

3.2.2 The participants
Extensive biographical narrative data was collected from twenty participants for this study. This sample consisted of ten men and ten women
aged over 70 years and living within a particular suburb of Dublin called Ballyfermot. This suburb has been identified as economically and socially disadvantaged by government policy makers (Craig, 1995; Ireland, 2000). The average age of the participants at the time of the interviews was 78 years, the oldest participant was born in 1924 and the youngest was born in 1938. The average age at which the participants finished their schooling was 14 with the majority (n=11) finishing their education after primary level. Nine of the participants were married at the time the interviews took place (4 women and 5 men). A further 8 participants were widowed (4 women and 4 men) and one female participant was never married. Also interviewed were a Catholic brother and nun, both of whom had worked in the community and were now residing there. Two of the female participants described their primary occupation as housewife. The remaining participants worked in low or semi-skilled employment, for example factory work and office cleaning, with the exception of the Catholic nun who worked in nursing and in community development. All of the male participants worked in low or semi-skilled employment during their lives, for example road sweeping and brick-laying, with the exception of the Catholic brother who worked as a primary school teacher.

In determining the minimum cut off point for the age of the sample consideration was given to the practical issue of obtaining a sufficient sample size as well as keeping the variability within the sample to a minimum. While this study did not in any way seek to be representative, when determining the characteristics of the sample it was deemed necessary to strive for a particular cohort who shared a historical and cultural frame of reference. I wanted to avoid addressing a sample which included the 'baby boomer' generation as research indicated that they have separate cultural experiences and therefore forged a different set of values and frames of references (Alwin, McCammon, & Hofer, 2006; Biggs, 1999; Jones, Whitbourne, & Skultety, 2006; Niemela-Nyrhinen, 2007). The minimum age of the sample was fixed at 70. Therefore, while the sample included those who were relatively 'young old', somebody in their early 70's at the time participant recruitment was taking place, would have been born in the late 1930's; a period of economic and social depression in the early
years of Irish independence from British colonial rule. All of the participants, who married, did so in their mid-20's and so were living with their families in Ballyfermot by the 1950's. They were allocated either 'newly-wed housing' or family housing in the slum clearance housing policy of the 1940's and 50's.

3.2.3 The community

Previous research identified social, environmental and economic location as crucial to the development and maintenance of well-being (Cook et al., 2007). Community resources and environmental influences are therefore important variables to consider when discussing happiness and well-being in later life. Bearing this in mind, all the participants were drawn from one particular socially and economically disadvantaged Dublin community; Ballyfermot. This allowed the study to account for community context and location in an understanding of aged, gendered and social classed life experiences.

Ballyfermot is a suburb of south west Dublin, seven kilometres from the city centre. In the 1940's the first local authority housing estates were built in the area in order to facilitate the programme of slum or tenement housing clearance in the city centre. During the construction of these estates the population of the area rose from approximately 600 to 13,000. This rapid development continued into the 1950's which saw the population increase to a peak level of approximately 30,000 as well as the expansion of the area boundaries. It was during this period of rapid population expansion and housing development that most of the participants for this study first came to the area. Their stories described how amenities and services were slow to progress alongside the rapidly expanding population. The first church was built in the community in 1953 and the first community library was established in 1959. The area was serviced by one bus route which was infrequent and inadequate.

1 The Irish Free State was in existence between 1922 and 1937 when it was replaced by the entirely sovereign modern state following a referendum which replaced the constitution. Ireland was recognised internationally as an Independent Republic in 1949.
During the 1990’s the community was established as an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. In 1995 a report conducted by the Irish Combat Poverty Agency ranked the area at 10 on a ranking scale of disadvantage from 1-10 (Craig, 1995, p. 6) This report noted the community as an area of "high unemployment, low income, and is badly affected by drug misuse and crime" (Craig, 1995, p. 4). Since the 1990’s the area has received significant amounts of national and European Union funding for community development. Of particular significance was the establishment of Ballyfermot Partnership in 1996 with funding administered by POBAL under the remit of the National Development Plan (NDP). The Partnership is a local development company that advocates on behalf of the community with efforts directed at enhancing the social and economic development of the area through increased education, employment and life options for local people. Furthermore, Ballyfermot was identified as one of the ten most disadvantaged areas in Ireland and was chosen out of these 10 areas for inclusion in the Urban II community initiative of the (NDP) from 2002-2006. Significant developments are evident in the community as a result of this allocation of funding. These developments include: the establishment of a community civic centre, an equine centre, the development of a community youth programme and the opening of a new national school. Furthermore, in 2006 Ballyfermot was designated as a RAPID area and therefore benefited from increased

2 POBAL is a not for profit company with charitable status which works on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion, reconciliation and equality.

3 URBAN is the EU Community Initiative under the Structural Funds, which supports innovative regeneration programmes in disadvantaged urban areas across the community. Ireland received support from the European Union (EU) under the EU URBAN II Initiative for the period 2000-2006 and this support amounted to €5, 300,000 from the EU over this period. A further €5,300,000 of National Government funding, through the Department of Environment and Local Government, and €820,000 of Local Authority funding, through Dublin Corporation Development Department, was committed to match EU funding. In total, the URBAN II initiative was worth a minimum estimated amount of €11,420,000. For more information see http://www.ndp.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/eu_structural_funds/community/community-initiatives.htm&mn=euso&nID=6#4 (accessed 15 February 2010)

4 The Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) programme is administered by POBAL. It is a focused Government initiative to target the 51 most disadvantaged urban areas and provincial towns in the country. Ballyfermot was added on 29th June 2006. RAPID aims to: Increase the investment made by Government departments and state agencies in the 51 communities; improve delivery of services through integration and coordination; enhance the opportunities for communities to participate in the strategic improvement of their areas. For more information see
government and EU funding for programmes targeted at combating social exclusion and inequality.

While there is evidence of community progression, development workers continue to implement social inclusion initiatives and to struggle against the disadvantage evidenced by high unemployment, low educational attainment as well as prevalent drug and alcohol abuse. According to census statistics for 2006, educational attainment in Ballyfermot remained significantly lower than the state as a whole. Of those Ballyfermot residents whose full-time education had ceased in 2006, 38% finished their education at age 15 or lower, this compared with 18% of the state as a whole. In terms of labour force statistics, in 2006 12% of Ballyfermot residents aged 15 years and over were unemployed, this compared with 5% of the state population. Furthermore, 7% of Ballyfermot residents aged 15 years or over were unable to work due to disability or permanent sickness compared with 4% of the population of the state. Of those Ballyfermot residents who were in the labour force in 2006, 24% were employed in semi-skilled or unskilled work, this compared with 15% of the total labour force for the state. The population of Ballyfermot in 2006 was 20,836 this represented a decrease of 8% since 1991. The population was young, with 39% under the age of 24. This compared with 35% of the national population under the age of 24. The percentage of Ballyfermot residents over the age of 65 is similar to the national percentage at 12% and 11% respectively. Of these, 9% of Ballyfermot residents are over the age of 70 which is the sample age group for this study.

3.2.4 Ethical considerations

The Code of Professional Ethics from the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) and the guidelines issued by the Dean of Research in Trinity, Dr. David G. Lloyd, were consulted when designing the research method for this study. The project was reviewed by a university research ethics


Census data collected in 2011 was unavailable for analysis for this thesis.
committee in the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, TCD, which granted approval for the study in May 2009. The data collection and analytical method was designed so as to guarantee respect for the autonomy of the potential research participant. I did this by ensuring the provision of adequate information which would allow for independent decision-making on whether to participate in the study. The PSI and University best practice guidelines stipulate the provision of information on the implications of participation in a project and they allow for independent decision-making on whether to participate. I provided information, both in written and in oral form, concerning the research project to all potential participants before the interviews took place. This information included the aims and objectives of the project as well as the intentions of the study. The written guide outlined the suggested interview topics and questions. (Appendix A)

A consent form was provided to the participants 3-4 days prior to the first interview taking place; this ensured sufficient time for the participants to consider the implications of their participation and guaranteed independent decision-making on whether or not to participate (Appendix B). This form was signed by my supervisors and I and it guaranteed respect for the rights and autonomy of the participant. The interviewees were fully informed and assured of the voluntary nature of their participation and of their right to withdraw from the study or decline to answer any questions or topics that may arise. The consent form guaranteed participant confidentiality and informed the participants of the procedures for security, transcription, storage and disposal of their interview data. Participant anonymity was secured by using pseudonyms in attributing interview data and removing any other names or identifiable references from the transcripts. It was decided not to de-identify the community of Ballyfermot, in which the research took place, as there was deemed to be a sufficiently large population of people aged over 70 years (n=1781) so as to ensure participant anonymity. This was fully explained to the participants. In order to safeguard participant confidentiality, the data derived from the interviews is presented in this thesis and all publications ensuing using pseudonyms.
3.3 The approach to data collection:

Biographical narrative represents the most appropriate means by which to obtain the necessary data to address this study's research questions. Rosenthal (2004, pp. 49-50) noted this method is based on central theoretical assumptions which relate biographical and personal experiences to social phenomena and lead to the interpretation of the meaning of phenomena in the context of overall biography:

"Observing individual areas of life or individual phases in life in terms of the biography's entire context can take place only after the entire life story's structure or gestalt and the whole life narrative has been taken into consideration." (Rosenthal, 2004, p.50)

The model of data collection employed for this study, represented in Figure 3.1, was based on open-ended questions, listening with a minimum of interruptions and ensuring that listener questions or comments were bound to the participant's utterances by repeating their words and following their story organisation and gestalt (Bell, 1988; Riessman, 1993, 2008; Rosenthal, 2004; Wengraf, 2001). The approach incorporated two interviews with each participant, one unstructured the other semi-structured. The interviews were divided into three sub-sessions and during the intervening time between the first and second interview the participants were asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire included demographic information as well as standardised scales measuring health and well-being. The objective of the biographical narrative interview method (BNIM), as described by Wengraf (2001), is to provide a relatively coherent life story or long narration as well as a large amount of smaller, recalled stories. The eliciting of smaller recalled stories was necessary for the analytical approach adopted for this study, outlined in Section 3.4 of this chapter. Smaller recalled stories were incorporated within the longer or whole story narrated in the first sub-session. Themes were followed up in sub-session two and three (Bell, 1988; Wengraf, 2001).
3.3.1 Sub-session one

The narrative sub-session one was initiated by a single question which was designed to elicit the participant's life story as they chose to tell it (Appendix C). Wengraf referred to this single question as the SQUIN or the Single Question aimed at Inducing Narrative (Wengraf, 2001, p. 110). Both Wengraf (2001) and Rosenthal (2004) stressed the importance of not interrupting the story which follows the SQUIN. Therefore, I supported and encouraged the telling of this story through para-lingual expressions and sounds which were necessary for the maintenance of the interviewer/interviewee relationship. During this session, I made notes on the topics raised by the participants and paid attention to the specific cue words used by them as well as the sequence in which topics were raised. This was to facilitate the second sub-session and to ensure that the integrity of the story gestalt was maintained (Bell, 1988; Rosenthal, 2004; Wengraf, 2001).

3.3.2 Sub-session two

During narrative sub-session two I prompted for further explanation on the topics already raised by the interviewee during the first sub-session. The participants were encouraged to elaborate on stories which were
generated in the first phase. Stories which were implicit within the first sub-session but which were not delivered were also addressed through story generating questions (Riessman, 2008; Wengraf, 2001). The objective of this type of questioning was to obtain story explanation of the key events of the life narrative as chosen by the interviewee. It was deemed important that this second phase of the interview must be limited to internal story questions, in other words, only the topics and issues that were raised by the participant in the first sub-session were to be addressed in the second (Bell, 1988; Rosenthal, 2004; Wengraf, 2001). This maintained the narrative flow or gestalt which was determined by the narrator. Furthermore, the language or cue-words employed by the narrator, which I made note of during the first sub-session, were used in framing the open-ended questions. The questions also addressed the topics in the order in which they arose during the first narrative sub-session.

The emphasis of the first two sub-sessions of the data collection approach was to allow the concerns of the interviewee to shape the stories they produced. This was undertaken with an awareness of the process of joint narrative construction that arises from the relationship between the research participant and the researcher (Gubrium & Sankar, 1994; Patterson, 2008; Phoenix, 2008; Riessman, 1993, 2008; Squire, 2008). The concern was to allow the participant to shape their own story without the overt influence of the researcher’s agenda associated with a structured or semi-structured interview.

3.3.3 Sub-session three

The first interview, which incorporated narrative sub-sessions one and two, was followed by a period of initial data analysis. During this analysis phase, the narrative data generated in the first interview was examined in light of the central research question and the theoretical context of the research. This period of initial data analysis was followed by the second, semi-structured interview or narrative sub-session three. This sub-session included questions that were specifically targeted at addressing the central research questions. However, the second interview also allowed
for follow-up whereby the participant could address some of the issues or topics which arose in the previous interview. This second interview also proved to be very useful in establishing a strong interviewer/interviewee rapport. Any outstanding story questions which arose during the preliminary analysis of the data generated in the previous interview were also addressed in the second interview (Appendix D).

The open non-structured interview phases represented by narrative sub-sessions one and two allowed for an interviewee-centred approach to the research. The final, third sub-session provided the opportunity to gain data which was specifically targeted to the central research questions and to follow up on themes which emerged in individual interviews. The interview design for this study also used the opportunity afforded by the gap between the first and the second interview to administer a self-completed structured questionnaire. This structured questionnaire yielded concrete demographic information to supplement the interview data. It also included standardised measures of life satisfaction and well-being which complemented the interview material and were important for the data analysis process. These measures were Diener et al.’s Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) as well as a self-complete subjective assessment of health and of life satisfaction which were taken from Phase One of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing. A further function of this questionnaire was to assist in the prompting of biographical memory and to facilitate evaluation or life review (Appendix E).

3.3.4 The pilot

The research questions and topics were arrived at circuitously during the first two years of my research as I undertook a review of the literature in the relevant fields. I contemplated the issues that arose from the literature review and I discussed and tested potential research questions on friends, family, colleagues and my supervisors. Throughout this period of development I continually modified and refined my central research questions and research design. I then conducted a pilot study which allowed me to test the adequacy of the method and to practice using the research tools in a context which simulated the data collection environment for the study. The pilot study was undertaken during the summer of 2009.
recruited four pilot participants who had a similar profile to the target sample of the main study. The four participants included two women and two men aged over 70 and living within a socially and economically disadvantaged community. One of the pilot participants was recruited from Ballyfermot while the remaining three were recruited from different communities with a similar socio-economic profile. In this way the pilot study replicated the conditions of the main study as much as possible without detracting from the participant recruitment.

The experience of piloting the research method highlighted some areas in need of modification. In particular methodological problems arose with the initial approach taken to the unstructured interview which incorporated sub-sessions one and two. The first two pilot participants were a man, aged 82 and a woman aged 70. The male participant responded quite well to the opening narrative inducing question which marked the beginning of sub-session one; he began to tell his story without the need for much further prompting. The female participant, however, found this particular method quite difficult. She was uncomfortable with the lack of structure and assistance or guidance supplied by me. This discomfort was expressed through a stalling of her narrative and repeated attempts to engage me as the interviewer to elicit advice, reassurance as well as structure. In the end this led to the breakdown of the unstructured approach which was adopted for this first interview and I attempted to ask questions which would lead her through her life story. This was not planned as part of my methodological approach and therefore I was improvising as I went along. As a result the interview became very similar to the standard semi-structured interview that I was trying to avoid at this stage of the data collection.

Following this pilot interview I was quite disappointed by my inability to implement the method successfully. It was hard to speculate on why the method broke down in this particular instance. I listened to the recording of the interview in order to establish the cause for the interview breakdown however it was difficult to work out what I could have done differently. I followed the exact same procedure with the male participant and it was
successful. However, the female participant found it difficult to tell her own story as she was very concerned to make sure that she was 'doing it right'. Furthermore, she found it difficult to accept that there was anything particularly interesting in what she had to say. Feminist researchers have pointed to this phenomenon which often occurs when interviewing women and they have highlighted importance of validating and representing women's voices which are very often overlooked (Landman, 2006; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002).

I began to think about how I could adapt this first interview (sub-sessions one and two) to avoid running into the same problems again. I looked at the introductory letter which the pilot participants received from me when they were considering whether or not to take part in the study. I decided to emphasise in this letter that I was interested in anything the participant had to say about their lives (Appendix A). I then examined how I set up the sub-session one. To do this I approached a colleague who was in her mid-60's with a background in psychology. Although she was unrepresentative of my target sample in terms of her age, educational and social background, I felt that she might provide some insight into how I might improve my approach. I undertook a test interview with this colleague, in which I adapted the introductory narrative question so that it gave a little more information in the hope that it would produce a better follow-up narrative. The revised introductory question was:

As you know, I am interested in life stories and ageing. For this first interview I will ask you to tell me your story. Some people can find this a little bit daunting, but I am interested in hearing about any events or experiences that you feel were important to you. You can start your story wherever you like. I'm not going to interrupt you as I want to hear your story as you tell it. If you don't mind though, I will just jot down some notes while you are talking and then when you are finished I will ask for more information.

In the pilot interview with my colleague, this revised question was enough to allow her to begin her story comfortably and resulted in a successful sub-session one. Following this I asked her advice on how to give further assistance if it was necessary. We discussed possible scenarios where the story faltered or the participant remained uncomfortable. As a result of this discussion I decided to prepare some
further prompt questions or statements that could be used if necessary. In particular I prepared the following which could be used after the opening question if required:

You can start your story at whatever time in your life that you wish. Some people like to start with memories of their childhood others like to start at the time when they first moved to their current house or when they got married. It is entirely up to you.

I also prepared some open-ended prompt questions which aimed at easing the participant into the telling of their story. Examples of these story inducing questions included: Can you tell me some more about that time? Can you describe that event? Can you remember anything else about that time? (Appendix C)

Following this adaptation to the method I undertook a further pilot interview with one more male and one more female participant. Again the male participant had no problem with the method and did not require any prompt questions to begin his story. The last pilot interview was conducted with a woman aged 69 and living in the community in which the study was going to be located. She was ruled out of participation in the main study as the cut off for the age of the sample was 70. It was decided rather than exclude her altogether she could participate in the revised pilot study. The result was a successful sub-session one despite the fact that the participant initially stated that she would prefer me to ask her questions and that she wasn’t sure what she would talk about. However, I used my revised introductory question and followed this up with some of the prepared open-ended prompt questions and this resulted in a successful interview.

Feedback from the pilot participants was elicited regarding other elements of the data collection process. Accordingly some modifications were made to the life history questionnaire, such as clarification of some of the instructions to the participants which prevented possible confusion. Based on the feedback some changes were also made to the design of the semi-structured interview which was included in sub-session three of the research method. While sub-sessions one and two of the research design
were largely focused on the past the third sub-session generated narratives from the participants which were located in the present. The first section of the semi-structured interview established the participants' level of social engagement and activities and assessed their satisfaction with this level of interaction. Following the pilot study it was decided to include questions which would generate data relating to concepts of hedonic happiness and joy. These questions ensured that this important facet of general well-being and happiness was captured. The questions also facilitated a transition from the past oriented sub-sessions one and two to the present oriented sub-session three. Similarly, the following section, which related to community environment, was modified to ensure assessments of the present-day community.

Generativity in later life was identified by research as an indicator for happiness and well-being in later life (Bauer et al., 2008; McAdams & De St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams, De St. Aubin, & Logan, 1993). Therefore, it was decided to include a final question in sub-session three which would elicit advice from the participant to a hypothetical young person today. The implication of this was to encourage reflection on the importance of life experience and of wisdom and to tie into the concept of generativity. This also allowed for the conclusion of sub-session three, and thus the research participation, on a positive note.

The pilot study was invaluable; it provided me with the opportunity to hone my research method and to make adjustments to my research tools which ensured that the appropriate data was obtained to address my central research questions. I took advantage of the opportunity to present some of the data that I collected during the pilot study at two major international conferences which provided valuable feedback on my methodological approach (O'Donnell & McTiernan, 2009a, 2009b). I also submitted chapters based on my pilot study findings for peer review and publication in an electronic book of conference proceedings as well as an edited collection (O'Donnell & McTiernan, 2010, In Press).
3.4 Data exploration

3.4.1 Transcription

Once the data were collected for the study the next step of the research method was the transcription of the oral accounts into a text based document. All of the interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. Rough field notes were also composed following each interview. These notes provided descriptions of the context in which the interviews took place, for example, in the participant's home or the day care centre. The notes also included comments regarding the interview process which were important for data interpretation. Content from these field notes formed the basis for the introductory comments of the case studies in Chapter Four as well as the participant profiles (Appendix F). The process of data transcription for this study was influenced by the guidelines established by Riessman (2002, p. 249). Figure 3.2 illustrates the four steps by which the rough transcriptions were converted into reduced narrative stories.

**FIGURE 3.2: Four transcription steps (Riessman, 2002)**

An initial rough transcription was undertaken of the interview data which included all the words as well as any major para-lingual expressions. This rough transcription included utterances of both the participant and the
interviewer throughout the life story as well as noting long pauses, laughter, stammering and crying. In the second step of the transcription process, the rough transcriptions were inputted into NVivo 8. This qualitative data analysis programme allowed for transcriptions to be undertaken in parallel with the audio recordings. In this second step the rough transcriptions were synchronised to the audio recording. This facilitated playback with simultaneous listening to the recording and reading of the transcript. At this point of the transcription process the rough transcripts were scrutinised thoroughly in order to identify potential narrative segments or stories in the interview material. The definitional criteria for an experienced-based narrative outlined in Chapter Two were used to identify narrative stories (Squire, 2008). These criteria were based on Labov's (1972, 1997) model for narrative analysis but were broadened to account for all stories of experience which were part of the narrator's narrative of who they are. There were 505 stories in total across the 20 participants.

Following identification of the stories, I returned to the audio recordings and re-transcribed each of the stories. In this third step of the transcription process particular attention was given to the minute details including: silences, false starts, emphases, non-lexical sounds and discourse markers (y'know, so, yeah, ok) plus other signs of listener participation. These minute details were deemed necessary in order to account for the dialogic process involved in the joint narrative construction between teller and listener (Volume Three). I then exported the stories with the relevant section of the audio from NVivo 8. This facilitated level one of the data analysis, explained in Section 3.4.2 of this chapter. Finally, in the fourth step of the transcription process each of the stories were reduced to their core plot and were structured according to their story function as outlined by Labov (Bell, 1988; Labov, 1972; Mishler, 1986; Riessman, 1993, 2002, 2008). This fourth and final step of the transcription overlapped with level two of the data analysis whereby the participant's overall life narrative

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6 Due to constraints of time a professional transcriber was employed to undertake rough transcription of some of the interview data. I have worked closely with this transcriber on previous research projects and we have developed a very good and trusting working relationship. She undertook the transcription of one of the interviews for each of the participants, this ensured that I transcribed at least one interview from each participant, this was important as the rough transcriptions allowed for the first level of data analysis. A Confidentiality Agreement between me and the transcriber was signed (Appendix H).
was created by joint narrative construction (Volume Two). The procedure for the narrative reduction and functional categorising is outlined in Section 3.4.2 of this chapter.

3.4.2 Analysis

Three levels of analysis were undertaken of the transcribed interview material and the life history questionnaire. These analysis levels occurred at different stages in the transcription process. Figure 3.3 illustrates the narrative analysis model, developed for this study, which connects the transcription stages and the analytical levels.

**FIGURE 3.3: Narrative analysis model for the four stages of transcription**

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**Data analysis level one**

The first level of analysis was undertaken at stage three of the transcription process. An average of 25 stories per participant were identified (range= 16:35) yielding a total of 505 stories (Volume Three). Both the audio segment and the detailed transcription of the story were exported from NVivo 8. This facilitated the simultaneous listening and reading of the stories. This level of data analysis was concerned with isolating individual
stories from the participants' interview material in order to categorise them. Thereby a macro, across participant and gendered analysis of the re-transcribed stories (N=505) was obtained. In doing so the relationship between these constituent parts or stories and their functions with regard to psychological well-being was established. This involved obtaining numerical data from the stories through categorical coding in order to make observations about the overall life narrative of each participant. This procedure enabled statistical comparisons to be drawn between the male and female participants. Furthermore, it facilitated statistical inferences concerning the connection between the narratives and the standardised measures of life satisfaction and health contained in the questionnaire (Chapter Four, Section 4.2.3).

The analysis procedure for level one involved simultaneous listening and reading of each of the stories (N=505) and coding each story according to three narrative categories (McAdams et al., 2006). A model which illustrates these categories and their relationship to elements of personality as well as aspects of ego development is presented in Figure 3.4.

**FIGURE 3.4: The three narrative categories for analysis (McAdams et al., 2006)**
The criteria for assessing each of the three narrative categories as well as the coding scheme were adopted from the study by McAdams et al. (2006) which assessed temporal continuity and developmental change in the life story over time. The coding criteria and scoring system for the categories of narrative complexity and emotional tone were replicated in this study (Appendix G). In relation to the motivational themes however, the scoring system was modified slightly for the purpose of simplifying the coding. The scoring for personal growth on a scale of 0 to 2 was replicated from the McAdams et al.'s (2006) study. However, for the purposes of this research, a scoring scale from 0 to 2 was also implemented for the two other motivational themes; agency and communion (Appendix G).

The coding was undertaken by me as well as an independent coder. This coder was given access to the 505 stories and audio extracts as well as coding criteria to explain the categories and the procedure for coding. Spearman correlation coefficients were obtained for the two sets of coding (Table 3A1, Appendix I). There were positive correlations between the two sets of scores for each of the five categories at a significance alpha level of p<.01. The strong significant positive correlation between the two coders indicated that there was a common interpretation of the stories in terms of their relative position in the coding framework. However, while there was significant correlation there were also significant differences in the mean scores between the coders. An independent-samples T-Test was undertaken to determine the significance of the difference between the coder means for each narrative category (Table 3A2, Appendix I). The test statistics and associated probability values indicated that there was a significant difference between the category means of each coder's data set (p<.01). Therefore, the two sets of codes were varying around significantly different means in each of the categories.

The significant difference between the mean scores of each of the coders highlighted the subjective bias in the coding. Establishing inter-coder reliability and objectivity for the categorical coding was not applicable to this

7 A Confidentiality Agreement between myself and the independent coder was signed (Appendix H)
non-positivist hermeneutic research design. However, the purpose of the double coding was to enhance the internal reliability of the research design by accounting for two subjective interpretations of the stories in terms of the categories which were capturing an aspect of eudaimonic well-being. In this way, a single set of scores for the stories on each of the measures was obtained by averaging the scores attributed by the two coders. The combined data set was then used to find an average score for the 20 participants for each of the five narrative categories. This was undertaken by grouping the stories according to participant and then obtaining an average score across the five categories (Table 3A3, Appendix I).

Exploratory tests of normality for the participants' average scores were then undertaken. These tests indicated that the participant average scores were normally distributed for each of the categorical codes, with the exception of narrative complexity (Table 3A4, Appendix I). The participants' average scores for each of the narrative categories facilitated comparisons and correlations with the self-report measures of health and life satisfaction contained in the questionnaire:

- Diener et al.'s (1985) Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) which yields a hypothetical maximum score of 35.

- A self-report measure of health, taken from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, which yielded a potential maximum score of 5.

- A further life satisfaction measure which was based on a Likert scale measuring responses to seven statements adopted from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing. Herein this scale is referred to as the Life Satisfaction Index (LSI). This measure yielded a potential maximum score of 28.

Exploratory tests of normality for the participant's scores in the SWLS and the LSI were undertaken (Table 3A5, Appendix I). These tests revealed that the participants were not normally distributed for the SWLS scale but were for the LSI.

**Data analysis level two:**

The second level of analysis occurred at stage four of the transcription process (see Figure 3.3). This investigation was concerned
with analysis of the discursive practice which was occurring in the reduced stories of each participant's life narrative. The first step of this analytical level involved reading and listening to all of the stories contained within each participant's interview material in the order in which they emerged in the first and second sub-sessions of the data collection. These sub-sessions were designed in such a way as to elicit the participant's life stories as they chose to tell them. As a result, the narrative data arising from these sub-sessions were structured by the participants according to themes and life events which they deemed relevant to their story of self. During this first step of the analysis the particular themes and life events used by each participant to structure their narratives were identified. Examples of these themes include: 'reflections on childhood', 'arriving to Ballyfermot', 'marriage and family', 'reflections on ageing', 'death of a family member'.

The second step of this analytical level involved selecting a subset of stories from the total set of each participant's story data. This subset was representative of each of the themes or events identified from the data obtained during sub-sessions one and two of the data collection. The next step of this analytical level was to organise the subset of stories selected for each participant according to the thematic ordering and gestalt of narrative sub-sessions one and two. Therefore, I was guided by the voice of the participant and their narrative flow or gestalt when I structured the subset of the participants' stories into an overall life narrative. The resulting life narratives for each participant were composed of a selected subset of stories structured according to the thematic ordering and flow of sub-sessions one and two of the data collection. This narrative structure was the result of joint narrative construction between researcher and participant (Volume Two).

The fourth step of data analysis level two involved simultaneous listening to the audio and reading of the transcript of the selected subset of stories again. During this reading/listening particular attention was given to the rhythm of the participant's voice in order to parse the utterances into clauses. The beginning and ending of clauses were marked by pauses,
falling and rising intonation and breaks. Once the clauses were identified
the lines were numbered and the parts of the story were separated by their
function using Labov's method for structural narrative (Labov, 1972;
Patterson, 2008, pp. 24-27; Riessman, 2008, pp. 77-105). These story
functions are:

- **Abstract;** provides a summary or the point of the story
- **Orientation;** provides information on time, place, character,
situation
- **Complicating Action;** relates the events of the story, the plot
crisis or turning point
- **Evaluation;** the narrator steps back from the action to
comment on meaning and communicate emotion
- **Resolution;** provides the outcome of the event, plot or
complicating action.
- **Coda;** provides the ending of the story, the narrator returns to
the present and/or rounds off the story indicating its end.

During the process of structuring the story by function I also removed
parts of the discourse which deviated from the core plot, for example,
lengthy asides, digressions, description and interactions between teller and
listener. Other features were preserved such as pauses, laughter, emotion
in voice and some sound effects. This facilitated a focus on not only what
was said but also how it was said while also concentrating on the core plot
of the story. Following the reduction and structuring of the story I noted
features of dramatized speech as outlined by Riessman (2008, pp. 105-
141). These features included:

- **Direct speech** which either reported or reconstructed the
  narrator's or a story character's speech;
- **Asides** whereby the narrator stepped out of the action to
  engage directly with me;
- **Repetition** which marked key moments and created emphasis
  in the story;
• Expressive sounds and sound effects which indicated turning points in the story, created emphasis or indicated interpretation and crisis resolution;

• Verb tense use in particular alternating between past tense, conditional past and present tense thereby creating a feeling of immediacy or a weakened/increased sense of agency.

For the purposes of transparency and replicability stages three and four from the transcription process (see Figure 3.2) are made apparent in the following example taken from the interviews with Eric. The steps are manifested in three different examples which convey how the re-transcribed story (Volume Three) which was the product of step three of the transcription process was reduced to the core plot as a result of step four (Volume Two). The story was entitled 'We learnt to explain our case' and it arose in sub-session one of the interview with Eric.
We learnt to explain our case

Some of us then found problems when our children got older, there was no secondary schools in the area so we'd to find secondary schools, like, my own daughters were going to the Dominican Convent but by the time they were 12 you either had to go on to 14, to fulfil the obligation of 14 years of age, actually doing nothing so in our case I had to go down to Goldenbridge, I explained the case to the Sister in charge there and got in as did others afterwards, we learnt how to explain our case and we went to... they went to Goldenbridge and went on to do their secondary education and got their Junior Certs and Leaving Certs at that time and em... so be it, they were a little better prepared for the world than we were.

Mmm

So, in time they got married and set up their own houses. Ballyfermot itself has changed dramatically, when we got a bite of the apple we found then that we could have muscle and we had the power within ourselves to change things by making the politicians sit up and take notice and those who were in charge. Another thing we done then was to come up with the idea of buying the houses, we were paying at that time a differential rent, a differential meant that one quarter of your wages, no matter what it was, Labour Exchange, any money that came into the house, any money, if your daughter was married... working or son was working and they were contributing to the family budget one quarter of their wages went to the rent and payment of the house so it became a very expensive house, you were paying a lot of money because everybody was involved, you wouldn't duck it because you had to get certificates every year to prove what money came into the house and if they found... you could be evicted and unfortunately at that time the law, as it stood then, the Justice had no option at the time but to evict you, that's the way the law was written, the Housing for the Working Class Acts. So we decided we'd look at the possibility of buying our houses and again, as luck would have it, another election was coming up and we made a deal with the opposition crowd and it must be said that the ruling party on both occasions was Fianna Fáil ...

Hmm.

... and they would have nothing to do with us, they didn't want to have anything to do with... because a lot of the houses at that time were used as an electioneering stunt or people thought that the only way you could get a house was through your TD even though you had a right under law to get a house depending on your circumstances but they issue them out like as a "Vote for me and I'll get you a house".

Mmm.

So we made a deal with the opposition parties and we won the situation and in 1973 all Corporation houses, not only in Ballyfermot but nationally, were sold to the tenants...
We learnt to explain our case

1. Some of us then found problems when our children got older,
2. there was no secondary schools in the area
3. like, my own daughters were going to the Dominican Convent
4. but by the time they were 12 you either had to go on to 14, to fulfil the obligation of 14 years of age,
5. actually doing nothing
6. so in our case I had to go down to Goldenbridge,
7. I explained the case to the Sister in charge there and got in
8. as did others afterwards, we learnt how to explain our case
9. and went on to do their secondary education and got their Junior Certs and Leaving Certs at that time
10. they were a little better prepared for the world than we were.
11. So, in time they got married and set up their own houses.
12. Ballyfermot itself has changed dramatically,
13. when we got a bite of the apple we found then that we could have muscle
14. and we had the power within ourselves to change things
15. by making the politicians sit up and take notice and those who were in charge.
16. Another thing we done then was to come up with the idea of buying the houses,
17. we were paying at that time a differential rent,
18. a differential meant that one quarter of your wages, no matter what it was,
19. Labour Exchange, any money that came into the house, any money,
20. one quarter of their wages went to the rent and payment of the house
21. so it became a very expensive house, you were paying a lot of money
22. because everybody was involved, you wouldn't duck it
23. because you had to get certificates every year to prove what money came into the house
24. and if they found... you could be evicted
25. the Justice had no option at the time but to evict you,
26. that's the way the law was written, the Housing for the Working Class Acts.
27. So we decided we'd look at the possibility of buying our houses
28. and again, as luck would have it,
29. another election was coming up and we made a deal with the opposition crowd
30. and it must be said that the ruling party on both occasions was Fianna Fáil...
31. they didn't want to have anything to do with... because
32. a lot of the houses at that time were used as an electioneering stunt or
33. people thought that the only way you could get a house was through your TD
34. even though you had a right under law to get a house
35. depending on your circumstances
36. but they issue them out like as a "Vote for me and I'll get you a house".
37. So we made a deal with the opposition parties and we won the situation
38. and in 1973 all Corporation houses, not only in Ballyfermot but nationally,
39. were sold to the tenants...

Example 3: The story is reduced to its core plot. This story is included in Volume Two as a constituent part of Eric's narrative.

We learnt to explain our case
1. Some of us then found problems when our children got older, AB
2. there was no secondary schools in the area
3. so in our case I had to go down to Goldenbridge,
4. I explained the case to the Sister in charge there and got in
5. as did others afterwards, we learnt how to explain our case
6. they were a little better prepared for the world than we were.
7. when we got a bite of the apple we found then that we could have muscle
8. and we had the power within ourselves to change things OR
9. by making the politicians sit up and take notice and those who were in charge.
10. we were paying at that time a differential rent,
11. one quarter of their wages went to the rent and payment of the house
12. so it became a very expensive house, you were paying a lot of money
13. because you had to get certificates every year to prove what money came into the house
14. and if they found... you could be evicted
15. So we decided we’d look at the possibility of buying our houses CA
16. another election was coming up and we made a deal with the opposition crowd
17. they didn’t want to have anything to do with... because E
18. a lot of the houses at that time were used as an electioneering stunt or
19. people thought that the only way you could get a house was through your TD
20. even though you had a right under law to get a house
21. depending on your circumstances
22. but they issue them out like as a “Vote for me and I’ll get you a house”.
23. So we made a deal with the opposition parties and we won the situation R
24. and in 1973 all Corporation houses, not only in Ballyfermot but nationally,
25. were sold to the tenants... Coda
Data analysis level three:

The third level of data analysis involved establishing a discursive thread which linked the stories of the individual narratives into participant case studies. The case studies (Chapter Four) employed the constituent stories of each narrative to illustrate expressions of ego development and self-actualising. This was achieved through interpretation of the stories in order to highlight the micro context in which individual identity claims were being made. An investigation of tone, complexity, meaning as well as motivation was undertaken in order to reveal the discursive mechanisms and resources employed by the participants to create their stories and build their narrative. These case studies should be read side-by-side with the participant narratives in Volume Two.

The presentation of case studies (Chapter Four) facilitated an examination of the discursive practice by which stories are created and become constituent parts of a narrative whole. In order to step back from the micro within-participant perspective of the case-study approach I undertook a discussion (Chapter Five) of the discursive contexts of the narratives in an examination of discourse-in-practice (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). This allowed for an investigation of the expression of self-actualising and ego development within the institutionally, culturally and socially available discursive resources. This level of analysis gave a cross participant perspective which identified the emerging factors related to eudaimonic well-being. I established the discursive practices and cultural or social resources which the participants utilised to make claims for their identities. These practices and resources ultimately revealed the socially embedded narrative tools utilised by these participants for the realisation of eudaimonic happiness and later life well-being.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a description of the procedural stages by which the appropriate participant sample and narrative data was obtained to address the research objectives. Furthermore a detailed account of the
interconnecting strands of the analytical method was provided. This
dynamic research design was grounded in the voice and experiential
knowledge of the research participant through close attention to the audio
recordings from the interviews as well as detailed transcriptions. The
interconnection between the core pillars of data exploration; transcription
and analysis, ensured that voice of the participant informed every stage of
the analysis. This dynamic method was reconciled to the epistemological
position outlined in Chapter Two by acknowledging the role of the
researcher in the joint dialogic process of life narrative construction. This
was particularly evident in the attention paid to the context of narrative
production as well as the selection and structuring of experience-based
stories for the participant life narratives.

The method produced three different data sets: Participant scores for
two life satisfaction measures and a subjective health measure. Participant
average scores for three narrative indices; emotional tone, narrative
complexity and motivational theme, which accounted for every identified
experienced-based narrative produced during the three interview sub-
sessions (Volume Three). Finally, life narratives were constructed for each
participant from their selected and reduced stories. These stories were
organised into life narratives according to the narrative flow or gestalt of the
participants' first unstructured sub-session (Volume Two). These life
narratives provided the material by which participant case studies were
constructed and presented in Chapter Four. The output of this research
design was data which was story-centred and which privileged the voice of
the participant through attention to the audio recordings, the narrative
gestalt and the discursive resources they employed in a *storying* of self.
Chapter Four

Narrative exploration of eudaimonic happiness and well-being: Presenting the study findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings from an exploration of the biographical narrative data, collected from the twenty research participants, are presented. To begin, an overview of the participant information is outlined which is based on the responses to items in the Life History Questionnaire (Appendix E). This overview includes demographic information as well as the participants’ scores for each of the life satisfaction measures and the subjective health measure. Particular attention is paid to gender as a comparative variable for the well-being measures. Descriptive and comparative statistics are also provided for the narrative indices, as per data analysis level one (Chapter Three, Section 3.4.2a). This level of data analysis isolated individual stories from the participants’ interview material in order to categorise them according to three narrative indices (McAdams et al., 2006). The scores for the indices were obtained by combining the results of two independent coders (Chapter Three, Section 3.4.2a). The indices’ scores were then compared to the life satisfaction and health scores in order to obtain an across participant perspective which established the relationship between the participants’ stories and their well-being.

The next level of data analysis involved creating case studies for each participant which examined the discursive practice contained within the selected and reduced constituent stories of the participants’ life narratives (Chapter Three, Section 3.4.2c). The twenty case studies are presented, in Section 4.3 of this chapter, according to gender and should be read in parallel with the participants’ narratives contained in Volume 2. The case studies began with a presentation of the demographic information and individual scores on the well-being measures and narrative indices.
Furthermore, the context in which the interviews took place, as well as my impressions of the interviews based on my rough field notes, were described in acknowledgement of the process of joint discursive narrative construction between participant and researcher (Riessman, 2002). Each participant's narrative was then interpreted through a story-centred approach which highlighted the micro context in which individual identity claims were being made. Particular attention was paid to the discursive resources employed by the participants to create their stories and build their narratives.

4.2 Participant overview

4.2.1 Demographics

The sample for this study consisted of ten men and ten women with an average age at the time of the interviews of 79 years (SD=3.86, mode=78, range: 72, 86). The average age of the female participants at the time of the interviews was 78 (SD=3.28) and for the male participants was 80 (SD=4.36). The oldest participant was born in 1924 and the youngest in 1938. A total of 11 participants (55%) grew up in Dublin city centre, two (10%) of them grew up in Ballyfermot. On average the participants had six siblings (SD=4.46, range: 0, 22) and the average age at which the participants came to Ballyfermot was 30 (SD=14.02, mode=23, range:12, 66). The majority (65%) of the participants finished their schooling after completion of primary level education. The mean age of finishing school among the participants was 14 (SD=1.28). The female participants had slightly more years of education (M=14.50, SD=1.65) compared with the male participants (M=13.67, SD=.50).^8

A total of 17 participants were married during their lives; 9 (45%) were still married at the time of the interviews and 8 (40%) were widowed. There was one participant who never married and a further two participants were members of the Catholic Clergy (a nun and a Christian Brother).^9 Among those that did marry, the average age at which they married was 23

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^8 Figure 4A1 in Appendix I illustrates the cross-tabulation of gender and educational attainment.

^9 Figure 4A2 in Appendix I illustrates the cross-tabulation of gender and marital status
(SD=3.93, range: 16, 30). Among the female participants the average age at which they married was 21 (SD=4.06, range: 16, 28) this was slightly lower than the male participants who married on average at 26 (SD=2.56, range: 23, 30). A total of 16 participants (80%) had children (nine men and seven women). The average number of children which the female participants had was 6 (SD=1.72, range: 4, 9). The male participants also had an average of 6 children (SD=1.81, range: 3, 8).

All of the male participants described themselves as having "continued working full time or seeking full time paid work until now or until retirement". Among the female participants, three described themselves as having "not undertaken paid work in the last 30 years". The remaining seven participants described themselves as having engaged in some paid employment throughout their lives. Among those women that did undertake paid work, (N=7) the average age at which they retired was 62 (SD=10.49, range: 40, 76). Among the male participants, the average age at which they retired from full time work was also 62 (SD=3.03, range: 57, 66). All of the participants were in receipt of a state pension either contributory or non-contributory. Two male participants also claimed a private pension.

4.2.2 Health and life satisfaction measures

The non-representative and limited sample size obtained for this study through purposive sampling (N=20) meant that the inherent assumptions of parametric tests (normal distribution and homogeneity of

10 Table 4A1 in Appendix I shows the cross-tabulation of gender and employment status.

11 The State Pension (Contributory) is paid to people from the age of 66 who have enough Irish social insurance contributions paid during their employment. It is not means-tested. This pension is taxable but an individual is unlikely to pay tax if it is their only income. The State Pension (Contributory) has a maximum rate of €230.30 payable to people who have an average of 48 or more contributions.

The State Pension (Non-Contributory) may be paid from age 66 to people in Ireland who do not qualify for a State Pension (Contributory) on the grounds of inadequate social insurance contributions. This is particularly relevant for women who did not undertake formal paid employment during their married life while rearing children. The State Pension (Non-Contributory) is means-tested. The first €30 per week of means as assessed by the Department of Social Protection does not affect the rate of pension. After that, the pension is reduced by €2.50 each week for every €2.50 of means. The State Pension (Non-Contributory) has a maximum personal rate of €219 per week.
variance) could not be substantiated. Therefore it was decided to use non-parametric analysis of the measures of well-being, health and life satisfaction in this study.

A Spearman's correlation of participant scores for the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and the Life Satisfaction Index (LSI) found that they were significantly positively correlated ($r_s=.586, R^2=.301, p < .01$). This provided a positive indication that both of the scales were measuring a similar aspect of well-being, namely life satisfaction. However, they were capturing a different aspect of life satisfaction and therefore complemented rather than substituted for each other. Figure 4.1 below illustrates a bi-variant scatterplot of the scores for each of the measures with a fitted correlation line.

**FIGURE 4.1: Bi-variant scatter-plot of SWLS scores and LSI scores with fitted correlation line.**

![Bi-variant scatter-plot of SWLS scores and LSI scores with fitted correlation line.](image)

The mean score among the participants for the SWLS was 27.40 ($SD=7.16$, range: 12, 35). The potential maximum score for this scale was 35. The participants' mean score for the LSI was 21.55 ($SD=3.34$, range: 16, 28). The hypothetical maximum score for this index was 28. The male participants scored slightly higher than the female participants on the SWLS and the LSI. However, a Mann-Whitney $U$ Test indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean ranks for each of the measures of life satisfaction according to gender at a critical alpha level of
.05. Table 4.1 provides the descriptive statistics for each of the measures distributed by gender.

**TABLE 4.1: Descriptive statistics for central tendency and variation in the SWLS and the LSI scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SWLS (Men)</th>
<th>SWLS (Women)</th>
<th>LSI (Men)</th>
<th>LSI (Women)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>27.40</td>
<td>26.30</td>
<td>21.55</td>
<td>22.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>30/31/33*</td>
<td>31/35*</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>12:35</td>
<td>14:33</td>
<td>16:28</td>
<td>16:28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the purpose of examining the effect of marital status on the life satisfaction measures the participants were divided into a married and not-married group. The not married group included widows (n=8), those that were never married (n=1) as well as the two members of the Catholic clergy. Those in the not-married group scored slightly higher on both of the life satisfaction scales than those that were married. A Mann-Whitney U test of significant difference between the mean ranks according to marital status indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores at a critical alpha level of .05. Due to the limited sample size for this study it was not possible to isolate for comparison those that had experienced marriage in their lives, those that were never married and those that were currently married. The categorisation of widows and widowers into the group ‘not married’ may have confounded the insignificant relationship between this group and the married group.

The participants were asked to rate their current health in general at the time of the interviews according to a five point Likert scale with a maximum score of 5 and a minimum of 1. The average score across the participants for this measure was 3.75 (SD=.72, range: 3:5) whereby 45% (n=9) of the participants rated their health in general as good, 40% (n=8) rated it as fair and 15% (n=3) rated it as very good. The mean score for the subjective health measure among the female participants was 3.50 (SD=.53) and among the male participants was 4 (SD=.82). The Mann-

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12 Table 4B2 in Appendix I shows the distribution of mean scores for the SWLS and the LSI according to marital status
Whitney U test for significant difference between the mean ranks indicated there was no statistically significant difference at a critical alpha level of .05. Objective measures of health were not undertaken for this study and therefore the validity and internal reliability the subjective self-assessment measure could not be ascertained.

A total of 50% \((n=10)\) of the participants indicated that they did have a long standing illness, disability or infirmity and that this illness disability or infirmity affected their daily activities. Of those 10 participants that indicated they had a long standing illness, disability or infirmity which affected their daily activities, 50% \((n=5)\) were male and 50% \((n=5)\) were female. Of this group of participants who indicated they had a long standing illness, 70% \((n = 7)\) rated their health as fair.

Marital status does not appear to have affected the participants' mean score on the subjective health measure. The mean score for the married participants on the subjective health measure was 3.67 \((SD=.71)\) compared with a mean score of 3.82 \((SD=.75)\) for the not-married group. The Mann-Whitney test of significant difference between the mean ranks indicated there was no statistically significant difference between those participants who were married and those who were not in terms of subjective health at a critical alpha level of .05. Again, interpretation of this statistics must be tempered with the recognition of potential confounding issues inherent in the categorisation of 'not married' as including those who were widowed \((n=8)\).

