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Following in their mothers' footsteps?
What the daughters of successful career women want
from their work and family lives.

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Doctor of Philosophy Gender Studies

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been, and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to any other University for the award of any other degree

Signature:

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Harold and Eileen Armstrong; living proof that it's the way your parents make you feel that counts the most.

University of Sussex

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Summary

Twenty-five percent of working women now occupy the top levels of the labour market (ONS 2013c). This presents an opportunity to assess the extent to which adult daughters have been