There was positive correlation between the mean score for the SWLS and the participants' self-reported health status \(r_s=.59, p<.01\). Similar positive correlation was found between the mean score for the LSI and the participants' self-reported health status \(r_s=.48, p<.05\). Table 4.2 shows the distribution of mean scores for the life satisfaction measures according to subjective health status.

**TABLE 4.2: Distribution of mean scores for the SWLS and the LSI according to subjective health status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Status</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>SWLS Mean</th>
<th>SWLS SD</th>
<th>LSI Mean</th>
<th>LSI SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.67</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>23.33</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31.22</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>22.67</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.88</td>
<td>7.85</td>
<td>19.63</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Kruskal-Wallis Test of significant difference between the ranked means for both the SWLS and the LSI according to subjective health status was undertaken. The associated probability value for the comparison of means scores for the SWLS according to subjective health status indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between these groups ($H (2) = 9.50, p < .01$). However there was no corresponding statistically significant difference found for the mean rank scores for the LSI according to subjective health status.

Mann-Whitney tests were carried out on the SWLS scores between the subjective health status groups in order to identify which health status groups were statistically significantly different from each other. The SWLS scores for those participants who identified their health as being fair were statistically significantly different than the SWLS scores of those participants who identified their health as being very good ($U=1, p < .05$) and those participants who identified their health as being good ($U=8, p < .01$). The SWLS scores for those participants who identified their health as being good and very good were not found to be statistically significantly different.

### 4.2.3 Categorical narrative coding

The first level of analysis of the narrative data occurred at stage three of the transcription process and it involved isolating individual stories from the participants' interview material in order to categorise them (Chapter Three, Section 3.4.2). An average of 25 stories per participant (range: 16, 35) were identified from the rough transcriptions of the interview recordings. The analysis procedure involved simultaneous listening and reading of each of the stories ($N=505$) and coding each story according to three narrative indices (McAdams et al., 2006). The three narrative indices were:

- Emotional tone – refers to the overall feeling of the story and a judgement as to whether it is a happy or sad story.

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13 Table 4B8 in Appendix I shows the outputs for the Mann-Whitney U tests of significant difference between the SWLS scores according to health status.
• Narrative complexity – refers to recognition that the world is not black and white and there is acceptance of the grey in life often through an expression of compassion or wisdom.

• Motivational theme:
  o Agency – is present in a story if the narrator is attempting to promote a sense of power, mastery, status achievement or responsibility.
  o Communion – is present in a story if the narrator is attempting to promote a sense of love, friendship, dialogue, caring, togetherness or unity.
  o Personal growth – is present in a story if the narrator conveys a sense of having learnt a new lesson about life, obtained a deeper self-understanding, reached a higher level of development or discovered something new about themself.

The criteria for assessing each of the three narrative indices as well as the coding scheme were adapted from the study by McAdams, Bauer, Sakaeda, Anyidoho, Machado, Magrino-Faila, White & Pals (2006) which assessed temporal continuity and developmental change in the life story over time (Appendix G). Parallel coding was undertaken by an independent coder in order to arrive at a combined data set. An overall score per participant for emotional tone and narrative complexity as well as the three sub-categories of motivational theme was obtained by averaging the scores attributed to each of their stories by myself and the independent coder.

The participants were given a score out of 5 for the emotional tone in their stories which ranged from a score of 1 for very unhappy and a score of 5 for very happy. The participants' overall mean score for emotional tone in their narratives was 3.31 (SD=.46, range: 2.15, 4.03). The motivational index of the participants' stories was assessed under three different themes: Agency, communion and personal growth whereby a score of 2 indicated a strong presence of the motivational theme, 1 a vague presence and 0 no presence at all. The participants' stories obtained the highest average score for the motivational theme of communion ($M=1.21$, $SD=.21$, range: .88, 1.63). The next highest average score was for the motivational
theme of personal growth \((M=.92, SD=.21, \text{range: .53, 1.31})\) followed by agency \((M=.84, SD=.28, \text{range: .12, 1.34})\). The participants' narrative complexity in their stories was also assessed. A score of 1 indicated the presence of narrative complexity and a score of 0 indicated no presence. The overall mean score for narrative complexity for the participants' stories was 0.57 \((SD=.12, \text{range: .26, .70})\). Table 4.3 shows the distribution of the participants' scores for each of the narrative indices as well as the health and life satisfaction measures.

**TABLE 4.3: Participants' scores for the life satisfaction measures, the subjective health measure and the three narrative indices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (pseud)</th>
<th>Subjective Health</th>
<th>Life Satisfaction</th>
<th>ET*</th>
<th>NC**</th>
<th>Motivational Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SWLS</td>
<td>LSI</td>
<td></td>
<td>A(^a)</td>
<td>C(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aoife</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillian</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitty</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mabel</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Una</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mat</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Average</td>
<td>Good (mode)</td>
<td>27.40</td>
<td>21.55</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Emotional Tone \(^b\) Narrative Complexity
\(^c\) = Agency, \(^b\) = Communion, \(^c\) = Personal Growth

Independent samples T-tests\(^14\) were carried out to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the participants' mean scores in each of the narrative categories by gender. Insignificant

\(^14\) Parametric tests were used for the scores for the narrative indices as they were found to be statistically significantly normally distributed, for further discussion see Chapter Three.
differences between the mean scores for the male participants and female participants were found for all three indices. However, the difference between the mean scores for emotional tone for the male participants ($M=3.48$, $SD=.37$) and the female participants ($M=3.13$, $SD=.50$) was approaching the level of significance ($p=0.08$). Similarly the test for significant difference between mean scores for the motivational theme of agency for the male participants ($M=1.0$, $SD=.23$) and the female participants ($M=.73$, $SD=.29$) was also approaching significance ($p=0.07$). Independent samples T-tests were carried out on the participants' mean scores in each of the narrative categories according to whether they were married or not married. There were no significant differences found between the mean scores for married participants and not married participants for the three narrative indices. Again, when interpreting this statistic it is important to acknowledge the potential confounding issues inherent in the categorisation of the not-married group.

Tests of Pearson's correlation were undertaken between the five categories. Significant correlations were found between the participants' scores for emotional tone in their stories and the motivational theme of agency ($R=.71$, $p<.01$). Furthermore, significant correlations were also found between the motivational theme of communion with narrative complexity ($R=.51$, $p<.05$) as well as the motivation theme of personal growth and narrative complexity ($R=.49$, $p<.05$). Tests of Spearman's correlation were undertaken between the participants' scores for each of the three narrative indices and the SWLS and LSI. Significant correlation was found between the scores for the emotional tone in the participants' stories and their scores on the SWLS ($r_s=.48$, $p<.05$) and the LSI ($r_s=.71$, $p<.01$). Furthermore, significant correlation was also found between the scores for the motivational theme of agency and the LSI ($r_s=.72$, $p<.01$). An analysis of variance was carried out to determine if there was a difference between the mean scores for the participants' stories on each of the narrative indices.
No statistically significant difference between the means was found.

**TABLE 4.4: Distribution of participants' scores relative to the sample mean (M) for the life satisfaction indices, the subjective health measure and the three narrative indices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (pseud)</th>
<th>Subjective Health</th>
<th>Life Satisfaction</th>
<th>ET**</th>
<th>NC***</th>
<th>Motivational Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SWLS</td>
<td>LSI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aoife</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>=M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillian</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>=M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitty</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mabel</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>=M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Una</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>=M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>=M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>=M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mat</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&lt;M</td>
<td>=M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>&gt;M</td>
<td>=M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Differences in relational scoring observed at 2 decimals
** Emotional Tone *** Narrative Complexity
A= Agency, C= Communion, PG= Personal Growth

Table 4.4 shows the distribution of the participants' score for each of the well-being measures, the subjective health measure and the three narrative indices relative to the sample mean. The three themes of the motivational index are ranked according to the highest and lowest scoring theme.

The participants' scores for each of the well-being measures, relative to the sample mean, facilitated a rudimentary categorisation of the participants into high and low well-being. This rather crude categorisation

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17 Table 4C5 in Appendix I shows the distribution of means according to subjective health status as well as the F statistic and associated significance value
was useful for further interrogation of data variables. Furthermore, it provided a structuring strategy for the presentation of the case studies which enabled deeper exploration of the concept of eudaimonic well-being. On the basis of their scores, relative to the sample mean for each of the well-being measures and the measure of emotional tone in their stories, the participants were grouped into two categories of 'high well-being' and 'low well-being'. All three of these measures were found to be statistically significantly positively correlated. Therefore, those who scored above the sample mean for each of the three measures were categorised as having 'high well-being' and those who scored below the sample mean were categorised as having 'low well-being'. Where there were conflicting scores for the two life satisfaction measures (i.e. Una, Alex and Eric) the relative score for emotional tone was employed in order to determine categorisation.

As a result of the well-being categorisation, Aoife, Bridget, Gillian, Kitty, Una and Jessica were categorised as having low well-being, whereas the remaining four female participants were categorised as having high well-being. Among the male participants, Luke and Jack were categorised as having low well-being, whereas the remaining eight male participants were categorised as having high well-being. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between gender and well-being categorisation. The relation between these variables was insignificant, however it was approaching significance ($p=0.7$). It is important to acknowledge at this stage the potential confounding factors which are likely to have influenced the relationship between gender and well-being in this sample of participants. The description of the sample recruitment process in Section 3.2.1 outlined the difficulties which were encountered in trying to recruit male participants and particularly those male participants who were socially isolated and therefore more at risk of low well-being. For example, four of the female participants were recruited from community-based day centres which provide care services to older people considered at risk and living with a community. By comparison only one male participant was recruited from a day care centre. Of further note, was five of the male participants were married compared with four of the female participants.
Subjective self-rated health may also have played a confounding role in the relationship between gender and well-being categorisation. Table 4.5 shows the distribution of mean scores for self-rated health, narrative complexity and motivational theme among the male and female participants according to their well-being category.

**TABLE 4.5: Distribution of mean scores for self-rated health, narrative complexity and motivation theme according to gender and well-being categorisation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Well-being</th>
<th>Subjective Health</th>
<th>Narrative Complexity</th>
<th>Motivational Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>High (n=4)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low (n=6)</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>High (n=8)</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low (n=2)</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A = Agency, C = Communion, PG = Personal Growth

A Mann Whitney test confirmed that among the female participants, the mean score for the subjective health measure was statistically significantly higher for those categorised as having high well-being ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.00$) compared with those categorised as having low well-being ($M=3.17$, $SD=0.41$) $U=2$, $p<0.01$. Among the male participants insignificant differences were found between the mean rank subjective health scores according to well-being category, however only two male participants were categorised as having low well-being, thereby decreasing the power of the test to detect significance.

The mean scores for narrative complexity in their stories was higher for the female participants who were categorised as having low well-being ($M=.61$, $SD=.10$) compared with those female participants who were categorised as having high well-being ($M=.49$, $SD=.08$). An independent samples t-test found the difference to be statistically insignificant, however it was approaching significance ($p=.08$). Among, the male participants it was the reverse, whereby those who were categorised as having high well-being obtained a higher mean score for narrative complexity ($M=.60$, $SD=.14$) compared with those who were categorised as having low well-being ($M=.50$, $SD=.00$). However, an independent samples t-test found the difference to be statistically insignificant.
A comparison of the mean scores for each of the motivational themes in the participants' narratives according to gender and well-being category was undertaken. The female participants categorised as having high well-being obtained a higher mean score for agency ($M=.95$, $SD=.21$) than those categorised as having low well-being ($M=.59$, $SD=.26$), $t(8)=2.36$, $p<0.05$. Statistically insignificant differences between the two groups of women were found for the mean scores for the motivational themes of communion and personal growth. The male participants categorised as having high well-being obtained a higher mean score for personal growth ($M=1.03$, $SD=.21$) than those categorised as having low well-being ($M=.58$, $SD=.07$), $t(8)=2.92$, $p<0.05$. Statistically insignificant differences between the two groups of men were found for the mean scores for the motivational themes of communion and agency.

In order to compare the men and women within well-being categories, the scores for self-rated health and the three narrative indices were subjected to a two-way ANOVA having two levels of well-being categorisation (high, low) and two conditions of gender. The effect of well-being category and gender on the motivational theme of personal growth was statistically significant yielding an F-ratio of $F(1,6)= 6.07$, $p<.05$, indicating that the mean score for personal growth among the women categorised as having low well-being ($M=.92$, $SD=.18$) was greater than among the men categorised as having low well-being ($M=.58$, $SD=.07$). Insignificant differences between the men and women within well-being categories were found for the self-rated health measure and the remaining narrative indices.

4.3 Presentation of case studies

The participant case studies present the overall narratives for the individual participants which were the outcome of joint narrative construction between the participant and I during data analysis level two (Chapter Three, Section 3.4.2). The individual narrative stories were ordered according to the thematic flow or gestalt of the participants' sub-session one and were structured by clause and function according to Labov's (Labov, 1972) categories of narrative elements. Finally, the stories
were reduced to their core plot and features of dramatized speech were identified (Riessman, 2008). The case studies established a discursive thread linking each of the stories and highlighted the micro context in which individual identity claims were being made. They revealed the discursive mechanisms and resources employed by each of the participants to create their stories and build their narrative.

The aim of this research is to propose a model for later life eudaimonic well-being which is grounded on the experiential knowledge of the participants. The case studies, presented below, refer directly to the constituent stories of the participants' narratives which are contained in Volume Two (V2) of this thesis. In order to facilitate a gender focus the female participants' case studies are grouped together and are presented first, followed by the male participants' case studies. Furthermore, the case studies are presented within their gender grouping according to well-being categorisation (see table 4.5). Thereby, the case studies of women who were categorised as having low well-being are presented first, followed by the female participants categorised as having high well-being. Next the case studies of the male participants who were categorised as having low well-being are presented. Finally the male participants who were categorised as having high well-being are presented.

In using a rather rudimentary method of categorising the participants into low and high well-being groups to structure the presentation of the case studies a more nuanced understanding of eudaimonic well-being was facilitated. This understanding was sensitive to the differing life course experiences and interpretations of the female and male participants. Furthermore, it allowed for interrogation of the crude categorisation of the participants according to well-being by identifying individual perspective and interpretation of life course situations and circumstances. In this way, the case study analysis resulted in the identification of emerging eudaimonic well-being attributes which account for individual life course experiences as well as the pursuit of meaning and purpose for life events.
In constructing the case studies I selected representative stories from the narratives which were analysed in order to illustrate the interpretative points. Footnotes contain directions to other stories in the narratives which were not specifically examined in the case study but related thematically to a story which was selected for presentation. It is important to point out that the case studies should be read in parallel with the narratives contained in Volume 2. In line with feminist methodological principles of reflexivity and transparency I included the narratives, composed of constituent stories, in the second volume of this thesis and would encourage and welcome alternative interpretations. Furthermore, Volume Three contains the transcripts of the entire set of stories (N=505) which were identified from the rough transcriptions of the interviews and were re-transcribed and subjected to categorical coding (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3). I anticipate future re-visiting of the data which would find new interpretation and possibly contradictory evaluation. Andrews (2008a) argued that interpretations of qualitative narrative data is undertaken from the vantage point of the researcher and informed by the researcher’s life experience and research knowledge. Therefore, interpretations of qualitative narrative data are never complete and are always open to the possibility of alternative perspectives.

4.3.1 The case studies of the female participants categorised as having low well-being

Case study one: Aoife

Aoife was born in 1929 and was 80 at the time the interviews took place. Aoife's father was employed in the Irish army and she grew up in the north inner city of Dublin. When she was 21 Aoife's parents separated; this was very unusual for that time in Ireland. As a result of this separation Aoife moved with her mother and her siblings into corporation housing in Ballyfermot. This was a period in her life which she remembered with a great deal of emotion during her narrative. When she was 14 Aoife finished school and she began work in a printing factory. She married when she was 25 and she had five daughters, one of whom died as a baby. Early in her

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18 The studies contain directions to particular narratives and stories contained in Volume Two (EXAMPLE: V2.1a refers to Volume Two, narrative one, story a)
marriage, after her husband became unemployed, Aoife and her husband were allocated housing in Ballyfermot by the corporation. They currently own the house having purchased it from the corporation under the tenant purchase scheme. Aoife worked part-time intermittently throughout her life in order to supplement the family income. Her last job, before retirement at 73, was as a supermarket promoter. At the time of the interviews she was in receipt of a state pension.

Aoife heard about my project through another research participant when they met at a community based age awareness meeting. The interviews with Aoife took place in her home where she lives with her husband and which was in the older part of Ballyfermot. The inside of Aoife's house was quite modernised; it had an extension at the back of the house which incorporated a modern kitchen and living room space. On both of the occasions I visited Aoife's home, her husband wasn't there, and she told me that she purposely arranged this. Aoife showed me photographs of her family and particularly of her great grandson who she was very fond of. It struck me that she was very close to her daughters and she spoke about them a great deal suggesting that she had a strong relationship with them.

Aoife rated her health as 'fair' and she obtained a score of 18 on the SWLS which was within two standard deviations below the mean for the participants ($M=27.40$, $SD=7.16$, Range:12, 35). She obtained an overall score of 18 on the LSI which was just within two standard deviations below the sample mean ($M=21.55$, $SD=3.35$, Range:16, 28). The stories (n=23) identified from Aoife's interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Aoife obtained a score of 3.24 for emotional tone, this was below the sample mean ($M=3.31$, $SD=.46$) and a score of .70 for narrative complexity, this was above the sample mean ($M=.57$, $SD=.12$). The three motivational themes of her stories were assessed as follows: Aoife's stories scored highest for the motivational theme of personal growth; they were attributed a score of 1.15 for this theme which was above the sample mean ($M=.92$, $SD=.21$). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Aoife's stories was communion; her stories were attributed a score of 1.04 for this theme which was below the sample mean ($M=1.21$, $SD=.21$). Finally the
lowest scoring motivational theme in Aoife's stories was agency. Her stories received a score of .87 for agency which was above the sample mean (M=.84, SD=.28).

Aoife's Narrative (V2.1, pp. 12-21)

A total of 23 stories were identified from Aoife's interview material. Of these, 13 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for her life narrative (V2.1). 'Leaving the North Strand' (V2.1a) was the first story that Aoife told me; opening sub-section one. The story consisted of two segments surrounding two different complicating actions, the first being the separation of Aoife's parents (clause 5) and the second was the unemployment of her husband (clause 25). The outcome of both these negative events in Aoife's life was to bring her to Ballyfermot to avail of corporation housing (clause 12 and 25). These stories were combined under the one title as they both referred to the common theme of adjustment and the incorporation of life's difficult events into one's story. In clauses 15 and 16 Aoife talked about getting 'used to Ballyfermot' although she portrayed herself to me as an outsider in clause 17, this acknowledgment caused Aoife to become upset at clause 20. The acceptance of life's negative events and a feeling of resignation were repeated at clauses 32-33 and again this was brought to a close by expressing an outsider sentiment in clause 34. This image of Aoife as detached from Ballyfermot, an outsider looking in, was repeated at different times through her narrative, particularly as she recalled the period of her life when she first came to Ballyfermot upon the separation of her parents.19

'Stigma' (V2.1c) was the first story that arose in sub-section two of the interviews and was in response to my prompting Aoife to talk about her parents' separation. In this story she talked about the difficult life her mother led in a society that was ill-equipped to legislate for her circumstances because of a patriarchal culture of intolerance that prevailed at that time. The repetition of 'nothing' during the orientation to the story emphasised the desperate circumstances faced by Aoife's family. Aoife's evaluation of the incident "they were hard times" placed these events within a particular

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19 See 'Culture shock' (V2.1b) and 'The development of Ballyfermot' (V2.1d) and 'Recognition' (V2.1k) Volume 2.
cultural and social context which associated shame or stigma to their situation (clauses 14-18). However, through the coda of the story Aoife returned to a more positive present as she acknowledged that society has now changed for the better regarding how women, in similar circumstances, are treated now.

A recurring theme in Aoife’s narrative was the social shifts that have occurred in Ireland in her lifetime as evidenced by the changing attitudes and expectations of people. Overall this was something that Aoife viewed positively. However, in ‘The Celtic Tiger’ (V2.1e) she recognised the negative aspects of changing social values experienced during the economic boom years in Ireland. The story arose early in sub-session one of Aoife’s interview and followed a description of her voluntary work in Ballyfermot community when her children were young. In this story Aoife contrasted two different scenes or time orientations. The past, described in the orientation clauses, was a simpler time with a strong sense of community. The present was described in the evaluation clauses as being wealthier but lacking an emphasis on community or family. This contrast facilitated Aoife in the construction of her argument that people were happier in the past.

Aoife’s narrative contained stories of her marriage which facilitated a reflection of the disappointments of her life. ‘Dreams don’t always come true’ (V2.1g) occurred during sub-section two of the interviews after I asked Aoife about when she met her husband. In the abstract to this story Aoife emphasised, through repetition, she was too young when she met her husband explaining that she did not have enough experience of life. While the incident at the centre of the story, the occasion where she met her husband (clauses 10-15), was told with humour, her evaluation hints at her later regret and she later echoed the abstract in her repetition of ‘too young’. The resolution (clauses 19-22) to the story revealed the source of her regret; her bad marriage and the suggestion of her husband’s alcoholism.

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20 See ‘Ballyfermot has changed so much’ (V2.1f) in Volume 2.
21 See ‘The return to Ballyfermot’ (V2.1h) in Volume 2.
The coda expressed her acceptance of this as part of life's course 'you have to take the good with the bad'.

During her narrative Aoife portrayed herself as quite socially active in the past although in recent years she said that she enjoyed her own company more. In the story 'Facing Fears' (V2.1i) Aoife talked about her discovery in her 50's that she wasn't afraid of flying. She conveyed an image of herself as socially engaged, and said that she 'had a good life'. The evaluation (clauses 15-18) in 'Facing Fears' revealed a common thread through the stories of Aoife's narrative, in particular clause 17 highlighted Aoife's overall reconciliation with negative life events and outcomes. 'Facing Fears' was centred on a positive event however, in the evaluation Aoife balanced this against negative events and concluded that she had 'a good life' if not 'all happy'.

In sub-section three of the interviews Aoife spoke very positively about her experience of ageing. Increasing confidence was a strong feature of Aoife's stories concerning ageing. In 'Life gives you confidence' (V2.1m) she juxtaposed her shy younger self with her happier and more confident older self, a trait she attributed to the experience of life. 'Life begins at 80' occurred after I asked Aoife how old she felt. In the orientation of this story (clauses 5-7) Aoife established her apprehension over turning 80 and her perception that time was running out. However, the evaluation clauses of this story revealed that Aoife was able to recognise the positive aspects of her life for example her good health and her growing confidence and to be grateful that she was 'still here'. In clauses 14-15 Aoife portrayed an image of herself as physically active and full of vitality and therefore unsuitable for living in a nursing home. The emphasis in clauses 16-20 was on continuity of the self when Aoife claimed that 'she never grew up'. This continuity was maintained in spite of the effects of advancing age on her body.

Aoife scored below the group means for the life satisfaction measures and she rated her health as 'fair'. Furthermore, the emotional tone in Aoife's stories (n=23) was attributed a score below the sample mean. These low levels of well-being and emotional tone were evidenced in her concentration on negative life events and disappointments during her

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22 See 'Activities' (V2.1j) in Volume 2.
life narrative. The strongest motivational theme for her stories was personal growth, this was attributed a score above the sample mean, and Aoife's stories were also attributed higher score than the sample mean for narrative complexity. This growth and complexity was evidenced in her attempts to integrate disruptive and negative life events into her narrative and to reconcile her present with her past. Aoife's discussion of ageing emphasised continuity and the importance of maintaining her autonomy despite any threats to her physical well-being.

Case study two: Bridget

Bridget was born in 1927 and was 82 years old at the time of the interviews. She was born in Co. Galway where her father was a motor mechanic and he had a small farm. Bridget moved to England after leaving school at the age of 15 where she trained to be a nurse. It was in England that she met her husband and they returned home to Ireland and got married when she was 19. Bridget and her husband moved to Dublin and were allocated housing in Ballyfermot where they reared 9 children. She gave up nursing upon marriage and her husband worked in security in the headquarters of a governmental department. Bridget worked intermittently as a cleaner throughout their marriage to supplement the family income. She was employed as a home care assistant prior to her retirement from paid work at the age of 60. It was about this time that her husband became very ill with Parkinson's disease. Bridget was his full time carer and she nursed him until his death in 1997. At the time of the interviews she lived alone in Ballyfermot and was in receipt of a state pension.

The interview with Bridget took place in the care centre which she attended a few times a week. She was new to the group when I met her. She was introduced to the care centre by a community nurse following a bad accident in which she broke her leg and spent some time in hospital. Bridget was one of the few women I interviewed who was not from Dublin and she still maintained a Galway accent. I got the impression from talking to Bridget that she considered herself to be a bit of an outsider. Bridget had a difficult life; she referenced her husband as having a drink and gambling
problem and she spoke about the difficulties she often had trying to make ends meet for her family. However, her pride in her family and in her own role as mother and housekeeper was very apparent during the interviews. Bridget was one of the first women to volunteer for the project and she spoke about how much she enjoyed reminiscing and talking to new people. Bridget struck me as being quite lonely. She spoke about how important the day care centre was to her particularly following the death of her husband as she tried to re-integrate herself back into the community.

Bridget rated her health as 'fair' and she obtained a score of 30 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviation above the mean for the participants ($M=27.40$, $SD=7.16$, Range:12, 35). She obtained an overall score of 19 on the LSI which was within one standard deviation below the sample mean ($M=21.55$, $SD=3.35$, Range:16, 28). The stories (n=27) identified from Bridget's interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Bridget obtained a score of 3.19 for emotional tone, this was below the sample mean ($M=3.31$, $SD=.46$) and a score of .69 for narrative complexity, this was above the sample mean ($M=.57$, $SD=.12$). The three motivational themes of her stories were assessed as follows: Bridget's stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.63 for this theme which was above the sample mean ($M=1.21$, $SD=.21$). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Bridget's stories was personal growth; her stories were attributed a score of .89 for this theme which matched the sample mean ($M=.92$, $SD=.21$). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Aoife's stories was agency. Her stories received a score of .70 for agency which was below the sample mean ($M=.84$, $SD=.28$).

Bridget's Narrative (V2.2, pp. 21-28)

A total of 27 stories were identified from Bridget's interview material. Of these, 11 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for her life narrative (V2.2). Family life was very important in Bridget's narrative and references to Bridget's own upbringing in rural Galway were a frequent feature of her narrative. In particular, Bridget was proud of the fact that her own parenting style emulated what she described as 'the Victorian' upbringing that she received. With reference to this
lifestyle, she spoke about the austere values that she inherited from her upbringing which she subsequently instilled in her children. The story entitled ‘The family in Ballyfermot’ (V2.2a) occurred early in sub-session one of the interviews, it followed a description of her early life and her return home from England to settle in Ballyfermot. The abstract clauses of ‘The family in Ballyfermot’ indicated the importance for Bridget of linking her own parenting style with the upbringing that she herself received. Furthermore, she lay out her credentials as a primary caregiver (clauses 2-3) and emphasised her austerity through a description of how she recycled the packing paper from the butcher’s so that her children could use it for their homework exercises. These orientation clauses in the story served to provide a contrast to her husband who was depicted in clauses 11-12 as letting the family down through his alcoholism and the resulting waste of money. In the coda (clauses 23-24), Bridget repeated the reference to her own family and the values that were associated with her upbringing.

In her narrative Bridget described her caring roles and she placed emphasis on the caring aspect of herself and was proud of the quality of her care giving. ‘The carer’ (V2.2b) arose during sub-session one of the interviews. In the story Bridget described how she cared for her husband until his death and subsequently cared for her sister who also died. These events resulted in Bridget’s social isolation. In the story abstract Bridget described her loneliness which was conveyed in the present tense ‘I miss him’ (clauses, 3, 11). This loneliness was emphasised in the orientation clauses (6 and 8). In the evaluation clauses (16-22) she expressed the sense of loss and helplessness that she felt after the deaths of her husband and sister. This feeling of desolation was compounded in the resolution by the realisation that she had lost contact with the world and had isolated herself from supporting friendship networks.

A predominant theme of Bridget’s narrative was her emergence from the social isolation she experienced following the death of her husband to the connectivity she attributed to her involvement with the community care

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23 See ‘A lot of things are gone out the window’ (V2.2d) in Volume 2 .
centre. "It's done me a world of good" (V2.2f) occurred during sub-section two of the interviews after I prompted her to talk about the isolation she experienced. The opening abstract clauses presented the central argument of this story which was to indicate the benefit of the care centre for Bridget. In the orientation of the story (clauses 2-7) Bridget described the isolation she experienced following the death of her husband and a subsequent bad fall she had and the resulting injury sustained. Through repetition of the words 'bad' and 'sick' during the orientation clauses Bridget emphasised the desperate state that she was in. This vivid description of her mental and physical deterioration provided contrast to the resolution and coda of the narrative (clauses 15-20). The phrase 'it's done me a world of good' was repeated in the resolution of the story echoing the abstract. Finally, Bridget concluded this transformative story with a return to her present circumstances which were very different from the circumstances described in the story orientation. The story revealed something about Bridget's resilience and her determination to rise above life's difficulties. This strong character was also reflected in other stories which focused on her recollections of rearing her family through hardship and her discussion of ageing.24

Bridget's assimilation into Ballyfermot and her acceptance of it as her home was a feature of her narrative. She charted the social progress of the area and noted how it had become a better place to live as she got older and how she had made it her home.25 In "Their hearts are bigger than their bodies" (V2.2g) Bridget returned to the complicating action described in clauses 8-11 of 'It's done me a world of good'. This event, a bad fall in which she broke her knee, was clearly a significant point in Bridget's life narrative. 'Their hearts are bigger than their bodies' occurred during a discussion of Ballyfermot in sub-session three. In the story Bridget offers a further interpretation of the fall in terms of her integration into Ballyfermot. In the orientation clauses of 'Their hearts are bigger than their bodies' Bridget emphasised her distress and pain after the fall in the Ballyfermot street. This set the context for her complicating action (clause 8) which resulted in

24 See 'It's hard work for a lady' (V2.2c) and 'I was always a survivor' (V2.2i) in Volume 2.
25 See 'Ballyfermot' (V2.2e) in Volume 2.
the community people, and particularly young people, gathering around her to help at this time of crisis. The relief and comfort she took from this action was emphasised through her repetition of 'they came'. In the evaluation clauses (9-14) Bridget presented the lesson she wished to convey to me about Ballyfermot, a lesson which was consolidated through her coda statement; 'their hearts are bigger than their bodies' (clause 16).

During sub-session three of the interviews Bridget told the story 'Great sadness in our lives' (V2.2h). In the story Bridget described three different traumatic events in her life; the deaths of four of her grandchildren by fire and suicide. The repetition of 'sad', 'heartbroken' and 'worse' throughout the story emphasised the negative emotion and tragedy associated with the events. However, the coda or final clause of the story illustrated a mechanism for resilience in the face of 'the worst thing in our lives'. Bridget concluded the story with an acknowledgment of her religious faith in the afterlife and of the comfort she received from that. Towards the end of sub-session three I prompted Bridget to talk about her religious or spiritual faith. 'A chunk out of my beliefs' (V2.2k) was told in the context of the scandals and abuses that had been recently revealed about the Catholic Church and which had a dominant presence in the media during the period in which I conducted my fieldwork. In the story Bridget described grappling with the events and with her sense of hurt over the revelations. Significantly in clauses 12-13 Bridget revealed her interpretation of the events which she attributed to a break down in rules and discretion among clergy. This echoed her previous stories which revealed her strong 'Victorian' values which she inherited from her parents and her upbringing.

Bridget scored below the group mean for the life satisfaction measures and she rated her health as 'fair'. Furthermore, the emotional tone in Bridget's stories (n=27) was attributed a score below the sample mean. These low levels of well-being and emotional tone were evidenced in her narrative stories which conveyed her experience of social isolation as well as family tragedy. Bridget demonstrated a strong external locus of control through her emphasis on faith, and austere social values. This external locus of control acted as a buffer to her experience of family
tragedy as she found solace from her faith. The strongest motivational theme for her stories was communion, which was attributed a score above the sample mean, and this was reflected in her emphasis on her caring roles throughout her life narrative. Bridget's stories were attributed a higher score for narrative complexity than the sample mean and her score for personal growth matched the sample mean. These two features of her stories were evidenced by her interpretation of her fall in relation to her increased sense of inter-personal connection.

Case study three: Gillian

Gillian was born in 1930 and she was 80 years of age at the time the interviews took place. She was born and grew up in the north inner city and had three brothers and one sister. Her father was a painter/decorator, however when Gillian was 13 he died from TB. As a result her mother went to work in a factory and Gillian became responsible for the care of her younger siblings and the home. She left school when she was 15 having obtained her primary certificate and began work in a printing factory. When she was 19 she married and four years later she was allocated corporation housing in Ballyfermot. Her husband was a kitchen porter and they had seven children in total, the youngest of whom committed suicide in 1980. Two of her children remain living in the Ballyfermot area and the four others live in the Dublin area. Gillian continued working throughout her life on a part-time basis to supplement the family income. This work was primarily in contract office cleaning. She retired from cleaning work when she was 65 and she is now in receipt of a state pension. Gillian and her husband own their house having availed of a tenant purchase scheme.

The interview with Gillian took place in a day care centre which was attached to Cherry Orchard Hospital in upper Ballyfermot. Gillian was brought to this centre once a week where she met with the staff, who were all geriatric nurses and with other clients, some of whom were long term patients in the hospital. This centre provided services to older people who were identified as being at a risk of isolation and loneliness. Gillian had agoraphobia and this weekly outing was one of the few times that she left her house. She also suffered from depression and during the first interview she told me that she had been referred to a mental health clinic.
Furthermore, Gillian suffered from very bad chest pains and shortness of breath which were exacerbated by panic attacks. When I returned to conduct the second interview with Gillian I found out that she had been taken into hospital due to ill health. A few weeks later when I did manage to schedule the follow-up interview she told me she her treatment plan for her cardiac condition had been revised, she was also getting treatment for her depression. Gillian's narrative was one of the most difficult of all the participants for this study. Her stories were often distressing with references to elder abuse, as well as marital problems and severe loneliness and isolation.

Gillian rated her health as 'fair' and she obtained a score of 14 on the SWLS which was within two standard deviation below the mean for the participants \((M=27.40, \ SD=7.16, \ Range:12, \ 35)\). She obtained an overall score of 16 on the LSI which was within two standard deviations below the sample mean \((M=21.55, \ SD=3.35, \ Range:16, \ .28)\). The stories \((n=26)\) identified from Gillian's interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Gillian obtained a score of 2.15 for emotional tone, this was below the sample mean \((M=3.31, \ SD=.46)\) and a score of .58 for narrative complexity, this matched the sample mean \((M=.57, \ SD=.12)\). The three motivational themes of her stories were assessed as follows: Gillian's stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.21 for this theme which matched the sample mean \((M=1.21, \ SD=.21)\). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Gillian's stories was personal growth; her stories were attributed a score of .85 for this theme which matched the sample mean \((M=.92, \ SD=.21)\). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Gillian's stories was agency. Her stories received a score of .56 for agency which was below the sample mean \((M=.84, \ SD=.28)\).

Gillian's narrative (V2.5, pp. 44-56)

A total of 26 stories were identified from Gillian's interview material. Of these, 13 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for her life narrative (V2.5). Gillian's mental and physical
health problems featured from the outset of sub-session one and were a recurrent theme throughout her narrative. 'Anxiety' (V2.5a) occurred early on in sub-session one and it described the sense of isolation Gillian experienced as a result of her health difficulties. Her distress was clearly evident and it was conveyed in the story through repeated reference to fear and isolation. Gillian made a connection between her anxiety and her deteriorating physical health in a reference to her frustration at not being able to do the things that she used to do.

Gillian’s narrative preoccupation with health was indicative of the extent of her anxiety and also her isolation. 'It stops you going out that door' (V2.5b) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews during a discussion of her social activities. The story described the onset of Gillian’s cardiac condition and the resulting social isolation and withdrawal from pre-existing social outlets. The story was structured around four scenes: a holiday in Galway with her neighbours; a doctor’s surgery and diagnoses; in bed at night struggling against overwhelming pain; and finally a scene of domestic confinement with a firmly closed front door. The evaluative clauses provided an insight into the distress that Gillian experienced as a result of this condition. Her description of the rope tightening around her chest was graphic and the torturous nature of the condition was conveyed through the repetition of 'pulling' in line 14. Her feeling of struggle and desperation was also portrayed in lines 15-16 particularly through the image of her simultaneously fighting and pleading with God. The coda of the story moved to a final scene which depicted Gillian isolated at home with a closed door and little prospect of being able to go out.

A recurring image through Gillian’s health-related stories was the depiction of her home as being a place of confinement. This sense of imprisonment was explained by Gillian as being a result of both her physical condition as well as her mental health and in particular her agoraphobia.

Gillian’s sense of isolation was compounded by her lack of community engagement and her perceived sense of neglect from her children. Furthermore, she found that the community supports that she recalled

26 See ‘Panic Attack’ (V2.5c) in Volume 2.
27 See ‘It’s not worth rearing them’ (V2.5e) in Volume 2.
existing in Ballyfermot when she first arrived there, were now gone. 'There's no community' (V2.5f) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews. In the story Gillian juxtaposed a description of the neighbourhood when she first arrived there as a young mother with her family to the current community. Gillian used repeated negative statements to describe the present; 'there's nobody', 'there's nothing', 'no-one'. The refrain 'all gone' was used by Gillian in lines 7 and 20 to transition from depictions of a positive and happy past community life to a negative and lonely present.

Gillian's youngest son died from suicide in the early 1980's and references to this event and to this son were frequent in her narrative. 'Things can come back' (V2.5g) occurred during sub-session two of the interviews after I prompted Gillian to talk about her early life growing up in the North Inner City. The story described the illness and death of her father when she was 13 and it shifted between scenes from this past event to a final connection with her son's death. The story moved through three different scenes: In the orientation clauses Gillian recalled a traumatic memory of visiting her father in a TB hospital. She then remembered telling her friend she would throw herself in the river if her father died. In the final scene and resolution clauses (16-17) she connected this threat she made as a child with her son's suicide referencing her son's death by drowning in the canal. This story created a link between the deaths of Gillian's much loved father and her youngest son and she placed herself at the centre of both these events.

Gillian's memories of her childhood focused on two negative events which occurred when she was 12; the death of her father and the premature birth of her sister. 'It was a lot to take on' (V2.5i) arose during sub-session two and it immediately followed 'Things can come back'. The story described the circumstances of the premature birth of her sister which resulted in Gillian becoming the primary carer for her younger siblings and her ill mother. It shifted between the scenes of her mother's bedroom with the 'blood on the floor' and the lonely image of Gillian watching the home incomprehensively from the street. The story was heavy with anxiety and distress. In clause 24 and Gillian indicated that this event marked the
beginning of her role as primary carer for her family and in particular her premature sister.

Throughout her narrative Gillian made connections between her different life events. 'History repeating' (V2.5j) occurred in sub-session three and in this story Gillian connected the death of her father with her own treatment for TB many years later. The setting for the story was the TB hospital that Gillian spent a year in when she was a young mother with five children. The complicating action of the story occurred at line 11 when she received the letter from her neighbour which resulted in her leaving the hospital against the advice of her doctors. The cause of her premature exit from the hospital was her husband’s alcoholism and her suspected fear of his neglect of their children. In her evaluation statements Gillian spoke about the repeated miscarriages she experienced after her illness. Her evocation of God in line 27 was indicative of her lack of control over her fertility and her own health. In the coda statement Gillian revealed that she had 10 pregnancies in total, five of which occurred after her illness.

Gillian’s unhappy marriage and her often hostile relationship with her husband in their home was a recurring theme of her narrative. She told stories depicted her husband’s alcoholism and gambling addiction which she argued contributed to her poor physical health and panic attacks.28 ‘Only a woman with seven children’ (V2.5k) occurred during sub-session two of the interviews. Gillian reflected upon her life and considered how it could have been different. The orientation clauses revealed a sense of entrapment in the marriage and line 14 illustrated the gendered nature of this entrapment which was imposed through her many pregnancies. Line 15 indicated a time shift in the story and it allowed Gillian to provide present day perspective over her whole life which was strong in narrative complexity. Lines 16-18 were particularly poignant; this was affected through Gillian’s use of the conditional tense which suggested an alternative life. In clauses 20-35 Gillian debated the causes of her situation. Initially, she argued that she was ‘just a woman’ and therefore unable to change her life. However, this argument was countered in line 25 when Gillian acknowledged examples of other women who were stronger than her. In

28 See 'Marriage' (V2.5l) and 'I'm getting the better of him' (V2.5m) in Volume 2.
response, she argued that it was her upbringing and ignorance which led to her dependence upon the will of her husband. Finally, Gillian argued that her state of ignorance was typical of the time. This facilitated Gillian’s coda of the story and allowed her to accept her unhappy marriage as being typical of life at that time.

Gillian’s scored below the group means for the life satisfaction measures and she rated her health as ‘fair’. Furthermore, her stories (n=26) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was below the sample mean. These low levels of well-being and emotional tone were evidenced in her narrative stories which concerned her very strong external locus of control, her health, her experience of family tragedy and her husband’s chronic addictions. Gillian’s lack of control and autonomy in her life were strong features of her narrative, particularly her stories which described her marriage and her bad health. The strongest motivational theme in Gillian’s stories was communion and this was reflected in her description of her social isolation and lack of connectedness with her community or her family. The scores attributed to Gillian’s stories for narrative complexity and the motivational theme of personal growth matched the sample mean. This was reflected in her consideration of her life as a whole and her attempts to reconcile her current unhappy marriage and her bad health with her past life experiences.

Case study four: Kitty

Kitty was born in 1930 and was 79 at the time the interviews took place. She was born in Limerick and she had three sisters and one brother. Her father was a sergeant in the army and the family moved to live in the North inner city when Kitty was a child. She finished her education when she was 16 upon attainment of a secondary intermediate certificate at which point she took up work as a seamstress in a sewing factory. Kitty never married and when she was 20 she moved with her family to Ballyfermot after her parents were allocated corporation housing there. She continued working full time in factories throughout her life although she moved around different industries including tailoring and biscuit making. She retired from
full time factory employment when she was 65 and at the time of the interviews she was in receipt of a state pension. She continued to live in the house her parents were allocated and at the time of the interviews she owned the house having availed of a tenant purchase scheme.

The interviews with Kitty took place in the day care centre which she attended once a week to meet with other older people and to have a hot meal and play bingo. Kitty was unusual from the other participants in that she was not born in Dublin and moved there as a young teenager. She also was not reared in the same degree of poverty as some of the other participants and she obtained a secondary intermediate certificate. Kitty was quite young looking with a lovely smile. She suffered from a medical condition, dystonia, which affected her eyes and her throat and it occasionally made speaking quite difficult for her. It was particularly affecting her during the second interview and she took many breaks and her voice sounded strained. However, she declined my offer to continue the interview at another time and expressed a wish to continue with the interview.

Kitty rated her health as ‘fair’ and she obtained a score of 15 on the SWLS which was within two standard deviations below the mean for the participants ($M=27.40$, $SD=7.16$, Range:12, 35). She obtained an overall score of 19 on the LSI which was within one standard deviations below the sample mean ($M=21.55$, $SD=3.35$, Range:16, 28). The stories ($n=21$) identified from Kitty’s interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Kitty obtained a score of 3.10 for emotional tone, this was below the sample mean ($M=3.31$, $SD=.46$) and a score of .45 for narrative complexity, this was below the sample mean ($M=.57$, $SD=.12$). The three motivational themes of her stories were assessed as follows: Kitty’s stories scored highest for the motivational theme of personal growth; they were attributed a score of 1.14 for this theme which was above the sample mean ($M=.92$, $SD=.21$). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Kitty’s stories was communion; her stories were attributed a score of .90 for this theme which was below the sample mean ($M=1.21$, $SD=.21$). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Kitty’s stories was agency. Her stories
received a score of .71 for agency which was below the sample mean 
\( M= .84, SD= .28 \).  

Kitty’s narrative (V2.7, pp. 66-72)  
A total of 21 stories were identified from Kitty’s interview material. Of 
these, 7 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and 
reduced, for her life narrative (V2.7). Kitty moved to Ballyfermot when she 
was 20 after her parents, who had been lodging in the north inner city, were 
allocated housing there. This move was cast in a negative light in different 
stories of Kitty’s narrative. ‘It was dreary’ (V2.7a) was the first story that 
Kitty told me in sub-session one of the interviews. It provided a vivid 
description of the first day she and her mother arrived to Ballyfermot. In the 
orientation clauses of the story Kitty described the wintry January weather 
and her bad cold as she remembered the day she and her mother took the 
bus to move to Ballyfermot from the North Strand. The turning point of the 
story allowed Kitty to juxtapose two story scenes; the cold, wintry and sick 
Ballyfermot with the summertime walking around the North Strand. This 
contrast facilitated her evaluative statement in clauses 9-10 when Kitty 
expressed the emotion of the event in terms of the heart break she and her 
mother were feeling. Clauses 11-27 provided a mixture of descriptive and 
evaluative statements. Kitty expressed negative emotion through an 
emphasis on how far away Ballyfermot was as well as repeated references 
to the wintry weather and descriptions of a dreary, empty house. The coda 
statement echoed the first line in its reference to the slush on the ground. 

Kitty’s arrival to Ballyfermot appeared to be an important negative 
point in her life narrative. ‘Baby Face’ (V2.7b) occurred during sub-session 
one of her interviews when Kitty recalled the tragic story of her first love. 
The depth of detail that Kitty recollected in the orientation clauses of the 
story suggested the importance she attributed to this event in her life. The 
evaluative clauses of the story revealed Kitty’s heart break over the 
incident. In clauses 32 to 41 Kitty assessed the outcome of this event and 
she revealed the impact this had on shaping her subsequent life. In line 34 
Kitty claimed that she didn’t grab opportunities and chances in her life
afterwards. This sentiment of lost chances was a recurring theme of her narrative particularly in stories which addressed why she didn’t marry. In lines 35 to 39 she presented the reasons for these missed chances, in particular she identified her move to Ballyfermot 7 months after the death. The coda of the story was quite poignant as Kitty recollected the song that he used to sing to her and she described her young freckly face.

Kitty’s marital status was a significant feature of her narrative and during her descriptions of her life as she’s grown older Kitty revealed that she has had to rely on her own resources. ‘I’ve made me own life’ (V2.7d) occurred in sub-session three during a discussion of social activities and Kitty made the point that she is responsible for her own happiness. In the orientation clauses Kitty established her independence and she emphasised that she can still manage to walk unaided and she goes into town regularly. The turning point of the story depicted a community nurse who introduced Kitty to the day care centre where I met Kitty for the interviews. In the evaluation clauses Kitty revealed that because she doesn’t have any relations close by to her she is responsible for making her own life happy. The following clauses emphasised her agency as she spoke about her options for social engagements and the choices which were in her power to make.

Kitty’s faith was very important to her and during the interview she showed me her Rosary beads which she said she always carried with her. In sub-session three during a discussion of her feelings of safety she told a story concerning a recent break-in to her house. ‘Sacred Heart’ (V2.7e) revealed how her faith was an important resource for her resiliency. The orientation clauses of the story depicted the terrifying scene in her bedroom where she was confronted in the middle of the night by a burglar. The story hinged on clause 23 where Kitty described her appeal to the image of the Sacred Heart, which was on the landing of her house, for protection. In her evaluation of the events Kitty revealed her faith in this source of protection and she confirmed that she believed it had helped to end the terror by giving the burglar the courage to leave her house. In the story resolution

29 See ‘He’s your kind’ (V2.7c) in Volume 2.
(clause 30) Kitty described the demonstrable actions she regularly carries out which confirm her faith as a source of protection and resilience.

In a discussion of ageing Kitty revealed a further insight into her sense of agency and the importance of attitude in dealing with life. 'Wrapped up in themselves' (V2.7f) occurred during sub-session three when I asked Kitty why some older people might be sad or lonely. In the orientation clauses of the story Kitty described her friendship with a neighbour and she spoke about how they had told each other about their health problems. The complicating action of the story revealed Kitty's own nature and her concern for the well-being of her friend which Kitty felt was not reciprocated. In the evaluation clauses Kitty provided an insight into her understanding of ageing and she noted that people can become self-absorbed which she felt contributed to their sadness or loneliness.

The overarching theme of Kitty's narrative was one of missed opportunities when she was young. Although her descriptions of her present day provided insight into the resources for her resilience, her sense of regret was still strong. 'Lost opportunities' (V2.7g) was the last story that Kitty told me in sub-session three. She reflected on her life as a whole and noted both her resources for well-being as well as her regrets. Finally, she offered me advice for my life which was based on her experiences. In the orientation clauses of the story Kitty emphasised the importance of the simple things in her life which she looked forward to and which made her happy. The complicating action of the story in clause 6 facilitated Kitty to step back from her life and to recognise her regrets, losses and missed chances. Finally, her resolution allowed her to pass on wisdom based on these experiences. Her final coda was poignantly sad revealing her fear of dying alone which she attributed to regretted missed opportunities.

Kitty's scored below the group means for the life satisfaction measures and she rated her health as 'fair'. Furthermore, her stories (n=21) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was below the sample mean. These low levels of life satisfaction and emotional tone were evidenced in her narrative stories which conveyed her negative
interpretation of life events and her sense of regret over missed opportunities. The strongest motivational theme in Kitty’s stories was personal growth and her stories were attributed a score for this theme which was above the sample mean. This strong sense of personal growth was reflected in Kitty’s evaluation of her life and her passing on advice based on her experiences and her realisation of her lost changes or opportunities. Kitty conveyed a strong sense of internal locus of control particularly in her stories which portrayed her sense of responsibility for making her own life and in determining her experience of ageing. Her narrative also depicted her strong religiosity and her conviction in the protective powers of her faith.

Case study five: Una

 Una was born in the inner city in 1937 and was 72 at the time the interviews took place. She had four brothers and her father worked in an electric shop. When she was 12 years of age she moved with her family to Ballyfermot when her parents were allocated corporation housing there. Una finished her education when she was 14 and she began work in a sewing factory. When she was 19 she emigrated to London where she worked in a pub. While there she met her husband who was also working in the pub trade. When she was 28 they married and returned to Dublin where they lived in the inner city. After the death of her father in 1980 Una and her husband moved into the house in Ballyfermot to live with her mother. Subsequently, they purchased the house with her mother, availing of a tenant purchase scheme. Her mother died in 2007 and Una and her husband continued to live in the house at the time of the interviews. Una continued working part-time, until retirement, as a cleaner in Trinity College. Her husband also worked in the college as a security man. Una retired when she was 40 due to ill health after she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Her husband continued working full time until his retirement at 65. Una and her husband did not have any children. At the time of the interviews she was in receipt of a state pension.

The interviews with Una took place in the day care centre which she attended regularly to get out of the house, receive a hot meal and meet with other older people in the community. Una was badly affected by her MS and she was quite physically limited, particularly in her walking. The interview
with Una was difficult; she had problems with the format for the first interview and repeatedly engaged me to ask her questions. This interview was the least successful, relative to the other participants, in terms of the unstructured method for data collection. The story wound to a halt very quickly and Una required quite a lot of assistance from me to construct her narrative. When her story did emerge it became clear that her life was quite unhappy and she spoke about the hardship of living with her husband’s alcoholism for much of her life. During her narrative Una revealed that, through her contact with the day care centre, she availed of the help of a social worker to address her husband’s alcoholism. At the time of the interviews the situation seemed stable and Una was hopeful that a resolution had been achieved. I came out of the interviews with Una feeling pretty low and was quite upset. I felt that her hard life was reflected in the difficulty she had creating her narrative. However, that she volunteered to take part in the study was positive. She also revealed that she had, in the past, reached out for help as evidenced by her calling the social worker and by attending this care centre.

Una rated her health as ‘fair’ and she obtained a score of 30 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviation above the mean for the participants ($M=27.40$, $SD=7.16$, Range:12, 35). She obtained an overall score of 16 on the LSI which was within two standard deviations below the sample mean ($M=21.55$, $SD=3.35$, Range:16, 28). The stories (n=17) identified from Una’s interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Una obtained a score of 2.65 for emotional tone, this was below the sample mean ($M=3.31$, $SD=.46$) and a score of .56 for narrative complexity, this matched the sample mean ($M=.57$, $SD=.12$). The three motivational themes of her stories were assessed as follows: Una’s stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.12 for this theme which was below the sample mean ($M=1.21$, $SD=.21$). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Una’s stories was personal growth; her stories were attributed a score of .79 for this theme which was below the sample mean ($M=.92$, $SD=.21$). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Una’s stories was agency. Her stories
received a score of .12 for agency which was below the sample mean ($M=.84, SD=.28$).

Una’s Narrative (V2.10, pp. 91-95)

A total of 17 stories were identified from Una’s interview material. Of these 7 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for her life narrative (V2.10). One of the first stories that Una told in during sub-session one of the interviews was ‘You get it in the end’ (V2.10a). In the story Una described her endurance of her husband’s alcoholism and her journey towards its resolution. The story abstract summarised Una’s message which was her antipathy towards alcohol which she associated with her time working in a London bar. The orientation clauses of the story provided the explanation for this antipathy; the long term alcoholism of her husband. The complicating action of the story, which occurred at clause 11, marked a story turning point as Una revealed that through an information leaflet at the care centre she sought help to address her husband’s alcoholism and put an end to the situation. Una’s repeated reference to time in the story emphasised the sense of endurance and also expressed her feelings of hope for the present. In clauses 7, 14 and 20, Una conveyed the length of time that she endured her husband’s alcoholism and portrayed her sense of despondency at repeated failed attempts to address the problem. In the story outcome or resolution in clause 21, Una referred to ‘this time’ to mark a turning point and convey a sense of hope for the future. The story coda referred again to the length of time she prayed for a resolution and conveyed a sense of hope that her prayers had been answered in the end.

During the construction of her narrative Una revealed the extent of her social isolation. ‘He was my favourite’ (V2.10c) occurred during sub-session two of the interviews during which Una explained how she lost contact with her favourite brother. In the story abstract Una summarised the point of her story which explained her lack of contact with her family and, in particular, her falling out with her favourite brother. The complicating action (clause 11) of the story revealed the source of the dispute which was a stolen purse. The coda of the story conveyed a sense of loss and regret as she repeated her claim that this brother was her favourite. In clause 18 she
used the past tense in her reference to loving him. This use of past tense as well as the final clause which referred to getting over the event conveyed a sense of intractability. This story was particularly poignant in the context of Una’s later stories, which revealed her isolation and loneliness.

Una’s health was a dominant feature in her narrative and, in particular, she noted how it had deteriorated in recent years and impacted on her sense of control over her environment. In the abstract of ‘Moaning and groaning’ (V2.10d) Una described her mother’s late onset of Alzheimer’s dementia and she noted how healthy her mother had been until she was 95 years of age. The abstract served to provide a counterpoint to Una’s description of her own health and, in particular, her Multiple Sclerosis (MS). In the complicating action of her story Una spoke about how the MS had taken ‘a grip’ of her in the previous two years. The evaluation clauses emphasised her sense of loss of control, and this was particularly evidenced through use of the words ‘sudden’ ‘just’ and ‘yet’ which conveyed her sense of frustration and lack of agency. The story outcome or resolution (clause 28) compounded this message of loss of control in her reference to unintentional sleep patterns which contributed to her chronic fatigue. Finally, her coda statement provided an insight into Una’s coping strategy as she referenced everybody having their complaints.

Una’s narrative revealed the extent of her social isolation and also indicated the importance of community based social care and resources for social engagement. ‘Only for here I’d never go out’ (V2.10f) occurred in sub­session three of the interviews during a discussion of social activities and engagement. In the orientation clauses of the story Una reconstructed the voice of a social worker as she described how reluctant she was to attend the community day care centre. In clause 8 she used the direct reported speech of the social worker to convey how the worker persuaded Una to go along to the centre on a trial basis. Una continued to use direct reported speech to convey the turning point or complicating action of the story. In her reconstruction of her conversation with the priest, before and after her first visit to the centre, Una conveyed her change of mind and her willingness to commit to the centre as much as possible. The evaluation clauses revealed
the causes for Una’s change of mind which included her surprise at her enjoyment of the centre as well her surprise about the development of friendships with the other clients. Una’s coda statement revealed the significance of this event in her life and also the importance of these resources for older community dwelling people.

One of the final stories of Una’s narrative focused on her faith and she revealed the importance of her beliefs as a source of comfort and hope. In ‘I would have nothing without that’ (V2.10g) Una described her faith has getting stronger in recent years in terms of an increasing sense of hope for an afterlife.

Una’s scores for the life satisfaction measures were contradictory: She obtained a score for the SWLS which was above the group mean however her score for the LSI was within two standard deviations below the group mean. Furthermore, the score attributed to her stories for emotional tone was below the sample mean. Her low scoring on the LSI and emotional tone were reflected in her narrative stories which concerned her negative experience of her husband’s alcoholism as well as her social isolation and lack of social connectedness. Una’s stories were attributed scores for all three motivational themes which were below the sample means. The strongest theme in her stories was communion; this was conveyed in her stories which focused on her isolation and her lack of community integration. Una’s stories were attributed a very low score for the motivational theme of agency. This was corroborated by her narrative stories in particular, her health-related stories, which conveyed her lack of control or autonomy in her home. Furthermore, she portrayed a very high external locus of control through her strong religiosity and her dependence on social welfare resources such as the day care centre.

Case study six: Jessica

Jessica was born in 1933 and was 76 at the time the interviews took place. She came from a very large family of 4 brothers and 9 sisters and was reared in the south inner city docklands where her father worked as a coal docker. She finished school when she was 12 and two years later she began work as a seamstress in a sewing factory. When she was 22 she married and as a new bride moved to Ballyfermot to live with her husband.
who was a truck driver. Jessica continued working in the sewing factory until the birth of her first child after which she worked as a seamstress from her home combining the work with caring for her six children. She continued working intermittently as a seamstress and contract office cleaner in order to supplement the family income until she retired at age 60. Jessica's husband died almost 10 years prior to the interviews and Jessica cared for him for quite a while before his death as he recovered from a stroke. At the time of the interviews she was in receipt of a state pension and she owned her home.

Jessica was introduced to me by a mutual friend and the interview took place in Jessica's home. Her house had been modernised; the two downstairs rooms had been joined together and her kitchen was in an extension at the back of the house. When Jessica opened the door she had a very hyper little dog which barked very loudly at me. Jessica put the dog upstairs out of the way telling me that the dog does not like strangers in the house and will bark non-stop, which it did do throughout the whole time I was there. Jessica asked my permission to smoke during the interview which I said was no problem. Her home was very bright, with many photographs of her family around. On top of the television there were two large framed photos of her husband and son who both died recently. Jessica also had a parrot in a cage in her kitchen which she showed me while she was making us both a cup of tea. She lived alone but her youngest daughter lived across the road in an apartment. During the interviews Jessica told me that she suffered from depression since the death of her son which was exacerbated by her estrangement from another son. She was receiving treatment in the form of medication for this depression and had previously undertaken counselling.

Jessica rated her health as 'good' and she obtained a score of 26 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviation below the mean for the participants ($M=27.40$, $SD=7.16$, Range:12, 35). She obtained an overall score of 21 on the LSI which was within one standard deviation below the sample mean ($M=21.55$, $SD=3.35$, Range:16, 28). The stories identified from Jessica's interview data were scored according to three narrative
indices. Jessica obtained a score of 2.79 for emotional tone, this was below the sample mean \( (M=3.31, \ SD=.46) \) and a score of .68 for narrative complexity, this was above the sample mean \( (M=.57, \ SD=.12) \). The three motivational themes of her stories were assessed as follows: Jessica’s stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.50 for this theme which was above the sample mean \( (M=1.21, \ SD=.21) \). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Jessica’s stories was personal growth; her stories were attributed a score of .71 for this theme which was below the sample mean \( (M=.92, \ SD=.21) \). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Jessica’s stories was agency. Her stories received a score of .55 for agency which was below the sample mean \( (M=.84, \ SD=.28) \).

Jessica’s Narrative (V2.6, pp. 56-65)

A total of 31 stories were identified from Jessica’s interview material. Of these, 14 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for her life narrative (V2.6). Jessica conveyed a very strong affection for Ballyfermot which she associated with her husband and the start of her married life. She opened her narrative in sub-session one with ‘Loved Ballyfermot from the beginning’ (V2.6a) and in this story Jessica explained that her life really began when she met her husband. In her reference to missing her mother while she was on honeymoon and the bus ride home she expressed her innocence and youth. This was further conveyed through her juxtaposition of her childlike shyness at the neighbours cheering and a description of the adult clothes she was wearing. Jessica was eager to point out that she settled into Ballyfermot very quickly. She spoke about her friendships with her neighbours and she expressed a strong sense of belonging to the area.\(^{30}\) ‘I dug my heels in’ (V2.6c) occurred during sub-session two of the interviews after I asked Jessica how she felt when she first came to Ballyfermot from the city centre. In the evaluative clauses Jessica employed the direct reconstructed speech of her son to convey her desire to stay in her home until she dies. In the coda statements Jessica argued that her memories were entrenched in her home and she

\(^{30}\) See ‘Neighbours’ (V2.6b) in Volume 2.
remained in contact with her life history through her physical contact with her environment.

Jessica's husband featured regularly in her narrative and she conveyed an idealistic image of him. 'He was A1' (V2.6d) occurred during sub-session two of the interviews when I prompted Jessica to talk about when she first met her husband. In the orientation clauses of the story Jessica conveyed the romance through her suggestion in line 4 of fate and her singling out her husband from a crowd. This romance was further conveyed through her recollection of their elicit relationship and how she plotted with her sister so that she could see him without her parents knowledge. Jessica's portrayal of her happy marriage and love for her husband was strongly conveyed in her recollection of nursing him after his first stroke. In the orientation clauses to 'Nursing' (V2.6e) Jessica recollected the circumstances of her husband's first stroke and the rehabilitative care she provided afterwards. She expressed a sense of pride in her care in line 8 when she remembered how she taught her husband to talk and walk following the stroke. Jessica emphasised the positive aspects of her life with her husband at this time through repetition of words such as 'wonderful' and 'smile' as well as reference to their achievements in rehabilitation after the stroke. The turning point of the narrative occurred at lines 16-18 when Jessica recollected a conversation with her daughter in which they noted her husband's decline heralding his second, terminal stroke.

Jessica's depiction of her life beginning when she met her husband and her positive portrayal of their marriage was linked to her description of her early life in sub-session two. In 'I was a skivvy' (V2.6g) Jessica conveyed the hardship of her childhood and the lack of opportunities available to her. In line 2 Jessica described herself with humour as 'the shakings of the bag' in reference to her 13 older siblings. While Jessica referred to the lack of state intervention in terms of truant inspectors and she also argued that she was a 'skivvy' to her mother, she did so without much bitterness. This story was told with a degree of humour and in line 8 she argued that her lack of education didn't do her any harm while at the
same time she acknowledged her regret. This story goes some way to explain why Jessica viewed her life beginning with her husband.

Jessica worked hard during her life and continued to work as a seamstress after she was married. ‘I kept myself going’ (V2.6h) occurred immediately after ‘I was a skivvy’ during sub-session two. In the story abstract she spoke about combining rearing her children with her seamstress work which was undertaken under the shadow of eviction. In the orientation clauses of the story Jessica provided the examples of two evictions of families which occurred after she first moved to Ballyfermot. Jessica conveyed an image of families and particularly women under huge pressure to provide for their children. The turning point of the story occurred at line 14 when Jessica changed scene and time orientation to conclude the story of one particular family who were evicted and who lived in extreme poverty. Jessica spoke about meeting the mother recently at an event for older people in the community and discovering that the family had succeeded despite their eviction. In lines 25-26 Jessica attributed this achievement to the mother of the family.

Jessica acknowledged her depression quite early in sub-session one of the interviews. She explained that this depression first arose after the death of her husband. It had recently been exacerbated following the death of her son from a brain tumour and also her estrangement from another son.31 ‘To bury one of your children’ (V2.6i) occurred during sub-session two of the interviews and Jessica spoke about coping with her grief. In the evaluation clauses Jessica spoke about how she had lost faith in a lot of things since his death in particular going out and socialising with her friends.

During sub-session three of the interviews Jessica spoke about her social activities. In ‘I’d love to wave a wand’ (V2.6k) Jessica juxtaposed two images of herself in two scenes. In the orientation clauses she presented an image of herself as outgoing and fearless in her socialising. The turning point at line 9 marked the transition to her second image of herself as lonely and miserable. In the coda statements, this scene was associated with long evenings alone at home. In her evaluation she spoke about the conflict she experienced between these two selves and how she desired to be

31 See 'Maybe someday he'll knock on the door' (V2.6j) in Volume 2.
transformed back to the person she was before her son died. This conflict between Jessica’s outgoing nature and her depression was a common theme in her discussion of her social activities. ‘If I wanted to, I’d do it’ (V2.6m) occurred in sub-session three and Jessica juxtaposed two images of herself and conveyed her fun loving nature which she found difficult to reconcile with her disheartened self.

Jessica’s retreat from her previous life on account of her grief for her son extended to her discussion of her faith in sub-session three. In ‘I don’t have the heart’ (V2.6n) Jessica depicted a version of herself as somebody who would never have stayed away from mass even while she was caring for her husband. The turning point of the story at line 6 identified a rupture between this previous self and her current self since the death of her son. In line 6 Jessica was keen to point out that this rupture did not pertain to her faith as such and she argued that she still goes into churches but prefers to be alone. In the coda statements Jessica brought an end to the story by referencing the recent church scandals which she argued had knocked a lot of people from their faith.

Jessica’s scored below the mean for the life satisfaction measures. Furthermore, her stories (n=31) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was below the sample mean. These low levels of life satisfaction and emotional tone were evidenced in her narrative stories which concerned her on-going depression and self-imposed social isolation. Her narrative conveyed a sense of the person she was prior to the death of her husband and son and she revealed her strong sense of hedonic joy and her happy marriage. Jessica’s contrast between her childhood and her happy marriage illustrated how previous negative life events can be used to enhance an experience in a different life domain. The strongest motivational theme in Jessica’s stories was communion. Her stories were attributed a score for communion which was above the sample mean. This was evidenced by her depiction of her very strong sense of community attachment and satisfaction in her role as carer for her children, when they were young, and for her husband after his stroke. Jessica’s stories concerning her
depression were indicative of her inability to rebound from recent negative life events including the death of her son.

4.3.2 The case studies of the female participants categorised as having high well-being

Case study seven: Debbie

Debbie was born in 1927 in North County Dublin; she was 82 at the time the interviews took place. Her father was a farmer and mother taught at the local national primary school. Debbie was unusual among the participants in that she stayed in school until she was 17 and completed her secondary intermediate certificate examinations. When she finished school she took up employment as a shop assistant in the city centre. At 21, Debbie married her husband who was a navy seaman and they moved into rented accommodation in the north inner city. Following the birth of their third child when Debbie was 25, she and her husband were allocated housing by the corporation in Ballyfermot. They had six children in total, three of whom are currently still living in Ballyfermot. Debbie’s husband died when her youngest child was nine years of age, she was 45 and she never remarried. Following the death of her husband she resumed working as a shop assistant and continued working full-time until retirement when she was 63. She is now in receipt of a state pension and she owns her own home where one of her daughters still lives with her.

Debbie was introduced to me by her daughter who volunteers for the senior citizen’s forum in Ballyfermot. The interviews took place in her kitchen. Her house was modernised with a kitchen extension and a decked terrace in the back garden. Debbie was initially anxious about doing this interview and upon arrival to her house both her daughter and her son were there as Debbie was nervous that she might not be able to supply me with enough information. However, once I explained clearly what I was doing and that I really was just interested in her story she relaxed a little bit and her son left us to it. Her daughter did remain with us during both interviews but she didn’t interrupt.

Debbie’s stories relating to her widowhood struck a chord with me as I related it to my own mother’s experience of being widowed very young and rearing a family on her own. During the break at the end of the first sub-
session, when the recorder was switched off, I told Debbie this. My telling her seemed like a natural thing to do as it was a shared experience. When Debbie spoke again about her experience of widowhood in the second sub-session she acknowledging our shared understanding of resiliency and the necessity of coping with life’s difficulties.

Debbie rated her health as 'good' and she obtained a score of 33 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviation above the mean for the participants (\(M=27.40, SD=7.16, \text{Range:}12, 35\)). She obtained an overall score of 28 on the LSI which was within two standard deviations above the sample mean (\(M=21.55, SD=3.35, \text{Range:}16, 28\)). The stories (n=19) identified from Debbie's interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Debbie obtained a score of 3.89 for emotional tone, this was above the sample mean (\(M=3.31, SD=.46\)) and a score of .45 for narrative complexity, this was below the sample mean (\(M=.57, SD=.12\)). The three motivational themes of her stories were assessed as follows: Debbie's stories scored highest for the motivational theme of agency; they were attributed a score of 1.16 for this theme which was above the sample mean (\(M=.84, SD=.28\)). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Aoife's stories was communion; her stories were attributed a score of 1 for this theme which was below the sample mean (\(M=1.21, SD=.21\)). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Aoife's stories was personal growth. Her stories received a score of .74 for personal growth which was below the sample mean (\(M=.92, SD=.21\)).

Debbie's narrative (V2.3, pp. 29-35)

A total of 19 stories were identified from Debbie's interview material. Of these, 9 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for her life narrative (V2.3). Early in sub-session one of the interviews, Debbie spoke about coming to Ballyfermot after she married. In 'A bit of quietness' (V.2.3a) Debbie impressed upon me that although she was initially reluctant to move to Ballyfermot she quickly settled into it and would never want to leave it now. In 'A bit of quietness' the contrast Debbie made between the 'wilds' and 'darkness' of Ballyfermot and the urban
civility and settled living of the city centre was quite striking. In lines 6-11 she remembered wheeling her pram on the paved streets in the sunshine chatting to the community of older people who were sitting outside and drinking stout. In the complicating action of the story Debbie provided a wonderful image of ‘coming out from town with all lights...’ and ‘coming into darkness!’ (of Ballyfermot). However, in telling the story Debbie revealed her resilience and ability to adapt to things. This provided a glimpse of the character that she fully revealed later in her narrative when talking about widowhood early in life.

Debbie’s narrative revealed her strong sense of loyalty to Ballyfermot. At times she seemed almost defensive about her praise for the area and was keen to paint a picture of a strong community and her attachment to it. ‘To have someone at the back of you’ (V2.3c) arose during sub-session one of the interviews. It followed a story in which Debbie talked about being regularly recognised by young people in the community because of her work in the local sweet shop. The orientation clauses of ‘To have someone at the back of you’ depicted a strong connection among the women and children. Debbie noted people shared with each other and everybody was in the same boat. These clauses created a sense of female comradeship and mutual support through the repeated use of ‘her’ or ‘she’ as well as the mention of Debbie’s mother. In the complicating action Debbie revealed that this sense of community and sharing among the women was necessitated by the common experience of financial hardship. In clause 15 Debbie’s statement ‘you had to have someone at the back of you’ contained the central point of her story which was to acknowledge that the circumstances at the time meant that people, and particularly women, had to rely on one another and on their families to manage. In the coda of the story Debbie attributed this experience of inter-dependence among the community to her current sense of attachment and belonging. Again the reference to her pram in line 23 echoed the depiction of a community of women and children in the orientation clauses.

32 See ‘We remember you’ (V2.3b) in Volume 2.
The experience of widowhood early in her life was a strong feature of Debbie’s narrative. In her stories, Debbie provided insight into her resiliency and there was evidence for self-understanding and coming to terms with life. In ‘I had to cope’ Debbie created a strong sense of determination and resilience through the repetitive use of ‘had to’ or ‘have to’ throughout the story. Debbie’s evaluation depicted her drawing strength from her past and from the resources within her to cope with life. She argued that the example provided by her grandmother, who was also widowed young, and her experience of hardship during her early life gave her the resources to cope with life’s difficulties.

During sub-session three of the interviews Debbie spoke about the experience of growing older and her strong self-confidence. In ‘You’ve got to use your own head’ (V2.3f) Debbie argued that her life experiences, particularly the experience of widowhood, required her to develop this confidence. Debbie conveyed a very strong sense of self-reliance and independence in the story. This emphasis was achieved through the constant repetition throughout the story of ‘you’. Debbie interpreted her sense of being alone with responsibility and duty as contributing to her self-confidence. The complicating action of the story occurred at lines 6-9 when Debbie depicted herself sitting down and facing the reality that she had to depend upon herself to rear her children and she had to have the confidence to make her own decisions. This was echoed in the coda statements in which Debbie re-iterated that self-confidence was essential for her to get through her life.

While Debbie’s narrative revealed her tough and resilient ability to cope with life’s difficulties, she also emphasised her fun-loving attitude and vibrant sense of humour. ‘Everybody should have fun’ (V2.3h) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews when Debbie was talking about ageing and the importance of not being afraid. ‘Everybody should have fun’ provided evidence for Debbie’s central point which was that older people

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33 See ‘I had to cope’ (V2.3d) and ‘You just have to’ (V2.3e) in Volume 2.
should not be afraid to enjoy themselves. The story effectively conveyed Debbie's own attitude and her strong sense of freedom and 'devilment'.

Debbie's narrative revealed a sense of satisfaction with life which she attributed to her focus on the present and her acceptance of whatever the future may hold. 'I don't plan nothing' (V2.3i) occurred at the end of sub-session three of the interviews. Debbie's evaluation statements and her coda in the story portrayed an easy going attitude which might seem to contrast with the determination and strong resilience that was demonstrated in her recollections of widowhood. However, clause 12 crucially revealed that this attitude was a result of her life experiences which taught her that 'none of us don't know' what the future holds and therefore to plan is futile.

Debbie's scored above the group means for the life satisfaction measures and she rated her health as 'good'. Furthermore, the emotional tone in Debbie's stories (n=19) was attributed a score above the sample mean. These high levels of well-being and emotional tone were evidenced in stories which conveyed her self-confidence and her strong sense of fun and hedonic well-being. The strongest motivational theme in Debbie's stories was agency and this was reflected in her life narrative, particularly in the stories which concerned her experience of young widowhood and of rearing her family alone. Debbie revealed her very strong sense of internal locus of control and her high self-esteem and confidence in her ability to cope with life's adversities. Debbie's stories were attributed scores below the sample mean for narrative complexity and the motivational themes of personal growth. However, her narrative stories illustrated her ability to interpret life events in relation to growth, personal meaning and challenge. This featured particularly in her discussion of widowhood as well as ageing.

Case study eight: Emma

Emma was born in 1935 and was 74 at the time of the interviews. Her father was employed in the Irish Army and was very active during Ireland's war of independence and the civil war in the 1920's. Emma's father's first wife died leaving their four children, one of whom also died aged four years. Her father then married Emma's mother and when Emma was just 10 months old her mother died also. As a result she and her step-brothers and sisters were separated and reared by different families. Emma
stayed with her father but was, for the most part, cared for by a neighbouring family. She grew up in Drimnagh; an area close to Ballyfermot that was developed during the 1930's as part of a state initiative to address a housing shortage. She finished her education when she was 16 and she began working as a seamstress.

Emma’s father died in 1957 when Emma was 22. During his final illness Emma nursed her father at home with the assistance of community based nuns. Emma was inspired by the dedication of the nuns and she decided to join the sisterhood shortly after her father died. Her life in the Little Sisters of the Assumption provided her with nursing training and she worked throughout her life, on a voluntary basis, in community development and social work. When she turned 70 she officially retired from voluntary community work. However, since 1999 she has resided in a Dublin Corporation housing estate in Ballyfermot which was a pilot scheme for a community development initiative. She and a fellow sister provided support to the residents and Emma remained very active in the Ballyfermot community. Emma worked throughout her life on a voluntary unpaid basis. At the time of the interviews she was in receipt of a non-contributory state pension and was acquiring her house from the local authority.

Emma heard about my project from another research participant. The interview with Emma took place at her home. She spoke of the devastating poverty that she witnessed in Ballyfermot when she first became a nun. She told me about the work that was undertaken by the nuns to provide care and some sort of welfare to the community. This was in a time before welfare state policies had reached this community and the government left much of the care for citizens in the hands of the Catholic Church. Emma provided incredible insights into the Ballyfermot community from the perspective of a development worker.

Emma rated her health as ‘good’ and she obtained a score of 31 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviation above the mean for the participants (M= 27.40, SD=7.16, Range:12, 35). She obtained an overall score of 25 on the LSI which was just within two standard deviations above
the sample mean \( (M=21.55, SD=3.35, \text{Range}:16, 28) \). The stories \( (n=28) \) identified from Emma’s interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Emma obtained a score of 3.23 for emotional tone, this was below the sample mean \( (M=3.31, SD=.46) \) and a score of .57 for narrative complexity, this matched the sample mean \( (M=.57, SD=.12) \). The three motivational themes of her stories were assessed as follows: Emma’s stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.29 for this theme which was above the sample mean \( (M=1.21, SD=.21) \). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Emma’s stories was personal growth; her stories were attributed a score of .88 for this theme which was close to the sample mean \( (M=.92, SD=.2) \). Finally, the lowest scoring motivational theme in Emma’s stories was agency. Her stories received a score of .91 for agency which was above the sample mean \( (M=.84, SD=.28) \).

Emma’s narrative (V2.4, pp. 35-43)

A total of 28 stories were identified from Emma’s interview material. Of these, 12 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for her life narrative (V2.4). Emma’s narrative conveyed her very strong sense of concern and care for people and for communities. Through her vocation and her training in nursing and social work she spent much of her life working within and on behalf of communities. As a result a lot of her narrative was devoted to stories which portrayed her commitment to the development and progression of people.34 ‘People getting control over their lives’ (V2.4a) was one of the first stories Emma told me during sub-session one of our interviews. She described her work in community development and training and her sense of being integrated into the community. ‘People getting control over their lives’ shifted between three different scenes in Emma’s life, each of which was centred on her role in community: her working life (3-7), her current role in the provision of support (8-14) and her participation in personal development programmes for older people (15-21). The story conveyed her strong commitment to and involvement with community throughout her life.

34 See ‘Community Development Training’ (V2.4b) and ‘Where the Celtic Tiger got in’ (V2.4h) in Volume 2.
Through her narrative Emma conveyed to me her deep sense of care for the world and particularly for people. ‘You can only do your bit’ (V2.4c) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews in response to my question which asked Emma if she had concerns or worries in her life now. The orientation clauses of the story presented Emma’s global concerns and worries for the country and for the church. The evaluation clauses revealed her desire to effect change for people which would have implications for these broader global issues. However, the resolution provided insight into the mechanism Emma used to prevent herself being overwhelmed with these global worries. Emma recognised the limited sphere in which she can exercise change and had an understanding of what is possible for her to do. This was emphasised through her repetition of ‘you can’ and ‘you can’t’ throughout the story.

Emma found outlet for her strong desire to effect change and to improve lives through her commitment to the education and support of people. Many of the stories in her narrative provided examples of people whom she had supported to make a positive change in their lives and she described her own sense of satisfaction at that. ‘Find your gifts’ (V2.4d) was the last story Emma told me during sub-session three in response to my question which elicited advice from Emma for young people. The story conveyed Emma’s belief in people’s potential for redemption and her belief in their essential goodness and innate giftedness. Her emphasis on gifts in the abstract hinted at the Christian message of redemption which was delivered in the story. Emma suggested an interventionist God through her emphasis on gifts as well as the mention of a deceased mother looking over the man in the complicating action. In clauses 17-23 she portrayed her commitment to encourage people to recognise and develop the gifts that God provided and thereby redeem themselves and make ‘a go of life’.

Emma’s concern for the development and care of people was connected to her Christian faith and her vocation with a Catholic order of nuns. ‘There was something drawing me’ (V2.4e) occurred during sub-session one of the interviews and Emma spoke about her decision to join the sisters following the death of her father. During the orientation clauses
of the story Emma spoke about being attracted by the kindness of the sisters and she noted that they were practical women. It was these traits which encouraged Emma to become a nun. Emma suggested in clause 15-16 an alternative life working for a dress designer. However, line 19 indicated that a vocational draw or calling was more powerful than her desire for this other life. In the evaluation clauses she recognised that she made the decision to become a nun quickly however there was a sense of satisfaction with her life. This satisfaction was consolidated in the coda which made the point that she was still there and still working with people.

Through her vocation Emma trained as a nurse and later became involved with community development and the establishment of home care initiatives and training. 'Out of the institution' (V2.4g) occurred during sub-session one of the interviews after Emma spoke about her life in the convent during her novitiate. In this story Emma described a very happy time in her life when she became involved in community development and found herself moving out from institutional life. In this story Emma conveyed a powerful sense of her freedom and her independence during this stage of her life. This freedom was emphasised through her repetition of 'out' during the orientation clauses (1-10). Her reference to her Honda motorcycle and later her car supported this image of her freedom and her happiness as she explored the different areas of Dun Laoghaire and County Clare. 'Out of the institution' contrasted with her previous story which described convent life when she was a novice.35 The complicating action in clause 11 conveyed the central point of this story which was to depict her life as 'normal' and undertaken outside of institutional walls. This positive experience of a working life ensured that Emma remained committed to community care and to creating bonds with her neighbours in order to provide support and friendship.

Emma's voluntary social work which she undertook as part of her vocation provided Emma with an outlet for her own sense of caring as well as great insights into the social welfare landscape of Ireland in the 1950's. 'The poverty was unbelievable' (V2.4i) occurred during sub-session two of our interviews when I prompted Emma to talk about her time as a young

35 See 'And I'm as human as anyone!' (V2.4f) in Volume 2.
novice in the convent in Ballyfermot. In the orientation clauses of the story Emma provided a description of the poverty that she encountered in Ballyfermot during the 1950's when she went into the community as a young novice to provide voluntary care to families. In the complicating action of the story Emma referenced the lack of state welfare intervention during the early to middle period of Irish history; this left a vacuum in social care which the Catholic Church filled, particularly Catholic nuns. The outcome of this was that Emma worked her whole life in providing community resources for care and development however this was always on a voluntary basis and as such was unpaid. The coda statement returned the perspective of the narrative to present day Ballyfermot and Emma acknowledged how far the community has come from its poverty stricken origins.

Emma's commitment to her vocation and her community care work meant that during her early life she was quite disconnected from her step-brothers and sister. 'Reconnecting with family' (V2.4j) occurred during sub-session two of the interview when Emma was discussing her life in the convent during her novitiate. She recalled that she wasn't encouraged to maintain a strong connection with her family and this meant that later in her life she found herself trying to reconnect and build new relationships with her family. The affirming aspects of this story were emphasised by Emma through her repetition of positive words in clauses 10-26. In her evaluation Emma recognised the personal benefit to her from the relationship she was able to forge with her brother before he died, in particular her current relationship with his grandchildren.

Emma's narrative conveyed her sense of an individual's responsibility to develop their innate gifts from God and their duty to create their happiness and fulfil their potential. 'Grow old as you've lived' (V2.4k) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews when Emma was discussing growing older. This story conveys Emma's philosophy which highlights the power people have to make their lives happy if they choose to

36 See 'And I'm as human as anyone!' (V2.4f) in Volume 2.
do so. In the story Emma spoke about taking on the words of advice given
to her by a wise woman and creating a mantra; ‘you grow old as you’ve
lived your life’. This mantra provided Emma with the code by which she
created a positive and happy later life. In the evaluation clauses (13-24)
Emma emphasised the agency that people have to ‘cope with life’ and ‘keep
the bright side out’. Emma recognised the continuity of ageing and the
importance of nurturing a positive attitude throughout one’s life. The coda
transported the story to the present day in an acknowledgement of Emma’s
contented present.

Emma’s scored above the group mean for the life satisfaction
measures and she rated her health as ‘good’. This was evidenced in her
stories which revealed her strong sense of achievement particularly in
relation to her role supporting people and communities to develop. Emma’s
stories which emphasised an individual’s responsibility to fulfill their potential
conveyed her very strong sense of internal locus of control. However, the
emotional tone in Emma’s stories (n=28) was attributed a score below the
sample mean. This could be explained by the orientation in her stories
towards an exploration of meaning and purpose, which may not have been
reflected in the scoring for the emotional tone index. All three motivational
themes in Emma’s stories were attributed scores either above or matching
the sample mean. The highest scoring theme was communion and this was
evidenced in her stories which concerned her commitment communities and
her strong sense of concern and care for people. In her reflection upon the
experience of ageing Emma emphasised life course continuity and the
importance of personal attitude.

Case study nine: Mabel

Mabel was born in 1931 and was 78 at the time the interviews took
place. She was born and reared in the Liberties area of Dublin city and she
was the youngest of six children. Her mother died in childbirth with Mabel
and she and her older brother were fostered by her aunt. When she was 7
her father went to England to find work. Mabel left school when she was 14
and began work in a knitwear factory. When she was 20 she married and
three years later she and her husband were allocated housing in
Ballyfermot after their tenement accommodation was condemned. Mable
had eight children in total, one of whom was still living in Ballyfermot. Mable gave up work upon marriage in order to rear her children. Her husband worked as a packer and delivery man in a bicycle factory and later a jewellery shop. He retired when he was 62 and, at the time of the interviews, Mabel and her husband continued to live in their home in Ballyfermot. She and her husband owned their home, having availed of a tenant purchase scheme and Mabel was in receipt of a non-contributory state pension.

Mabel contacted me about participating in the study after receiving a newsletter which provided information about the research. The interviews with Mable took place in her home in the front parlour. On the walls, book shelves and mantelpiece of the room there were quite a lot of Catholic images and icons, as well as two African carvings. I later learned that one of Mabel's sons was a Jesuit Priest who had worked for some time in Africa. Behind the couch on the wall there was a portrait of Mabel's granddaughter who had lived with her for a time when she was a child. Also on the wall beside the fireplace was a large family portrait. Mabel gave me a DVD, made by her son, which contained an interview with Mabel about her foster mother who she clearly loved very much. Mabel seemed very comfortable in the interview setting, probably because she had done a life history interview before with her son.

During the interview with Mabel her husband came into the room and joined us. This was a little bit difficult as he wanted to contribute to the interview. I then asked him if I could come back another time to interview him explaining that I prefer to interview people one at a time. He apologised for interrupting and agreed to do a separate interview with me at another date. He remained in the room however, and occasionally did interject. It was interesting how the two of them told their stories together and there was a strong sense of collaborative narrative accrual between the two of them.

Mable rated her health as 'good' and she obtained a score of 33 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviation above the mean for the
participants \((M=27.40, SD=7.16, \text{Range:}12, 35)\). She obtained an overall score of 22 on the LSI which was within one standard deviation above the sample mean \((M=21.55, SD=3.35, \text{Range:}16, 28)\). The stories \((n=22)\) identified from Mable's interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Mable obtained a score of 3.61 for emotional tone, this was above the sample mean \((M=3.31, SD=.46)\) and a score of .55 for narrative complexity, this was close to the sample mean \((M=.57, SD=.12)\). The three motivational themes of her stories were assessed as follows: Mable's stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.59 for this theme which was above the sample mean \((M=1.21, SD=.21)\). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Mabel's stories was personal growth; her stories were attributed a score of .91 for this theme which matched the sample mean \((M=.92, SD=.21)\). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Mable's stories was agency. Her stories received a score of .68 for agency which was below the sample mean \((M=.84, SD=.28)\).

Mabel's Narrative (V2.8, pp. 73-80)

A total of 22 stories were identified from Mabel's interview material. Of these, 12 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for her life narrative (V2.8). Mabel began her narrative in sub-session one with a story about how she met her husband. ‘*I didn’t like him at first*’ (V2.8a) was constructed as an archetypal love story in which Mable was pursued and reluctantly won over by her husband. The orientation clauses of the story established the context for the complicating action or turning point in which Mabel began her relationship with her husband. This context depicted Mabel as the object of one man's possessiveness and depicted her husband as the kind hero. The resolution clauses depicted the archetype of the reluctant woman and the male pursuer. The evaluation clauses presented the evidence for Mabel's eventual submission. Mabel found joy from describing her playful and almost petulant rejections of her husband despite his kindness and her mother's fondness for him.

‘*That's how we ended here*’ (V2.8b) arose in Mabel's narrative immediately after ‘*I didn’t like him at first*’ and she explained how herself and husband came to live in Ballyfermot moving from the Liberties area of
Dublin. In the orientation clauses Mabel described their simple and unadorned honeymoon which consisted of a day trip with their bridesmaid and best man to Bray, a seaside town south of Dublin. Mabel went on to explain how they purposely inhabited a condemned tenement in order to be allocated corporation housing. In the orientation clauses Mabel suggested the sense of community that existed in the inner city of her youth. The neighbours and friends who witnessed their wedding were in their room to welcome them back from their honeymoon (clause 16). The complicating action of the story described how a local business woman plotted for them to get allocated corporation housing.

Mabel went on in her narrative to describe how she and her husband settled into Ballyfermot and she noted her very good neighbours. In 'The community games' (V2.8c) Mabel described her husband's community activism, in particular the initiative he started in Ballyfermot which provided an annual day out for the Ballyfermot children. This initiative led to the establishment of the community games in the area which was an inter-community sports gala for young people. The story clearly conveyed Mabel's pride in her husband as well as her sense of their place in the community through her reference to the recognition they still get from the Ballyfermot people.

The circumstances of Mabel's childhood family was a strong feature of her narrative. 'I forgive you' (V2.8d) was a powerful depiction of loss and forgiveness. In the first scene of the story (clauses 8-15) Mabel remembered a film star being pointed out to her as he resembled her father. This scene was strongly evocative of a sense of yearning. The next major scene was instigated by the complicating action of her father's return when Mabel was 25. Her subsequent description of the awkward scene in her kitchen when she struggled to react appropriately to him conveyed Mabel's anxiety. While the story was reduced for the purposes of creating Mabel's narrative, in the original transcript Mabel described in detail the disruption among her siblings that was caused by her father's return. After his death there was a rift over the inheritance which was denied to her dead brother's wife who Mabel felt deserved it. The reference in lines 3 and 35 to the half-
crown that was her father's parting gift to Mabel and her repeated reference to not wanting anything from her father were symbolic of her sense of hurt as well as her resilience. The sources for this resilience were conveyed in the resolution clauses which described the final scene of the story; the church at her father's funeral. It was a powerful scene and Mabel invoked the resources for forgiveness provided by her happy childhood.

Mabel's foster mother was a very important character in her narrative and she appeared frequently in different stories as a kind guide and a source of love. In 'A great childhood' (V2.8e) Mabel conveyed her happy childhood and in particular the love she received from her foster mother. The orientation clauses of the story established the first story scene in which Mabel vividly recalled her childhood self as she fixated on the doll in the shop window. Her recollection of the dolls clothes in clause 9 provided immediacy to the memory. Mabel's use of the reconstructed direct speech in clauses 11-14 and 19 conveyed her own childish innocence as well as the maternal warmth of her foster mother. The second scene of the story arose after the complicating action of discovering the doll was gone from the window and it depicted the chimney in her home and her letter to Santa. Her reference to the fire lighting in clause 21 and her childlike prayers further conveyed her innocence as well as the warmth of her home. Finally, the resolution consolidated the archetypal Christmas story when Santa did provide the longed for gift and Mabel noted the how this happy memory stayed with her always.

Mabel's strong religious faith was another dominant theme of her narrative and it was linked to various events in her life as a method of providing a source of meaning. 'Messages from God' (V2.8g) occurred at the end of sub-session two of her narrative when she spoke about her illnesses during her life. The story conveyed Mabel's belief in divine intervention and miracles. In the abstract of the story Mabel recalled her husband appealing for the help of a particular saint in the recovery of Mabel from post-natal complications. Her conclusion in line 15 confirmed her belief that her recovery was a miracle related to her husband's appeal for intervention. The subsequent story repeated this message of the power of

37 See 'She was very good' (V2.8f) in Volume 2.
the divine. In clause 23 Mabel used the direct reconstructed speech of the mysterious woman she encountered in the hospital while being treated for an aneurism. This facilitated Mabel to emphasise her message of divine power. Her coda statement consolidated this message and allowed her to interpret her dream in light of the events that occurred during her illness. This provided a means for Mabel to understand her illness and to show resiliency in her recovery.

Mabel’s narrative also served to construct an image of herself as the maternal carer and her children and grandchildren were an important source of happiness for Mabel. ‘Always presents under the tree’ (V2.8h) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews during a discussion of social contact and engagement. The story served to emphasise Mabel’s close relationship with her family and in particular with her young grandchildren. The story was told in the context of a discussion of a recent state economic policy to withdraw the Christmas bonus which topped up older people’s state pension. In the story Mabel emphasised the importance for older people of being able to buy presents particularly for their families as it provided them with joy and a source of engagement. The complicating action of the story facilitated Mabel to depict the happy scene in her home on Christmas morning surrounded by all her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The good relationship with her family that Mabel enjoyed also featured in her discussion of ageing. ‘The mother-in-law in a home’ (V2.8l) arose during sub-session three of the interviews after Mabel spoke about her feeling that time was going by very quickly and her fear of bodily decline with age. In the story abstract Mabel acknowledged the fear and isolation experienced by some older people. The orientation clauses of the story however depicted a friend of Mabel’s who regretted her decision to move out of her home to live with her daughter. The story of this friend was used by Mabel to provide evidence for Mabel’s desire to remain in her own home. In the complicating action of the story Mabel used the direct speech of this

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38 See ‘Sure we won’t see that’ (V2.8k) in Volume 2.
woman emphasise the lesson to be learnt from this friend's experiences. In her evaluation she also noted the importance of allowing her children to live their lives and the difference in the relationship between a mother-in-law and a mother. The story provided a credible image of Mabel as autonomous and in control of her life and the decisions about her future.

Mabel scored above the group mean for the life satisfaction measures and she rated her health as 'good'. Furthermore, her stories (n=22) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was above the sample mean. These high levels of life satisfaction and emotional tone were evidenced in Mabel's stories which concerned her happy marriage and her strong sense of community belonging. The highest scoring motivational theme in her stories was communion and this was reflected in her strong community attachment as well as her emphasis on her maternal caring role. Mabel's stories were attributed a score for narrative complexity and the motivational theme of personal growth which matched the sample means. This was reflected in her ability to reconcile negative life experiences with her overall assessment of her life as being happy. In particular, Mable drew on the resources of her happy childhood and marriage as well as her strong religiosity for resiliency in the face of illness and the experience of her father's neglect. These resources facilitated Mable to find meaning and purpose for these negative experiences and events and thereby facilitate growth.

Case study ten: Sally

Sally, who was 78 at the time the interviews took place, was born in 1931. Her father was a coach builder and he and Sally's mother decided to adopt Sally and her sister later in their lives, after they had Sally's two brothers. Sally finished school at primary level when she was 12 and two years later she began working in a sweet shop. Later she took up employment in a foundry in the inner city before she married at the age of 29. Sally had her first child when she was 34 and she and her husband were allocated housing in Ballyfermot after their city tenement accommodation was condemned. They had five children, one of whom remained living in Ballyfermot. Sally gave up full time work after the birth of her first child however she continued to work intermittently in order to
supplement the family income. This work consisted of knitting, which she undertook from her home, and she was a home help assistant for older people. In 1995 when she was 64 Sally returned to education and she obtained her Leaving Certificate examinations. She subsequently studied art in Ballyfermot College and she went on to obtain a third level diploma in art from Dun Laoghaire College. During this time in her life she began to search for her birth mother who she found and developed a relationship with before her birth mother died. Sally’s husband died in 2000 and she remained living alone in their house in Ballyfermot, which she owned, having availed of a purchase scheme. She was in receipt of a state pension.

The interviews with Sally took place in her home in Ballyfermot. I met Sally through the local senior citizen’s forum, where she is an active member. Sally’s house was the only house that I visited that was still in its original form; there was no extension at the rear of the house. Upon entering Sally’s house I noticed that the walls in the hallway were covered with photographs. It was the same in the sitting area, beside the kitchen, where the interviews took place. Every inch of the walls contained a photo, a newspaper cutting, certificate, or a piece of her artwork. Most of the material related to herself and her family. Knitting wool and needles were also piled up on the chairs and Sally showed me some of her work, which included a throw on the sofa. During the interviews she worked on a little hat and glove set for her son and his wife who were expecting a baby. Sally produced two very large folders full of documents and photographs which she went through during the interview to help jog her memory. These folders contained an enormous amount of material which covered her whole life right down to parking fines from 30 years ago! This struck me as quite strange at first but it began to make sense when she spoke about being adopted and her search for her birth mother and an understanding of her past and herself.

Sally rated her health as ‘good’ and she obtained a score of 33 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviation above the mean for the participants (\(M=27.40, \ SD=7.16, \ Range:12, \ 35\)). She obtained an overall
score of 25 on the LSI which was within two standard deviations above the sample mean \((M=21.55, SD=3.35, \text{Range:}16, 28)\). The stories \((n=27)\) identified from Sally’s interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Sally obtained a score of 3.46 for emotional tone, this was above the sample mean \((M=3.31, SD=.46)\) and a score of .39 for narrative complexity, this was below the sample mean \((M=.57, SD=.12)\). The three motivational themes of her stories were assessed as follows: Sally’s stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.24 for this theme which matched the sample mean \((M=1.21, SD=.21)\). The next highest scoring theme in Sally’s stories was agency. Her stories were attributed a score of 1.04 for agency which was above the sample mean \((M=.84, SD=.28)\). Finally her stories were attributed a score of .96 for personal growth which was close to the sample mean \((M=.92, SD=.21)\).

Sally’s Narrative (V2.9, pp. 81-91)

A total of 27 stories were identified from Sally’s interview material. Of these, 13 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for her life narrative (V2.9). Sally began her narrative at the start of her life when she spoke about being adopted. ‘How I started my life’ (V2.9a) was split between three scenes; the maternity hospital, a convent orphanage and her adopted family home. In the abstract of the story Sally referred to her search for the knowledge that she needed to construct the story of her adoption. This story was a jigsaw composed of second hand knowledge and Sally’s conjecture. In the complicating action of the story (clause 15), Sally employed the direct reported speech of the social worker and the priest in order to depict the external social values which surrounded her birth mother. Sally attributed a strong authoritarian and malign presence to the Catholic Church in this story. This was particularly evident in her references to the priest in the maternity hospital, the convent orphanage and the nuns who discriminated against her adopted sister in the coda. In clauses 19-21, Sally’s use of the past conditional ‘could have’ suggested an alternative imaginary life and it conveyed a sense of loss and regret. Clauses 25-28 however, suggested a warm relationship with her brother. The coda described the stigma of adoption and indicated a possible cause for the sense of regret that was conveyed in the story.
Sally's search for knowledge about the circumstances of her adoption was the dominant theme of her narrative. Her stories which concerned her birth mother were complex and emotionally charged with a pervading sense of loss, hurt and disappointment. Clause 11 in 'How I started my life' portrayed some of the resentment that Sally felt towards her birth mother which was picked up again in 'I was abandoned' (V2.9b) in sub-session two. In this story, Sally spoke about the sense of 'blackness' that pervaded her adult life and which drove her to start her journey and search for information regarding her birth mother. In this story Sally spoke about the disappointment she felt when she finally met her birth mother. This led to her expression of appreciation for the good upbringing she received from her adopted parents. The story was charged with emotions which were associated with her sense of abandonment, however, the reference to her children's different perspective (clauses 13-17) and to the good upbringing she had with her adopted family (clauses 38-46) also provided the story with a sense of resolution.

Sally provided a detailed account of her search and eventual discovery of her birth mother in 'Finding my birth mother' (V2.9c). The story was framed in relation to her quest for her original birth certificate and it conveyed a sense of catharsis and resolution. In the story Sally juxtaposed two families: Her own husband and children, who were unaware of her discovery; and the extended family of her birth mother, which she was integrating herself into after their reunion. Sally's decision to disassociate herself from her birth mother's family after her birth mother's death facilitated Sally's reintegration with her own family and particularly her children. The story coda, while recognising the strain on her marriage that was caused by her secret and by her husband's excessive drinking, conveyed a sense of resolution. This resolution was achieved by her reference to her children's acceptance of her. This reference to her children resonated with clauses 13-17 in 'I was abandoned' which expressed her fear of her children's rejection. Sally's acceptance by her children was juxtaposed to her feelings of discomfort and exclusion conveyed in clauses 45-48 of 'Finding my birth mother'.
In ‘First baby’ (V2.9d) Sally described her first pregnancy and she remembered her lack of knowledge and understanding of fertility and childbirth. In clauses 8-10, Sally emphasised that this ignorance was a feature of the times and she referred to women doing things ‘naturally’ in reference to their lack of knowledge about pregnancy. The repeated references to not knowing what was happening and her description of the pain she was in when she experienced complications in her pregnancy conveyed her fear and distress. In her discussion of her pregnancies, in particular her references to having five children in six years, Sally portrayed a world where women had little control over their fertility and had to accept the children as they came.  

During her narrative Sally conveyed a strong sense of loyalty and attachment to Ballyfermot which she had made her home. ‘Didn’t care what kind of a house’ (V2.9g) occurred during sub-session two of the interviews after I prompted Sally to describe Ballyfermot when she first arrived. In clauses 11 and 12, Sally described the remoteness of Ballyfermot from the inner city where she grew up and had lived until that point. In particular, she referenced the fact that once she was there she could not travel back to the city centre easily. The orientation clauses of the story described the gradual infrastructural progression of Ballyfermot and the increased amenities and services. The outcome and coda clauses of the story (27-31) emphasised Sally’s commitment to Ballyfermot and her home.

While Sally’s narrative strongly conveyed her commitment to remain in Ballyfermot in her later life, she also acknowledged that she went through a period of loneliness caused by social isolation. ‘I wasn’t always this way’(V2.9j) occurred during sub-session three during a discussion of social activities. Sally described her active social life but recognised that she had to reach out to avail of community based resources for social engagement. In the orientation clauses, Sally described enviously watching neighbours being collected for various community club meetings and activities. Sally’s reference to, ‘myself’ in clause 15 and to ‘I explained’ in clause 17, conveyed a sense of agency as Sally described reaching out for social engagement. The coda statement referred to her awareness of older people

39 See ‘Five children in six year’ (V2.9e) in Volume 2.
who are housebound and who remain isolated from community resources for social engagement.

In her narrative Sally was keen to portray her sense of contentment and happiness in later life. 'Confidence' (V2.9k) occurred during a discussion of ageing in sub-session three of the interviews. Sally associated her increased sense of happiness and confidence to her advancing age and life experience. In the orientation clauses, Sally's repeated references to the word 'gone' portrayed her sense of abandonment when her children began to leave her family home. In the complicating action or turning point of the story, Sally spoke about her present happiness which arose from greater understanding and learning. This understanding was conveyed in the evaluative clauses in which Sally was able to accept her children's departure as part of life's course. The resolution or outcome of the story was Sally's increased confidence and happiness.

During her narrative Sally spoke about the damage caused to her faith by the revelations regarding the abuses committed by Catholic clergy in Ballyfermot parish. In 'No fault with God' (V2.9m) Sally confirmed her faith in God and she spoke about maintaining this relationship despite her rejection of institutional religion. The story conveyed Sally's sense of betrayal and disgust at the particular abuses that were undertaken in the parish of Ballyfermot. The repetition throughout clauses 1-15 of negative words and phrases emphasised these feelings of disgust. However, clause 17 represented a language shift to the use of positive words which described Sally's personal faith and relationship with God. The coda of the story facilitated Sally to convey the supportive and comforting nature of this relationship. The shift from past to present tense in clauses 19-20 emphasised that Sally maintained this relationship and continued to draw sustenance from it.

Sally scored above the group mean for the life satisfaction measures and she rated her health as 'good'. Furthermore, her stories (n=27) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was above the sample mean. These high levels of life satisfaction and emotional tone were evidenced in
her narrative stories which conveyed her social integration and connectedness as well as her attachment to her community. In particular Sally’s discussion of the experience of ageing indicated her strong sense of agency and control in relation to her social connectedness. These aspects of her narrative were also reflected in the scoring for motivational theme whereby the highest scoring motivational theme in her stories was communion. Her stories were attributed scores for personal growth and agency which were above the sample means. This growth was particularly evident in her story of her discovery of her birth mother. The outcome for this journey of discovery for Sally was an overall sense of closure and the reaffirmation of her connection to a different life domain; her own family and in particular her children.

### 4.3.3 The case studies of the male participants categorised as having low well-being

**Case study eleven: Luke**

Luke was born in 1924 and was 86 at the time the interviews took place. He was born and reared in Inchicore which is an historic Dublin city suburb very close to Ballyfermot. Luke had 5 brothers and 3 sisters and his father was a railway worker in the Irish Rail works in Inchicore. Luke finished his education when he was 14 and he began work as a messenger boy in the city centre. He later went on to join his father working in the railway. When he was 28 he married and after a brief period living in an inner city tenement he and his wife were allocated ‘newly-wed’ housing in Ballyfermot. Luke and his wife had four children two of whom were living in Ballyfermot at the time of the interviews. Luke continued working in the railway until his retirement at age 64. At the time of the interviews he was in receipt of both a state and a private pension. Luke and his wife owned their house after availing of a tenant purchase scheme.

I was introduced to Luke through a local credit union chairperson who acted as a gatekeeper for some of the male participants for this study. The interviews were conducted in Luke’s home where he lived with his wife.

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40 The ‘newly-wed’ housing scheme was a state initiative of the 1950’s which attempted to address the housing shortage in Ireland during the immediate post-war period. The state allocated subsidised corporation housing in Dublin to newly married couples through a lottery draw.
and son. The first time I went to the house to introduce myself to Luke I also met his wife, she was very ill and on a respirator. We arranged for me to come to do the interviews with Luke at times when his wife goes to a day care centre. Luke was his wife’s full time carer and so these hours during the day three times a week were his only time off. In the interviews Luke spoke in great detail about his work with Irish Rail and in particular his memories of steam engines. He also talked about his love of running and his association with a local running club. Luke continued running right into his 80’s and only stopped running on the advice of his locum doctor. He showed me the cabinet in his sitting room which displayed all his medals and trophies which he got over the years for his running. There were also quite a few photographs of Luke and his family hanging on the walls and on shelving in the sitting room. In particular Luke drew my attention to three large portrait photographs of his three grandchildren. Luke later told me that he and his wife had lost contact with these grandchildren after the break-up of his son’s marriage. This was a cause of great regret for Luke. A few weeks after the interviews with Luke were finished I heard that his wife had died.

Luke rated his health as ‘fair’ and he obtained a score of 12 on the SWLS which was within three standard deviation below the mean for the participants ($M=27.40$, $SD=7.16$, Range:12, 35). He obtained an overall score of 21 on the LSI which just below the sample mean ($M=21.55$, $SD=3.35$, Range:16, 28). The stories (n=16) identified from Luke’s interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Luke obtained a score of 2.88 for emotional tone, this was below the sample mean ($M=3.31$, $SD=.46$) and a score of .50 for narrative complexity, this was below the sample mean ($M=.57$, $SD=.12$). The three motivational themes of his stories were assessed as follows: Luke’s stories obtained matching scores for the motivation themes of agency and communion. His stories were attributed a score of .88 for agency which was above the sample mean ($M=.84$, $SD=.28$). Similarly, his stories obtained a score of .88 for communion which was below the sample mean ($M=1.21$, $SD=.21$). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Luke’s stories was personal growth. His stories
received a score of .63 for personal growth which was below the sample mean ($M=.92$, $SD=.21$).

Luke’s narrative (V2.16, pp. 142-147)

A total of 16 stories were identified from Luke’s interview material. Of these, 8 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for his life narrative (V2.16). Luke spent 43 years of his life working in the railway which was based in Inchicore close by to Ballyfermot. Much of his narrative was taken up with lengthy descriptions of his working life and in particular his work with steam engines. In the orientation clauses of ‘To know the engine like a person’ (V2.16b) Luke described his work with steam engines. While the clauses arose in the context of explaining how hard the work was there was a sense of mastery conveyed in his recognition of the skill that was involved. In these clauses Luke emphasised that no engine was the same and a large part of his job was knowing each engine ‘like you knew a person’. The turning point of the story arose at clause 17 when Luke spoke about the introduction of diesel engines. In his evaluation statements Luke recognised that there was no skill involved in working with the diesel engines and he acknowledged that while steam engine work was harder there was greater enjoyment from it.

A second predominant theme of Luke’s narrative was his running. Luke took up running and joined a club when he was 34 and he continued running until he was 83. He was clearly passionate about running and had won awards for numerous marathons and half marathons.\textsuperscript{41} In the orientation clauses of ‘The running club’ (V2.16d) Luke established his running achievements and he explained that in the later years he continued running a few miles a week. However the complicating action of the story revealed that due to a change in doctors and a new prescription he had to abruptly stop running. In the coda statement Luke recognised that his caring role for his wife prevented him from taking up alternative social activities.

Luke’s family life was also an important theme in this narrative. He explained that he and his wife reared their four children in Ballyfermot having won a draw with the corporation for a house early in their marriage.

\textsuperscript{41} See ‘My life was down to running’ (V2.16c) in Volume 2.
He recalled the difficulty his wife had coming out to Ballyfermot from the city centre and coping with the distance and isolation from her family.\(^{42}\) During sub-session three Luke revealed that he had become estranged from his only three grandchildren. In 'Missing grandchildren' (V2.16f) Luke described the circumstances of this estrangement. In the opening line of the story Luke drew my attention to three photographs of his grandchildren which were hanging on the wall in the sitting room. The orientation statements established that neither he nor his wife had seen these children in five years. In the complicating action of the story Luke revealed that with the encouragement of his brother he went to court to gain access to the children, the result of which was the disappearance of his daughter-in-law with his grandchildren. The outcome clauses of the story revealed that Luke’s son was currently living with Luke and his wife while he looked for a new job.

Luke was his wife’s full-time carer and he explained that due to this caring role he was quite restricted in his social activities. He discussed the lack of options for older men in terms of community based social outlets and he described the various social clubs which his wife was involved in.\(^{43}\) In 'Not too up on things' (V2.16g) Luke explained that due to his caring role and the fact that he ran for so long he was not well networked into the different clubs or activities available for him. In the orientation clauses of the story Luke revealed that his running provided him with his social outlet up until very recently. The complicating action of the story revealed that he had not been able to substitute another activity with running due to the demands of his wife’s care.

Luke scored below the group means for the life satisfaction measures and he rated his health as ‘fair’. Furthermore, his stories (n=16) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was below the sample mean. This was corroborated in his stories which conveyed his social isolation due to his caring role for his wife. The strongest motivational

\(^{42}\) See ‘Newly-wed Houses’ (V2.16e) in Volume 2.

\(^{43}\) See ‘Community Clubs’ (V2.16h) in Volume 2.
themes in Luke’s stories were communion and agency. His stories were attributed a score below the sample mean for communion. This theme was reflected in his stories which conveyed his sadness over his estrangement from his grandchildren. Luke’s stories which pertained to his working life and his running emphasised the sense of accomplishment and mastery that he obtained from these two experiences. Luke’s stories obtained scores above the sample mean for agency. However, he noted that his skills with steam engines were made redundant with the introduction of diesel engines and he was forced to give up his running on account of his health. Luke’s narrative highlighted the gendered nature of community social activities and danger of social isolation for older men and for spousal carers.

Case study twelve: Jack

Jack was born in 1938 and was 72 at the time the interviews took place. He was born in The Liberties; an historic quarter of Dublin city centre built around the weaving and silk industry which by the 19th century was associated with tenement slum housing, dire poverty and overcrowding. Jack’s father was a warehouse and factory worker and he had nine brothers and sisters in total. He finished school when he was 14 having obtained his primary education and he began work as a messenger boy in the city centre. After a period of time spent working in England he returned home in his early twenties and found employment with the CIE, the Irish rail and transport company. He continued working on a contract basis for the Irish rail as a store man until his early retirement due to ill health when he was 57. Jack married when he was 23 and after living in rented inner city accommodation himself and his wife were allocated ‘newly-wed’ housing in Ballyfermot when Jack was 29. He had three children, all of whom are living in the Dublin area. Jack and his wife currently own their home, having availed of a tenant purchase scheme, and he has a state pension.

The interview with Jack took place in his home. He was introduced to my project through a local credit union chairperson who acted as a gatekeeper for a lot of the men in my sample. When I arrived for the first interview I was immediately struck by how young Jack looked. I subsequently found out, that despite health problems, he was extraordinarily fit and remained very physically active in the gym. The
interview took place in the sitting room at the front of the house. I could hear Jack’s wife vacuuming upstairs but I was not introduced to her until the end of the first interview when she came into the room. She then proceeded to tell me quite a bit about her story and I suggested coming back another time to interview her which she agreed to. When I returned to the interview with Jack, he was reluctant to speak and the interview finished pretty soon after that. Subsequently when I phoned to arrange the second interview with him he told me that his wife was no longer interested in participating. During the second interview Jack explained a recent crisis concerning his health had upset his wife greatly with the result that she was very nervous about being on her own without him. Jack explained that while he understood his wife’s fear he found this a little inhibiting.

Jack rated his health as ‘good’ and he obtained a score of 23 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviation below the mean for the participants \((M=27.40, \ SD=7.16, \ Range:12, 35)\). He obtained an overall score of 18 on the LSI which was within two standard deviations below the sample mean \((M=21.55, \ SD=3.35, \ Range:16, 28)\). The stories \((n=20)\) identified from Jack’s interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Jack obtained a score of 3.58 for emotional tone, this was above the sample mean \((M=3.31, \ SD=.46)\) and a score of .50 for narrative complexity, this was below the sample mean \((M=.57, \ SD=.12)\). The three motivational themes of his stories were assessed as follows: Jack’s stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.20 for this theme which matched the sample mean \((M=1.21, \ SD=.21)\). The next highest scoring for motivational theme in Jack’s stories was agency; his stories were attributed a score of .80 for this theme which was close to the sample mean \((M=.84, \ SD=.28)\). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Jack’s stories was personal growth. His stories received a score of .53 for this theme which was below the sample mean \((M=.92, \ SD=.21)\).
Jack's narrative (V2.15, pp. 135-142)

A total of 20 stories were identified from Jack's interview material. Of these, 8 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for his life narrative (V2.15). Jack began his narrative in sub-session one by describing The 'Liberties' area where he grew up. In particular he noted the dire poverty experienced by all in the community. His description of his childhood depicted the humour that co-existed with the poverty and his depiction of the hardship focused on the sense of community that it engendered. 'You did what you had to do' (V2.15a) occurred early in sub-session one. While the story recognised the hardship experienced by his family it emphasised the community based resources for coping and it used humour to counter the privation. In the orientation his repetition of 'hard life' in lines 5 and 13 and his reference to 'people' in line 8 and 'living from hand to mouth' in line 9 created a sense of a collective experience of poverty. The story emphasised the community resources which enabled resilience, these resources included a lack of animosity, strong communality, humour as well as structural resources such as the pawn shop.

Jack's health problems were a recurring feature of his narrative and he described the different conditions and complications that he experienced.44 'People die for less' (V2.15b) occurred early in sub-session one. The orientation clauses of the story described Jack's experience of the first pulmonary clot which he said came without any warning. In line 10 Jack reproduced the reported speech of his specialist doctor to emphasise the extent of the threat imposed by the condition. The doctor's reported speech was again used in lines 21-27 to lend authority to the description of Jack's current situation which revealed that he lives with the constant threat of stroke. The coda statement depicted the resources that Jack used to cope with this threat and he revealed his own resiliency in his reference to young people dying 'for less'.

Jack's narrative contained a description of his working life which included a period spent working in England. In 'Working life' (V2.15d), he explained that his work was unskilled and he found it boring. With the

44 See 'I'm a man of many talents!' (V2.15c) in Volume 2.
exception of the time he spent in England as a young man where 'he was getting man's money' there was little expression of pride or interest in his story. His description conveyed a lack of agency particularly in lines 10-13. He spoke about 'escaping' 6 weekly contract reviews which meant that while he was in continuous employment for 37 years he was not permanent and his status and wages were unprotected. The complicating action of the story described in clause 15 was his health problems, specifically his need for a hip replacement. The resulting threat to his wages instigated his decision to take early voluntary retirement. The evaluative clauses (16-29) highlighted the 'boring' nature of his job and the welfare entitlements which cushioned his transition out of employment.

Jack’s health situation was a recurring feature of much of his stories and it clearly had a profound impact on his life. The strain on his marriage and on his wife caused by his health reoccurred at different points in the third sub-session of the interviews. ‘She’s a worrier’ (V2.15e) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews during a discussion of his social activities. In the orientation clauses Jack described the anxiety of his wife over his health which meant that 'she didn’t want him out of her sight'. This situation was clearly upsetting Jack however he was concerned to assure me that he understood where this anxiety came from and that his wife was 'a lovely person'. This depiction of the difficulties of the situation was echoed in the story resolution which provided a second description. His understanding of his wife was emphasised through repetition of statements which conveyed her nature. These statements juxtaposed with the sense of claustrophobia and irritation which were conveyed in his descriptions of her constant presence and his accountability to her anxiety.

In the final section of sub-session three Jack emphasised his sense of life satisfaction in response to my questions about well-being. ‘Every day is a bonus’ (V2.15g) described the satisfaction he felt on seeing his family settled. Jack emphasised his lack of regrets and his ability to take each day as it comes and suggested a sense of achievement when he considered the

45 See 'I’m happy in my skin' (V2.15f) in Volume 2.
happiness of his family. During this discussion of well-being and satisfaction Jack revealed his strong Catholic faith and his ambition to be a Eucharistic Minister. The abstract clauses of 'Eucharistic Minister' (V2.15h) emphasised, through repetition and emphatic qualifiers, the importance of his faith to Jack. In the evaluative clauses he revealed that his experience of witnessing the solace provided by the Eucharist to hospital patients had inspired him to pursue his ambition to become a minister and to work in hospitals. The resolution clauses revealed that Jack expected this ambition to be realised in the next few weeks and there was a sense of satisfaction and purpose provided in the coda statement.

Jack obtained relatively very low scores for the measures of life satisfaction however he rated his health as good. His stories (n=20) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was above the sample mean, this conflicted with the life satisfaction measures. In his narrative stories Jack contradicted the well-being measures and assessed his life satisfaction as good. However, his stories conveyed the impact of his bad health on his life and the high level of anxiety this had caused his wife. This anxiety appeared to affect his own sense of well-being in particular his autonomy. The strongest motivational theme in Jack's stories was communion and this was corroborated by his stories which conveyed his strong sense of community belonging during his childhood as well as his high level of connectivity with his family. Jack's stories about his working life conveyed very little job satisfaction; a sense of accomplishment or mastery was notably absent. His stories contained conflicting evidence for well-being and life satisfaction, in particular a high level of connectivity in relation to his family and his religiosity but low self-esteem and agency in relation to his working life.

4.3.4 The case studies of the male participants categorised as having high well-being

Case study thirteen: Alex

Alex was born in 1931 and was 79 years of age at the time of the interviews. Alex's father worked as a machine operator for the local rail industry and so he was unusual among the participants in that he grew up nearby Ballyfermot. He finished his full time education at primary level and
left school at 13 and began working with a local farmer. Upon marriage at 25 he moved with his wife to a tenement house in the city centre. Shortly after he married he was allocated housing in Ballyfermot by the corporation. He now owns his house after availing of a tenant purchase scheme. Alex retired from his work as a supervisor with Roadstone, a building supplier, at the age of 59 and is now in receipt of a contributory state pension. He has seven children, four of whom are currently living in Ballyfermot. Alex’s wife died of Motor Neuron Disease a few years prior to the interviews.

I was introduced to Alex through his son-in-law who was a local credit union chairperson who acted as a gatekeeper for some of the male participants in my sample. The interviews took place in Alex’s home, a house that was very typical of the corporation houses that were built in the area in the 1950’s. He lived in this house with his grandson. Alex and his wife informally adopted this grandson after his birth and were his primary guardians. Occasionally a different fostered son also stayed with Alex, this son had down’s syndrome and therefore did not live in the house full time. Our interviews took place in the sitting room at the front of the house. Due to his deteriorating eyesight Alex had placed a large armchair directly in front of the TV. He pointed out how he had built blocks to stand the chair on as he found it difficult to get in and out of low chairs because of the arthritis in his hips and knees. He also showed me how he built a container for his coffee cup on the arm of the chair so that he could avoid spills. He seemed keen to show to me that he could make things including the shelves and bookcases in the sitting room.

Alex rated his health as ‘good’ and he obtained a score of 32 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviation above the mean for the participants (M=27.40, SD=7.16, Range:12, 35). He obtained an overall score of 19 on the LSI which was within one standard deviation below the sample mean (M=21.55, SD=3.35, Range:16, 28). The stories (n=35) identified from Alex’s interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Alex obtained a score of 3.37 for emotional tone, this was above the sample mean (M=3.31, SD=.46) and a score of .66 for narrative complexity, this was above the sample mean (M=.57, SD=.12). The three
motivational themes of his stories were assessed as follows: Alex's stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.16 for this theme which was close to the sample mean ($M=1.21$, $SD=.21$). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Alex's stories was personal growth; his stories were attributed a score of 1.07 for this theme which was above the sample mean ($M=.92$, $SD=.21$). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Alex's stories was agency. His stories received a score of .83 for agency which matched the sample mean ($M=.84$, $SD=.28$).

Alex's Narrative (V2.11, pp. 95-108)

A total of 35 stories were identified from Alex's interview material. Of these, 15 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for his life narrative (V2.11). Alex started his narrative with stories concerning his childhood and his early life in Ballyfermot. "People are afraid of one another" (V211a) was one of the first stories that Alex told me during sub-section one of the interviews Alex presented the world of his childhood as more innocent than the present day world, the repetition of the word 'walk' in lines 5 and 6 emphasised this innocence. The story depicted two different scenes or time orientations which enabled Alex to argue in favour of the existence of a simpler and kinder way of life in the past compared to the present. This point was emphasised through the repetition of the word 'afraid' in the second half of the narrative.

Alex's wife was a key figure in his narrative and in 'Over and done with now' (V2.11d) he referred to her illness and death. This story occurred in sub-section one of the interviews and followed a story in which he spoke about how house-proud his wife was when she was alive. In his evaluation clauses Alex described the debilitating nature of his wife's illness, motor neuron disease, which was emphasised by the expression of 'I'd have had to' in clauses 21, 22, and 23. This repetition echoes clause 24 "she wouldn't be able to do absolutely nothing" and lent gravity to Alex's depiction of a real potential outcome of this illness. This was then contrasted to the actual outcome which was viewed positively in light of the negative alternative presented in clause 15-24. In the outcome of Alex's story, presented in

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46 See 'It's man clean not woman clean' (V2.11c) in Volume 2.
clauses 25-28, he expressed gratitude for the fact that she died before the disease made her completely dependent and robbed her of her dignity. The resolution to the story was that his wife died before she became helpless and ultimately Alex found comfort in this as expressed by the coda which returned the story to the present (clause 30).

In 'I knew her so well' (V2.11e) Alex described the relationship he had with his wife and pointed to the intimacy of their marriage born from the length of time they spent together. 'The first girl' (V2.11f) occurred during sub-section two of the interviews when I asked Alex to talk more about his wife, in particular to describe how they first met. In clause 9 Alex stepped out of the story to explain to me that he had admired his wife before they met, he said that he 'had his eye on her'. This aside suggested the romance in the story which was elaborated on in his evaluation when Alex explained that his wife was special or different from other girls. This romance was emphasised by his repetition of the words 'afraid' and 'terrified' throughout the story. In the coda of the story Alex jumped forward in time from their first date to their eventual marriage in order to bring the story to its resolution. The romance of the story was again emphasised in clause 21-22 when he stated that she was the first girl he ever went out with.

The stories from Alex's narrative which related to social relationships depicted the gendered nature of friendship and social contact. 'Not a friend in the world' (V2.11g) occurred in sub-section three of the interviews in response to my questions about social activity and friendship. This story emphasised the importance of family relationships to Alex, particularly his relationships with his children. In the abstract of the story Alex reconstructed a conversation between himself and his wife in which they debated over the difference between an acquaintance and a friend. The evaluation clauses provided Alex's assessment of his own friendships and his response to his wife's charge that he hadn't 'a friend in the world' (clause 2). In clause 10 Alex admitted that he did not talk about private matters to his friends in the pub however in the story resolution he

47 See 'Talked to my father openly' (V2.11h) in Volume 2.
recognised the importance of his family, and in particular his son-in-laws, in providing him with a source of friendship and an outlet for any private concerns or matters.

Attitude was an important feature of Alex's narrative and in particular he emphasised the choice that people have when interpreting life and these choices determine whether they make life hard or easy for themselves.48 If you think poor you'll be poor (V2.11k) occurred in sub-section three of Alex's interview which investigated ageing and the experience of growing old. The abstract and the coda of this narrative echoed each other and emphasised the mantra which was repeated through the story 'think poor and you will be poor'. The abstract of the story summarised the point which was that an individual's attitude in life can determine their well-being. Alex used his orientation statements to reveal his own outlook and to show how he applied the advice he received 'as a young fella' to his own life, this he argued separated him from others who were 'thinking poor' (clause 22).

A considerable amount of Alex's narrative was devoted to the process of growing older. In 'You never feel old' (V2.11m), Alex emphasised the continuity he felt in himself as he aged which conflicted with his bodily experience of deterioration. The story entitled 'Dependence' (V2.11n) described his fear of deteriorating health and the dependence which may result from this. This story occurred in sub-section three of the interviews and was in response to my question to Alex, 'What is the worst thing about being old?' In the orientation statements (clauses 3-6) Alex presented an image of himself as independent and of having autonomy over his own needs, even in the face of advancing age and bodily deterioration. The image Alex portrayed of himself is of somebody who has adapted to his current situation. This image served to provide a contrasting emphasis on his fear of future dependence which was expressed in the complicating action in clause 7. In clause 10 Alex expressed the emotion associated with this fear and this potential future scenario of dependence was further emphasised through the resolution statement in clause 12. The repetition of the word 'depend' throughout the story emphasised Alex's anxiety about his future.

48 See 'Words' (V2.11j) and 'Just get on with it' (V2.11l) in Volume 2.
Alex's faith also featured in his narrative and 'Come away with an easier mind' (V2.11o) was one of the final stories he told me. Alex spoke about using this resource throughout his life to achieve a sense of perspective on life events and a greater sense of calm and peace of mind. In the complicating action of the story Alex spoke about going to the church to 'have a word with the Quare fella' in his reference to talking to God to find perspective during rows with his wife. The evaluation clauses revealed Alex's assessment of the importance of his faith as a resource for finding answers to life's difficulties and an 'easier mind'. The story coda brought the story to the present day and emphasised the continuing importance of his faith for Alex. He revealed that he continued to use his faith as a means of finding solutions and answers to difficult life events.

Alex's scores for the life satisfaction measures were contradictory: He obtained a score for the SWLS which was above the group mean however his score for the LSI was within one standard deviation below the group mean. He rated his health as 'good'. His stories (n=35) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was above the sample mean. Alex's stories conveyed a strong sense of meaning and purpose for his life, particularly his ability to accept and integrate difficult life events into his life narrative. The strongest motivational theme attributed to Alex's stories was communion and this was evidenced by his stories which related to his sense of family connectedness. Alex's stories were attributed scores which were above the sample means for narrative complexity as well as the motivational theme of personal growth. His stories conveyed his ability to integrate positive and negative life events into his life narrative and to find meaning from these events. Alex's narrative stories also depicted his very strong sense of internal locus of control. In particular he highlighted the importance of personal attitude for well-being. In his discussion of ageing, Alex emphasised continuity and the importance of maintaining autonomy and control over one's environment despite physical decline.
Case study fourteen: Danny

Danny was born in 1931 and was 78 at the time of the interviews. His father was a tram conductor and when Danny was a young boy his family, which included 7 siblings, were allocated corporation housing in a south city centre suburb. Although he worked as a paper delivery boy from about the age of 11, he finished his formal education at the age of 14, at which point he began an apprenticeship in a tailors in the city centre. Danny married when he was 27 and upon eviction from a tenement room they were sub-letting, himself and his wife were allocated corporation housing in Ballyfermot. Danny and his wife subsequently bought the house from the corporation under a tenant purchase scheme and they reared 7 children there. At the time of the interviews Danny and his wife had been living in this house for 50 years. Danny was very active in the development of Ballyfermot community and was one of the founding members of the Tenants association which campaigned for better amenities and services for Ballyfermot residents. He continued working full time until his retirement at the age of 62. His occupation, prior to retirement, was a warehouse checker for a flour and oatmeal mill in the city centre. At the time of the interviews he was in receipt of a contributory state pension.

The interviews took place in Danny's house on the main street of Ballyfermot. His house was very well kept, and tidy. The interviews took place in the front 'parlour' room of the house which looks out onto the main street. This was a small sitting room that had book cabinets displaying family photographs as well as a lovely cabinet which Danny revealed during the interviews was made for him by his daughter who is a carpenter. On one of the walls there was picture that Danny made with individual photographs of the faces of each of his grandchildren all arranged around a photograph of himself and his wife. I heard Danny's wife moving about the house but was not introduced to her. We remained in the parlour for the duration of the interviews.

Danny rated his health as 'very good' and he obtained a score of 31 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviation above the mean for the participants ($M=27.40, SD=7.16, Range:12, 35$). He obtained an overall score of 23 on the LSI which was within one standard deviation above the
sample mean \((M=21.55, SD=3.35, \text{Range:}16, 28)\). The stories \((n=34)\) identified from Danny's interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Danny obtained a score of 3.50 for emotional tone, this was above the sample mean \((M=3.31, SD=.46)\) and a score of .62 for narrative complexity, this was close to the sample mean \((M=.57, SD=.12)\). The three motivational themes of his stories were assessed as follows: Danny’s stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.22 for this theme which matched sample mean \((M=1.21, SD=.21)\). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Danny’s stories was agency; his stories were attributed a score of 1.34 for this theme which was above the sample mean \((M=.84, SD=.28)\). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Danny’s stories was personal growth even though his stories received a score of .99 for personal growth which was above the sample mean \((M=.92, SD=.21)\).

Danny’s narrative (V2.12, pp. 108-118)

A total of 34 stories were identified from Danny’s interview material. Of these, 14 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for his life narrative (V2.12). His family, and in particular his children and grandchildren, were a very strong feature of Danny’s narrative. He frequently expressed his pride and the sense of achievement himself and his wife had at the progression of their children.49 ‘I didn’t want that for them’ (V2.12c) occurred during sub-session two of the interviews after I prompted Danny to talk about his children. In this story Danny attributes the achievements of his children to his emphasis on education. In the orientation clauses (1-5) Danny detailed the limited resources which he and his wife had to create an environment for his children to study. This depiction provided the evidence for the determination that Danny later expressed in clauses 11 and 12, a determination for them ‘to improve themselves’. During clauses 11 to 14 Danny’s expression of his past future need; ‘I didn’t want’, shifted to present ‘they have’. This shift in time

49 See ‘She’s a little fire’ (V2.12b), ‘It used to make me boil’ (V2.12d) and ‘I’ve no regrets’ (V2.12m) in Volume 2 .
orientation in the coda created a strong sense of accomplishment in the story.

The development of Ballyfermot was a strong feature of Danny's narrative and it was something that he frequently depicted himself as having an active role in.\textsuperscript{50} Many of his stories described the Tenants Association members struggling against authorities such as Dublin Corporation as well as the Catholic Church who controlled the provision of community welfare and services in the area. 'The Scouts' (V2.12g) was one such story which depicted the battle Danny and his colleagues had with the Church in establishing a branch of the boy scouts in Ballyfermot. His stories indicated that the attitude of the authority figures such as the Church and the corporation towards the residents was often to diminish their ability to govern themselves.

In ‘The last of the summer wine’ (V2.12i) Danny recalled an incident in which a female resident challenged the politicians at an association meeting that he and his colleagues organised. In the orientation clauses of the story Danny depicted the paternalism of the Church which refused to grant permission for the association to access a hall in which to hold their meetings. The central event of the story (clauses 10-16) was told by Danny using the reconstructed speech of the woman. This facilitated Danny to emphasise the purpose of his story which was to demonstrate the effectiveness of the tenants association in providing a voice for the community, a voice which Danny reproduced in his story. The resolution in clause 18 consolidated the sense of achievement and satisfaction which Danny conveyed through the telling of this story. This was further emphasised in the coda statements in which a member of the community referred to himself and his colleagues as 'the last of the summer wine'.

The importance of the community and his sense of place were positively conveyed in Danny's narrative. This was associated with his own community activism as well as the length of time he had resided there and the networks which he embedded around him during that time. ‘I would never move’ (V2.12j) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews during the section in which we discussed Ballyfermot. In the story Danny

\textsuperscript{50} See 'You had to fight that sort of thing' (V2.12h) in Volume 2.
adamantly defended Ballyfermot has the community for him to grow old in; this was evidenced through his listing of the resources available to him in the community (clauses 12-19). In the complicating action Danny presented an example of a man who did move away and who continually returned, in order to further support his argument. This argument was forcefully conveyed through his repetition of ‘I wouldn’t move’ both in the abstract and the coda statement as well as his direct engagement of me through use of rhetorical questions (clause 5, 9 and 20).

Danny’s stories of ageing focussed around his physical decline which was repeatedly juxtaposed to his younger, stronger self. In ‘What’s the world coming to’ (V2.12k) Danny described his vulnerability to society’s ruthlessness due to his deteriorating physical strength. Danny’s depiction of the cruelty of the girl who knocked him down without apologising and in particular his reconstruction of her speech in clause 10 portrayed a world in which Danny was no longer tolerated. This was further reiterated in the refrain of clause 12 as was the sense of his dawning realisation that he was no longer physically able for this world. This feeling of exclusion was powerfully conveyed in the image of Danny excluded from the upstairs of the bus due to the ‘pushing’ and ‘shoving’. The coda demonstrated a resignation to this new status; ‘I’ll never go upstairs again, you know, I won’t go upstairs’.

Detailed descriptions of his working life were a strong feature of Danny’s narrative and he emphasised his work ethic which he claimed to have inherited from his father.51 ‘If you let your mind go’ (V2.12I) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews during the discussion of ageing. The story was about Danny’s reluctant entry into retirement when he was 62 after 47 years of work. ‘If you let your mind go’ transitioned from an acknowledgment of Danny’s physical redundancy with age in the orientation clauses, to a celebration of his strong work ethic and prowess during his working life in the evaluation clauses. This juxtaposition created a sense of poignancy. Danny effectively conveyed to me an understanding of

51 See ‘There was no idling’ (V2.12a) in Volume 2.
masculinity and ageing as well the emotional experience of physical decline. Finally, in the coda he shifted his focus to his mind in recognition of the importance of holding on to that in the face of physical ageing.

During the telling of his narrative Danny frequently conveyed to me his sense of old world values which were juxtaposed to the present. He provided descriptions of the widespread social and economic poverty that existed during his childhood and early adulthood. In 'Christmas morning' (V2.12e) he emphasised that while this poverty brought hardship it also coincided with strong community ties and values in terms of material expectations. 'A grasp on religion is a grasp on life' (V2.12n) occurred during a discussion of faith in sub-session three. In this story Danny conveyed his sense of sadness at what he saw as people today turning away from faith because of a loss of the 'ordinary' values of the past. In this story Danny used the image of the girl prioritising the backdrop for her wedding in her choice of venue to depict a modern world gone astray. In the coda statements Danny argued for the maintenance of faith in terms of the resources it provides for comfort and also for interpreting and understanding the events of his life.

Danny scored above the group means for the life satisfaction measures and he rated his health as 'very good'. Furthermore, his stories (n=34) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was above the sample mean. This well-being was reflected in his stories which depicted his sense of family connectedness and community belonging. In particular, Danny's stories which related to his children and the development of Ballyfermot, conveyed his sense of accomplishment from his role in their progression. The highest scoring motivational theme for Danny's stories was communion; this was reflected in his stories relating to his family and the community. Danny's stories were attributed scores which were above the sample means for agency and for personal growth. His sense of agency was conveyed in his stories which concerned the experience of ageing. In particular, he reflected on his prioritising of his mind over his body by his acceptance of the physical decline associated with advancing age. Danny

52 See 'No-one had any money' (V2.12f) in Volume 2.
conveyed a strong growth motivation in his stories through his ability to find meaning from his faith as well as his experience of hardship in his youth.

**Case study fifteen: Eric**

Eric was born in 1927 and was 82 at the time the interviews took place. His father worked as a builder's labourer and Eric grew up in Dublin's inner city. He was the eldest of three boys and they all lived in one room in a tenement house. When he was 14 Eric finished his formal education at primary level and he began work as a city messenger boy. He later became a house painter and when he was 24 he married his wife and moved into a tenement room. Four years later, in 1955, Eric and his wife were allocated 'newly-wed' housing in Ballyfermot where they had six children. Throughout his life in Ballyfermot Eric was very involved in community activism. He was a founding member of the tenants association which lobbied government parties to introduce a tenant purchase scheme. Eric was widowed and he lived on his own although he had regular contact with his children and grandchildren, some of whom also lived in Ballyfermot. He retired from house painting when he was 66 and at the time of the interviews was drawing a state pension.

Eric contacted me after hearing about my study through the local community development partnership and through a newsletter that was delivered around the area. The interview with Eric took place in the front sitting room of Eric's house. There were photos of Eric's family in frames around the room. During the first interview Eric showed me a letter from his granddaughter which he kept on the sitting room mantelpiece. He wanted to explain to me his very close relationship with his grandchildren as evidenced by this letter. At the end of our second interview Eric's grandson, a student in the local college, arrived to the house and sat in with his grandfather and myself. We had an animated conversation about student politics and working class issues. It struck me that Eric had a very good relationship with his grandchildren and he was very proud of his family. The second interview with Eric was delayed for a few weeks as he became ill after our initial interview. He explained to me that he suffered with
depression and with very bad arthritis. Social class was a very strong element of Eric's story.

Eric rated his health as 'fair' and he obtained a score of 27 on the SWLS which was just below the mean for the participants ($M=27.40$, $SD=7.16$, Range:12, 35). He obtained an overall score of 22 on the LSI which was just above the sample mean ($M=21.55$, $SD=3.35$, Range:16, 28). The stories (n=37) identified from Eric's interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Eric obtained a score of 3.54 for emotional tone, this was above the sample mean ($M=3.31$, $SD=.46$) and a score of .64 for narrative complexity, this matched the sample mean ($M=.57$, $SD=.12$). The three motivational themes of his stories were assessed as follows: Eric's stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.38 for this theme which was above sample mean ($M=1.21$, $SD=.21$). Eric's stories obtained the same score for the motivational themes of personal growth and agency. The next highest scoring theme for Eric's stories was personal growth. His stories obtained a score of 1.11 for personal growth which was above the sample mean ($M=.92$, $SD=.21$). Finally, the lowest scoring motivational theme for Eric's stories was agency. His stories were attributed a score of 1.09 for agency which was above the sample mean ($M=.84$, $SD=.28$).

Eric's narrative (V2.13, pp. 119-128)

A total of 37 stories were identified from Eric's interview material. Of these, 12 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for his life narrative (V2.13). Eric's narrative contained in-depth descriptions of the inner city during his childhood and in particular he highlighted the widespread poverty he experienced. 'There would have been dead bodies' (V2.13a) was one of the first stories that Eric told me during sub-session one. He spoke about the extent of the poverty that he and many others experienced living in inner city tenements. His identification of the inadequacy of state welfare provision and over-reliance on the church to deal with endemic poverty (clause 12) revealed Eric's social consciousness. This clause as well as his evaluation statements (19-25) hinted at his passion for social justice which emerged strongly in the subsequent stories.
While Eric's narrative contained stories in which he recognised the hardships of poverty he also placed a value on the simplicity of life which was associated with a lack of resources. 'The simple things' (V2.13b) occurred during sub-session two of Eric's interviews after I prompted him to tell me some more about his experience of tenement living. In the orientation clauses of the story Eric invoked powerful sensory imagery to describe his memories of food and he used contrast to convey his point. He compared his feeling of 'perpetual hunger' with the satisfactory 'ah' he felt when he did eat. He contrasted 'creamery butter' with the 'deplorable' 'cart grease' taste of margarine. The evaluation statements Eric remembered a film he went to see with his father and he recalled the cardboard figures and scenes used in the studio films to create the backdrop to the film. In clauses 16-18, he acknowledged that while life was limited, it was wonderful because they did not know anything better – 'it was the greatest thing out'. This evaluation was reiterated through Eric's invocation of the phrase 'ignorance is bliss' in his coda statement.

In his narrative Eric illustrated his understanding of social inequality and his commitment to the progression and development of Ballyfermot. 'We learnt to explain our case' (V2.13c) occurred during sub-session one of the interviews. In the abstract clauses to the story (1-6) Eric spoke about the struggle he went through to ensure that secondary education was provided to his children. This struggle and his victory made him aware of his power to affect change. There was a strong sense of collectivism in the story that was driven by the persistent use of 'we', 'us' and 'our'. The shift to using 'they' and 'you' in clauses 11-14 as well as the reference to 'people thought' in clause 19 suggested the community of people that the tenants association represented. This shift had the effect of enhancing the sense of agency that Eric communicated in the story. In the resolution to the story (clause 23) Eric reiterated this agency and expressed a sense of achievement when he said 'we made a deal' and 'we won'. This sense of

53 See 'The forerunners to a revolution' (V2.13d) in Volume 2.
achievement was driven home in the coda statement which described the implications of this struggle for Ballyfermot and nationally.

In his narrative Eric spoke about his gradual awakening to the realities of class oppression through his life experiences. 'No blacks, no dogs, no Paddies' (V2.12e) occurred during sub-session two of the interviews after I prompted Eric to talk about his experience of emigration. In the story he spoke about being forced to emigrate to London to look for work shortly after he was married and the discrimination he encountered there. This was particularly exemplified in the complicating action of the story; his encounter with the customs official when he was entering England. In clause 25 and clauses 6-8 Eric recognised that he was providing a present day interpretation of past events and this present context had provided him the language to represent the past. While the story provided a description of the experience of emigration and discrimination, the point of the story was emphasised in the coda clauses. Eric argued that these experiences made him aware of his lack of education and began his own consciousness raising on the issue of social justice.

Although the overarching theme of Eric's narrative was his commitment to social and political justice, family was evidently important to him.® “Grandchildren” occurred in sub-session three of the interviews during a discussion of family relationships. In the orientation clauses of the story Eric said that he learnt ‘the language and the attitudes of young people’ through his grandchildren and this was his secret for staying young. Eric described the very close and trusting relationship he has with his grandchildren, which he put down to his ability to ‘listen to them as one individual to another’. Clauses 10-12 provided his secret to keeping this relationship in-tact; respect for them as individuals. Eric's description of this inter-generational relationship provided insight into the importance of family, and particularly his grandchildren, to Eric. The outcome of the story, provided in clause 17, was a very strong relationship with his grandchildren which was independent of his children. The coda statements conveyed his sense of pride in his grandchildren.

54 See 'I have regrets and satisfactions' (V2.13h) in Volume 2.
In his narrative Eric expressed a sense of achievement which was evidenced by the progression of his family as well as the successes of his community activism. 'I have my life in order' (V2.13i) occurred towards the end of sub-session three in response to my questions which asked Eric to assess his life satisfaction. In the abstract of the story Eric judged himself to be satisfied with his life. The orientation clauses provided the evidence upon which he based his judgement; the ownership of his house and the achievements of his family. In clauses 11-13 Eric reflected that he and his original neighbours had 'seen a lot pass in the last 50 odd years'. The complicating action at the centre of the story was the comment from his neighbour who remarked on the days when Eric was involved in the tenants association. There was a sense that Eric enjoyed the recognition he received from his neighbour for 'fighting battles'. In his evaluative clauses (19-22) Eric spoke about the importance of that achievement which was more than 'just property' but 'self-esteem'. Although Eric argued that all the community contributed in their own way, his reference to 'every man's army' in clause 25 conveyed a sense of personal achievement and leadership.

The connection between Eric's self-esteem and the progression of his family was succinctly explained in 'it's easier to stay on top' (V2.13j) which occurred towards the end of sub-session three. In this story Eric connected the progression of his grandchildren's generation with his commitment to the cause of social justice and a fight against class-based oppression. Inter-generational transfer of advice, wisdom and achievement was a significant feature of this story. In the orientation clauses to the story Eric provided evidence of inter-generational progression through education. His evaluation clauses revealed the value that he placed on this progression and also his understanding of his role in that. He eloquently used the metaphor of the ladder to describe 'the frame of humanity'. He argued that through the transference of his own achievements his grandchildren were further up the ladder than he was. Eric took a macro view of the generational progression and thereby was able to find personal satisfaction from his grandchildren's and their generation's successes.
Eric scored close to the sample mean for the life satisfaction measures and he rated his health as 'fair'. However, his stories (n=34) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was above the sample mean. There was strong evidence of the pursuit of meaning and purpose in his narrative, which contributed to his sense of life satisfaction. Eric demonstrated a social consciousness and commitment to social justice which provided a sense of purpose to many of his stories. His stories concerning his role in the development of Ballyfermot conveyed his sense of accomplishment and high self-esteem. The strongest motivational theme for Eric's stories was communion and this was reflected in his stories which portrayed his good relationship with his family, particularly his grandchildren. Eric's stories were attributed scores which were above the sample mean for agency and personal growth. His agency was conveyed in his stories concerning his accomplishments in community development as well as his sense of satisfaction at the progression of his children and grandchildren. Furthermore, his ability to employ experiences of poverty to enhance his appreciation of life was reflective of his strong growth motivations.

Case study sixteen: Fred

Fred was born in 1934 and was 75 at the time the interviews took place. Fred was the only participant I interviewed that was born and reared in Ballyfermot and who was not allocated housing by the corporation. His father was seconded to the Irish Army and also worked in the local rail works as a machine operator. Fred later went on to do his apprenticeship there as well. He finished his primary education when he was 14 and after a brief time working for a local farmer in Ballyfermot he went to a technical college in the city centre and he achieved his vocational group certificate. During this time he also began his apprenticeship in the rail works. After he passed his exams he did some part-time teaching in the technical college and eventually he became engineering technician in University College Dublin.

When he was 23 Fred married his wife and after a brief time living in a flat in the inner city they moved to rented housing in Ballyfermot on the same street as his parents. A short time later Fred and his wife bought the
house in Ballyfermot and they had four children there before moving to bigger housing close by. While none of Fred’s children lived in Ballyfermot at the time of the interviews, three did remain in the Dublin area and Fred spoke about his good relationship with them. Fred owned his home, having finished paying his mortgage, and he lived alone as his wife died after nearly 35 years of marriage. He maintained a close relationship with a brother who was also living in Ballyfermot and a widower. Fred retired at age 63 and was in receipt of both a contributory state and a private pension.

The interview with Fred took place in the day care centre which he visited twice a week to get a meal and to meet with the other clients, all from his community. During the second interview Fred brought in photographs for me to look at. One of the photos was an old black and white one of his very young daughter standing on the street outside his family home and another of his son as a child with his friend. He also showed me another photo of himself with his soccer team when he was a teenager and some more historical photos of the local area and of the rail works where Fred worked for a time. Fred was the only participant to have grown up in the area and he remembered the post-war construction of the corporation housing in Ballyfermot. He grew up in and identified himself with ‘the ranch’ area which is the oldest part of Ballyfermot situated very closely to the historic areas of Inchicore and Kilmainham.

Fred rated his health as ‘very good’ and he obtained a score of 31 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviation above the mean for the participants (\(M=27.40, SD=7.16, \text{Range:12, 35}\)). He obtained an overall score of 25 on the LSI which was within one standard deviation above the sample mean (\(M=21.55, SD=3.35, \text{Range:16, 28}\)). The stories (n=17) identified from Fred’s interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Fred obtained a score of 4.03 for emotional tone, this was above the sample mean (\(M=3.31, SD=.46\)) and a score of .26 for narrative complexity, this was below the sample mean (\(M=.57, SD=.12\)). The three motivational themes of his stories were assessed as follows: Fred’s stories scored highest for the motivational theme of agency; they were attributed a score of 1.24 for this theme which was above the sample mean (\(M=.84, 213\))
SD=.28). The next highest scoring for motivational theme in Fred's stories was communion; his stories were attributed a score of .91 for this theme which was below the sample mean (\(M=1.21, SD=.21\)). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Fred's stories was personal growth. His stories received a score of .65 for personal growth which was below the sample mean (\(M=.92, SD=.21\)).

Fred's narrative (V2.14, pp. 129-135)

A total of 17 stories were identified from Fred's interview material. Of these, 9 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for his life narrative (V2.14). Fred's working life was a strong feature of his narrative and many of his stories provided description of his job and the satisfaction that he got from his work. In particular, he spoke about his enjoyment of teaching young people and his pride in his accomplishments. 'I must've passed on something' (V2.14b) occurred during sub-session two of his interviews when I prompted Fred to tell me some more about his work. The abstract clauses of the story established Fred's love of his job and the subsequent story presented the evidence for this feeling. In the orientation clauses Fred enjoyed relating the different research and development work that he did and his repetition of past tense action verbs emphasised his sense of accomplishment. In the complicating action of the story he highlighted two of his past students who went on to achieve their own career successes and in clause 20 Fred recognised his role in their achievements. His coda statement returned the story to the present and Fred used self-depreciating humour to avoid any danger of appearing arrogant.

Fred's achievements in his education and his career were unusual particularly as he finished his primary education at 14. Fred spoke about his career with a strong sense of accomplishment and he recognised how unusual it was. During his narrative Fred mentioned two key figures in his life; his father and the principle of the technical college. Fred spoke about the strong influence of his father who encouraged his children to go on in their education. 'For a Joe Soap' (V2.14c) occurred immediately after 'I

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55 See 'Looking after students' (V2.14a) in Volume 2.
56 See 'That's what I did' (V2.14d) in Volume 2.
must've passed on something' when I prompted Fred to talk about his education. The orientation clauses of the story provided a description of the route Fred took to his group certificate exams, a state examination which was a pre-requisite for many employment opportunities at that time. The complicating action of 'For a Joe Soap' centred on the school principle who had a reputation for being a 'hard man' but who showed kindness and encouragement to Fred. Fred emphasised this kindness through repeated reference to the 'ten shilling note' given to him by the principle which was contrasted to the 15 shillings he earned at the time for a 48 hour week in the rail works. Fred recognised his own achievements in the final statement in which he depicted himself as an ordinary person who achieved beyond the norm in his career. However, the story did not attempt much evaluation of this past and Fred seemed to accept the events in his life without much contemplation of meaning or emotion.

In his narrative Fred spoke about the achievements of his children in their careers. 'That's what I did' (V2.14d) occurred during sub-session two of the story when I prompted Fred to talk about the influence of his father on his life. In the orientation clauses of the story Fred conveyed his admiration for his father who he said was 'strict but fair' and he provided a description of his father's working achievements. His evaluative statement in clause 14 provided his assessment of his father's parenting and he said that this provided the model for his relationship with his own children. This story did not present a strong evaluative element and Fred's story was focused on descriptive and outcome clauses rather than a strong consideration of meaning.

Fred's wife died after they were nearly 35 years married and he spoke about living alone. The local pub featured in Fred's narrative as an important social outlet for him. 57 'Like a condemned cell' (V2.14e) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews when I asked Fred about his typical weekly activities. In the orientation statements of the story Fred talked about his need to get out of his house which he said could feel like

57 See 'Playing the bones' (V2.14f) in Volume 2.
'condemned cell'. Clauses 2 and 9 created the sense of a masculine social environment in the pub, in particular his reference to sport. Fred pointed out that he has his own seat in the pub and he mentioned by name the other regulars and spoke about the ‘cross-talk’ between them thereby suggesting friendship.

Fred closely identified with Ballyfermot and particularly ‘the Ranch’ where he grew up. He talked about his long family history in the area and he remembered his childhood there. ‘Cowboys’ (V2.14g) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews when I asked Fred to talk about the changes that he had seen in Ballyfermot during his life. The story was largely descriptive and like the other stories in Fred’s narrative, did not contain evaluative clauses. However, it did serve to create a sense of Fred’s strong attachment to the area and he described his happy childhood memories.

In his narrative Fred did not often step out of a description of events to comment on meaning or the emotions associated with the story. This revealed something about his matter-of-fact attitude to life. This attitude was iterated in his discussion of ageing and his emphasis on people’s outlook to determine their well-being. ‘A good outlook on life’ (V2.14h) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews when I asked Fred to consider why some older people might be unhappy. This story was unusual in Fred’s narrative in that he did provide evaluative clauses; this was likely a result of my questioning which explicitly asked for comment. Fred talked about the importance of attitude and outlook in how people age and he provided an example of an older neighbour who became very cranky after she was widowed. In his evaluation Fred talked about his own resources for getting on with life and with other people which he said he acquired through his life experiences and in particular his work. Fred emphasised in his coda statement that personality or ‘nature’ is important as well as life experiences in determining well-being.

Through his narrative Fred portrayed himself as quite self-reliant with a strong ability to get on with life using his own resources. The overall lack of evaluation in his stories gave me a sense of his practical nature. This was confirmed in his discussion of his faith. ‘If you believe in something
strong enough' (V2.14i) was one of the last stories Fred told me, he discussed his disillusionment with the Catholic church and how he separated his faith from the institution. In the orientation clauses (3-4) he provided the justification for his dismissal of clergy; ‘they’re all only human’. The complicating action of the story revealed the cause of his turn away from the church; he was let down by a particular priest in the parish. The outcome of the story was Fred’s commitment to his faith and in particular to Jesus Christ and his rejection of a mediating church. The coda statements which described his philosophy provided insight into Fred’s character and in particular he conveyed his strong sense of personal agency; ‘if you believe in something strong enough, you get what you want’.

Fred scored above the group means for the life satisfaction measures and he rated his health as ‘very good’. Furthermore, his stories (n=17) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was above the sample mean. This high level of well-being was reflected in Fred’s stories which conveyed his strong sense of job satisfaction and emphasised his feelings of achievement, generativity and high self-esteem. Fred’s stories which concerned his social activities, in particular his hobbies and his music, depicted flow and hedonism as sources for his well-being. The strongest motivational theme for Fred’s narrative was agency and this was corroborated by his stories which emphasised his high internal locus of control. In particular Fred highlighted the importance of attitude for later life well-being and his belief in his own ability to obtain his goals. Fred’s stories were attributed scores below the sample mean for personal growth and narrative complexity. This was reflected in his lack evaluation of past experiences in terms of their meaning for growth or the acceptance of negative life events.

Case study seventeen: Mat

Mat was 83 at the time the interviews took place. He was born in 1927 in Crumlin, a village south of Dublin city, and had four brothers and three sisters, his father was a brick layer. When Mat finished school at 14 he began his bricklaying apprenticeship with his father. Mat spent much of
his early working life building houses for Dublin Corporation in Ballyfermot. When he was 24 he married and he and his wife lived for some time in the city centre before moving to Ballyfermot when he was 36. Mat and his wife had 4 children. He became a foreman of works and was later recruited by Dublin Corporation as a building inspector. During this period he returned to education and he obtained a third level diploma which facilitated his career development to become a manager in the Corporation Sanitation Department. Mat was also a published writer of poetry, novels and plays. This had become a particular interest of his since his retirement when he was 65. While his wife did not undertake paid work, she was a painter and did some part-time art teaching on a voluntary community basis. Mat and his wife continued living in their home in Ballyfermot which they owned and Mat was in receipt of a state pension.

The interviews with Mat took place in his home. His house was a little bigger than some of the other houses that I visited as it had a side entrance and the garage had been converted. Upon first meeting Mat, he struck me as being quite young looking, particularly because he was wearing blue jeans. He was very relaxed during the interview and mentioned how he had been interviewed before for different things related to his writing. Mat was well-known in the area of Ballyfermot particularly for his writing and he was suggested to me as a potential participant by a number of the other participants and gatekeepers. The Credit Union chairperson arranged an introduction. When I first arrived to the house I was introduced to Mat's wife and was shown some of her paintings. She then went to watch television in a smaller room off the main sitting room where we conducted the interviews. Mat was very used to telling his story; he showed me some of his pieces of writing and gave me a book (fiction) that he had published as well. His narrative was very detailed and he brought quite a lot of historical information to the interviews.

Mat rated his health as 'good' and he obtained a maximum score of 35 on the SWLS which was within two standard deviations above the mean for the participants ($M=27.40$, $SD=7.16$, Range:12, 35). He obtained an overall score of 24 on the LSI which was within one standard deviation above the mean ($M=21.55$, $SD=3.35$, Range:16, 28). The stories (n=29)
identified from Mat’s interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Mat obtained a score of 3.93 for emotional tone, this was above the sample mean \((M=3.31, SD=.46)\) and a score of .69 for narrative complexity, this was also above the sample mean \((M=.57, SD=.12)\). The three motivational themes of his stories were assessed as follows: Mat’s stories obtained matching scores for the motivation themes of communion and personal growth. His stories were attributed a score of 1.31 for communion which was above the sample mean \((M=1.21, SD=.21)\). Similarly, his stories obtained a score of 1.31 for personal growth which was also above the sample mean \((M=.92, SD=.21)\). Finally the lowest scoring motivational theme in Mat’s stories was agency. His stories received a score of .88 for agency which was above the sample mean \((M=.84, SD=.28)\).

Mat’s Narrative (V2.17, pp. 148-160)

A total of 29 stories were identified from Mat’s interview material. Of these, 14 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for his life narrative (V2.17). Education was an important feature of Mat’s narrative and many of his stories referenced the Jesuit education he received as a mature student. In ‘Get it off your chest’ (V2.17a) Mat remembered his childhood education and in particular confronting, as an adult, the teacher who physically abused him when he was a young school pupil. The story was structured around three scenes: the radio studio of a national broadcaster; Christmas Eve in town; and the pub in which Mat confronted the teacher. The abstract clauses facilitated the time shift between scene one and scene two and established the context for the story telling. The confrontation was described in the complicating action clauses 30-39 in which Mat uses direct speech to reconstruct the conversation between himself and the teacher. In the evaluative statements Mat revealed that it was the education he received as an adult from the Jesuit priests which gave him the confidence to make this confrontation. There was a strong sense of catharsis as well as forgiveness suggested by his reference to getting it off his chest and to saying a prayer for the teacher later (clauses 40-41). Clause 42 conveyed Mat’s sense of justice which enabled catharsis. The coda statements transitioned back to the first scene in the broadcaster
studio and Mat consolidated his sense of catharsis by reference to a shared experience of abuse.

The strong positive influence of the Jesuit education also featured in Mat's stories about his working life. In 'To be a master of a thing' (V2.17b) Mat referenced the confidence given to him by this training which guided him in his role as a supervisor. The orientation statements acknowledged the training in supervision that he received from the Jesuits and the subsequent story related how he put this training into practice. Mat employed direct speech in describing the complicating action of the story, which was his refusal to reprimand the men under his supervision upon the request of his boss. The evaluative statements continued to use direct speech to reconstruct the conversation with his boss and facilitated Mat to convey his understanding of effective supervision. Through further use of direct speech the resolution clauses vindicated Mat's understanding. Mat used the voice of the boss to convey a message about himself and his effective supervision and mastery of his work.

Mat's sense of mastery in his work was relayed again in 'Put her in her place' (V2.17c) when Mat presented himself as the mediator between the men under his supervision and the bosses. Mat described how he challenged a woman who had made a complaint to his boss about the bin collectors who were under Mat's supervision. Mat conveyed his perception of the woman's sense of entitlement which he understood to be arising from her status as a doctor's wife (clauses 30-31). In this way, Mat placed the story in the context of social class conflict and presented himself as the underdog standing up to class privilege. In the evaluative clauses he referenced the skills provided to him by the Jesuits which encouraged him in his stance. His reference in clause 35 to being in the right appealed to a sense of justice which underpinned his courage.

Mat's strong value for education was reflected in his decision to teach creative writing in his mid-life to disadvantaged or socially excluded youths. 'Breaking down barriers' (V2.17e) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews during a discussion of social engagement. In the abstract to the story Mat described the rewarding and frustrating nature of the work and how he broke down the barriers between himself and the
students through humour. The subsequent story described how he discovered that one particularly 'rough' student had become engaged with and interested in his class. In the coda of the story Mat expressed his amazement at this discovery and conveyed a strong sense of satisfaction and generativity.

Intergenerational transfer was a strong theme of Mat's narrative and he conveyed a sense of his appreciation and understanding of younger generations and the importance of gaining wisdom through life experiences. You must be moved by emotions' (V2.17g) provided a further insight into Mat's wisdom which he argued came from his appreciation of the important things in life. Mat presented an archetypal Christmas story and through the events of the story, and in particular his relationship with the child in the story, he conveyed an image of himself as charitable and kind. His colleague, the builder, was a foil for Mat through the example of his cynicism and lack of time for the child. The central message of the story was to highlight the difference between existing and living. Through the use of direct reported speech which reconstructed the conversation between himself and the builder (clauses 35-41) Mat conveyed a message about himself; he had a greater understanding of the true meaning of Christmas and thereby of life. In the coda statements Mat argued for the importance of emotions in living and he claimed that one must always give in to emotions.

Mat's narrative conveyed the mutually benefitting intergenerational relationship that he had with his grandchildren. In 'That means something' (V2.17i) Mat spoke about his love of his grandchildren and his appreciation of his reciprocal relationship with them. The story conveyed Mat's sense of joy at watching his grandchildren grow up and hinted at his regret over the possibility of not living long enough to witness them become adults. The evaluative clauses 9 and 10 suggested the source of his joy was in the reciprocal nature of their relationship which was further compounded in the

58 See 'Passing on wisdom' (V2.17d) and 'Enjoy the ignorance' (V2.17f) in Volume 2.
59 See 'You live out of them' (V2.17h) in Volume 2.
coda statements. The coda acknowledged the happiness he felt listening to his granddaughter recognise the importance of him in her life.

Mat's strong sense of the importance of family and of intergenerational family relationships was also conveyed in his stories which pertained to his relationship with his parents. 'We shared the one cup of tea' (V2.17j) occurred during sub-session two of the interviews. In clauses 6-7 he provided insight into his resources for resilience and his belief that his father is always with him. In the orientation clauses Mat referred to how he worked side-by-side with his father and he presented the poignant image of the corner of the church they built together. Mat's reference to how he shaved his father while he was in hospital and his reconstruction of their last conversation emphasised their close bond. This bond contributed to the sense of loss and grief that were conveyed in his description of caring for his body after his father's death. In the coda statements Mat revealed his resources for coping with his grief and coming to terms with his loss, this included the ability to look back and appreciate the good times they had together.

In his narrative Mat presented himself as being very satisfied with his life and as having accumulated wisdom and insights into the meaning of life. 'There's no more hills to climb' (V2.17l) further emphasised this sense of satisfaction. The story occurred in sub-session three of the interviews. In the story Mat employed the metaphor of hills to convey an image of himself as contented and satisfied with his life's achievements. Mat spoke about his sense of having accomplished what he wanted to accomplish in life and his feeling of satisfaction that there were no more hills for him to climb. Mat's positive outlook on life was also expressed in his stories which related to ageing. 'It's all about attitude' (V2.17m) was representative of this outlook. In this story Mat used humour to emphasise the choice people have to view the circumstances of their lives positively. Through his repetition of 'attitude' throughout the story and his use of the three sub plots Mat conveyed a very strong sense of personal efficacy. Mat emphasised the importance of having a positive attitude as a mechanism for maintaining happiness and a sense of life satisfaction.

60 See 'Positive thinking' (V2.17n) in Volume 2.
Mat scored above the group mean for the life satisfaction measures and he rated his health as 'good'. Furthermore, his stories (n=29) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was above the sample mean. This high level of life satisfaction and well-being was reflected in Mat's stories which conveyed his sense of accomplishment and his connectedness with his family. Mat's stories were attributed scores for each motivational theme which were above the sample means. The highest scoring themes in his stories were communion followed by personal growth. The theme of communion was evident in his stories which conveyed his generativity associated with his teaching and his grandchildren. Mat's stories demonstrated personal growth, in particular, his acceptance and integration of negative events into his life narrative. He exhibited a strong internal locus of control; his stories emphasised the importance of attitude in determining the ageing experience as well as the choice people have to view their lives in a positive way. Mat used the framework of religion to provide him with an interpretive code by which to exercise agency in his life through forgiveness as well as a commitment to justice.

Case study eighteen: Michael

Michael was born in 1929 and was 80 at the time the interviews took place. He was reared in the 'Liberties' area of Dublin city and was an only child. His mother was not married and Michael did not know his father. His mother worked fulltime in a local paper bag factory. Michael finished school when he was 13 and worked for a time as a church bell ringer. He went on to work as a packer for a bicycle factory and also as a delivery man for a jeweller. When he was 22 Michael married and after a brief period living in tenement housing in the Liberties, he and his wife were allocated housing in Ballyfermot by the Corporation. They had 8 children in total, one of whom was living in Ballyfermot at the time of the interviews. Michael continued working full time until his retirement at age 62. At the time of the interviews he was living with his wife in their home in Ballyfermot which they owned, having availed of a tenant purchase scheme. Michael was in receipt of a state pension.
Both Michael and his wife, Mabel, took part in this project. They heard about my research through a newsletter which was distributed by the community senior citizen's forum. The interview with Michael took place in his home. The first time I arrived to interview Michael he brought me upstairs to see his study area where did his writing. Michael had published some stories for children and he gave me a present of one of his books. On the walls of the study were many photos of Michael with different people including family and some well-known politicians and media personnel. In the sitting room, where the interviews took place, there were many photos as well as Catholic images and iconography. Michael showed me a book that was made for himself and his wife by their children on their 50th wedding anniversary. The book contained family photos as well as poems and messages from their grandchildren. Both Michael and his wife were very generous of their time and they also acted as gatekeepers to other participants.

Michael rated his health as 'good' and he obtained a maximum score of 35 on the SWLS which was within two standard deviations above the mean for the participants ($M=27.40$, $SD=7.16$, Range:12, 35). He obtained an overall score of 22 on the LSI which was within one standard deviation above the mean ($M=21.55$, $SD=3.35$, Range:16, 28). The stories ($n=25$) identified from Michael's interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Michael obtained a score of 3.06 for emotional tone, this was below the sample mean ($M=3.31$, $SD=0.46$) and a score of .68 for narrative complexity, this was above the sample mean ($M=0.57$, $SD=0.12$). The three motivational themes of his stories were assessed as follows: Michael's stories scored highest for the motivational theme of personal growth; they were attributed a score of 1.18 for this theme which was above the sample mean ($M=0.92$, $SD=0.21$). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Michael's stories was communion; his stories were attributed a score of 1.14 for this theme which was below the sample mean ($M=1.21$, $SD=0.21$). Finally, the lowest scoring motivational theme in Michael's stories was agency. His stories received a score of .78 for this theme which was below the sample mean ($M=.84$, $SD=.28$).
A total of 25 stories were identified from Michael's interview material. Of these, 13 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for his life narrative (V2.18). Michael began his narrative in sub-session one with a description of himself as a child. In 'I was my own master' (V2.18a) he depicted himself as having been wild and uncontrollable as a child. In clauses 5-7 he made reference to society's disapproval of himself and his mother, who was unmarried. Michael argued that this disapproval meant that he was his own master; free to do whatever he wanted to do. The story went on to provide an example of some of the antics that he got up to as a child. Clause 27 made a second reference to external disapproval in its depiction of the women giving out about his bad language. Although the story was told with humour, in the resolution to the story, Michael made reference to the many things he did which he was not proud of. In his stories of his childhood there was a sense that Michael had sympathy and understanding for his rebellious child self. However, the resolution clause 39 shifted the time orientation to the present day and it suggested regret at some of his actions.

Michael created his narrative of his youth with reference to the archetypal story of the intervening guide or saviour. 'He was the kindest Christian' (V2.18c) occurred during sub-session one of the interviews immediately after his descriptions of his rebellious childhood. In the abstract of the story Michael explained that as a child he rejected socio-religious values which he believed were wrong. He placed his disrespectful and rebellious behaviour as a child in the context of his independent thinking. The abstract provided an explanation for Michael's rebellious behaviour and it facilitated the orientation clauses describing how he and a friend mocked the proceedings of a religious society meeting. The turning point of the story (clause 33) confirmed that Michael ended up joining the society. He proceeded to explain that it was the intervention of the society leader who inspired him to join. Michael referred to the leader's acts of kindness and

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61 See 'I couldn't move' (V2.18b) in Volume 2.
Christianity. His reference in clause 41 to his 'duty' countered his previous description of rebellion. The gravity of his social work suggested Michael's growth from childish rejection to a greater understanding of society and of himself.

'I seldom had shoes' (V2.18d) followed Michael's story of the intervention of the kind Christian leader. In its depiction of the cruelty and rejection that Michael experienced from socio-religious organisations, this story contrasted with the figure of the kind Christian. In the abstract Michael used 'we' in a depiction of the general poverty that was experienced by families and other children at the time. In clause 3, Michael shifted to the use of 'I' as he singled himself out as being rejected by a particular religious charity fund for children's shoes. Michael explained this organisation discriminated against illegitimate children in their dissemination of charity. The subsequent story elaborated on a particular incident where Michael was denied shoes from the fund. During these clauses Michael continued the use of 'I' as he explained that he never had shoes as a child. In clause 17 he shifted back to 'we' in a repeated acknowledgement of the shared experience of poverty.

Michael's mother was a recurring character in his narrative; she was particularly dominant in his stories concerning his early life. 'A lot of sad things' (V2.18e) occurred early in sub-session one of the interviews and it described the constant anxiety concerning financial security that permeated Michael's childhood. The story conveyed a strong sense of the feminine world in which Michael was reared as well as the constant anxiety that Michael experienced over financial security during his childhood. In his narrative Michael presented a positive depiction of the feminine world in which he grew up, which included his aunts. However, it was Michael's mother who was the dominant protective and loving character of his childhood.62 ‘She had a tough life’ (V2.18g) occurred during sub-session two of the interviews. The story conveyed the desperate circumstances of Michael's mother as she attempted to shield him from the discrimination of being illegitimate and the hurt of being poor. His reference to her staunch defence of him and her 'terrible fear' (clause 4) conveyed the sense of an

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62 See 'She thought the sun shone out of me' (V2.18f) in Volume 2.
external social threat. In clause 5, Michael described himself as his mother's 'pride and joy' and he presented an image of the archetypal protective mother who saw only the good in her son. The subsequent story told of the side-effects of the stress and anxiety that she felt in this role, in particular, Michael vividly described how his mother often tore her hair out with frustration. The story conveyed a very strong sense of love between Michael and his mother as well as the feeling of their social isolation. The story coda statements returned the story to the present day and Michael conveyed his gratitude and pity for his mother.

Through his narrative Michael portrayed his strong sense of life satisfaction and his appreciation of his life. 'Things could be worse' (V2.18h) occurred during sub-session three of the interviews and Michael revealed his source for this contentment. Michael spoke about using his past experiences of poverty and pain to facilitate his current life appreciation and well-being. In clause 12, he acknowledged that there is always somebody in worse circumstances and he went on to provide the example of his own childhood. This recognition of the relative experience of well-being provided Michael with coping and resilience resources for obtaining life appreciation.

In sub-session three Michael elaborated on the importance of his Christian faith in providing him with the resources for well-being. In 'Forgiveness' (V2.18k), Michael provided an insight into his Christianity and his life philosophy. The story abstract summarised the message of Michael's story which appealed to the central tenet of Christianity: forgiveness. There was a strong sense of necessity conveyed in the abstract clauses, particularly in clauses 2, 12 and 13, that lent emphasis to Michael's message and stressed the importance that he attributed to forgiveness. The subsequent story presented the evidence and argument for this message. Michael employed the direct speech to reconstruct the conversation between himself and his workmate emphasising his argument. Through the story Michael conveyed an image of himself as a truly Christian

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63 See 'Faith is important' (V2.18j) in Volume 2.
person and he presented a powerful argument for the importance of learning to forgive.

Michael's life philosophy was an important mechanism for him to convey personal meaning and purpose in his narrative. 'Get on with life' (V2.18m) occurred in sub-session three during a discussion of ageing. In the story Michael revealed his belief in showing resilience as a way of coping with sadness in life. The abstract of the story placed it within the context of his ageing and his physical decline. However, Michael used the story as a means of demonstrating his attitude to life which enabled him to get on despite setbacks or decline. In the evaluative clauses (9-14), Michael discussed his resilience and he emphasised the importance of getting over sadness and getting on with life.

Michael scored above the group mean for the life satisfaction measures and he rated his health as 'good'. However, his stories (n=25) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was below the sample mean and scores above the mean for narrative complexity and the motivational theme of personal growth. It would appear that much of Michael's well-being came from his ability to accept and integrate negative life experiences into his narrative and to reconcile disparate experiences or perspectives. His stories provide evidence of this growth and complexity in particular his understanding of his past and his ability to forgive and to get on with life in face of disruptive or negative events. The second highest scoring motivational theme of Michael's stories was communion and this was evident in the loving relationship he had with his mother and his aunts in childhood and his current happy marriage and family life. Furthermore, Michael also demonstrated how his religion provided him with a framework for agency in terms of forgiveness as well as an internal locus of control; particularly in his ability accept uncontrollable experiences such as ageing.

Case study nineteen: Philip

Philip was born in 1925 and was 85 at the time the interviews took place. He was reared in a south Dublin city suburb and had three brothers and three sisters. His father was a labourer and he also worked as a bin collector. Philip finished school when he was 13 in order to begin working as a delivery boy; he was later employed as a road sweeper. When Philip
was 30 he married and, after a brief time living in an inner city tenement, he and his wife were allocated 'newly-wed' housing in Ballyfermot. Philip and his wife had 7 children, one of whom remained living in Ballyfermot. In the later stages of his career Philip was promoted to a litter warden. His wife was also employed part-time to supplement the family income; she was a contract office cleaner and later she worked in a factory. When he was 66 Philip retired and it was around this time that his wife died suddenly after being diagnosed with Cancer. At the time of the interviews Philip was living alone in the house which he owned, having availed of a tenant purchase scheme. He was in receipt of a state pension.

Philip agreed to take part in my study after I met him in the local radio station where he was part of a group of men who organised a day time radio chat show twice a week. The show was aimed at older men with music and discussion. The men invited me onto their show to talk about my research project and advertise it. Philip was quite nervous about the idea of me coming to his house to do the interview because he lived on his own and because I am a young woman. We resolved this issue by Philip organising for his son to be in the house while the interviews were taking place. The interviews took place in Philip's sitting room. This was a very cosy front room with quite a lot of pictures of Philip's family in frames around the room. Philip also pointed out a medal that he and his late wife won for ballroom dancing. I really enjoyed Philip's company. He had quite a lot to say about his youth and it appeared to me that he also enjoyed telling me about some of those memories.

Philip rated his health as 'very good' and he obtained a score of 30 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviations above the mean for the participants (\(M=27.40, \ SD=7.16, \ Range:12, \ 35\)). He obtained an overall score of 22 on the LSI which was within one standard deviation above the mean (\(M=21.55, \ SD=3.35, \ Range:16, \ 28\)). The stories (n=30) identified from Philip's interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Philip obtained a score of 3.20 for emotional tone, this was below the sample mean (\(M=3.31, \ SD=.46\)) and a score of .65 for narrative complexity, this matched the sample mean (\(M=.57, \ SD=.12\)). The three motivational
themes of his stories were assessed as follows: Philip’s stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.18 for this theme which matched the sample mean ($M=1.21$, $SD=.21$). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Philip’s stories was personal growth; his stories were attributed a score of .83 for this theme which was below the sample mean ($M=.92$, $SD=.21$). Finally, the lowest scoring motivational theme in Philip’s stories was agency. His stories received a score of .60 for this theme which was below the sample mean ($M=.84$, $SD=.28$).

Philip's Narrative (V2.19, pp. 170-181)

A total of 30 stories were identified from Philip’s interview material. Of these, 13 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for his life narrative (V2.19). One of the first stories that Philip told me was ‘Those were the days’ (V2.19a). In this story Philip emphasised that times have changed dramatically since his childhood. In the abstract clauses, Philip described the general poverty and hunger which was widespread during the recessionary years of the 1930’s. The purpose of this abstract was to emphasise how the present day cannot be compared to those times. In clauses 19, 26 and 37, Philip referred to the media turmoil that was on-going at the time of the interviews. This turmoil concerned reports of physical abuse of children in schools by clerical teachers during the 20th century. In the story Philip attempted to contextualise his own experience of abuse in relation to the general attitude that existed at the time towards children and authority. In the evaluation clauses, Philip repeatedly referred to how attitudes have changed by way of understanding the cruelty of that time (clauses 27-29). In the coda statements Philip returned to the description of a particular abusive lay teacher from his school days in order to emphasise that this attitude was endemic in society.

Overall, Philip’s stories from his childhood were told with humour and there was a strong sense of happiness, this was particularly evident in his stories relating to his mother.\(^64\) Philip’s use of humour throughout his narrative was a recurring feature. Even stories which describe the cruelty and poverty of his childhood were punctuated with laughter. This laughter

\(^64\) See ‘That was my mother’ (V2.19b) in Volume 2.
had a cathartic effect during stories which were emotionally charged. It demonstrated Philip's mechanism for communicating emotion and meaning.

'We didn't know we were poor' (V2.19c) occurred during sub-session two of the interviews when I prompted Philip to talk about the poverty he had talked about in his earlier stories. Philip explained that the experience of poverty was relative and recognisable only when in sight of those who were wealthy. In clauses 13-15, Philip concluded that he was better off than other families at the time. The turning point of the narrative emphasised survival, and in the coda statements, Philip acknowledged the benefit of surviving hardship was a stronger immune system. This could also be read as a stronger resiliency learnt through enduring and surviving deprivation.

Philip's family and in particular his wife were important features of his narrative.®® Philip's description of meeting his wife as a young man at a dance drew on the archetypal love story in its emphasis on chance and fate.®® His wife died almost 20 years prior to the interviews. In 'That's the story' (V2.19f) Philip described her illness and death. The abstract of the story emphasised the unexpected nature of her death. Philip argued that they expected that he would die first as he had weaker health and he was older. There was a strong sense of sadness and loss that permeated the story and was particularly evident in clauses 15, 16 and 30. These clauses suggested the fickleness of life and the unanticipated twists in fate that defy expectations.

In 'On the picket line' (V2.19h) Philip spoke about repeatedly going on strike during the 1950's in order to secure better wages. In clauses 19-28, he employed the direct speech of the union representative in his reconstruction of the negotiations. This leant authority to Philip's message of the continual struggle for wage increases that he and his colleagues were involved with. His exclamation of 'thirty shillings' in clause 29, which was repeated in clause 35, conveyed the sense of relief and victory that he and his colleagues felt at receiving this raise. Philip again employed direct
reported speech in his reconstruction of the worker's mocking and disbelieving response to the union representative's prediction of future wage increases. Philip used a shift in time orientation and reverted to a present day perspective on this exchange in order to highlight the naivety of the workers as well as to emphasise the dramatic changes in wage expectations that have occurred since that time.

During a discussion in sub-session three of ageing Philip told a humorous tale to describe his physical decline. He provided an insight into his sources of resilience which were friendship and his sense of humour. 'The two sticks' (V2.19i) revealed the supportive nature of his friendship as Philip remembered how he encouraged his friend to adapt to ageing by suggesting he use a walking stick. The complicating action (clause 24) of the story was told with humour when Philip remembered how he fell while out walking with his friend. The punch line of the story came at the coda when Philip recalled how his friend bought him a walking stick to match his own. Philip's use of humour was indicative of his general positive outlook and resilience. The story conveyed his determination to view the positive aspects of potentially negative life events.

In 'The two sticks' Philip employed the conventional joke construction in the story structure: set-up, complicating action and punch line. This structure was repeated by Philip in his discussion of his faith. In the abstract of 'The stakes are too high' (V2.19i) Philip outlined the hypocrisies that he perceived in Catholicism. In the story abstract Philip acknowledged that he continued to attend Catholic mass and that he adhered to the central Christian belief in the Lord's Prayer and the Catholic tenets concerning the sacred Eucharist. However, the central point of the abstract was to emphasise that he was a questioning believer in Catholicism and that he recognised the institutional flaws which have implications for social equality. Philip's story centred on the complicating action of one religious man turning to another non-religious man to ask about his belief in God. The punch line of the story conveyed the central message which was Philip's reasoning for his continued adherence despite his recognition of the failures of Catholicism. This story was constructed as a joke and the punch line 'the

67 See 'It's a mental thing' (V2.19k) in Volume 2.
stakes are a bit high’ was delivered with humour. However, it conveyed a particular image of Philip as a questioning believer and revealed an insight into his faith.

Philip's recognition of the flaws that he considered inherent in Catholicism and his desire to question his adherence to the faith resulted in a deep consideration of his faith. At the time of the interviews there was great media turmoil about the child sex abuse perpetrated by Catholic clergy. In 'We're the Church' (V2.19m) Philip provided insight into the hurt that these scandals caused and he provided his reasoning for his continued attendance in Church despite these scandals. Philip's story vacillated between a condemnation of the individual priests who carried out the abuse and his explanation for the inadequate institutional response to incidents of abuse. Philip's story resonated with the rhetoric and discourse that was concurrent in newspapers and media at the time. Clauses 20-30 reconstructed the defence put forward by the church and his evaluative clauses (31-48) echoed the general arguments which were promulgated in the public and media discourse of the scandals. Philip's attempts to assign cause and blame and to give reasons for his own response were indicative of his state of conflict and feelings of betrayal. His final appeal to the ordinary people of the church and to the central tenet of forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer represented the fundamentals of Philip's faith. The story indicated his determination to hold onto those aspects of his faith in the face of this turmoil.

Philip scored above the group mean for the life satisfaction measures and he rated his health as 'very good'. However, his stories (n=30) were attributed a score for emotional tone which was below the sample mean. The scores attributed to his stories for narrative complexity and the motivational theme of communion matched the sample means and it would appear that these attributes contributed to his life satisfaction. The theme of communion was evident in his stories which conveyed his happy marriage and his sense of connectedness to his family. Philip's narrative complexity was evident in his discussion of his religious faith. The second highest scoring motivational theme in Philip's stories was personal growth and this
was reflected in his attempts to place the events of his past in their context and thereby to accept them. Philip demonstrated repressive coping and resilience in his use of humour and positive emotion to convey potentially negative life events, for example his experience of abuse as a child as well as the physical decline associated with ageing.

**Case study twenty: Tony**

Tony was born in 1932 and he was 78 at the time the interviews took place. He was born in a small rural farming community in West Cork. His father was a small farmer and Tony came from a large family of 6 brothers and 2 sisters. When Tony was 12 he was awarded a scholarship to complete secondary education at a Christian Brother boarding school. Upon finishing school Tony joined the Christian Brothers and trained to be a primary school teacher. He began his teaching career in a small rural school in West Mayo. After eight years in Mayo he was sent to work in Africa in missionary schools around the continent. After 17 years working in the missions, Tony returned to Ireland and continued working in primary education as both a teacher and a school principle. When he was 59 he returned to education and he obtained a Third Level degree in humanities. During his time teaching in Ireland he became an alcoholic. As a result of his alcoholism he was removed from teaching and he began to get involved in social work with disadvantaged youths and travellers. At the time of the interviews he was recovering from his addiction, he continued to work in social work and he provided addiction counselling. Since he was 66 Tony was living in a Christian Brother's monastery in Ballyfermot and, although he was retired at the time of the interviews, he continued to provide social support and counselling to members of the Ballyfermot community.

The interview with Tony took place in the Christian Brother's monastery in Ballyfermot attached to the Christian Brother's primary school where many of the brothers teach. I was introduced to Tony by one of the other participants who told him about my research. When I arrived at the monastery there were members of the community in the entrance lobby waiting to speak to one of the brothers. Tony subsequently told me that community members often knock on the monastery door to ask for help or guidance on a particular issue. After our first interview Tony gave me a tour
of the monastery. It reminded me of my primary school building which was a Catholic convent school. In particular, there was the same smell, the same iconography, wall colours and parquet flooring. Tony showed me the common sitting room where the brothers could meet and watch TV together. He also showed me a lovely chapel at the rear of the building where they pray together. The interviews took place in a small sitting room on the ground floor of the monastery.

Tony rated his health as ‘fair’ and he obtained a score of 29 on the SWLS which was within one standard deviation above the mean for the participants ($M=27.40$, $SD=7.16$, Range:12, 35). He obtained an overall score of 26 on the LSI which was within two standard deviations above the sample mean ($M=21.55$, $SD=3.35$, Range:16, 28). The stories (n=21) identified from Tony’s interview data were scored according to three narrative indices. Tony obtained a score of 3.76 for emotional tone, this was above the sample mean ($M=3.31$, $SD=.46$) and a score of .60 for narrative complexity, this was close to the sample mean ($M=.57$, $SD=.12$). The three motivational themes of his stories were assessed as follows: Tony’s stories scored highest for the motivational theme of communion; they were attributed a score of 1.29 for this theme which was above sample mean ($M=1.21$, $SD=.21$). The next highest scoring motivational theme in Tony’s stories was agency. His stories obtained a score of 1.14 for this theme which was above the sample mean ($M=.84$, $SD=.28$). Finally, the lowest scoring motivational theme in Tony’s stories was personal growth. His stories obtained a score of 1.10 for personal growth which was above the sample mean ($M=.92$, $SD=.21$).

Tony’s Narrative (V2.20, pp. 183-195)

A total of 21 stories were identified from Tony’s interview material. Of these, 14 were selected, thematically ordered, organised into clauses and reduced, for his life narrative (V2.20). Tony began his narrative with stories concerning his early working life and he spoke in detail about his time teaching in Africa. These stories portrayed a strong sense of personal agency and accomplishment through repetition of action verbs in the first
person and an emphasis on his legacy. These stories also portrayed an image of Tony as a radical independent thinker within a conservative institutional structure. Through using reconstructed reported speech Tony provided credibility to an image of himself as a revolutionary. ‘You do what you’re told to do’ occurred during sub-session one and Tony explained how the institutional framework of the Christian Brothers effectively thwarted his radical attempts at implementing change. In the abstract (1-26), Tony summarised the point of the story which was to show how his independent thinking was brought under the control of the institution. The story described Tony’s lesson in the primary rule of the brothers, described in clause 26; ‘you do what you’re told to do’. The repetition throughout the abstract of action verbs in the first person emphasised his personal agency and lent credibility to the image of himself as a creative and radical thinker. In the evaluative clauses (33-39), Tony used direct speech to reconstruct the debate between him and the institution. The story outcome conveyed the mechanism employed by the institution to assert authority over Tony. This mechanism was to move him around the missions and therefore diffuse his attempts at instigating change. The coda conveyed his lack of autonomy and a resignation to the will of the institution.

Tony's stories which concerned his work as a primary school teacher drew on the archetypal figure of the teacher as a deliverer who recognises and develops the gifts of his students. ‘The greatest achievement’ (V2.20d) occurred mid-way through sub-session one and it explained how, upon his return from Africa to teach in Ireland, Tony won over a troublesome class. The abstract of the story established Tony’s love of education and in particular music and literature which he viewed as signs of life in a school. His evocation of the senses in clause 9 conveyed his passion for his vocation. His judgement in clause 12, that the school was dead, facilitated Tony’s portrayal of him bringing life to the school in terms of culture, music and literature. His reconstruction of the conversation between himself and the principal in the orientation clauses appealed to the image of Tony operating against the system. The complicating action of the

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68 See ‘A wonderful idea’ (V2.20b) and ‘To say thank you to God’ (V2.20a) in Volume 2.
69 See ‘The goodness inside’ (V2.20f) in Volume 2.
story (clauses 26-30) reconstructed the confrontation and battle of wills between Tony and the class ringleader. Tony’s victory in this confrontation was the story turning point. In the evaluation clauses, Tony emphasised the culture that he brought to the class in the form of music, literature and art which, he argued, converted them to a beautiful class. The story served to provide a sense of personal agency and accomplishment to Tony which was compounded in his coda statement claiming the greatest achievement of his life.

Tony’s stories from his teaching days referred to particular students that Tony encountered and he remarked on the effect that he had on their lives. These stories provided a sense of purpose and meaning to Tony’s narrative. He conveyed a Christian commitment to the development of the potential of youth. In ‘I’m keeping him’ (V2.20e), Tony reconstructed an argument he had with mother who wanted to move her child from Tony’s school to an industrial school. Clauses 11-15 were particularly powerful as it framed the argument in terms of parenthood and the right to determine the best interests of a child. Tony challenged the mother directly in an effort to keep the child in his class, in particular clauses 12-13 were very powerful in their positioning of Tony as the child’s guardian and proxy parent. This story served to convey Tony’s commitment to teaching and to his students and it provided an image of the teacher as a parental figure. The subsequent story emphasised Tony’s success at teaching and, in particular, his reconstruction of the conversation with his colleague lent credibility to this success (clauses 44-47).

Tony’s love of teaching provided the context for his stories which concerned his alcoholism and the depression he experienced when he was removed from teaching. ‘Never been put on my feet since’ (V2.20g) occurred during sub-session one of the interviews. In the complicating action and evaluation clauses he provided an account of his journey into alcoholism. In clauses 18-22 Tony used direct speech to represent the voice of the demon sitting on his shoulder and coaxing him to drink. The

70 See ‘The goodness inside’ and ‘Nothing better than teaching’ in Appendix X.
evocation of inner demons and his description of the gradual descent into alcoholism in clauses 24-27 were resonant of the archetypal addiction story. Clauses 31-34 described the outcome of his addiction; his exclusion from teaching children. In the coda, Tony brought the story into the present context with a reference to a judicial report published prior to the interviews taking place. This report examined child abuse in religious run educational institutions and was the focus of public discourse at the time of the interviews. One of its key findings was that sexual and physical abusers remained teaching in the institutions even after the church hierarchy was made aware of their abuse.

Tony's stories of his alcoholism provided insight into his resources for resilience; his faith and his ability to appreciate life through contrast with previous despair. In 'He's found' (V2.20h) Tony recalled the isolation he experienced during his wait for his cancer operation and the persistent temptation of alcohol. He explained that his isolation was compounded by his gender which inhibited him from seeking emotional support. In the orientation clauses of the story, Tony recalled how he turned to his faith to provide him with comfort during this time. In the complicating action of the story, Tony revealed that during his treatment and recovery from cancer he gave into temptation and began drinking again. In clause 53, he referenced being 'back where he left off' which suggested a sense of an unfinished passage through alcoholism to recovery. Tony’s evaluation of this event provided an insight into his understanding of his dependency and his recognition of the ever present temptation. The story resolution (clause 58) portrayed Tony’s confidence that he has now completed his recovery journey by way of his adamant declaration which contrasted with the hesitation conveyed in clause 53. In his coda statements Tony revealed that he regularly told his story of recovery to recovering alcoholics at a community addiction centre. Tony’s difficult passage to recovery and the appeal to resources of faith resonated with the archetypal addiction story.

Tony’s faith featured regularly throughout his narrative as a source of motivation and comfort. Towards the end of sub-session two he reflected upon the sacrifices he made in his life to become a Christian Brother. In 'My

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71 See 'When you get out of the pit' (V2.20i) in Volume 2.
Tony recalled when he was 20 and he took up his first teaching position in a rural Christian Brother primary school in Mayo. He remembered falling in love with a local girl. In the orientation clauses, Tony conveyed the romance of the story through his reference to their youth and the secret looks that passed between them. In clause 7 he conveyed a sense of fate when he described how she stood out from the others around her. This appeal to the romantic convention of fate informed the complicating action in clause 17 which conveyed his conviction to abandon his teaching and his vocation if he met her on the train. However, in the evaluation clauses, Tony reconstructed the voice of his faith in order to convey the calling towards his vocation and away from the romance. In the coda Tony suggested an alternative life with this girl. The story represented a juncture in Tony's narrative whereby he presented two distinct possible lives and acknowledged the choice he made to follow one path over another.

Towards the end of sub-session three, during a discussion of life satisfaction, Tony returned to his decision to pursue his vocation with the Christian Brothers. In 'Nothing better than teaching' (V2.20I) Tony spoke about how the recent revelations concerning church abuses caused him to reflect upon his commitment to the Catholic Church. In a later story he returned to these scandals and remarked that he would not have joined the Church if he had known about these abuses.72 The revelations were the catalyst for 'Nothing better than teaching' and they initiated the evaluation of his vocation. In the orientation clauses Tony conveyed a strong sense of regret and emotional loneliness through the use of negative words as well as repetition of 'nobody' to emphasise his lack of family, particularly children. In clause 14 he employed direct speech to construct the voice of the Church and he depicted his naivety in his willingness to accept the sacrifices that his vocation entailed. However, clauses 16-17 represented the story turning point and the shift to highly positive language which described teaching. In the evaluation clauses Tony revealed the sources for

72 See 'Don't hold the sins of others against me' (V2.20m) in Volume 2.
his happiness which included acknowledgement of all the children that he taught and led to greatness. The story emphasised the self-esteem and happiness that Tony derived from his commitment to the education of children.73 In his comparison of the grandchildren of his brothers with the children in his classroom the story resonated with 'I'm keeping him'. Tony's teaching stories conveyed his strong sense of guardianship and love for the children he taught.

Tony scored above the group mean for the life satisfaction measures however he rated his health as 'fair'. Furthermore, his stories (n=21) were attributed a score above the sample mean for emotional tone. This high level of life satisfaction was evident in his sense of accomplishment and generativity in his work. Tony's stories were attributed scores above the sample mean for all three motivational themes. The highest scoring motivational themes were agency and personal growth. Tony demonstrated high self-esteem and internal locus of control in his stories which conveyed his accomplishments in his working life. His discussion of his religious faith, particularly in relation to alcoholism, provided evidence of his ability to use this framework to exercise agency in his life. His growth was clearly evidenced in his story of his journey to recovery from alcoholism. Tony scored above the mean for the motivational theme of communion and this was corroborated by his stories which conveyed his strong sense of care for people. The theme of communion was also evident in his stories which revealed his emotional loneliness. However, his sense of accomplishment as a teacher provided him with a buffer to this loneliness.

4.4 Conclusion

The individual case studies presented in this chapter revealed the complex interaction of variables in each participant's narrative reflection on their lives and their construction of identity. The gendered life course had a role in shaping the participants' stories in relation to work, family, social activities and friendships. Marital status also impacted on the kinds of stories they told, particularly in relation to sources for family connectedness.

73 See 'The greatest achievement' (V2.20d), 'I'm keeping him' (V2.20e) and 'The goodness inside' (V2.20f) in Volume 2.
generativity and care. Social class also featured in the narratives as shaping their life courses in terms of educational attainment and the participants' relationship with the welfare state and their community. The experience of ageing was common to all of the participants and evoked a reflection on life experiences and the desire for integrity and a quest for meaning.

4.4.1 Connecting narratives and well-being

The case studies revealed the relationship between the statistical measures of well-being and the composition of life narratives. Positive correlation was found between the life satisfaction measures and the subjective health rating for all the participants. Furthermore, those who rated their health as 'fair' obtained a significantly different ranked mean score for the SWLS than those who rated their health as good or very good. This was evidenced in the case studies of participants whose bad health impacted on the quality of their daily living in terms of social activities and connectedness. Positive correlation was also found between both of the life satisfaction measures and the scores for the narrative index of emotional tone in the participants' stories. Hedonic sources of happiness, humour and positive emotion were found to be associated with higher life satisfaction and an enhanced score for emotional tone. The motivational theme of agency was also significantly correlated with the LSI scores as well as the scores for the emotional tone in the participants' stories. This was evidenced in the participants' case studies which indicated the role of agency in enhancing a sense of self-esteem, accomplishment and achievement in life.

Narrative complexity was a strong feature of those stories which relayed negative life events and this feature functioned positively by facilitating the search for meaning, learning and purpose for these events. No statistically significant association was found between narrative complexity and the measures of well-being or emotional tone. However, there were significant positive correlations found between narrative complexity and the motivational themes of personal growth and
communion. The relationship between narrative complexity and personal growth was clearly evident in the participants' stories and this served as a way of incorporating negative life events into a life narrative and a construction of identity. The relationship between complexity and growth indicated the importance of these two variables for eudaimonic resilience and the achievement of integrity through the assigning of meaning and purpose to life events.

Across all of the participants' stories the highest scoring motivational theme was communion, followed by personal growth. Agency was the lowest scoring motivational theme. The statistical tests revealed there was no significant difference between the male and female participants in terms of the scores for the motivational themes. However, the case studies provided a more nuanced perspective on the manifestation of these themes within the participants' stories. Among the female participants, Bridget, Emma, Jessica and Mabel scored above the sample mean for communion. A common feature across each of these women's stories was their emphasis on their nurturing and caring role and their ability to provide support for spouses, family and, in the case of Emma, community members. Among the male participants Eric, Mat and Tony scored above the mean for communion. The theme of communion manifested in their stories which depicted their role in intergenerational and community based transfer, development and progression. The participants' stories which were motivated by communion revealed the importance of a feeling of interpersonal connectivity and responsibility. This played a role in the interaction between communion, personal growth and narrative complexity.

There was no statistically significant difference found between the mean scores for the male and female participants' stories in relation to the motivational themes. However, the difference for agency was approaching statistical significance. Six of the male participants scored above the sample mean for agency in their stories compared to three of the female participants. Among the male participants work was the primary domain for stories which related their agency; this included employment, in the case of Fred, Mat, Tony and Danny, and also community development in the case of Danny, Eric and Michael. It is interesting to note that among the three
female participants whose stories scored above the mean for agency, Debbie and Emma were unmarried, through early widowhood and vocational status respectively, and continued working full-time throughout their lives. The association between agency and self-esteem as well as an internal locus of control was evident in the participants’ narratives and may explain the significant correlation between agency and the well-being measures.

4.4.2 A within and across gender analysis

The participant case studies revealed the dynamic, and sometimes contradictory, interaction of the psychological, social and cultural variables in the individual participants' life narratives. However, the exploration of the data in section 4.2.3 (see table 4.5) facilitated analysis of the differences between genders as well as the differences between those categorised as having high or low well-being.

Health emerged as a key variable affecting the participants' well-being. Those with greater self-rated health scores were more likely to have been categorised as having 'high well-being' and this was statistically significant for the female participants. Furthermore, analysis of the narrative indices according to gender and well-being categorisation revealed the nuanced relationship between gender, narrative complexity and motivational themes. The degree of narrative complexity in the stories of the female participants who were categorised as having low well-being was statistically significantly higher than the degree of narrative complexity in the stories of the female participants who were categorised as having high well-being. The reverse was the case for the male participants whereby, narrative complexity was a strong feature of those categorised as having high well-being. This could be explained by the significant overall positive correlation found between narrative complexity and the motivational themes of personal growth and communion. Personal growth was a strong motivating theme of the narratives of the male participants who were categorised as having high well-being. Furthermore, the stories of the male participants categorised as having high well-being obtained statistically
significantly higher scores for personal growth than the stories of the male participants who were categorised as having low well-being. By contrast, agency emerged as a strong motivational theme among the female participants categorised as having high well-being, compared with their low well-being counterparts (see table 4.5).

The case studies presented in this chapter facilitated an in-depth exploration of the individual life narratives which were constructed from the component stories provided by the participants. This exploration revealed the dynamic and complex operation of inter and intra personal variables within each participants’ narrative construction of self and identity. The interpersonal variables which emerged included: family connectivity, social engagement and activities, friendships, community attachment and belonging, quality of marital relationship, a sense of autonomy and purpose as well as generativity. The intra-personal variables which emerged from the case studies included: locus of control, self-esteem and confidence, self-efficacy and attitude, a sense of agency or accomplishment, humour and positive emotion as well as meaning finding through integration. These emerging variables as well as the attributes of health and the narrative characteristic indices are represented in Table 4.6 and are categorised according to gender and well-being.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Well-being</th>
<th>Self-rated health</th>
<th>Intra-personal</th>
<th>Inter-personal</th>
<th>Integrity/Generativity</th>
<th>Indices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>High well-being: Debbie, Emma, Mabel, Sally</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>• Internal locus of control (LOC)</td>
<td>• Strong family connectivity</td>
<td>• Integration of negative life events through meaning finding</td>
<td>• Positive emotional tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low well-being: Aoife, Bridget, Gillian, Kitty, Una, Jessica</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>• External LOC</td>
<td>• Lack of family connectivity</td>
<td>• Contamination effect of negative life events experiences</td>
<td>• Negative emotional tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>High well-being: Danny, Fred, Mat, Tony, Michael, Eric, Philip, Alex</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>• Internal LOC</td>
<td>• High self-efficacy</td>
<td>• Integration of negative life events through meaning finding</td>
<td>• Positive emotional tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low well-being: Luke, Jack</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>• Low self-esteem</td>
<td>• High self-efficacy</td>
<td>• Personal growth</td>
<td>• Negative emotional tone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.6: A within and between gender comparison of the emerging well-being attributes

- Integration of negative life events through meaning finding
- Personal growth
- Strongest motivators were agency and communion
- Positive emotional tone
- Narrative complexity below the overall mean
- Strongest motivators were communion and personal growth
- Positive emotional tone
- Narrative complexity about the mean
- Strongest motivators were personal growth and communion
- Disparate emotional tone
- Narrative complexity below overall mean
The emerging well-being attributes and characteristics represented in Table 4.6 provide the focus for discussion in Chapter Five and are the basis for the proposed model for later life eudaimonic well-being. The discussion includes commentary on the themes shared across the case studies, such as, the prominence of religiosity and faith, the experience of childhood poverty and hardship and the significance of a sense of continuity in the experience of ageing. Furthermore, the case studies provided evidence of the operation of particular cultural, social and psychological resources in the narrative construction of identity. These resources included the use of alternative possible selves for life course evaluation, as well as the employment of archetypes and acculturated meta-stories as frames for the interpretation and development of self. These themes, resources and well-being attributes evidenced in the case studies, provide the empirical basis for a discussion of the relationship between the narrative construction of identity and later life well-being in Chapter Five.
Chapter Five

**Narrative scaffolds and storied lives: The creation of later life eudaimonic happiness and well-being**

### 5.1 Introduction

The results of this study indicated that successful attainment of well-being in later life is related to a selective combination of components of eudaimonic happiness. In this way, individuals can optimise later life outcomes and compensate for age associated losses or decline. A further research finding established that individuals can achieve eudaimonic well-being through imaginative and creative storytelling which enables dialogic exchange with acculturated narrative scripts. Thereby, eudaimonic well-being is supported through the scaffolding structure of storytelling which provides the frame for individuals to create their narrative identity and interpret life experiences.

Through the exploration of the participants’ narratives the following component attributes of eudaimonic well-being, pertaining to two primary domains, were identified: inter-personal attributes and intra-personal attributes. This result underscores the findings of Bauer, McAdams and colleagues related to the two growth orientations of eudaimonia: socio-emotional well-being and social cognitive maturity (Bauer & McAdams, 2004, 2010; Bauer et al., 2008; Bauer & Park, 2010). The identification of the domain attributes and characteristics, which are associated with eudaimonic well-being, was undertaken from a feminist epistemological perspective which ensured a balance between the experiential knowledge of both the female and male participants. In this way the similarities and differences in the life course experiences of women and men informed the research findings and the interpretation of the results.

Through the exploration of the participants’ narratives, this research found that the pursuit of inter-personal attributes, such as socio-emotional connection, purpose, generativity, symbolic immortality and autonomy, was
motivated by a desire for communion. Furthermore, these attributes were recognisable through participant characteristics, such as social and family connectivity, community belonging and hedonic pleasure. The attributes pertaining to the intra-personal domain, which emerged from the narratives, included self-efficacy, self-esteem, control, integrity and self-realisation. The participants' pursuit of these intra-personal attributes was motivated by agency and was recognisable through the characteristics of confidence, determination, maturity, attitude and hardiness. Eudaimonic well-being was achieved by participants through the balanced combination of attributes from both domains. Those participants who successfully attained a high level of eudaimonic well-being compensated for age associated losses, life course disappointments and disruptive negative life experiences, through selective attribute optimisation and inter-domain compensation (Baltes & Baltes, 1990).

The discussion of the research findings in this chapter builds upon the work of Bauer, McAdams and colleagues in proposing an integrated model for later life eudaimonic well-being (Bauer & McAdams, 2004, 2010; Bauer et al., 2008; Bauer & Park, 2010). This model assimilates the research findings and the diverse understandings of the components of well-being from the literature. In particular, this model incorporates a eudaimonic orientation to happiness which, the discussion of the literature indicated, is associated with the attainment of meaning and purpose and thus with successful ageing (Bauer & Park, 2010; Erikson, 1959; O'Donnell & McTiernan, In Press; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Furthermore, it accounts for the role of socio-cultural environment in providing the discursive resources for the narrative construction of self and later life eudaimonic well-being.

To begin, an integrated model of later life eudaimonic well-being is proposed. The model addresses the prevailing explanations of social, emotional and cognitive later life well-being from the literature. This is followed by a discussion of the component attributes of the model, which is divided between the two eudaimonic well-being domains, inter-personal and intra-personal, and draws together the diverse understandings of well-being and life satisfaction from the literature. Attention is then paid to the use of acculturated interpretive schemas as they impact upon life appraisal and
growth orientation. Furthermore, the imagination and creativity employed by participants to narrate their lives, and thereby achieve eudaimonic well-being, are identified. Finally, the limitations of this study are explained and further areas of research are proposed.

5.2 An integrated model for later life eudaimonic well-being

Through an exploration of the participants’ narrative data, this research revealed some of the key attributes associated with the inter-personal and intra-personal eudaimonic well-being domains. The division between the inter-personal and the intra-personal elements of well-being was also a feature of Veenhoven’s (2000) model for the four qualities of life which distinguished between an individual’s ‘live-ability’ and their ‘life-ability’. According to Veenhoven’s model, an individual’s ‘live-ability’ incorporates their inter-personal social relationships and capital. ‘Life-abilities’, on the other hand, were represented on his model as personality-based resources and capacities for resiliency. Appraisal of ‘live-ability’, according to Veenhoven, is important for a subjective global evaluation of life satisfaction and well-being. On the other hand, Veenhoven argued, the pursuit of a higher meaning and life purpose was related to the ‘life-abilities’ of individuals. Bauer and McAdams (2004, 2010) argued that eudaimonic well-being is achieved through inter-personal social emotional relationships as well as intra-personal cognitive maturity and the development of personality-based resources for resiliency. The analysis of the participants’ narratives for this research corroborates the work of Bauer and McAdams in the identification of the social-emotional and psycho-personal domains of well-being which are necessary for the pursuit of meaning and purpose in later life.

It is important to acknowledge the evidence for the association between health and well-being which emerged from the participants’ narratives. The significance of this association must be tempered with the recognition of the subjective nature of self-report measures. Objective measures of health were not undertaken for this study, therefore the internal
validity of the self-rated health measure could not be established. Never-
the-less, participants’ mean scores for the life satisfaction measures and for
their self-reported health were statistically significantly correlated. This
finding was supported by the results of the first wave of The Irish
Longitudinal Study of Ageing (TILDA), which employed the same measure
for self-rated health as this study, and found health to be correlated with
quality of life (McGee et al., 2011). It is evident that any discussion of later
life well-being must recognise the influence of health status on quality of life
outcomes. The model for later life eudaimonic well-being (Figure 5.1), which
was developed to depict the main findings of this study, is premised upon
the use of selective optimisation of well-being attributes which compensate
for age associated loss in physical or cognitive health (Baltes & Baltes,
1990; Freund & Baltes, 1998). Therefore, individuals may exercise agency
through interpretation of life circumstances and through the mobilisation of
intra-personal and inter-personal support. In this way, a sense of
eudaimonic well-being is supported despite age related decline in health.

An important facet of eudaimonic well-being is the capacity of an
individual to think about their lives with complexity; integrating life events
and conceptual experiences into a deeper understanding of the self and
others (Bauer & Park, 2010; Erikson, 1959; Loevinger, 1966, 1976). It is
evident that meaning and purpose for life experiences is the basis for later
life eudaimonic well-being. A global evaluation of well-being accounts for
the cumulative effect of life events on affect regulation, personal cognitive
maturity as well as social-emotional growth goals (Bauer & McAdams,
2010; Bauer & Park, 2010; Kim-Prieto et al., 2005; Veenhoven, 2000). The
identification of the two domain sources for well-being in the participants’
narratives has led to the creation of the proposed model of later life
eudaimonic well-being, which builds upon the work of Bauer, McAdams and
colleagues (Bauer & McAdams, 2004, 2010; Bauer et al., 2005; Bauer &
Park, 2010). This model, represented in Figure 5.1, is offered within the
limitation of this study and is informed by the various inter-connecting
strands of research and theory. It represents the inter-dependent psycho-
social elements of later life eudaimonic well-being.
FIGURE 5.1: The wheel of later life eudaimonic well-being

Not unlike Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory, The Wheel of Later Life Eudaimonic Well-Being, depicts the three spheres of well-being as radiating outwards from the micro individual level to the macro social and cultural level. The microsphere contains the internal attributes which emerged as important components of eudaimonic well-being from the participants’ life narratives. The mesosphere is the mediating layer between the internal attributes and their outward representation. This sphere contains the outward orientated, and thus more measurable, attributes which contribute to the creation of eudaimonic well-being. Finally the macrosphere represents the interchange between the individual and their wider cultural and social location. This interchange is achieved through narrative accrual and the use of acculturated interpretive schemas. The borders of each of the spheres are permeable in order to represent the fluid and mutually constructive relationship between each of the layers. The microsphere and the mesosphere are divided by a diameter line into two hemispheres which represent the psycho-social domains of inter-personal
and intra-personal eudaimonic well-being. These hemispheres also illustrate the motivational relationship between inter-personal well-being and communion as well as intra-personal well-being and agency.

Within the microsphere the spokes of the wheel, or the radii, indicate the internal well-being attributes associated with each hemisphere. These attributes are connected by the radii to their counterparts in opposing domains. In this way, the inter-personal attribute of purpose is connected to the intra-personal attribute of self-efficacy, whereby optimisation of efficacy can lead to the realisation of purpose for life and vice-versa. Similarly, social-emotional connectivity is associated with self-realisation, integrity with generativity, self-esteem with symbolic immortality and autonomy with control. These connections illustrate the importance of selective optimisation which allows for compensation both within and between domains (Baltes & Baltes, 1990; Heine et al., 2006). For example, increasing age is often associated with impaired physical functioning which has implications for the individual’s control over their activities of daily living. This impaired control, however, may be compensated for by the prioritising of autonomy whereby an individual can mobilise and govern assistance from their social support networks or communities to realise their goals. Furthermore, compensation can also occur within domains. For example, a threat to one domain attribute, such as self-esteem, can be compensated for by prioritising goals or meaning relations for another attribute, such as self-efficacy.

The mesosphere of the wheel contains the characteristic attributes that emerged from the exploration of eudaimonic well-being in the participants’ narratives. These attributes were also identified by the reviewed literature in Chapter One as measurable characteristics of later life well-being. Attributes, such as, a sense of community or environmental belonging, friendship and family-based social networks, strong social-emotional relationships and connectivity, satisfaction with levels of social interaction and activities, as well hedonic pleasure, emerged as necessary ingredients for inter-personal and social well-being. Furthermore, the participants’ beliefs concerning the importance of personal attitude or outlook on life, as well as confidence, determination, hardiness and maturity
emerged as important characteristic attributes of intra-personal or psychological well-being.

The outer perimeter, or the macrosphere, of the model refers to the dialogic narrative exchange between the individual and culture through collective narrative accrual. The participants' narratives illustrated how the various aspects of inter-personal and intra-personal well-being are constructed through narrative interpretation of life events and circumstances. The accrual of socially and culturally embedded narratives provides the scaffolding upon which individuals can interpret life events and circumstances and thereby support a sense of self (Piaget, 1970; Vygotskey, 1978). In this way, the macrosphere of the model represents the exchange between an individual and culture. This exchange provides interpretive schemas or scripts which enable an individual to fashion their life story in such a way as to enhance a sense of eudaimonic well-being. However, the permeable walls of this sphere, represented by the incomplete borderlines, indicate that this relationship between culture and the individual is dialogic. Through the use of imagination and creativity individuals contribute to the accrual of cultural scripts through the storied representation of personal experiences which have global cultural resonance.

The wheel brings together the different strands of later life well-being and quality of life research with the findings emerging from the exploration of the participants' narrative data. In doing so it presents an integrative concept of eudaimonic well-being which is necessary for a holistic understanding of psycho-social happiness and well-being in later life. The model emphasises the inter-dependence of the various attributes and spheres of later life eudaimonic well-being whereby no one attribute or sphere is elevated in status above another. Therefore, eudaimonic well-being is sustained through the pursuit of meaningful relationships and life purpose within both the inter-personal and intra-personal domains. Furthermore, narrative is represented on the model as the mechanism by which individuals interpret life events and engage in an imaginative dialogue with their cultural surroundings.
The next section of this chapter discusses the manifestation of the well-being attributes which are located in the micro and mesosphere of the model in the narratives of the research participants. The two domains of eudaimonic well-being, inter-personal and intra-personal provide a structure to this discussion which draws together the diverse understandings of well-being and life satisfaction from the literature.

5.3 An exploration of the attributes of later life eudaimonic well-being

5.3.1 Inter-personal well-being

Analysis of the participants' narratives, in light of prevailing conceptualisations of well-being, revealed that the development of meaningful relationships with family, friends and community provides the basis for inter-personal well-being and the attainment of meaning and purpose. The strongest motivational theme across the participants' life stories (N=505) was communion. Furthermore, statistically significant correlation was found between communion and the scores for narrative complexity in the participants' stories. This finding is supported by previous research which connected social emotional well-being with communal motivations for narratives (Bauer & McAdams, 2004). Previous research has drawn on existential humanist philosophy to argue that central to the experience of being human is an unending quest for meaning and purpose for life (Fry & Debats, 2010b; Heine et al., 2006). Social-emotional well-being was associated by Bauer and Park (2010) with experiential growth or the deepening in the felt experience of one's life. This domain of growth involved inter-personal meaning-making or the ability to derive meaning and purpose for one's life from surrounding people, places, ideas and beliefs (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Heine et al., 2006).

The findings of this research highlighted the association of love, intimacy, dialogue and belongingness with eudaimonic well-being among the sample cohort. These results reflected the findings of previous research which examined the role of inter-personal social connectivity and emotional support networks in later life well-being (Davidson et al., 2003; de Jong Gierveld, 2003; Gilleard et al., 2007; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Murrell &
Norris, 1991; O' Luanaigh & Lawlor, 2008; Scott & Wenger, 1995). Analysis of the participants' narratives identified key attributes of personal and social connectivity which are important for inter-personal eudaimonic well-being. These aspects include: strong family connectivity and care for future generations; a sense of community engagement and belonging; as well as close emotionally supportive friendships. The results indicated that through selectively combining and optimising these attributes it may be possible to achieve the core internal features of inter-personal eudaimonic well-being. These core features are: generativity; purpose; autonomy; symbolic immortality; and social-emotional connection.

**Family connectivity and generativity**

One of the strongest findings of this research was the relationship between well-being and family connectivity, demonstrated through marital satisfaction and strong familial intergenerational relationships. It would appear from the participants' narratives that positive family relationships were crucial to the creation of a global sense of life satisfaction and this finding is supported by previous research (Arber, Price, et al., 2003; Davidson et al., 2003; Fry & Debats, 2010a; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Scott & Wenger, 1995; Wiggins et al., 2004). For example, Mat was one of the highest scoring participants for the health and well-being measures and he also scored well above the sample mean for emotional tone in his stories. His narrative contained themes of inter-generational solidarity and care as well as a strong and happy marriage. These themes of inter-personal well-being echoed across the married participants who were categorised as having high eudaimonic well-being, for example Mabel, Danny and Michael. Furthermore, positive inter-generational relationships with children and grandchildren were narrative features of those participants who were widowed and who were also categorised as having high well-being, for example Debbie, Sally, Fred and Alex.

By contrast, poor marital relationships and a lack of family connectivity or integration were found to be associated with lower scores for well-being, health and emotional tone in the participants' narratives. For
example, Luke, Aoife, Gillian, Una and Kitty scored below the sample mean for the well-being measures and they all rated their health as fair. Furthermore, their stories obtained low scores for emotional tone. The difficult marriages of Aoife and Una ‘contaminated’ their stories which expressed their regret, disappointment and lack of an internal locus of control (McAdams, 2008). Similarly, in her narrative, Gillian focussed on her negative life circumstances, including her health, her marriage and her lack of family connection. Absence of family connectivity was also a feature of Luke’s narrative and in particular his reference to his loss of contact with his grandchildren. Furthermore, Kitty’s narrative concerned lost opportunities for marriage, love and intimacy in her life.

The theme of generativity emerged from the participants’ stories which concerned intergenerational relationships between the participants and their children and grandchildren. In his eight stage model of ego development, Erikson (1959) identified ‘generativity’ as occurring in later adulthood. He argued that this life stage involved self-generation through a commitment to cultivating strength in the next generation. According to Erikson, during this psycho-social developmental stage an individual must resolve the crisis between generativity versus stagnation, the successful realisation of which leads to the virtue of care. Familial generativity combined with high scores for the well-being measures was a feature of the narratives of Eric, Mabel, Sally, Michael, Alex, Danny and Debbie. These participants found an outlet for generativity and the attainment of the virtue of care through their commitment to their roles in child-rearing and their relationships with their grandchildren.

It was evident from the participants’ narratives that family connectivity was the primary domain in which they achieved the virtue of care through generativity. This was further supported by the narratives of Luke, Una and Gillian which were noted for their lack of family connectivity as well as their absence of generativity. Gillian’s narrative exhibited a degree of stagnation which was understood by Erikson (1959) to be the consequence of a failed progression through the generative stage of his model. Gillian was categorised as having low well-being and she rated her health as fair. This was reflected in her stories which concerned her
experience of family tragedy, her difficult and abusive marriage and her lack of family connectivity. Gillian was unable to express a sense of generational progression or advancement. In the story entitled ‘Things can come back’ (V2.5g) Gillian described the suicide of her son which she connected to previous negative life events. The connection between these negative events suggested a degree of self-absorption which Erikson associated with stagnation (Erikson, 1959; Erikson et al., 1986).

Generativity, purpose and symbolic immortality

The participants’ narratives demonstrated the connection between generativity and purpose for life which was identified by the literature as a key domain for life satisfaction and well-being (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Ryff, 1991; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). A commitment to the progression and development of future generations of family was particularly evident among the male participants. Both Danny and Eric explicitly commented on their expectation for a better life for their children and grandchildren. In the story entitled ‘It’s easier to stay on top’ (V2.13j) Eric employed a macro view of the generational progression evident within his own family. He illustrated how the transference of wisdom, advice and achievement from one generation to the next resulted in better life opportunities and outcomes for his grandchildren.

The connection between generativity and purpose was also evident in the participants’ stories that concerned their role in the provision of care for dependent children. This aspect of generativity was more common among the female participants, particularly as it related to child rearing. A common thread across the narratives of Bridget, Jessica and Mabel was the sense of achievement and purpose they derived from their role as primary caregiver to their children. For example, in the story entitled ‘The family in Ballyfermot’ (V2.2a) Bridget conveyed her sense of achievement in her child rearing which provided purpose for her in the construction of her life narrative.

Generativity and a sense of purpose for life are related to symbolic immortality and these attributes emerged from the narratives as being
integral to the pursuit of inter-personal eudaimonic well-being. Symbolic immortality is understood as the continuity of self beyond death through the transference of experience, wisdom and knowledge to the next generation (Heine et al., 2006). This eudaimonic well-being attribute was identified by Hein, Proulx & Vohs (2006) as one of four key domains for meaning maintenance and well-being. Exploration of the narratives indicated that generativity, purpose and symbolic immortality were highly dependent upon cultivating strong inter-personal and inter-generational relationships. For example, Mat's stories which concerned his relationship with his grandchildren were particularly powerful in their suggestion of familial legacy and immortality.

Family connectivity was a particularly strong theme emerging from the participants' narratives. This manifested through an expression of love and care for family as well as a sense of purpose and symbolic immortality obtained from generational progression. However, family was not the sole domain in which the attributes of generativity, purpose and symbolic immortality were expressed by the participants. A commitment to the progression and development of future generations was also evident in the stories of Fred, Mat, Emma and Tony which concerned their role in teaching and provision of training. In these narratives the participants emphasised the impact they had in encouraging younger generations to realise their potential. These stories emphasised the participants' transference of wisdom and knowledge to their students and they portrayed the life satisfaction that the participants derived from this experience of generativity. In this way the participants conveyed a sense of their legacy and symbolic immortality.

Due to their vocations, neither Emma nor Tony married or had children. However, they were both categorised as having high well-being. Their narratives provided evidence of alternative sources for generativity and symbolic immortality which they associated with vocational commitment. Both Emma and Tony undertook a review of their vocational lives in their narratives which facilitated them to express their care for people as well as their legacy. In 'There was something drawing me' (V2.4e) Emma recognised her vocation as facilitating her to pursue her
personal growth goal in relation to the care and development of people within her community. Emma spoke about the satisfaction she derived from her role in enabling young people to realise their potential and their 'giftedness'. Similarly, in 'Nothing better than teaching' (V2.20) Tony evaluated his decision to become a Christian brother and this instigated a discussion of his sense of loss in the familial domain and his lack of resources for emotional support. However, in his overall appraisal of this major life decision, he counterbalanced this loss with a reflection on the sense of care and life satisfaction that was associated with the generative nature of his teaching role.

**Care provision and the implications for autonomy**

The inter-personal domain of family was also present in the participants' narratives as a site of tension which restricted experiential growth and the achievement of inter-personal well-being. This tension was centred on the expression of autonomy which, research has indicated, is a significant element of subjective well-being (Rioux, 2005; Ryff, 1991; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Wiggins et al., 2004). The narratives of Jessica, Bridget, Luke and Jack were particularly significant in highlighting the implications for autonomy of spousal care relationships. Furthermore, each of these participants were categorised as having low well-being. In 'She’s a worrier' (V2.15e) Jack described his wife’s anxiety over his health. He conveyed a sense of claustrophobia associated with his lack of independence in his social activities and the necessity for him to be accountable to his wife.

While Jack’s narrative provided the perspective of a care recipient, the narratives of Jessica, Luke and Bridget expressed the implications for social isolation of the full-time provision of spousal care. Previous research has indicated that older care-giving adults are more likely to be in poor physical and psychological health (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2003; Schulz & Beach, 1999). Of particular concern is the risk posed to the social and economic capital of adults who are providing informal full-time care (Carmichael & Charles, 2003). Jessica, Luke and Bridget were categorised as having low well-being and, with the exception of Jessica, obtained low
scores for the health measure. Their narratives highlighted the association between care-giving, social isolation and depressed social connectivity. The association of care with decreased well-being indicates the impact of care-giving roles on autonomy in terms of social activities and engagement as well as family connectivity.

It is important to acknowledge the gender dimension to the construction of care that was exhibited in the stories of Jessica, Luke and Bridget. The provision of care and the demonstration of caring skills and abilities provided a sense of purpose and achievement to the stories of Bridget and Jessica, albeit they both recognised the implications of this role for social isolation. For example, In 'Nursing' (V2.6e) Jessica described the care that she provided to her husband after his stroke and she noted her success in his rehabilitation. This sense of pride and achievement in her role as carer was re-iterated in 'I kept myself going' (V2.6h). In this story, Jessica described the capabilities and prowess which she exhibited during her married life by caring for her children, her home and supplementing the family income through sewing work. By contrast, Luke's narrative did not convey the same consideration of his caring role in terms of his skills or abilities. Research has highlighted the phenomenon whereby care provision is viewed as a natural extension of a woman's role within the home (Calasanti, 2006; Rose & Bruce, 1995). The operation of gender norms and the reconciling of gendered identity with care work may have facilitated the women to find a purpose for their spousal caring roles which was denied to Luke.

Social connectivity and community belonging

Exploration of the participants' narratives highlighted the importance of environmental context and community belongingness for a sense of later life well-being. The research reviewed in Chapter One indicated the important role of community resources for well-being in later life, particularly in buffering against age associated losses to independence (Cook et al., 2007; Gilleard et al., 2007; Scott & Wenger, 1995). Gilleard et al. (2007) indicated the importance for well-being of long-term residence and growing older in a particular community. The participants' commitment to Ballyfermot reflected their life course experience of living in the area and this laid the
foundation for a sense of belonging. Debbie's narrative, for example, provided a very strong sense of community attachment. This attachment was fostered by stories which portrayed the care and support offered by the community and which helped her to cope with the experience of rearing her children alone.

It was evident from the participants' narratives that similar life course pathways and shared experiences of child-rearing, community, social class and hardship provided the participants with a sense of environmental belonging and attachment. Their shared life course experiences also indicated a further inter-personal aspect of social emotional well-being which was social comparison and the relative appraisal of life events and experiences. Many of the participants acknowledged in their stories the widespread poverty during their childhoods. Furthermore, they recalled arriving to Ballyfermot and having to establish new community bonds as well as amenities. Research has highlighted the relative experience of poverty as mediating the impact of low income and material wealth on well-being (Easterlin, 1995, 2003; Layard, 2005; Layard et al., 2008). It was evident from the narratives that inter-personal social comparison was used by the participants to offset some of the worst effects of poverty and hardship. In his story entitled 'We didn't know we were poor' (V2.19c) Philip pointed out that as a child his poverty only became apparent when he was in the presence of those who had money. Furthermore, the sense of community that was engendered from shared life experiences provided resources for resilience. In his story entitled 'You did what you had to do' (V2.15a) Jack recalled these resources as including humour and mutual kindnesses and support from neighbours. This was reiterated in Debbie's recollection of the inter-dependence of neighbours in 'To have someone at the back of you' (V2.3c).

A lack of community belonging and commitment to Ballyfermot was associated with decreased well-being among the participants. In the narratives of Kitty and Aoife, Ballyfermot played a very important role as a catalyst for many of their negative life events. In particular, their arrival to Ballyfermot as young teenagers signalled a decline in their family fortunes.
In the case of Aoife this was associated with the break-up of her parents’ marriage and the allocation of corporation housing to her impoverished mother. ‘Culture shock’ (V2.1b) conveyed Aoife’s sense of being an outsider in Ballyfermot and also associated her arrival there with disappointment, loss and deterioration in status. In Kitty’s case her arrival to Ballyfermot came following the eviction of her family from their rented accommodation in the North inner city. Kitty associated her arrival with the death of her first love as well as a series of missed opportunities for love and marriage. The story entitled ‘It was dreary’ (V2.7a) conveyed a strong sense of disappointment and loss.

Ballyfermot is an area of Dublin which is classified as being of low socio-economic status and associated with high crime, unemployment and drug or alcohol dependency. While the participants acknowledged the high crime in the area they often defended the community as their place to grow old in and highlighted their strong sense of community loyalty and environmental autonomy. In this way, the participants’ narratives corroborated research findings which indicate that the socio-economic status of an area does not significantly impact upon a sense of community attachment or belonging (Gilleard et al., 2007; A. E. Smith et al., 2004).

A common feature across all the narratives was a description of the development of Ballyfermot community over time. These stories revealed a strong sense of community attachment whereby the participants associated the development of the area with the progression of their families. In their study of the relationship between age and place, Gilleard et al. (2007) found a strong association between ageing in place and attachment to place. This finding was reflected in the participants’ narratives which commonly described the gradual progression of the area in terms of amenities and infrastructural resources. The participants’ stories revealed how they witnessed this progression during their lives and this lent a strong sense of community attachment to their stories. The sense of belonging to Ballyfermot was also evident in the participants’ association between the community development and the progression of their families. For example, the narrative of Eric demonstrated a very strong commitment to his community which was evident in his stories which portrayed his role in
community activism and development. In Eric’s story entitled ‘We learnt to explain our case’ (V2.13c) he spoke about fighting for better community educational amenities for his children so that they would have more opportunities in their lives.

**The role of autonomy for a sense of belonging**

A common feature across the narratives was an overt expression of the participants’ commitment to remaining in Ballyfermot and their homes despite threats to their independence posed by advancing age. The importance of autonomy as mediating the relationship between well-being and attachment to place or community belonging has been highlighted by previous research (Rioux, 2005). In ‘I dug my heels in’ (V2.6c) Jessica reconstructed an argument with her son in order to convey her commitment to remaining in her home which she associated with her life memories. Similarly, in ‘The mother-in-law in a home’ (V2.8l) Mabel argued for the importance of remaining in one’s own home, as one aged, in order to safeguard one’s independence. A similar argument was put forward by Danny in ‘I would never move’ (V2.16j) whereby he adamantly defended Ballyfermot as the place for him to grow old. Danny pointed out the community-based resources for his well-being which included a strong network of neighbours and friends as well as his sense of belonging to the community.

A strong theme emerging from the participants’ narratives was the implications for personal and environmental autonomy of deteriorating health. This was particularly evident in the narratives of Gillian and Una. In the story entitled ‘There’s no community’ (V2.5f) Gillian explained that her lack of environmental autonomy was caused by her poor physical and mental health. This influenced her perception of her community environment as being devoid of resources for social engagement. Una’s narrative also portrayed her health as impacting upon her environmental autonomy and increasing her sense of social isolation. In ‘Moaning and groaning’ (V2.10d), Una described her poor health as resulting in reduced
environmental autonomy, social isolation and a perception of the lack of community resources for engagement.

Social connectivity and positive emotion

The importance of social networks to the well-being of the participants was evident from their narratives. Of particular significance was how the participants highlighted, through storytelling, the importance of inter-personal relationships for meaning-making and emotion regulation in later life. In 'Reconnecting with family' (V2.4j) Emma explained the personal benefit she accrued from re-establishing a relationship with her brother which helped her come to terms with previously distant and strained family relations. In 'I wasn't always this way' (V2.9j) Sally spoke about consciously deciding to engage with community-based social resources in order to break her social isolation and to counteract a feeling of loneliness which was associated with her children leaving home. In 'The two sticks' (V2.19i), Philip recalled sharing the experience of ageing with a male friend and their use of mutually supportive positive emotion and laughter to adapt to physical decline.

The participants' narratives also demonstrated the importance of community resources for the fostering and protecting of social networks in later life and this finding is supported by previous research (Cook et al., 2007). In 'Only for here I'd never go out' (V2.10f), Una emphasised that the care centre, in which the interviews took place, was her only source of social connectivity. This was echoed in the stories of Bridget and Gillian, and together these participants illustrated the crucial role of community welfare nurses and care centres in integrating those vulnerable to isolation into community social networks. Satisfaction with one's social activities and networks has been found by previous research to be crucial to fostering and maintaining well-being and happiness in later life (Davidson et al., 2003; Phillipson, 1997; Scott & Wenger, 1995; J. Smith et al., 1999). Of particular importance is the sustaining of social relationships which can buffer older people from low morale and loneliness (de Jong Gierveld, 2003; O'Luanaigh & Lawlor, 2008).

A key research finding emerging from analysis of the participants' narratives revealed that the availability of social networks alone was not
sufficient for well-being. Despite their integration into a community care centre Una, Bridget and Gillian scored below the sample mean for the well-being measures and the emotional tone in their stories. A common feature across their narratives was the lack of reference to a key support network member and they exhibited a high degree of emotional loneliness (O’Luanaigh & Lawlor, 2008; Treacy et al., 2004). This supports the findings of previous research which indicated that the quality of social relationships within support networks, is crucial for fostering a sense of well-being (Chan & Lee, 2006; de Jong Gierveld, 2003; Murrell & Norris, 1987; Scott & Wenger, 1995; Treacy et al., 2004).

The presence of close and emotionally supportive relationships in the participants’ narratives was associated with higher scores on the measures of well-being and the emotional tone of their stories. Research has highlighted the difference between social networks and support networks and it has noted the distinction between loneliness and social isolation (Masi et al., 2011; O’Luanaigh & Lawlor, 2008; Wiggins et al., 2004). An individual’s perception of the availability of emotional and instrumental support is key to the prevention of loneliness and the sources of this support are drawn from one’s social network (Chan & Lee, 2006; de Jong Gierveld, 2003; Murrell & Norris, 1987; Scott & Wenger, 1995; Treacy et al., 2004). The analysis of the participants’ narratives indicated that the quality of social relationships rather than the quantity need to be accounted for in an assessment of well-being.

The use of positive emotion and hedonic sources of resilience was an important feature of inter-personal well-being which emerged from the participants’ narratives. The inter-personal features of affect regulation and positive emotion were evident from the participants’ stories which conveyed sources for pleasure and ‘flow’ in their lives (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Research has outlined the importance of affect balance and positive emotion for the experience of well-being in later life (Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998; Ong & Bergeman, 2010). In their study of socio-emotional well-being Ong and Bergeman (2010) highlighted the importance of positive emotion as a foundation for later-life resilience. Their research indicated that access
to positive emotion was sustained through social connectedness and engagement with both functional and emotional support structures (Ong & Bergeman, 2010). In her story entitled ‘Everybody should have fun’ (V2.3h) Debbie provided an example of her sense of humour and fun which centred on a recent community-based excursion with a group of friends. Fred also indicated the importance for him of inter-personal positive emotion in his story entitled ‘Playing the bones’ (V2.14f) in which he described playing traditional music in his local pub with his friends.

The connection between well-being and the availability of emotional and instrumental support from within social networks has implications for the significance of autonomy in social connectivity. Carstensen’s work on social emotional selectivity theory highlighted the importance of accounting for changing preferences and priorities for social relationships across the life span (Carstensen, 1991; Carstensen et al., 1999). Carstensen and colleagues emphasised the importance of autonomy for older people in the composition of their social networks and the prioritising of particular goals for personal and social well-being. This autonomy facilitates an older person to concentrate on particular social relationships in the pursuit of goals pertaining to emotion regulating and meaning. The participants’ narratives supported this theory of social emotional selectivity in the importance that they placed upon family connectivity and the maintenance of emotionally supportive friendships.

Friendship and the gendered life course

A further significant finding which emerged from the analysis of the participants’ narratives was the effect of the gendered life course on the nature of friendships and social activities. Previous research has observed that the gendered life course shapes the composition and nature of social networks in later life (Davidson et al., 2003; Helliwell & Putnam, 2005; Phillipson, 1997; Scott & Wenger, 1995). The existing literature indicates that the friendship needs of older men and women differ. Women tend to form conversation-based, emotionally supportive friendships which are centred upon their home and the domestic environment. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to associate their friendships with social activities focused away from the home, for example in pubs or golf clubs (Phillipson,
The presence of a friend can have a significant impact upon an older woman's psychological health, however, for older men, wives were found to provide the main source of emotional support (Phillipson, 1997).

Friendship emerged from the female participants' narratives as being crucial for the provision of emotional support as well as resources for social activities and affect regulation. Aoife, for example, spoke about going on holidays with a group of female friends and the importance of this for her self-confidence and coping abilities. Emma spoke about sharing her home with another religious sister and the companionship that this house sharing arrangement provided her. Jessica noted the sense of comfort she got from knowing that her place with her group of friends on their social outings remained open for her as soon as she recovered from her illness. Similarly, Debbie spoke about drawing on her friends for positive emotion and hedonic pleasure thereby enabling her to enjoy her life. Another common feature across these female friendships was a sense of shared life experiences and difficulties. This was particularly evident in stories which concerned rearing their families in the community and the shared experience of poverty and hardship.

Among the male participants the experience of friendship was notably different. In 'Not a friend in the world' (V2.11g) Alex distinguished the many acquaintances he regularly met in the pub from friends. He remarked that he did not discuss private matters with his acquaintances. Alex's story revealed the importance of family connectivity for his emotional well-being, in particular, his relationship with his sons since the death of his wife. Like Alex, Fred was a widower and he spoke about the necessity for finding a social outlet for affect regulation and positive emotion. In 'Like a condemned cell' (V2.14e), Fred emphasised the social 'cross-talk' that occurred in the pub and he pointed out that this did not extend to personal or private matters. The importance of family and in particular adult children as social network members who provided emotional support was emphasised by the narratives of Alex and Fred. Among the married men,
for example, Danny, Michael, Jack and Mat, wives played a crucial role in their support networks.

The emotional loneliness that was evident in the narratives of Tony and Luke suggested the inherent danger in the gendered norms for male friendships. In ‘He’s found’ (V2.20h), Tony recalled coping with cancer and alcoholism; he noted the lack of emotional support available from his social network, which was largely composed of fellow Christian Brothers. He explained his experience of emotional isolation by reference to male norms for social interaction which inhibited discussion of emotion and private concerns. In ‘Community Clubs’ (V2.16h) Luke spoke about feeling excluded from existing community social clubs due to the dominance of women members. His narrative also illustrated how physical decline, associated with ageing, impacted upon older men’s resources for social networking. Luke was compelled to retire from his running club due to bad health and had not replaced this outlet for social well-being due to his perception of the lack of availability of community social resources for older men.

5.3.2 Intra-personal well-being

The participant’s narratives conveyed the central position of a sense of agency within an understanding of the intra-personal element of eudaimonic well-being. Agency was conveyed by stories which focussed upon the participants’ personal and public achievements, their satisfaction with their responses to life events, their attitude and self-confidence in approaching life’s challenges and their determination to exhibit resilience. In their investigations of narrative identity and eudaimonic well-being, Bauer and McAdams (2004, 2010) found that the pursuit of intra-personal meaning for one’s life was motivated by agency and was associated with cognitive maturity, as measured by Loevinger’s model for ego development (Loevinger, 1966, 1976). Loevinger’s conceptual understanding of maturity as linked to life course development culminates in the attainment of integrity and self-realisation which are essential components of intra-personal successful ageing (Erikson, 1959; Erikson et al., 1986; Ryan & Deci, 2001).

The pursuit and attainment of meaning in life is a necessary ingredient for happiness and resilience in the face of life’s events,
particularly negative or disruptive experiences (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Fry & Debats, 2010b). A strong sense of agency emerged from the participants' narratives as an important component of their personality-based resources for meaning-making and resilience. The participants' stories (n=505), which were evaluated as being motivated by agency, portrayed the narrator's sense of achievement, responsibility, power and impact as well as self-mastery, victory and high status (McAdams et al., 2006). The presence of agency as a motivational theme in the participants' stories was found to be significantly correlated with emotional tone as well as with the life satisfaction index (LSI). Encompassed within an understanding of agency are the concepts of control and self-efficacy as well as self-esteem and self-realisation. These concepts will now be discussed in relation to their importance in the attainment of integrity and in the pursuit of intra-personal eudaimonic well-being.

Self-efficacy, Self-esteem and the gendered life course

The mean score for agency in their stories was higher for the male participants than for the female participants and, while the difference was found to be insignificant, it was approaching significance. Analysis of the participants' narratives highlighted the social construction of intra-personal well-being. Gendered cultural norms provided the narrative resources for the expression agency and particularly, the component attributes of self-esteem and efficacy. Self-esteem is understood as a confidence in one's ability to cope with life challenges and adversity and in one's potential for success and happiness (Branden, 1994; McMullin & Cairney, 2004). Self-efficacy was understood by Fry and Debats (2010b) as a perception of one's ability to successfully exercise influence over one's environment and life outcomes through modifying one's behaviour. Analysis of the participants' narratives revealed that the domain sources for an expression of esteem and efficacy in their stories were different for men and women and conditioned by their gendered life course (Arber, Price, et al., 2003). The domestic sphere of childrearing and the provision of care featured in the stories of the female participants which conveyed their sense of agency.
By contrast work or employment emerged as key domain sources for agency among the male participants.

The connection between self-esteem, efficacy and well-being in the female participants was associated with a sense of pride or accomplishment in their caring roles. Debbie was categorised as having high well-being and agency was the highest scoring motivational theme of her stories. This was evidenced in her stories which portrayed her determination to rear her children on her own. She spoke about her sense of responsibility as well as the confidence she had in her abilities to succeed and to get on with her life despite difficulties. Debbie's stories were remarkable for their high level of efficacy and self-esteem and this was attributable to her particular experience of widowhood early in her marriage and her strong resilience and coping abilities. However, the stories of Mabel and Sally also demonstrated a combination of high well-being, self-esteem and efficacy. Mabel was married at the time of the interviews and Sally was recently widowed. Both these women expressed pride and a sense of achievement in describing their roles in child rearing and caring for their families. This finding is supported by previous research which has indicated that women are more likely than men to derive self-esteem from their caregiving roles due to gendered cultural norms (Rose & Bruce, 1995).

Emma also demonstrated a strong sense of self-esteem and efficacy in her stories which concerned an individual's responsibility to realise their potential and determine their life outcomes. Emma was unique among the female participants in that her vocation provided her with a high level of education. Furthermore, she had an outlet for garnering self-esteem and efficacy through high status employment in community development. Employment and working life were also important domain sources for a sense of self-esteem and efficacy among the male participants and these sources were particularly related to a sense of achievement. In 'To be a master of a thing' (V2.17b), Mat described the confidence he gained through his educational training in management and supervision. Similarly, Fred conveyed his sense of achievement through stories which concerned the accomplishments of his working life. Tony's stories which concerned his teaching life with the Christian Brothers conveyed his sense of
accomplishment and emphasised his legacy; particularly his achievements in bringing music and culture to the various schools in which he worked.

The importance of working life as a domain source for a sense of self-esteem and efficacy was also highlighted by the narratives of Luke and Jack. Both these participants conveyed how unskilled work could lead to a sense of boredom, futility and ultimately to a lack of self-esteem which impacts upon well-being. In 'To know an engine like a person' (V2.16b), Luke noted that, while the introduction of diesel engines made his working life much easier, he lost the sense of accomplishment that he derived from the intricacies and skills of working with steam engines. This sense of dissatisfaction with low skilled employment was echoed in the narrative of Jack. In 'Working life' (V2.15d) Jack described the nature of his work in the Irish Rail services, which he explained was unskilled and uninteresting. The story was particularly noted for the absence of any expression of pride, accomplishment or status. Significantly, both Jack and Luke obtained low scores on the measures of life satisfaction and well-being.

A common feature across the female participants was an expression of a sense of pride and accomplishment in their caring roles and this included Jessica, Aoife and Bridget who were categorised as having low well-being. Their low well-being was explained in section 5.3.1 in relation to their losses within the inter-personal domain. Furthermore, the lowest scoring motivational theme in their stories was agency and this was reflected in the lack of intra-personal well-being attributes in their stories. Baltes and Baltes (1990) theory of selective optimisation with compensation indicates the importance for well-being of selecting between and within domains for optimising attributes and realising well-being priorities and goals. This is particularly important in the face of decline and loss associated with advancing age. Danny’s narrative provided an example of the process of selective optimisation with compensation in a powerful account of masculinity, self-esteem and ageing. In 'If you let your mind go' (V2.12l) Danny recognised of the effects of physical decline in later life and the story demonstrated shifting domain sources for the realisation of self-esteem. Danny shifted from the physical prowess associated with working
life to an emphasis on the mind in order to optimise his abilities and achieve well-being. Through this story Danny highlighted the importance of agency in the selection of attributes for efficacy and self-esteem which is necessary for well-being in later life.

The role of control and efficacy in later life well-being

An internal locus of control and self-efficacy emerged from the participants' narratives as important aspects of agency which contribute to well-being and life satisfaction. This finding is supported by previous research which has noted the positive association between an internal locus of control, health and well-being (Fry & Debats, 2010b; Higgs et al., 2003; Rotter, 1966; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). A combination of self-efficacy and internal locus of control was evident in the narratives of those participants that were categorised as having high well-being. For example, in 'If you believe in something strong enough' (V2.14i), Fred conveyed his belief in his ability to influence his environment and obtain desired life outcomes. Self-efficacy was a very strong theme in the narratives of Emma and Debbie. In 'You've got to use your own head' (V2.3f) for example, Debbie highlighted the importance for resilience of having a strong sense of personal efficacy and facing up to one's responsibilities. Furthermore, Emma emphasised the responsibility of the individual to influence their life outcomes and to fulfil their potential for happiness. In 'You can only do your bit' (V2.4c), she provided a very clear recognition of the limits of her sphere of influence and her sense of satisfaction at her role in effecting positive change within that sphere.

Analysis of the participants' narratives revealed that self-efficacy was particularly important for the mobilisation of psychosocial and socio-economic resources. These resources enabled the participants to maintain a sense of control despite age associated social, physical and cognitive decline. Previous research has found that the impact on well-being of shifting preferences for control in later life, in response to declining physical and mental abilities, is mediated by beliefs concerning the nature of one's self-efficacy (Fry & Debats, 2010b). This was particularly significant in the participants' stories which emphasised the power of the individual to affect positive change in their environments and mobilise existing resources. In
this way, they countered some of the effects of advancing age on their well-being. For example, in 'Dependence' (V2.11n), Alex described his strategies for coping with impending loss and physical decline. These strategies included mobilising the community-based taxi services as well as his family support networks. Furthermore, Sally explained how she had affected change in her environment which countered her experience of social isolation after the departure of her children from the family home. Their stories conveyed the importance of efficacy in selecting and optimising well-being domains, such as friendship or community engagement, which compensate for losses in other domains, for example family connectivity or physical abilities (Baltes & Baltes, 1990).

A key finding of this research is that central to the relationship between efficacy and control, is the role self-efficacy can play in shaping an individual's relationship with their environment and their expectations concerning social resources for goal attainment. In 'Dreams don't always come true' (V2.1g), Aoife conveyed a lack of belief in her ability to affect change in her unhappy marriage and life circumstances. Her interpretation of life events were coloured by her lack of efficacy and revealed a negative outlook on life and a low internal locus of control. Luke, in his narrative, discussed the lack of resources he had for social activities, particularly since the end of his involvement with the local running club. His story entitled 'Not too up on things' (V2.16g) conveyed his resignation to his social isolation and his inability to affect change in his environment. The narratives of Gillian and Una shared common themes including poor health, social isolation, lack of community engagement or family connectivity as well as marital difficulties and alcoholic husbands. In 'You get it in the end' (V2.10a), Una conveyed an overwhelming sense of her lack of efficacy which was represented in her appeal to God for a resolution to her husband's alcoholism. Similarly, in 'Only a woman with seven children' (V2.5k), Gillian appealed to her gender, her general state of ignorance as well as the times in which she was reared for an explanation of her unhappy life outcomes. The story conveyed her lack of efficacy which led to
decreased control and a resignation to negative and unhappy life experiences.

**External locus of control and well-being**

Exploration of the narrative of Bridget revealed a connection between an external locus of control and decreased well-being. An external locus of control has been understood as the belief that forces which lie external to the self, such as religion or other cultural and societal structures, influence one's life outcomes (Rotter, 1966). The belief that control over one's life outcomes lies outside one's inner capabilities has been found to be associated with decreased health and well-being outcomes (Rotter, 1966; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Throughout her narrative Bridget placed an emphasis on the austere social values that she inherited from her upbringing. She depicted herself as struggling against her perception of the liberalisation of values and she fixated on perceived dangers of moral and social decline. This struggle was demonstrated in her story entitled 'A chunk out of my beliefs' (V2.2k) where Bridget attempted to come to terms with the revelations concerning child sex abuse and the Catholic clergy. Her assignation of blame to the liberalisation of social values indicated her dependency upon values for her well-being. Bridget conveyed a strong sense of her social exclusion and her struggle to obtain a sense of belonging to Ballyfemot. This was related to her perception of declining social values which created a sense of social exclusion in her narrative.

A close examination of the participants' narratives revealed that the relationship between efficacy, locus of control and well-being was not straightforward. The narratives indicated that an over-reliance on an internal locus of control could lead to decreased well-being. Previous research has found that an external locus of control may buffer an individual from the worst effects of a disruptive or negative life event (Specht et al., 2011). This was corroborated in the narrative of Kitty and in particular in her stories which attempted to come to terms with her unhappy life outcomes. In 'I've made my own life' (V2.7d), Kitty argued that she was responsible for her own well-being and established her personal agency and her belief in her self-efficacy. However, Kitty was categorised as having low well-being and her story would suggest that her strong internal locus of control may
have resulted in decreased well-being. This is explained through her inclination to take personal responsibility for unhappy life outcomes.

A focus upon the use of religiosity in the participants' narratives provided insight into the nuanced relationship between an external locus of control and well-being. A key finding was that an internal locus of control is important for the maintenance of stability in well-being throughout the life course. However, in the face of transient extreme negative life events, an external locus of control, in particular religiosity, can act as a buffer for well-being. This finding is supported by literature which indicated that an external locus of control can limit the immediate effects of negative life events and facilitate a faster return to pre-event levels of well-being (Specht et al., 2011).

The participants' narratives demonstrated different uses of religiosity which had implications for the relationship between locus of control and well-being. In his story entitled 'Come away with an easier mind' (V2.11o), Alex described how he used religion and a relationship with God on an everyday basis to find the inner resources of perspective and calmness by which he could cope with life events. In this way, he achieved an internal locus of control and safeguarded his well-being. By contrast, the narratives of Mabel and Tony illustrated how religiosity can be the focus of an external locus of control and this can provide a buffer to negative life events (Fry & Debats, 2010a; Specht et al., 2011). In 'Messages from God' (V2.8g), Mabel conveyed her belief in divine intervention as providing a framework by which she could interpret her life and elicit the assistance of miracles for her recovery from a traumatic health experience. Similarly, in 'He's found' (V2.20h), Tony described the importance of his faith in enabling him to recover from his alcohol addiction and his illness. It is evident from these narratives that a balanced combination of internal and external locus of control can lead to enhanced well-being particularly in the face of extreme negative life events.
The role of attitude for efficacy and control

The psychological and personality-based resource of attitude also emerged from the narratives as pertinent to understanding the relationship between eudaimonic well-being, efficacy and control. In ‘Things could be worse’ (V2.18h), Michael utilised his experience of past hardship to enhance his interpretation of his present. He emphasised the importance of having a positive outlook on life when evaluating life satisfaction. This was a common response to childhood experiences of poverty or hardship among the participants. Baumeister and Vohs (2002) argued that benefit-finding is a key process by which individuals can find meaning for negative life events. The connection between attitude, efficacy and meaning-making was further re-iterated in Michael’s story entitled ‘Forgiveness’ (V2.18k) where he emphasised the choice people have in how they interpret their lives and he argued for the importance of not harbouring negative emotion.

The importance of attitude, as an expression of efficacy, was particularly pertinent in the participants’ stories which concerned successful ageing and a sense of continuity through the life course. Central to this sense of continuity was the garnering of a good positive attitude early in life and maintaining this attitude into later life. In ‘A good outlook on life’ (V2.14h), Fred described the attitude which he cultivated throughout his life whereby he garnered the necessary personality-based resources to guarantee a sense of continuity in later life. In ‘It's all about attitude’ (V2.17m), Mat emphasised the choice older people have to view their lives positively and thereby to safeguard well-being. These stories indicated the importance for later life well-being of cultivating a positive attitude throughout one’s life which can act as a buffer to later life loss or decline.

The use of mantras, or repeated refrains, which guide responses to life circumstances or events, emerged from the narratives as a key mechanism for cultivating a positive attitude. Previous research has indicated the role of automaticity for safeguarding cognitive resilience and memory (Bargh, 1997; Bartlett, 1950; Logan, 1991). However, the participants demonstrated a different use of automaticity in the creation of mantras which highlighted the link between efficacy, well-being and continuity throughout the life course. In ‘If you think poor, you’ll be poor’
Alex emphasised the power of an individual to control how they view the world and thereby to increase their sense of satisfaction and well-being. The story is particularly pertinent in that Alex pointed out that he cultivated this positive attitude throughout his life and he employed the technique of mantra to reinforce his determination to cultivate a positive outlook. Like Alex, Emma articulated a mantra in her story, ‘Grow old as you’ve lived’ (V2.4k), which emphasised the importance of cultivating a positive attitude in life. In this story Emma made a persuasive argument for the power and responsibility an individual has to make their lives happy through the cultivating of positive emotion and interpretation of life circumstances.

Connecting self-efficacy, self-esteem and integrity

The participants’ narratives revealed that inter-personal well-being was associated with their sense of self-worth as well as their beliefs and values concerning efficacy and control. Self-efficacy and self-esteem were identified by Baumeister and Vohs (2002) as important domains for the quest for personal meaning and happiness. Debbie’s narrative illustrated how the experience of adversity in life can lead to increased self-esteem through the wielding of personal efficacy and the integration of life’s challenges into a holistic view of one’s life. In ‘You’ve got to use your own head’ (V2.3f), Debbie spoke about how her experience of widowhood early in her marriage and the realisation that she had to be self-reliant and to cope with rearing her children alone contributed to the enhanced self-confidence she now enjoyed in her later life (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Heine et al., 2006).

A key finding emerging from this research is the connection between adversity and self-esteem which is fostered through the search for meaning for life’s challenges (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Erikson, 1959; Heine et al., 2006). This finding is supported by the work of Wong and Watt (1991) which noted that integrative reminiscence is associated with a coherent sense of self-worth or esteem as well as a reconciliation to one’s past. This connection was evident in the narratives of Eric and Danny and their
discussions of their role in community activism and development. In ‘The last of the summer wine’ (V2.12i) for example, Danny conveyed his personal satisfaction and sense of achievement at the progression of the community despite the obstacles presented by the rigid class structures of an authoritarian political and social context. Similarly, in his narrative, Eric highlighted his achievements in struggling against political and church-based authoritarianism in order to establish a tenant purchase scheme for Ballyfermot residents of corporation housing. In ‘I have my life in order’ (V2.12i), Eric directly addressed the sense of self-esteem that he and the community tenants derived from these accomplishments. Furthermore, in listing the sources for his personal life satisfaction Eric included the ownership of his home.

Social class provided a common thread which linked adversity, self-esteem and integrity in the men’s stories. For example, in ‘Put her in her place’ (V2.17c), Mat conveyed his strong sense of mastery and courage in a representation of himself as the underdog standing up to class-based privilege, represented by the doctor’s wife in his story. Significantly, like Debbie, Mat associated self-esteem with confidence and he expressed his sense of self-worth through a story which described his struggle with adversity. Social class also featured in the stories of Eric and his recollections of his role in agitating for better community facilities and infrastructure. In his narrative, Eric highlighted the limited expectations society had for the people of Ballyfermot. Furthermore, he acknowledged his struggles to defy these expectations, overseeing his family’s progression up the social ladder through educational attainment. Both these men integrated their struggle against adversity during their lives into a holistic life narrative which promoted integrity rather than despair (Erikson, 1959). In doing so, they fostered a sense of achievement and self-esteem (Bauer et al., 2008; Wilson, 2011; Wong & Watt, 1991).

The importance for successful ageing of the cultivation of a positive attitude has already been explored in relation to the expression of self-efficacy in the participants’ narratives. However, the identification of the relationship between attitude and happiness is also significant for a discussion of self-esteem. An important component element of self-esteem
is the belief in one's potential for happiness; specifically a sense of self-worth whereby one is entitled to experience well-being or happiness (Branden, 1994). In their discussion of the relationship between attitude and happiness Alex, Fred, Mat and Emma noted the responsibility of an individual to create their happiness and well-being through the expression of efficacy. This has significance not only for the role of control beliefs and self-efficacy but also for self-esteem, whereby a high sense of self-esteem and self-worth facilitates the necessary cultivation of a positive attitude and outlook on life.

The role of religion and faith in providing interpretive scripts which foster a sense of self-esteem and well-being emerged as an important finding from the exploration of the participants' narratives. This finding is supported by previous research which has identified the role of faith for enhanced later life resiliency and well-being (Fry & Debats, 2010b; McAdams, 2006b, 2008). In 'Find your gifts' (V2.4d), Emma employed a Christian concept of human potential when she spoke about an individual's responsibility to develop the gifts that God provided them. This story illustrated the connection between self-esteem and faith which was also present in the narrative of Tony. In 'Never been put on my feet since' (V2.20g), Tony recalled the loss of his work as a teacher which was a major source of his self-esteem. His description of his descent into alcohol dependency, in particular his reference to the demon on his shoulder, conveyed Tony's loss of control which was associated with a loss of self-worth. In 'He's found' (V2.20h), Tony revealed how his faith provided him with the resources for his recovery, in particular a sense of self-worth and a desire to live. This story resonated with the work of McAdams (McAdams, 2006a, 2006b) on 'The Redemptive Self' as a cultural myth employed by individuals to interpret life challenges and thereby support a belief in second chances and redemption.

The concept of forgiveness emerged from the narratives of Mat and Mabel as an important theme connected to a discussion of self-esteem and faith. In 'Get it off your chest' (V2.17a), Mat spoke about drawing upon the self-confidence he gained from the Jesuit education he received in
adulthood to confront an abusive teacher from his childhood. Importantly, Mat acknowledged a sense of catharsis, which resulted from the confrontation. This catharsis was conveyed in his connection between his self-esteem and his ability to forgive. The connection between forgiveness and self-esteem was also made by Mabel in her story entitled ‘I forgive you’ (V2.8d). In this powerful story Mabel conveyed her sense of hurt and abandonment caused by her father’s neglect. However, she drew upon resources of self-worth and esteem to express her forgiveness. These sources of self-esteem were located in her very happy and loving relationship with her foster parents and particularly her foster mother. In this way both Mable and Mat integrated negative, and potentially psychologically damaging events, into their life narratives and they employed forgiveness as a mechanism to protect and foster their self-esteem (Bauer et al., 2008; McAdams, 2006a, 2006b; Wilson, 2011; Wong & Watt, 1991).

Integrity, self-realisation and maturity

The ability to integrate negative life experiences into their narratives and to interpret these events in terms of positive life outcomes was a feature of the participants’ narrative quest for self-realisation. The concepts of integrity, self-realisation and wisdom were positioned at the helm of social and ego development models which depicted human endeavour towards an integrated self-concept and meaning in life (Erikson, 1959; Loevinger, 1966; Maslow, 1943). In his narrative, Michael conveyed how he had come to terms with his difficult childhood experiences of illegitimacy and poverty. In ‘He was the kindest Christian’ (V2.18c), Michael described his growth from childhood rebellion to adult responsibility in terms of a greater understanding of his life circumstances and of himself. In her narrative, Gillian demonstrated an inability to integrate negative life experiences into a deeper understanding of her life’s journey. Her story, ‘Things can come back’ (V2.5g), illustrated a fixation upon the childhood experience of her father’s death as well as the tragic death of her son by suicide. In this way, Gillian’s narrative demonstrated ‘contamination’, understood by McAdams (2001, 2008) as an inability to integrate negative events into a life narrative in a way which would facilitate well-being.
The quest for personal meaning and self-realisation in the participants' narratives was facilitated by an expression of efficacy and esteem. Furthermore, it was related to the domains of socio-emotional well-being, particularly family relationships and social connectivity. Self-realisation was identified by Higgs et al. (2003) as an important domain for their measure of quality of life in old age and it was associated with an enhanced personal maturity (Bauer & Park, 2010; Fry & Debats, 2010b). In her narrative, Sally described her journey towards self-discovery and maturity in relation to her quest for knowledge concerning her birth mother and her adoption. In ‘Finding my birth mother’ (V2.9c), she expressed a sense of resolution to this journey and she described her re-integration with her own family. Sally's narrative demonstrated how she found self-realisation by prioritising her relationship with her children. Thereby her family relationships became her domain sources for personal meaning and life satisfaction.

Analysis of the participants' narratives demonstrated the often difficult and painful processes of self-realisation and maturity which were not necessarily connected to well-being. These processes involved the accommodation of life events into existing interpretive schemas, which Piaget identified as an indicator for cognitive maturity (Piaget, 1970). Self-realisation, or the quest for a deeper understanding of one's life experiences in relation to personal meaning, was identified by Bauer and Park (2010) as a component of cognitive growth and was associated with maturity rather than well-being. The revelations of Catholic Church abuse scandals, which were on-going during the time of the interviews, were a recurring feature in the participants' narratives. Many of the participants attempted to reconcile their faith to their sense of betrayal, disgust and hurt. In 'We're the Church' (V2.19m), Philip represented his personal struggle to hold on to his faith in the face of these revelations. The story reconstructed the public discourse concerning these revelations and he conveyed the turmoil and disruption these events had caused him. In the story resolution Philip expressed his determination to hold on to the aspects of his faith that were important to him. This was a common response across the
participants as they battled to integrate these events into their personal schema for meaning in life. Sally, Jessica, Fred and Philip expressed their faith in terms which allowed them to continue to seek comfort, meaning and purpose from a religious framework despite the threats imposed by the revelations.

The personality trait of 'hardiness' was identified by the literature as being an important resource for later life resiliency (Bonanno, 2004; Fry & Debats, 2010b). This trait includes a strong internal locus of control as well as an ability to view life's challenges as opportunities for personal growth and a desire to find meaning for life experiences. The participants' narratives demonstrated that agency is an essential component for intra-personal well-being. In particular, self-esteem and beliefs concerning control and efficacy enabled personal growth among the participants, as represented by a commitment to finding meaning and self-realisation through life's challenges.

5.4 Realising eudaimonic well-being through narrative

Exploration of eudaimonic well-being in the participants' narratives illustrated how the various aspects of inter-personal and intra-personal well-being may be constructed through narrative interpretation of life events and circumstances. This exploration was undertaken within the context of the sample limitations of this study. This sample was derived from a cohort of Irish people living within a disadvantaged socio-economic community in Ireland. The life course and cohort effects of disadvantage, associated with social and cultural themes of gender and social class, were evident in the narratives obtained for this research. These aspects of social location had the effect of increasing exposure to adversity, hardship, ill-health and disruption as well as limiting access to buffering resources such as income and education.

This research found that the collective accrual of acculturated myths and narrative scripts provides the scaffolding by which individuals may integrate events into a life narrative which supports a global sense of eudaimonic well-being (Piaget, 1970; Vygotskey, 1978). This section of the
chapter addresses the outer perimeter, or the macrosphere, of the Wheel of Later Life Eudaimonic Well-being represented in Figure 5.1. This sphere refers to the dialogic narrative exchange between the individual and culture through collective narrative accrual (Bruner, 1991). Through deployment of masquerade Biggs (2004) noted the continual flux and narrative exchange between the internal self and its external social and cultural manifestations. This section of the chapter begins with a discussion of the socio-cultural environment which provides the scaffolds for the narrative construction of self and identity. Finally, an exploration of the participants' use of agency and imagination in the creation of their life stories is undertaken. This exploration accounts for the hermeneutic interpretive process of life appraisal and the narrative construction of eudaimonic well-being (Greene, 2003; J. Martin & Sugarman, 2001).

5.4.1 Socio-cultural narrative accrual

Examination of the reciprocal relationship between culture and story in the participants' narratives revealed the importance of accounting for social context in the narrative construction of self and eudaimonic well-being. In particular the use of archetypes, acculturated meta-narratives and the collective experience of narrative accrual were important features of the narratives. The role of social contexts in providing canonical scripts for meaning-making through life story work has been highlighted by research investigating the relationship between culture, identity and narrative (Brookman et al., 2011; Bruner, 1991; McAdams, 2006b, 2008; Ochberg, 1994). The mutually constructive interaction between narrative and culture operates on the level of narrative accrual whereby culture, history and social norms are formed through the amalgamation of stories (Bruner, 1991). Culture, according to McAdams, provides the narrative scripts which individuals can choose from to interpret their life events and circumstances and designate their identities (McAdams, 1996a, 1996b).

In the construction of their narratives the participants' drew on culturally ascribed archetypes to represent themselves and individuals in their life stories. The concept of psychological archetypes as informing
insight into personality development was advanced by Jung's work on the collective unconscious (Jung, 1959). According to Jung (1959), archetypes and myths are products of an innate universal unconscious and are used by individuals to interpret their experiences and observations. Examples of the archetypal figures employed by the participants include the carer, the mentor, the addict, the mother and the child. The use of recognisable characters and acculturated scripts facilitated the participants to accommodate life events within an overall schema (Piaget, 1970). In this way, archetypes contributed to the structure of the scaffolding erected by the participants to integrate life events and characters into their life narrative and to support a sense of self.

In their career narratives, Fred, Mat and Tony, acknowledged an archetypal mentor figure and this experience facilitated them to achieve generativity through teaching. In this way, their stories reflected the cultural myth of 'the redemptive self' which was developed by McAdams (2006a, 2006b). In 'With his encouragement' (V2.20n), Tony remembered an encouraging mentor from his early life that facilitated his career development and provided personal support for his self-esteem and confidence. Tony attributed his career success to this figure. Furthermore, in his stories which concerned his teaching, Tony noted his own role as mentor and guide to his students. Similarly, in 'For a Joe Soap' (V2.14c), Fred remembered the intervention of a school principal who encouraged him to pursue academic qualifications. Significantly, in 'I must've passed on something' (V2.14b), Fred noted his own role as mentor in progressing and developing his students' potentials. This echoed the narrative of Mat and his acknowledgment of the contribution of the Jesuit priests in developing his confidence and self-esteem. Like Fred, Mat spoke about transferring his knowledge and experience to his students and thereby taking on the mantle of mentor. The incorporation of the mentor archetype into the narrative scaffolding of Fred, Mat and Tony supported their sense of generativity, purpose and self-esteem and played an important role in the construction of eudaimonic well-being.

The mentor figure was also employed by Michael and he demonstrated the use of this archetype for the attainment of greater self-
understanding and realisation. In his narrative Michael noted his troubled
and rebellious child self; subjected to social exclusion due to his illegitimate
status. In 'He was the kindest Christian' (V2.18c), Michael described the
intervention of an individual who, through kindness and forgiveness,
assisted Michael to transition from childhood rebellion to adulthood
responsibility. This transition was also represented as a feeling of inclusion
and belonging within the Christian faith. Michael's story conveyed a sense
of second chances and therefore it was also a story of redemption
(McAdams, 2006b). In constructing his life story, Michael positioned
particularly difficult and negative experiences within the archetypal and
culturally recognisable narratives of redemption and a journey to a sense of
belonging (McAdams, 2006b). In this way the acculturated myth of the
'redeemptive self' and the archetypal figure of the mentor or redeemer,
provided the scaffolding by which Michael could achieve self-realisation and
integration of life experiences.

The figure of the mentor was employed by the male participants to
assimilate their experiences of fatherhood within personal schemas
conditioned by gender. For example, in 'It's easier to stay on top' (V2.13j),
Eric recognised his role in advocating for better opportunities and guiding
future generations of his family through intergenerational transference of
knowledge. This concept of intergenerational progression and transfer was
also employed in the narratives of Danny, Mat and Tony. Tony's story
titled 'I'm keeping him' (V2.20e) was particularly powerful in his claim to
the status of proxy parent and his acknowledgement of his role in delivering
children to education and a better life. The employment of the mentor
prototype in the representation of fatherhood facilitated the male
participants' discussion of care, love and nurture without disrupting
gendered norms concerning emotion work and masculinity (Calasanti,
2006; Davidson et al., 2003). In this way, the emotions of care and nurture
were assimilated into their life stories and their gendered sense of self.

The discussion of the use of acculturated myths to represent the
gendered nature of emotion work is also relevant to the narrative portrayal
of motherhood and the archetypal figure of the maternal carer. In 'The
family in Ballyfermot' (V2.2a), Bridget demonstrated her devotion to the role of mother through a representation which depicted her sacrifices, her austerity and her ability to rear her family with scant financial resources. This was echoed in the narratives of other participants for example Jessica, Sally and Mabel. In the cases of Bridget and Jessica this also extended to their description of the provision of spousal care later in life. In ‘She was very good’ (V2.8f), Mabel employed the figure of the maternal carer to represent the modest kindness and firm benevolence of her foster mother. Michael’s depiction of his mother, in ‘She had a tough life’ (V2.18g), also resonated with the maternal carer archetype in his representation of his mother as suffering in her role as protector and nurturer. The recurring feature of the maternal carer archetype conveyed a culturally sanctioned representation of women and motherhood as resourceful, nurturing and the keeper of social values concerning austerity and hard work. This figure facilitated the participants to integrate their experiences of motherhood into a gendered schema and thereby achieve a sense of self.

The archetypal figure of the child occurred in the narratives of Emma, Mat and Mabel as representative of future promise, innocence and wisdom. In ‘Find your gifts’ (V2.d), Emma spoke about people’s innate giftedness and her role in the provision of support to young people in the realisation of their gifts from God. The story facilitated Emma to support a sense of self and also to convey a message of hope for the future. The figure of the child was also employed by Mat and Mabel as a means by which to express hope and a commitment to humanity. In ‘A great childhood’ (V2.8e), Mabel described her childhood innocence in order to convey a message concerning the importance of love and care during childhood for future self-esteem and resilience. In ‘You must be moved by emotions’ (V2.17g), Mat used the archetypal figure of the innocent child to convey the true meaning of Christmas in terms of future hope, redemption and Christian kindness. In this way, Emma, Mabel and Mat supported a sense of hope and commitment to humanity through the use of the cultural prototypical figure of the child in their storying of self.

McAdams (1996a, 2006b) highlighted the role of culture in the provision of sanctioned and recognisable scripts or myths. Thereby,
acculturated myths facilitate the *storying* of self and the interpretation of life events. The odyssey, or journey of self-discovery, is an example of a culturally recognisable myth that featured in the narratives of Tony and Sally. Tony's story of his journey to recovery from his alcohol addiction drew on the archetypal story of the addict. This story was particularly recognisable through his inclusion of references to persistent temptation, the demon on his shoulder and the role of faith in his recovery. In this way, Tony employed culturally inscribed mythology to represent his experiences and to convey his journey towards recovery, self-esteem and hope. Sally also employed the concept of odyssey in her representation of her quest for her birth mother and her journey back to her own family and a greater self-realisation. Sally's use of a recognisable odyssey script facilitated her quest for personal meaning and supported her sense of self.

A dominant and overarching theme across the participants' narratives was the role of religion in providing a canonical script for the interpretation of life events and the sustaining of well-being. For example, in 'A grasp on religion is a grasp on life' (V2.12n), Danny emphasised the role of religion in providing interpretive schemas for meaning-making. Comparison of the narratives of the women and men suggested a potential gender dimension to the use of this canonical script which centred on the presence of agency. The stories of Kitty, Mabel and Una contained references to a belief in an interventionist God and their use of religious scripts illustrated the association between religiosity and an external locus of control. However, the stories of the male participants illustrated how these scripts could also be used to wield agency in one's life and to garner inner resources for coping and resilience. For example, in his story 'Come away with an easier mind' (V2.11o), Alex employed the cultural script of religiosity to convey how his relationship with God facilitated him to gain perspective on his life and to find inner resources to cope with difficult life events.

Religious schemas and acculturated myths were also a feature of the narrative of Emma and she demonstrated how she used these scripts to find self-esteem and purpose as well as self-realisation and meaning in her
life. In ‘Find your gifts’ (V2.4d), Emma employed the Christian script of redemption and second chances to convey her understanding of her purpose in life. Through an emphasis on the moral responsibility of an individual to realise their potential in life by developing their gifts Emma also conveyed how this script can be used to support a sense of self-esteem and worth. Furthermore, in her story ‘There was something drawing me’ (V2.4e), Emma employed the archetypal story of the vocational calling to find meaning for her life course and to place her life events within a recognisable interpretive schema. In this way, Emma interpreted her life decisions as part of a greater plan and this supported her quest for intra-personal meaning and self-realisation.

The participants’ narratives conveyed the role of religion in providing acculturated scripts or myths which are used to establish eudaimonic well-being. However, a recurring theme of the narratives was the disruption and turmoil caused to those schemas by the revelations concerning clerical abuse which were on-going at the time the interviews took place. Piaget’s (1970) work on adaptation described two different processes for coping with disruptions to interpretive schemas: assimilation of the disruptive event or experience into the schema; or accommodating and changing the schema to allow for the event. Those participants that raised these scandals in the construction of their narratives demonstrated the painful process of accommodation which is associated with ego maturity. In ‘We’re the Church’ (V2.19m) Philip demonstrated narrative complexity as he attempted to reconcile his sense of betrayal and hurt with the elements of the religious schema which provided him with comfort and meaning. Both Sally and Fred found a means to accommodate the revelations into their religious schema by separating their faith from its institutional expression.

5.4.2 Creativity and imagination in ‘storying’ self

The participants’ use of recognisable global archetypal figures and scripts in their narrating of self, illustrated the role that culture plays in providing discursive resources for personal identity construction. However, narrative is also crucial for understanding the construction of culture through the hermeneutic process of narrative accrual (Bruner, 1991; Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Ochberg, 1994). The participants’ stories provided evidence
of the creation of acculturated narratives through the contribution of local stories which shape global and collective values and beliefs. The representation of personal experiences of gender, social class, poverty and religion drew upon common discursive threads which facilitated the emerging of a collective identity, which was locally experienced yet globally resonant. This dialogic and creative relationship between culture and personal identity had implications for finding meaning in a global context which impacted upon self-realisation and eudaimonic well-being. Furthermore, in articulating personal experiences as having cultural resonance, the participants made claims for control, autonomy, purpose and self-esteem.

The narratives of the female participants conveyed a picture of the power and control exercised over women through social, legal and political tools of patriarchal oppression. Aoife, for example, noted the oppression of women which resulted in the impoverishment of her mother after the break-up of her parents' marriage. Many of the women also noted the lack of control they could exercise over their fertility and their ignorance concerning their health and pregnancy. For example, in 'First baby' (V2.9d), Sally recalled the traumatic experience of her first pregnancy and her subsequent lack of control over her fertility. However, the participants also recognised the social changes that have occurred during their lifetimes which have attempted to address this gendered oppression and they noted the different lives their daughters led compared to them. In this way, their narratives contributed to the shaping of a global acculturated script of gender oppression and the realisation of cultural change. This impacted on their experience of eudaimonic well-being as it provided the scaffolding for the interpretation of gendered life experiences within a particular cultural and social framework which recognised development over time.

The 'storying' of social change and development in the participants' narratives also accounted for the progression and development of Ballyfermot community and the collective experience of poverty. For example, in 'The poverty was unbelievable' (V2.4i), Emma recalled her first encounter with the poverty in Ballyfermot as a novice nun working in the
community. She acknowledged the achievement of the people of the community in progressing away from poverty and establishing infrastructural resources for community development. Through the contribution of personal experiential stories of poverty and community development the participants' created a collective culturally embedded script which facilitated eudaimonic well-being. This script contained common elements which included: a recognition of the communal experience of hardship; a focus on the benefits and positive aspects of this experience; and the importance of social comparison for life appraisal.

In 'You did what you had to do' (V2.15a), Jack emphasised the community-based resources for coping with hardship during his childhood. These resources included a strong sense of community, mutual assistance and sharing of resources and humour. These elements of the communal resources for coping with hardship were also evident in Debbie's recollections of arriving to Ballyfermot and the experience of establishing a family in the new community. The women's narratives emphasised a gendered element to this communal experience in their recollections of the shared experience of child-rearing and the forging of neighbourhood support networks. In his story entitled 'Christmas morning' (V2.12e), Danny recognised the shared experience of poverty and the development of community, however, he also emphasised the benefits of living through hard times. In particular he noted the importance of moral values concerning material expectations and the ability to recognise the important things in life such as family. This was echoed in Eric's story 'The simple things' (V2.13b) in which he explained that the benefit of poverty was the ability to appreciate life through contrast. This element of the acculturated script of poverty facilitated the participants' to find intra-personal meaning from their life experiences by scaffolding life events onto the script and supporting meaning-making.

Research on the relationship between economic capital and well-being has indicated the importance of relativity in mediating the effects of income on personal and national indicators of happiness (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004; Easterlin, 1995, 2003; Layard, 2005; Layard et al., 2008). This was born out in the accounts of the participants which emphasised the
importance of social comparison in the appraisal of economic well-being. For example, in 'I kept myself going' (V2.6h), Jessica noted the widespread experience of poverty and she recalled the eviction of a neighbouring family. Through social comparison Jessica provided an appraisal of her circumstances at that time and she concluded that her family were relatively comfortable. The importance of downward social comparison for the maintenance of well-being was also emphasised by Philip in his story, 'We didn't know we were poor' (V2.19c). Philip noted that the collective experience of poverty during his childhood buffered him from the negative effects of hardship. It was only when he was in the presence of those who were better off did his own circumstances become apparent.

A further contribution to the acculturated narrative of poverty and community development was the creation of an archetypal figure of the underdog. This figure was particularly important in the narratives of the male participants and it was related to the experience of social class oppression. The depiction of the self as an underdog standing up against class-based oppression and privilege was centred on the male participants' stories concerning the domains of work and community activism. For example, in 'The Scouts' (V2.12g), Danny claimed the status of underdog in his description of confronting societal figures of class-based authority and paternalism. The creation of this archetypal myth provided the scaffolding for these participants that supported a sense of self-esteem, efficacy and purpose in their narrative identities.

The creation of acculturated narratives, through the contribution of experiential stories, accounts for the expression of agency within the reciprocal and dialogic relationship between the individual and culture. Individual life experiences are articulated through story and contribute to the creation of a culturally embedded scaffold that supports a sense of collective and individual identity (Bruner, 1991). Using the metaphor of the masquerade Biggs (1999, 2004) noted this creative and dialogic process of identity formation also operates within the discursive construction of multiple selves. An individual interacts with their social and cultural environment through the imaginative creation of possible selves which are projected
outwards to protect an inner ego from negative societal images (Biggs, 1999, 2004; Jung, 1959, 1986). In the performance of possible selves, according to Biggs (1999, 2004), the individuals' inner self or ego is involved in an imaginative and creative dialogic exchange with an outer logic. The operation of imagination and creativity involves the continual interplay between the inner and the outer logic and ensures flux and growth in personal identity.

The continuous dialogue between actual and imagined selves, according to Markus and Nurius (1986), is an important cognitive strategy for life appraisal and motivation. The imaginative creation of possible or alternative selves was evident in the participants' narratives and their deployment of these other selves contributed to eudaimonic growth and integrity. In 'There was something drawing me' (V2.4e), Emma represented a junction in her life course where she chose between a life working for a dress designer or becoming a nun. Emma imagined an alternative life course in order to appraise her chosen life path. This use of imagination facilitated Emma to reflect on her actual life, to emphasise personal agency and to enhance a sense of life satisfaction and well-being. A similar strategy of imagining an alternative life was employed by Tony in 'My romance' (V2.20j). Like Emma, Tony used his imagination to suggest an alternative life in order to appraise his actual life course. The motivation for imagining alternative lives and possible selves in both these cases was a cognitive evaluation of life events with the aim of integrative growth and eudaimonic well-being.

The use of imagined possible selves was employed by the participants to convey a sense of regret and loss in an attempt to understand negative life events and come to terms with life outcomes. In 'Only a woman with seven children' (V2.5k), Gillian suggested an alternative 'ought self' in order to reflect upon her lack of agency. The 'ought self' that Gillian created in the story was the imagined self that she argued she should have been. In the story Gillian attributed her unhappy life outcomes to her inability to realise this 'ought self' and in this way the story was indicative of despair; a state that Erikson (1959) argued was the result of an inability to achieve integrity. By contrast, in his story entitled 'Over and done
with now' (V2.11d), Alex attempted to come to terms with the illness and death of his wife by the creative use of imagined possible selves. In the story Alex created an alternative life in which he imagined his wife's dependence in order to positively appraise the actual life outcome. The story facilitated Alex to incorporate negative life events into an interpretive schema which valued the dignity of his wife and thereby supported a sense of meaning and integrity.

The creation of imagined possible selves to promote or inhibit growth in integrity was indicative of the importance of narrative in mediating the relationship between identity formation and eudaimonic well-being. Narrative is also important for understanding the relationship between identity construction and time, in particular the capacity of the self to generate meaning over time. Green (2003) highlighted the significance of memory and imagination to spatio-temporal fluidity; the human ability to move between past, present and future. In the construction of a life story an individual selects and fashions memories in order to create a sense of continuity of the self across time (Biggs, 1999, 2004; Greene, 2003). In 'You never feel old' (V2.11m), Alex emphasised the importance of a sense of continuity of self despite bodily decline and advancing old age. This sense of continuity of self across time was also emphasised by Emma and Fred when they highlighted the need to cultivate and maintain a positive attitude throughout the life course. Exploration of spatio-temporal fluidity in the participants' narratives emphasised that the past is in service to present needs as well as to the demands of an imagined future (Greene, 2003).

The movement between the past, present and future in the participants' narratives demonstrated the hermeneutic dialogic relationship between present self and past life events. The participants' narratives provided evidence of varying uses of the past in shaping present or future outcomes. In 'I was a skivvy' (V2.6g), Jessica interpreted unhappy past life experiences in order to express appreciation for subsequent life events and thereby she integrated negative life events into an understanding of her present self. This strategic fashioning of memory and interpretation of the past to enhance the present was also a feature of Michael's narrative. He
demonstrated the ability to integrate negative life events, most notably the experience of illegitimacy and childhood poverty, into a greater understanding of his present self. Gillian’s narrative portrayed the inability to achieve integrity and the danger to well-being of allowing negative past events to contaminate present or future life outcomes.

Through the selective use of memory in creating their life stories the participants demonstrated the importance of imagination in deriving a sense of self-esteem and eudaimonic well-being from the past. For example, in ‘I forgive you’ (V2.8d), Mable explained how an interpretation of her happy childhood facilitated her to find forgiveness for negative life events and thereby incorporate these events into her overall life narrative. In this way, Mable used past events for the achievement of present integrity. Similarly, in ‘Those were the days’ (V2.19a), Philip reflected upon his childhood experience of physical abuse. However, he provided a present day interpretation of the experience which allowed him to view the events from the perspective of changing social values. In this way, his imaginative integration of past events into an overall life narrative buffered him against threats to his well-being and enabled him to achieve a sense of integrity and self-realisation.

Life events, culture and projected possible selves provide the resources for the narrative construction of present self and the imagined future. Understanding of the past is never fixed and is always in service to present needs or future desires in an unending interpretive process. Exploration of the participants’ narratives has demonstrated the hermeneutic process of dialogic interpretive exchange between the individual and culture, between multiple selves as well as the individual across time. Imagination and creativity are crucial to the on-going hermeneutic construction of present self through continual engagement with possible ways of being. In this way, the narrative construction of self is a never-ending dialogic process of growth motivated by the pursuit of eudaimonic well-being.
5.5 Conclusion

Two primary research questions were stated at the outset of this thesis: What is later life eudaimonic happiness and well-being? Furthermore, what role do narrative and storytelling play in the realisation of later life eudaimonic well-being? Within the study limitations, this doctoral research has proposed The Wheel of Later Life Eudaimonic Well-being as an integrated model for later life well-being which is grounded in the narratives of the participants and draws together existing theory and research on well-being and happiness. In providing a comprehensive description of later life eudaimonic well-being this model directly addresses the first of the primary research questions. This understanding of well-being incorporates eudaimonic orientations to happiness and recognises the pursuit of inter and intra-personal meaning as integral to later life psycho-social well-being. Furthermore, the model recognises the role of narrative scaffolds in supporting a sense of eudaimonic well-being through the provision of interpretative schemas. In this way the model addresses the second research question of this study. Eudaimonic well-being is supported and sustained in later life through narrative scaffolds which provide the frame for individuals to create their narrative identity and interpret life experiences through storytelling.

A life narrative for each participant was presented in Volume Two of this thesis. These narratives were the outcome of joint narrative construction between the participant and I and the formed the bases for the participant case studies contained in Chapter Four. These narratives consisted of a tapestry of stories which reflected and interpreted a dynamic interaction of psychological, social and cultural variables. This tapestry was unique to each participant and represented the hermeneutic emergence of individual identity from particular life experience, perception and interpretation. However, as illustrated by the case studies, the narratives were woven from common threads drawn from life course experiences of gender, social class and ageing. The individual compositions of these variables; the prominence of some threads and the interpretive hue of others, are what make each tapestry singularly unique while, at the same
time commonly connected. When assessed collectively, the narratives provide insights into the complex and dynamic processes of later life eudaimonic happiness and well-being from the perspective of a particular cohort of Irish older people.

Analysis of the participants’ narratives identified the importance of communal motivations such as love, dialogue, intimacy and belonging for socio-emotional meaning-making and the attainment of inter-personal eudaimonic well-being. In this way, family, friendship and community connectivity provided the basis for the attainment of the internal inter-personal well-being attributes of generativity, symbolic immortality, purpose, autonomy and social-emotional connection. A strong sense of agency emerged from the participants’ narratives as an important component of their personality-based resources for meaning-making and resilience. Encompassed within an understanding of agency are the concepts of control and self-efficacy as well as self-esteem and self-realisation. These concepts were discussed in relation to their importance for the attainment of integrity and the pursuit of intra-personal eudaimonic well-being. Global eudaimonic well-being is made possible by selective optimisation of well-being attributes from both within and between inter and intra-personal domains. In this way an individual is facilitated to compensate for losses or decline across the lifespan.

Through an exploration of discourse-in-practice this thesis accounted for the *storying* of self and the narrative interpretation of the life course events. Narrative provides interpretive scaffolds by which individuals can create their story of self. In this way, narrative is crucial to understanding eudaimonic well-being in later life. Hermeneutic analysis revealed the role of narrative in mediating the dialogic and interpretive relationship between personal identity and culture, possible selves and the fluid movement between the past, present and imagined future. This analysis revealed the operation of creativity and imagination in the discursive negotiation of identity and the realisation of eudaimonic well-being in later life.

### 5.5.1 Study limitations and avenues for further research

The present study has certain limitations which need to be taken into account when considering the contributions of this doctoral research.
However, some of these limitations can also be seen as fruitful avenues for further research. To begin, this research has investigated the complex and extensive phenomenon of later life eudaimonic happiness and well-being from a rather narrow empirical perspective. The selection of the case study approach necessitated a small sample size and this incurred limitations as far as the generalisation of the results is concerned. The particular life course and cohort effects of socio-economic disadvantage as well as themes of gender and social class were evident in the narratives obtained for this research. Therefore the model proposed in this research emerged from these particular aspects of social, economic and cultural contexts. On the other hand, this limitation may also be seen as a strength of the research. By employing a case-study approach which provided in-depth experiential data, this present study investigated the lived experience of later life and, in this way, contributed to an understanding of the general phenomenon of eudaimonic well-being.

A future challenge, arising from this research, is the need to study the attributes of eudaimonic well-being, as identified through this present qualitative study, using a broader empirical lens. The benefit of such an approach would be to test the applicability of these findings to other research contexts and sample cohorts. In particular, exploration of the buffering resources of income and education might contribute a more nuanced understanding of this complex phenomenon. Similarly, future research may address regional and cultural context in an investigation of alternative narrative scripts and culturally sanctioned schemas for well-being in later life. In this way, future research might test the wide-scale applicability of this model and contribute a deeper more nuanced understanding of later life eudaimonic well-being to knowledge and enquiry in the area of social-psychology.

The method employed for this study was limited in terms of the coding for narrative indices. The inter-coder reliability for this data set was not statistically significant. Although, establishing reliability and coder objectivity was not applicable to the hermeneutic research design adopted for this study, the lack of coder synthesis had implications for the reliability...
of the statistical tests undertaken for indices scores. This opens up the possibility for further interrogation of the concepts measured by the narrative indices to arrive at standardised measures which could be applied to narrative data. This future research may result in a more fruitful exploration of the participants’ stories and provide a nuanced insight into the relationship between gender, well-being and health with the indices.

This present research has produced life narratives, presented in Volume Two, for each participant through joint narrative construction. Furthermore, cleaned re-transcribed transcripts of all the stories (N=505) identified from the participants’ interview material have been assembled (Volume Three). This represents a contribution to future research and opens up possibilities for re-visiting the narratives in order to undertake further exploration and re-interpretation of the experiential data.

A further study limitation is the method of participant sampling which was restricted to a specific community context and a specific age cohort. This method was useful for providing sample selection criteria and was necessary to address the stated study aim of identifying the personal, social and cultural contexts in which eudaimonic happiness and well-being are constructed. However, the restricted sampling narrowed the focus of this research and resulted in unanswered questions as to the possible contributions alternative cultural scripts and frames of reference might make to the narrative scaffolds which support a sense of eudaimonic well-being. Furthermore, variables such as differential educational attainment and income accumulation across the life-course were not sufficiently addressed in this study because of the relative homogeneity of the sample for these variables. There were indications within this relatively homogeneous sample of the buffering role that educational attainment may play in generating a sense of eudaimonic well-being. Of particular significance was the presence of narrative complexity and integrity in the narratives of those participants who had greater educational attainment, as well as those who had extensive writing experience. This finding suggests an avenue for future research which would make an important contribution to knowledge in the areas of cognitive, developmental and educational psychology.
A heterogeneous longitudinal study of narrative and well-being represents a further exciting avenue for future research. This study would examine the psycho-social and economic variables which affect change in the priorities and goals for well-being across the adult life span. In particular, this study would address the correlation between life course progression and the prioritising of eudaimonic well-being goals. Furthermore, this longitudinal study would trace the evolving narrative interpretations of life events and experiences across time. Consideration of a future longitudinal study of narrative and eudaimonic well-being underlines the strength of the epistemological basis for this present research. The method and analysis employed in this study were supported by an epistemological understanding of self and identity as subject to continuous flux and change. This change is made possible through narrative interpretation of life and the continual revision and construction of meaning for the past. The adaptation and imaginative transformation of narrative interpretative schemas creates possibilities for eudaimonic happiness and well-being throughout the life course and especially in the final stages of life.
Appendix A

Participant Introduction Letter

Dear X

Thank you for considering participating in my research project. I am studying for a doctoral degree in the School of Histories and Humanities, Trinity College Dublin. I am writing a thesis for this study and my focus is on life stories and ageing. In this letter I will provide some more information on my project in order to help you to decide whether you are interested in participating.

This study involves listening to the life stories of older people in order to understand the role of memories and life review in the process of growing older. I am interested in ageing and in how people remember particular events or phases during their lives.

If you do decide to participate in the project, I will guarantee your confidentiality and anonymity. Your name will not be used when writing the thesis, nor in any publications arising from this study. I will not use any identifying features such as other names you may mention during the interview or any details which could be used to identify you. Your participation would involve the following:

- The first interview would involve you telling me your life story. The events and the stories you choose to tell me about are entirely up to you. I will not ask about anything that you do not bring up during the interview or you do not wish to talk about. You may have a lot of memories or you may have just a few; I am interested in anything you can tell me about. This interview may last approximately one to one and half hours.

- The second interview is a follow up to the previous interview and will take place between two and four weeks later. This second interview will provide you with the opportunity to respond to the initial first interview. You may want to change something you said in the first interview or you may have remembered another incident or memory that you want to share. During this second interview I will also ask some more specific questions related to my research project. I anticipate that this interview will be shorter than the first interview (approximately 40 minutes).

- During the time between the first and the second interview I will provide you with a questionnaire which you can fill in. This questionnaire is designed to ask some very specific questions about your life for example particular dates and facts about your life such as your date of birth.
Your interest in this project is very much appreciated. I hope that this research will be used to benefit older people themselves as it reveals the importance of life history and memories to the process of growing older as well as understanding the factors that can make life better for older people.

I will make contact with you in the next couple of days in order to further discuss the project and your participation. Please do not feel in any way that you should participate in this project if for any reason you do not want to.

I look forward to meeting with you,

Best wishes,

__________________________

Deirdre O’Donnell
email
Tel:
Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in this research project on life stories and ageing which is being undertaken by me for a doctoral thesis (Trinity College Dublin).

If you agree to participate, this will involve three stages: the primary interview involves telling your life story; the second interview will follow more specific questions covering themes about your life experiences; also included is a brief questionnaire which will be completed by you in the time between the first and second interview.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can decline to answer any question if you wish. Even if you agree to participate now, you are free to withdraw from the study at any stage.

This research is intended to benefit ageing research in Ireland. It is anticipated that the research findings will be disseminated via academic presentations and publications as well as a doctoral thesis.

I would like to use a digital voice recorder which will help in the research analysis. Extracts from the recordings may be played, or the typed transcriptions read, in academic conference presentations, publications or in third level classes for teaching purposes. The original recording and transcription will be available only to me. The recordings will be kept in a secure location which will be locked when I am not present.

Any information which is obtained from you during the course of your research participation and which can be identified with you will be treated confidentially. Pseudonyms will be used in place of your name as well as any other names that appear in your accounts. No identifying features will appear in the final study or in any publications ensuing.

If you have any questions about this research please feel free to ask me. You are also free to contact my research supervisors to seek further clarification or information. Please see below for my contact details as well as the contact information for my research supervisors, Dr. Maryann Valiulis and Dr. Kathleen McTiernan.
I understand what is involved in this research and I agree to participate in the study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

Deirdre O'Donnell
Tel:
Email:

Signature of Supervisor

Date

Dr. Maryann Valiulis
Tel:
Email:

Signature of Supervisor

Date

Dr. Kathleen McTiernan
Tel:
Email:
Appendix C

Narrative Sub-Session One: The First Interview

Single Question Aimed at Inducing Narrative (SQUIN):

As you know, I am interested in life stories and ageing. For this first interview I will ask you to tell me your story. Some people can find this a little bit daunting, but I am interested in hearing about any events or experiences that you feel were important to you. You can start your story wherever you like. I'm not going to interrupt you as I want to hear your story as you tell it. If you don't mind though, I will just jot down some notes while you are talking and then when you are finished I will ask for more information.

Sample Prompt Questions:

You can start your story at whatever time in your life that you wish. Some people like to start with memories of their childhood others like to start at the time when they first moved to their current house or when they got married. It is entirely up to you.

Can you tell me some more about that time?

Can you describe that event?

Can you remember anything else about that time?

That's really interesting, I'd love to hear more about that?

Is there a particular incident or memory that stands out from that time in your life?
Appendix D

Narrative Sub-Session Three: The Second Interview

Guide

Socialising and Activities
Can you describe your typical week's activities to me?
Are you satisfied with the amount of activity you do?
  • Would you prefer to do more/less?
Do any of your family live in this area?
  • If so, how often would you meet with them?
Do you have friends who live in this area?
  • If so, how often would you meet with them?
Could you describe the kinds of activities do you like to do with your friends and/or family?
What things do you do for fun? What makes you laugh?

The community
How long have you lived in your current area/locality?
Describe this community to somebody who just moved here.
  • How has it changed in the past ten years?
How do you get around in this community?
  • For example, grocery shopping, going to the doctor etc.
Do you feel like you are a part of this community? That you belong here?
Do you feel that the people of this area can be trusted?
Are most people around here friendly?
Are there times that you might feel a bit afraid to leave your house and go outside?
  • Does this ever make you feel inhibited from doing what you would like to do?
Do you ever feel threatened when you are out walking in the streets around this area?
  • If so, is there anything in particular that makes you feel that way?
  • How often would that happen? Can you describe what that feels like?
What do you feel might be the greatest concern for other people your age in this community?
What changes would you like to see in this community which could make life better for you?
Do you think there is anything people your age could do for themselves to make this community better to live in?

What is the best thing about living here?

**Ageing**

What age do you feel?

- Do you mind telling people your age?

Do you ever get surprised when you accidentally catch a glimpse of yourself in the mirror or see a recent photograph of yourself?

Do you look like your mother/father? Do you ever think that you are growing to look more like them?

When you meet people do you think they are aware of your age?

- Do you think that they treat you differently because of your age?

Is time going quickly or slowly for you now?

Do you think your confidence or self-esteem has changed in your later life?

- If so can you describe that to me?

Can you think of any characteristics or skills that you have developed over recent years that you appreciate now that you are older?

- These can be new skills or maybe some old skills that you have found again.

How often do you think other people of your age would feel sad or lonely?

- What contributes to this?

How do you stay in good health at your age?

What is the best thing about being your age?

What is the worst thing about being your age?

**Life satisfaction and happiness**

Considering what you have achieved in life so far, would you say that you are, all in all, satisfied?

When you think of the things you want from life, would you say that you are doing well?

When you think of the future, what comes to mind?

- Are there particular goals that you have in mind, things that you would like to achieve or do?

Do you have any concerns when you think of the future?

- Have you made plans for your later life?

What are the things that have most meaning for you at this stage of your life?

- Has your appreciation of some things grown or depreciated at this stage of your life?

Would you consider yourself to have a strong religious or spiritual belief?

- How important do you think this is to you now and why?
• Has this changed much through the different phases of your life? What things in life or experiences give you the most satisfaction now? Do you like to reminisce on your life? Which memories or recollections of particular phases of your life give you the most pleasure? Would you say that on balance, you can look back on your life with a sense of happiness?
  • Could you rate that happiness on a scale of 1 to 10?
Given your life experiences and your wisdom, what words of advice would you tell a young person today which you think would help them on their journey through life?
Appendix E

*Life History Self-Completion Questionnaire*

Please take the time to complete the questionnaire below either by yourself or, if you prefer, with a family member or a friend. It is estimated that this questionnaire will take approximately 20 to 25 minutes to complete.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.1</th>
<th>First name ___________________________ Surname ___________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q.2</td>
<td>Male .................................. □ Female .................................. □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.3</td>
<td>What year were you born? ________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.4</td>
<td>How many brothers do or did you have, in total? .................................. □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How many sisters do or did you have, in total? .................................. □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How many of your siblings are alive today ............................................. □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.5</td>
<td>Is your father alive today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes .................................. □ No ............................................. □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If yes skip to Q.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.6</td>
<td>In what year did your father die? ________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.7</td>
<td>What age was your father when he died? ________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.8</td>
<td>Is your mother alive today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes .................................. □ No ............................................. □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If yes skip to Q.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.9</td>
<td>In what year did your mother die? ________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.10</td>
<td>What age was your mother when she died? ________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.11</td>
<td>Did your father undertake paid work during his life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes .................................. □ No ............................................. □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If no skip to Q.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.12</td>
<td>What type of work did your father do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.13</td>
<td>Did your mother undertake paid work during her life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes........................................</td>
<td>No........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.14</td>
<td>What type of work did your mother do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.15</td>
<td>Where did you grow up? By grow up I mean where did you live during your childhood and until adulthood approximately 18 years of age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please tick as many as apply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Centre .................................................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current area/location of residence ................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other location in the Dublin area .....................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please specify, as many as apply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other location outside Dublin ..........................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please specify, as many as apply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.16</td>
<td>At what age did you move to your current area of residence e.g. Ballyfermot?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.17</td>
<td>How many years have you lived at your current address?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.18</td>
<td>Are you currently residing...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a home that you own or pay a mortgage on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In rented accommodation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In accommodation you are acquiring from local authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among family in family member's home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.19</td>
<td>Are you a member of any of these organisations, clubs or societies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Please tick all that apply</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political organisations, trade unions or environmental groups</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary or charitable associations</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church or religious groups</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenants groups, resident groups, Neighbourhood watch</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, arts or music groups or evening classes</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social clubs</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports clubs, gyms or exercise classes</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other organisations, clubs or societies</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Please specify**

No, I am not a member of any organisations, clubs or societies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.20</th>
<th>How easy or difficult would it be for you to get to each of the following places, using your normal form of transport?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Please tick one box for each place</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank or cash point</td>
<td>Very easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor (GP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Shops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

310
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very easy</th>
<th>Quite easy</th>
<th>Quite difficult</th>
<th>Very difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optician</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supermarket</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q.21 At what age did you finish your schooling?        

Q.22 What is the **highest level** of education you have attained to date?

*Please tick one box*

- Primary or below .................................................. ❏
- Secondary Intermediate Certificate (or equivalent) ......... ❏
- Secondary Leaving Certificate ................................... ❏
- Third level diploma or certificate ............................. ❏
- Third level degree or above ...................................... ❏

Q.23 Are you currently:

- Never married .................................................................. ❏
- Married (first and only marriage) ................................... ❏
- Remarried (second or later marriage) ............................ ❏
- Partnered (first and only partnership) .......................... ❏
- Re-partnered (second or later partnership) ..................... ❏
- Separated/Divorced ................................................... ❏
- Widowed ......................................................................... ❏

**If never married please skip to Q.25**

Q.24 At what age did you first marry or enter your first partnered relationship?  

______________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.25</th>
<th>Do you have children?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes .................................. □ No .................................. □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If no</td>
<td>skip to Q.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.26</td>
<td>How many children do you have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.27</td>
<td>How many of your children are currently under the age of 18?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.28</td>
<td>How many of your children live in the same area/locality that you currently reside in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.29</td>
<td>How many of your children live in the Dublin area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.30</td>
<td>Have you ever undertaken paid work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes .................................. □ No .................................. □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If no</td>
<td>skip to Q.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.31</td>
<td>At what age did you start your first paid job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.32</td>
<td>What was your first paid job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>______________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.33</td>
<td>What is or was your primary occupation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>______________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q.34 Which of the statements below best describes your working life

*Please tick one box below*

- I continued working full time or seeking full time paid work until now or until retirement
- I continued working part-time or seeking part-time paid work until now or until retirement
- I have worked intermittently in order to supplement the household income as needed
- I undertook part-time and or full time paid work over thirty years ago
- I have not undertaken paid work in the last thirty years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.35 Are you currently undertaking paid work?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes...........................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If no skip to Q.37.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.36 What kind of work are you currently undertaking?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Skip to Q.40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.37 Are you retired?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes........................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If no skip to Q.40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.38 What was your occupation prior to retirement?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.39 At what age did you retire?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.40 Did your spouse/partner undertake paid work?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes.........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.42</th>
<th>Is your spouse/partner retired?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes:</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No:</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If no
skip to
Q. 45

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.43</th>
<th>What was your spouse/partner's occupation prior to retirement?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.44</th>
<th>At what age did your spouse/partner retire?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.45</th>
<th>What type of pension do you have?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please tick one box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State pension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both state and private pension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No pension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.46</th>
<th>How is your health in general? Would you say it was</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please tick one box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.47</td>
<td>Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? By long-standing I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time, or that is likely to affect you over a period of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes.................................................................................................................................................................................. ☐ No................................................................. ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Q.48 | Does this/Do these illness(es) or disability(ies) limit your activities in any way? | |
|      | Yes.................................................................................................................................................................................. ☐ No................................................................. ☐ |

| Q.49 | Can you drive a car? | |
|      | Yes.................................................................................................................................................................................. ☐ No................................................................. ☐ |

| Q.50 | Do you have access to a car? | |
|      | Yes.................................................................................................................................................................................. ☐ No................................................................. ☐ |

| Q.51 | Can your spouse/partner drive a car? | |
|      | Yes................ ☐ No .................. ☐ N/A................................. | |

| Q.52 | Does your spouse/partner have access to a car? | |
|      | Yes................ ☐ No .................. ☐ N/A................................. | |
Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each statement by ticking the appropriate box **under** that statement. *Please tick one box for each statement.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 1: In most ways my life is close to my ideal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement 2: The conditions of my life are excellent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement 3: I am satisfied with my life</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement 4: So far I have gotten the important things I want in life</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement 5: If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here is a list of statements that people have used to describe their lives or how they feel. I would like to know how often, if at all, you think they apply to you.

**Statement 1:** My age prevents me from doing things I would like to do

- [ ] Often
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Not often
- [ ] Never

**Statement 2:** My health stops me from doing things I want to do

- [ ] Often
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Not often
- [ ] Never

**Statement 3:** Shortage of money stops me from doing things I want to do

- [ ] Often
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Not often
- [ ] Never

**Statement 4:** I feel that my life has meaning

- [ ] Often
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Not often
- [ ] Never

**Statement 5:** On balance, I look back on my life with a sense of happiness

- [ ] Often
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Not often
- [ ] Never

**Statement 6:** I enjoy the things that I do

- [ ] Often
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Not often
- [ ] Never

**Statement 7:** I feel free to plan for the future

- [ ] Often
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Not often
- [ ] Never

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have encountered any problems or have any questions about this questionnaire please feel free to bring them up with me at our next meeting.
Appendix F

Participant Profiles

Case study one: Aoife

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (at time of interview)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being categorisation</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Above the sample mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Personal growth (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second highest motivational theme</td>
<td>Communion (&lt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Agency (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When she was 21 Aoife’s parents separated and as a result of this separation Aoife moved with her mother and her siblings into corporation housing in Ballyfermot. When she was 14 Aoife finished school and she began work in a printing factory. She married when she was 25 and she had five daughters, one of whom died as a baby. Early in her marriage, after her husband became unemployed, Aoife and her husband were allocated housing in Ballyfermot by the corporation. Aoife worked part-time intermittently throughout her life in order to supplement the family income. Her last job, before retirement at 73, was as a supermarket promoter. At the time of the interviews she was in receipt of a state pension.

Case study two: Bridget

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (at time of interview)</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being categorisation</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Above the sample mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Communion (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bridget moved to England after leaving school at the age of 15 where she trained to be a nurse. It was in England that she met her husband and they returned home to Ireland and got married when she was 19. Bridget and her husband moved to Dublin and were allocated housing in Ballyfermot where they reared 9 children. Bridget worked intermittently as a cleaner throughout their marriage to supplement the family income. She was employed as a home care assistant prior to her retirement from paid work at the age of 60. It was about this time that her husband became very ill with Parkinson's disease. Bridget was his full time carer and she nursed him until his death in 1997. At the time of the interviews she lived alone in Ballyfermot and was in receipt of a state pension. The interview with Bridget took place in the care centre which she attended a few times a week. She was introduced to the care centre by a community nurse following a bad accident in which she broke her leg and spent some time in hospital.

**Case study three: Gillian**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (at time of interview)</th>
<th>82</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being categorisation</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Equal to the sample mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Communion (=M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second highest motivational theme</td>
<td>Personal growth (=M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Agency (&lt;M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gillian left school when she was 15 and began work in a printing factory. When she was 19 she married and four years later she was
allocated corporation housing in Ballyfermot. Her husband was a kitchen porter and they had seven children in total, the youngest of whom committed suicide in 1980. Gillian retired from cleaning work when she was 65 and she is now in receipt of a state pension. Gillian and her husband own their house having availed of a tenant purchase scheme. The interview with Gillian took place in a day care centre which was attached to Cherry Orchard Hospital in upper Ballyfermot. Gillian had agoraphobia and this weekly outing was one of the few times that she left her house. She also suffered from depression and during the first interview she told me that she had been referred to a mental health clinic. Gillian’s narrative was one of the most difficult of all the participants for this study. Her stories were often distressing with references to elder abuse, as well as marital problems and severe loneliness and isolation.

Case study four: Kitty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (at time of interview)</th>
<th>79</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being categorisation</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Less than sample mean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Highest scoring motivational theme: Personal growth (>M)
Second highest motivational theme: Communion (<M)
Lowest scoring motivational theme: Agency (<M)

Kitty never married and when she was 20 she moved with her family to Ballyfermot after her parents were allocated corporation housing there. She continued working full time in factories throughout her life although she moved around different industries including tailoring and biscuit making. She retired from full time factory employment when she was 65 and at the time of the interviews she was in receipt of a state pension. She continued to live in the house her parents were allocated and at the time of the interviews she owned the house having availed of a tenant purchase
scheme. The interviews with Kitty took place in the day care centre which
she attended once a week to meet with other older people and to have a
hot meal and play bingo. Kitty suffered from a medical condition, dystonia,
which affected her eyes and her throat and it occasionally made speaking
quite difficult for her.

Case study five: Una

| Age (at time of interview) | 72 |
| Health                      | Fair |
| Well-being categorisation   | Low |
| Narrative Complexity        | Equal to the sample mean |
| Highest scoring motivational theme | Communion (<M) |
| Second highest scoring motivational theme | Personal growth (<M) |
| Lowest scoring motivational theme | Agency (<M) |

When Una was 19 she emigrated to London where she met her husband. After the death of her father in 1980 Una and her husband moved into her parent's house in Ballyfermot to live with her mother. Subsequently, they purchased the house with her mother, availing of a tenant purchase scheme. Her mother died in 2007 and Una and her husband continued to live in the house at the time of the interviews. Una continued working part-time, until retirement, as a cleaner in Trinity College. Her husband also worked in the college as a security man. Una retired when she was 40 due to ill health after she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Una and her husband did not have any children. At the time of the interviews she was in receipt of a state pension. The interviews with Una took place in the day care centre which she attended regularly to get out of the house, receive a hot meal and meet with other older people in the community. Una was badly affected by her MS and she was quite physically limited, particularly in her walking. Her life was quite unhappy and she spoke about the hardship of living with her husband's alcoholism for much of her life.
During her narrative Una revealed that, through her contact with the day care centre, she availed of the help of a social worker to address her husband's alcoholism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (at time of interview)</th>
<th>76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being categorisation</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Greater than the sample mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Communion (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second highest motivational theme</td>
<td>Personal growth (&lt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Agency (&lt;M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case study six: Jessica

Jessica finished school when she was 12 and two years later she began work as a seamstress in a sewing factory. When she was 22 she married and as a new bride moved to Ballyfermot to live with her husband who was a truck driver. Jessica continued working in the sewing factory until the birth of her first child after which she worked as a seamstress from her home combining the work with caring for her six children. She continued working intermittently as a seamstress and contract office cleaner in order to supplement the family income until she retired at age 60. Jessica's husband died almost 10 years prior to the interviews and Jessica cared for him for quite a while before his death as he recovered from a stroke. At the time of the interviews she was in receipt of a state pension and she owned her home. During the interviews Jessica told me that she suffered from depression since the death of her son which was exacerbated by her estrangement from another son. She was receiving treatment in the form of medication for this depression and had previously undertaken counselling.

Case study seven: Debbie

| Age (at time of interview) | 82 |
Debbie was unusual among the participants in that she stayed in school until she was 17 and completed her secondary intermediate certificate examinations. At 21, Debbie married her husband who was a navy seaman and following the birth of their third child when Debbie was 25, she and her husband were allocated housing by the corporation in Ballyfermot. They had six children in total, three of whom are currently still living in Ballyfermot. Debbie's husband died when her youngest child was nine years of age, she was 45 and she never remarried. Following the death of her husband she resumed working as a shop assistant and continued working full-time until retirement when she was 63. She is now in receipt of a state pension and she owns her own home where one of her daughters still lives with her.

Case study eight: Emma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (at time of interview)</th>
<th>74</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being categorisation</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Equal to the sample mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Communion (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second highest motivational theme</td>
<td>Personal growth (=M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Agency (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emma's father died in 1957 when Emma was 22. During his final illness Emma nursed her father at home with the assistance of community based nuns. Emma was inspired by the dedication of the nuns and she decided to join the sisterhood shortly after her father died. Her life in the Little Sisters of the Assumption provided her with nursing training and she worked throughout her life, on a voluntary basis, in community development and social work. Since 1999 she has resided in a Dublin Corporation housing estate in Ballyfermot which was a pilot scheme for a community development initiative. She and a fellow sister provided support to the residents and Emma remained very active in the Ballyfermot community. Emma worked throughout her life on a voluntary unpaid basis. At the time of the interviews she was in receipt of a non-contributory state pension and was acquiring her house from the local authority.

Case study nine: Mabel

| Age (at time of interview) | 78 |
| Health                   | Good |
| Well-being categorisation | High |
| Narrative Complexity     | Equal to the sample mean |
| Highest scoring motivational theme | Communion (>M) |
| Second highest motivational theme | Personal growth (=M) |
| Lowest scoring motivational theme | Agency (<M) |

Mabel's mother died in childbirth with Mabel and she and her older brother were fostered by her aunt. When she was 7 her father went to England to find work. Mabel left school when she was 14 and began work in a knitwear factory. When she was 20 she married and three years later she and her husband were allocated housing in Ballyfermot after their tenement accommodation was condemned. Mable had eight children in total, one of whom was still living in Ballyfermot. Mable gave up work upon marriage in
order to rear her children. She and her husband owned their home, having availed of a tenant purchase scheme and Mabel was in receipt of a non-contributory state pension. The interviews with Mable took place in her home in the front parlour. On the walls, book shelves and mantelpiece of the room there were quite a lot of Catholic images and icons, as well as two African carvings. I later learned that one of Mabel's sons was a Jesuit Priest who had worked for some time in Africa.

Case study ten: Sally

| Age (at time of interview) | 78 |
| Health | Good |
| Well-being categorisation | High |
| Narrative Complexity | Less than the sample mean |
| Highest scoring motivational theme |
| Second highest motivational theme |
| Lowest scoring motivational theme |

Sally was adopted as a young baby as was her sister. She finished school when she was 12 and she took up employment in a foundry in the inner city before she married at the age of 29. Sally had her first child when she was 34 and she and her husband were allocated housing in Ballyfermot after their city tenement accommodation was condemned. They had five children, one of whom remained living in Ballyfermot. Sally continued to work intermittently in order to supplement the family income. In 1995 when she was 64 Sally returned to education and she obtained her Leaving Certificate examinations. She subsequently studied art in Ballyfermot College and she went on to obtain a third level diploma in art from Dun Laoghaire College. During this time in her life she began to search for her birth mother who she found and developed a relationship with before her birth mother died. Sally's husband died in 2000 and she remained living
alone in their house in Ballyfermot, which she owned, having availed of a purchase scheme. She was in receipt of a state pension.

**Case study eleven: Luke**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (at time of interview)</th>
<th>86</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being categorisation</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Less than the sample mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Agency (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Communion (&lt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Personal growth (&lt;M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Luke finished his education when he was 14 and he began work as a messenger boy in the city centre. He later went on to join his father working in the railway. When he was 28 he married and after a brief period living in an inner city tenement he and his wife were allocated 'newly-wed' housing in Ballyfermot. Luke and his wife had four children two of whom were living in Ballyfermot at the time of the interviews. Luke continued working in the railway until his retirement at age 64. At the time of the interviews he was in receipt of both a state and a private pension. Luke and his wife owned their house after availing of a tenant purchase scheme. In the interviews Luke spoke in great detail about his work with Irish Rail and in particular his memories of steam engines. He also talked about his love of running and his association with a local running club. Luke continued running right into his 80's and only stopped running on the advice of his locum doctor. Luke was his wife's full time carer. A few weeks after the interviews with Luke were finished I heard that his wife had died.

**Case study twelve: Jack**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (at time of interview)</th>
<th>72</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Well-being categorisation | Low
---|---
Narrative Complexity | Less than the sample mean
Highest scoring motivational theme | Communion (=M)
Second highest motivational theme | Agency (=M)
Lowest scoring motivational theme | Personal growth (<M)

Jack finished school when he was 14 having obtained his primary education and he began work as a messenger boy in the city centre. After a period of time spent working in England he returned home in his early twenties and found employment with the CIE, the Irish rail and transport company. He continued working on a contract basis for the Irish rail as a store man until his early retirement due to ill health when he was 57. Jack married when he was 23 and he and his wife were allocated ‘newly-wed’ housing in Ballyfermot when Jack was 29. He had three children, all of whom are living in the Dublin area. Jack and his wife currently own their home, having availed of a tenant purchase scheme, and he has a state pension. Despite health problems, he was extraordinarily fit and remained very physically active in the gym.

Case study thirteen: Alex

| Age (at time of interview) | 79 |
| Health | Good |
| Well-being categorisation | High |
| Narrative Complexity | Greater than the sample mean |
| Highest scoring motivational theme | Communion (=M) |
| Second highest motivational theme | Personal growth (>M) |
| Lowest scoring motivational theme | Agency (=M) |
Alex finished his full time education at primary level and left school at 13 and began working with a local farmer. Upon marriage at 25 he moved with his wife to a tenement house in the city centre. Shortly after he married he was allocated housing in Ballyfermot by the corporation. He now owns his house after availing of a tenant purchase scheme. Alex retired from his work as a supervisor with Roadstone, a building supplier, at the age of 59 and is now in receipt of a contributory state pension. He has seven children, four of whom are currently living in Ballyfermot. Alex’s wife died of Motor Neuron Disease a few years prior to the interviews. The interviews took place in his home where he lived with his grandson. Alex and his wife informally adopted this grandson after his birth and were his primary guardians. Occasionally a different fostered son also stayed with Alex, this son had down’s syndrome and did not live in the house full time. Alex’s eyesight was deteriorating and he suffered with severe arthritis.

Case study fourteen: Danny

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (at time of interview)</th>
<th>78</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being categorisation</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Equal to the sample mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Communion (=M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second highest motivational theme</td>
<td>Personal growth (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Agency (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although he worked as a paper delivery boy from about the age of 11, Danny finished his formal education at the age of 14, at which point he began an apprenticeship in a tailors in the city centre. Danny married when he was 27 and upon eviction from a tenement room they were sub-letting, himself and his wife were allocated corporation housing in Ballyfermot. Danny and his wife subsequently bought the house from the corporation under a tenant purchase scheme and they reared 7 children there. Danny
was very active in the development of Ballyfermot community and was one of the founding members of the Tenants association which campaigned for better amenities and services for Ballyfermot residents. He continued working full time until his retirement at the age of 62. At the time of the interviews he was in receipt of a contributory state pension.

Case study fifteen: Eric

| Age (at time of interview) | 82 |
| Health                     | Fair |
| Well-being categorisation  | High |
| Narrative Complexity       | Equal to the sample mean |
| Highest scoring motivational theme | Communion (>M) |
| Second highest motivational theme | Personal growth (>M) |
| Lowest scoring motivational theme | Agency (>M) |

When he was 14 Eric finished his formal education at primary level and he began work as a city messenger boy. He later became a house painter and when he was 24 he married his wife and moved into a tenement room. Four years later, in 1955, Eric and his wife were allocated 'newly-wed' housing in Ballyfermot where they had six children. Throughout his life in Ballyfermot Eric was very involved in community activism. He was a founding member of the tenants association which lobbied government parties to introduce a tenant purchase scheme. Eric was widowed and he lived on his own although he had regular contact with his children and grandchildren, some of whom also lived in Ballyfermot. He retired from house painting when he was 66 and at the time of the interviews was drawing a state pension. The second interview with Eric was delayed for a few weeks as he became ill after our initial interview. He explained to me that he suffered with depression and with very bad arthritis. Politics and social class were very strong elements of Eric's story.
Case study sixteen: Fred

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (at time of interview)</th>
<th>75</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Very good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Well-being categorisation</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Less than the sample mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Agency (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Communion (&lt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Personal growth (&lt;M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fred was the only participant I interviewed that was born and reared in Ballyfermot and who was not allocated housing by the corporation. Fred finished his primary education when he was 14 and he went to a technical college in the city centre and he achieved his vocational group certificate. During this time he also began his apprenticeship in the rail works. After he passed his exams he did some part-time teaching in the technical college and eventually he became engineering technician in University College Dublin. When he was 23 Fred married his wife and a short time later Fred and his wife bought a house in Ballyfermot and they had four children there before moving to bigger housing close by. Fred owned his home, having finished paying his mortgage, and he lived alone as his wife died after nearly 35 years of marriage. He maintained a close relationship with a brother who was also living in Ballyfermot and a widower. Fred retired at age 63 and was in receipt of both a contributory state and a private pension. The interview with Fred took place in the day care centre which he visited twice a week to get a meal and to meet with the other clients, all from his community.

Case study seventeen: Mat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (at time of interview)</th>
<th>83</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When Mat finished school at 14 he began his bricklaying apprenticeship with his father. Mat spent much of his early working life building houses for Dublin Corporation in Ballyfermot. When he was 24 he married and he and his wife lived for some time in the city centre before moving to Ballyfermot when he was 36. Mat and his wife had 4 children. He became a foreman of works and was later recruited by Dublin Corporation as a building inspector. During this period he returned to education and he obtained a third level diploma which facilitated his career development to become a manager in the Corporation Sanitation Department. Mat was also a published writer of poetry, novels and plays. This had become a particular interest of his since his retirement when he was 65. While his wife did not undertake paid work, she was a painter and did some part-time art teaching on a voluntary community basis. Mat and his wife continued living in their home in Ballyfermot which they owned and Mat was in receipt of a state pension.

Case study eighteen: Michael

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (at time of interview)</th>
<th>80</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Well-being categorisation</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Greater than the sample mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Personal growth (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second highest motivational theme</td>
<td>Communion (&lt;M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Michael was reared in the ‘Liberties’ area of Dublin city and was an only child. His mother was not married and Michael did not know his father. His mother worked fulltime in a local paper bag factory. Michael finished school when he was 13 and went on to work as a packer for a bicycle factory and also as a delivery man for a jeweller. When he was 22 Michael married and after a brief period living in tenement housing, he and his wife were allocated housing in Ballyfermot by the Corporation. They had 8 children in total, one of whom was living in Ballyfermot at the time of the interviews. Michael continued working full time until his retirement at age 62. At the time of the interviews he was living with his wife in their home in Ballyfermot which they owned, having availed of a tenant purchase scheme. Michael was in receipt of a state pension. Michael published some stories for children and he gave me a present of one of his books. In the sitting room, where the interviews took place, there were many photos as well as Catholic images and iconography.

Case study nineteen: Philip

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (at time of interview)</th>
<th>85</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
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<td>Well-being categorisation</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Equals the sample mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Communion (=M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second highest motivational theme</td>
<td>Personal growth (&lt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Agency (&lt;M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Philip finished school when he was 13 in order to begin working as a delivery boy; he was later employed as a road sweeper. When Philip was 30 he married and, after a brief time living in an inner city tenement, he and his wife were allocated ‘newly-wed’ housing in Ballyfermot. Philip and his
wife had 7 children, one of whom remained living in Ballyfermot. When he was 66 Philip retired and it was around this time that his wife died suddenly after being diagnosed with Cancer. At the time of the interviews Philip was living alone in the house which he owned, having availed of a tenant purchase scheme. He was in receipt of a state pension.

Case study twenty: Tony

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (at time of interview)</th>
<th>78</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being categorisation</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Equals the sample mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Agency (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second highest motivational theme</td>
<td>Personal growth (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest scoring motivational theme</td>
<td>Communion (&gt;M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When Tony was 12 he was awarded a scholarship to complete secondary education at a Christian Brother boarding school. Upon finishing school Tony joined the Christian Brothers and trained to be a primary school teacher. He began his teaching career in a small rural school in West Mayo. After eight years in Mayo he was sent to work in Africa in missionary schools around the continent. After 17 years working in the missions, Tony returned to Ireland and continued working in primary education as both a teacher and a school principle. During his time teaching in Ireland he became an alcoholic. As a result of his alcoholism he was removed from teaching and he began to get involved in social work with disadvantaged youths and travellers. At the time of the interviews he was recovering from his addiction, he continued to work in social work and he provided addiction counselling. Since he was 66 Tony was living in a Christian Brother’s monastery in Ballyfermot and, although he was retired at the time of the interviews, he continued to provide social support and counselling to members of the Ballyfermot community.
### Appendix G

**Categorical Coding Criteria (McAdams et al., 2006)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Category</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Emotional Tone** | Positive Emotional Tone:  
- Happy ending  
- Expression of positive affect for example joy, excitement interest  
Negative Emotional Tone:  
- Unhappy ending  
- Expression of negative affect for example sadness, distress, fear | 1 = Very unhappy story/very negative emotional tone  
2 = Unhappy story  
3 = Neither unhappy nor happy story  
4 = Happy story  
5 = Very happy story/very happy emotional tone | |
| **Motivational Theme 1: Agency** | Presence of at least one of the following:  
- Achievement or responsibility  
- Power or impact  
- Self mastery  
- Status or victory | 0 = No evidence for agency  
1 = Some albeit vague, qualified or implicit evidence for agency  
2 = Has described an event or experience that serves explicitly to promote and/or convey a sense of agency | |
| **Motivational Theme 2: Communion** | Presence of at least one of the following:  
- Love or friendship  
- Dialogue  
- Caring or help  
- Unity or togetherness | 0 = No evidence for communion  
1 = Some albeit vague, qualified or implicit evidence for communion  
2 = Has described an event or experience that serves explicitly to promote and/or convey a sense of communion | |

Note: Emotional tone refers to feeling. Where there are mixed feelings code for the dominant one. E.G. a sad event is narrated through the use of humour – this can be coded as having negative emotional tone if you feel that the humour is disguising sadness.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivational Theme 3: Personal Growth</th>
<th>Presence of at least one of the following:</th>
<th>0= No evidence for personal growth</th>
<th>1= Some albeit vague or qualified evidence for personal growth</th>
<th>2= Has described an event or experience that serves explicitly to promote positive development of self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Personal growth involves accepting life experiences and reconciling them to an understanding of the self and of life. In telling this story is the narrator attempting to promote a sense of personal growth or to convey this sense of growth to the listener? | • Learned a new lesson about life  
• Obtained a deeper self understanding  
• Reached a higher level of development  
• Discovered something new about the self | | | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Complexity</th>
<th>Presence of at least one of the following:</th>
<th>0= No, the story does not display narrative complexity</th>
<th>1= Yes, the story displays narrative complexity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Narrative complexity involves a recognition that the world is not black and white. It often involves accepting life events and people through compassion and through wisdom or understanding. This acceptance however does not necessarily affect a sense of self but rather is an acceptance of the grey in life and in people. In telling this story does the narrator reveal complexity in their narrative? | • Multiple points of view (e.g. role taking)  
• Mixed motivations (e.g. doing something for many conflicting reasons)  
• Complex emotional experiences (e.g. mixing opposite emotions in same moment)  
• Contradictory aspects of self | | |
Confidentiality Agreements

TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

It is understood and agreed that Deirdre O'Donnell (discloser) will grant temporary access to NAME (RECIPIENT) to research data in the form of digital audio recordings of interviews. This temporary access will be granted for the purpose of transcription. To ensure the protection of such data, the parties agree as follows:

The confidential information to be disclosed by Deirdre O'Donnell to RECIPIENT includes:

- The digital audio recordings of approx 50 interviews with 20 research participants.

In addition to the above, the confidential information shall also include the transcriptions which will be completed by RECIPIENT and which will be returned to Deirdre O'Donnell (word file).

RECIPIENT shall use the confidential information only for the purpose of transcribing as defined by the criteria and determined by Deirdre O'Donnell.

In signing this agreement RECIPIENT understands that the confidential information and data defined above is the intellectual property of Deirdre O'Donnell. As such RECIPIENT has a duty to protect this property during the period of access through password protected storage on her computer. This information will not be disclosed by RECIPIENT to any third party. Furthermore, RECIPIENT agrees to destroy all copies of this confidential information, including those saved to her personal computer, upon completion of the transcription.

If there is a breach or threatened breach of any provision of this Agreement, it is agreed and understood that Deirdre O'Donnell shall have no adequate remedy in money or other damages and accordingly shall be entitled to seek injunctive relief. Disputes will be settled in a court of competent jurisdiction.

The parties acknowledge that they have read and understand this Agreement and voluntarily accept the duties and obligations set forth herein.

Signature of RECIPIENT

______________________________ Date

Signature of Deirdre O'Donnell (Discloser)

______________________________ Date
CODER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

It is understood and agreed that Deirdre O'Donnell (discloser) will grant temporary access to RECIPIENT (recipient) to research data in the form of narrative categorical coding criteria as well as qualitative interview extracts in both audio and text version. This temporary access will be granted for the purpose of data coding. To ensure the protection of such data, the parties agree as follows:

The confidential information to be disclosed by Deirdre O'Donnell to RECIPIENT includes:

- Categorical narrative coding criteria in the form of a MS Word Document.
- Narrative extracts from qualitative interviews in both audio and text files in the form of exported NVivo files.
- A coding template to be completed by RECIPIENT in the form of an excel file.

In addition to the above, the confidential information shall also include the coding which will be completed by RECIPIENT and which will be returned to Deirdre O'Donnell (excel file).

RECIPIENT shall use the confidential information only for the purpose of data coding as defined by the criteria and determined by the coding template.

In signing this agreement RECIPIENT understands that the confidential information and data defined above is the intellectual property of Deirdre O'Donnell. As such RECIPIENT has a duty to protect this property during the period of access through password protected storage on her computer. This information will not be disclosed by RECIPIENT to any third party. Furthermore, RECIPIENT agrees to destroy all copies of this confidential information, including those saved to her personal computer, upon completion of the coding.

If there is a breach or threatened breach of any provision of this Agreement, it is agreed and understood that Deirdre O'Donnell shall have no adequate remedy in money or other damages and accordingly shall be entitled to seek injunctive relief. Disputes will be settled in a court of competent jurisdiction.

The parties acknowledge that they have read and understand this Agreement and voluntarily accept the duties and obligations set forth herein.

Signature of RECIPIENT (Recipient) 

Date

Signature of Deirdre O'Donnell (Discloser) 

Date

337
### Chapter Three: Tables and figures

**TABLE 3A1:** Inter-coder correlations for the narrative categorical coding (N=505)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Category</th>
<th>Spearman Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Significance (2-Tailed)</th>
<th>R² Linear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Tone</td>
<td>0.703</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Theme: Agency</td>
<td>0.511</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Theme: Communion</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Theme: Personal Growth</td>
<td>0.278</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>0.183</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 3A2:** Test of significant difference between the inter-coder means for each narrative category (N= 505)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Coder</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Tone</td>
<td>Coder 1</td>
<td>3.4455</td>
<td>1.28077</td>
<td>3.715</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coder 2</td>
<td>3.1960</td>
<td>.79880</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Coder 1</td>
<td>.6238</td>
<td>.82437</td>
<td>-8.921</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coder 2</td>
<td>1.0832</td>
<td>.81224</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communion</td>
<td>Coder 1</td>
<td>.9347</td>
<td>.86928</td>
<td>-12.228</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coder 2</td>
<td>1.5287</td>
<td>.66044</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Growth</td>
<td>Coder 1</td>
<td>.5030</td>
<td>.75625</td>
<td>-19.489</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coder 2</td>
<td>1.3604</td>
<td>.63684</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Coder 1</td>
<td>.2792</td>
<td>.45781</td>
<td>-22.801</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coder 2</td>
<td>.8614</td>
<td>.34589</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 3A3:** Distribution of participant scores for each narrative category (combined data set)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Tone</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.3080</td>
<td>.46456</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.8440</td>
<td>.28279</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communion</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.2095</td>
<td>.21053</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Growth</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.9210</td>
<td>.20983</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.5710</td>
<td>.11706</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 3A4: Tests of normal distribution of combined dataset scores for each category per participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk Statistic</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Tone</td>
<td>0.967</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>0.966</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communion</td>
<td>0.958</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Growth</td>
<td>0.980</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3A5: Tests of normal distribution of participant scores for the SWLS and the LSI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk Statistic</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction With Life Scale</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction Index</td>
<td>0.966</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.676</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter Four: Tables and figures

Demographics

FIGURE 4A1: Clustered bar chart showing a cross-tabulation of gender and highest educational achievement
FIGURE 4A2: Clustered bar chart showing a cross-tabulation of gender and marital status

FIGURE 4A3: Clustered bar chart showing a cross-tabulation of gender and whether or not the participant can drive a car
**TABLE 4A1: Cross-tabulation of gender and employment status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worked / sought full time until retirement</td>
<td>Male (n=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked intermittently to supplement household income</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not undertaken paid work in the last 30 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked part-time until retirement</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 4A2: Cross-tabulation of gender and whether or not the participant can drive a car**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can you drive a car?</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (n=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 4A3: Cross-tabulation of gender and whether or not the participant has access to a car**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you have access to a car?</th>
<th>Gender*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (n=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Only those that could drive a car were selected*

**TABLE 4A4: Cross-tabulation of gender and whether or not the participant's spouse can drive a car**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can your spouse drive a car?</th>
<th>Gender*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Only those that could not drive a car were selected*

**Health and Life Satisfaction**

**TABLE 4B1: Mann-Whitney U comparison of ranked means for the SWLS and the LSI according to gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Satisfaction</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>P. Value (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWLS</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>.649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSI</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.25</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>.341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 4B2: Distribution of mean scores for the SWLS and the LSI according to marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SWLS - Married</th>
<th>SWLS - Not married</th>
<th>LSI - Married</th>
<th>LSI - Not Married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4B3: Mann-Whitney U comparison of ranked means for the SWLS and the LSI according to marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>P. Value (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWLS Married</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Married</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSI Married</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Married</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4B4: Mann-Whitney U comparison of ranked means for the subjective health measure according to gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>P. Value (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.5 (SD=.5)</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4 (SD=.8)</td>
<td>12.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4B5: Mann-Whitney U comparison of ranked means for the subjective health measure according to marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>P. Value (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.67 (SD=.7)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not married</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.82 (SD=.8)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4B6: Kruskal Wallis comparison of ranked means for the SWLS by subjective health status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Kruskal Wallis $\chi^2$</th>
<th>P. Value (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 4B7: Kruskal Wallis comparison of ranked means for the LSI by subjective health status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Kruskal Wallis $X^2$</th>
<th>P. Value (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4B8: Mann-Whitney U comparison of ranked means for the SWLS score according to subjective health status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Status</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>P. Value (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Categorical Narrative Coding

TABLE 4C1: Independent samples t-test of significant difference between the mean scores for each narrative category by gender (N=20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Coder</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Tone</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communion</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Growth</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4C2: Independent samples t-test of significant difference between the mean scores for each narrative category by marital status (N=20).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Tone</td>
<td>Married (n=9)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not married (n=11)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Married (n=9)</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not married (n=11)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communion</td>
<td>Married (n=9)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not married (n=11)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Growth</td>
<td>Married (n=9)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not married (n=11)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>Married (n=9)</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not married (n=11)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 4C3: Pearson correlation coefficient matrix for the narrative indices (N=20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Category</th>
<th>Emotional Tone</th>
<th>Motivational Theme: Agency</th>
<th>Motivational Theme: Communion</th>
<th>Motivational Theme: Personal Growth</th>
<th>Narrative Complexity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Tone</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.708**</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>-0.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Theme: Agency</td>
<td>0.708**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.181</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>-0.303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Theme: Communion</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>-0.181</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.127</td>
<td>0.511*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Theme: Personal Growth</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>0.127</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.487*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>-0.283</td>
<td>-0.303</td>
<td>0.511*</td>
<td>0.487*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

TABLE 4C4: Spearman correlation coefficients for the narrative indices and the life satisfaction measures (N=20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Category</th>
<th>SWLS</th>
<th>LSI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Tone</td>
<td>0.479*</td>
<td>0.655**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Theme: Agency</td>
<td>0.269</td>
<td>0.725**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Theme: Communion</td>
<td>0.228</td>
<td>0.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Theme: Personal Growth</td>
<td>0.300</td>
<td>0.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>-0.0259</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

TABLE 4C5: ANOVA comparison of mean scores for each of the 3 narrative indices according to self-reported health status (N=20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Status</th>
<th>Very Good (M)</th>
<th>Good (M)</th>
<th>Fair (M)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig. (2-Tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Category</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Tone</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Theme: Agency</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Theme: Communion</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Theme: Personal Growth</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Complexity</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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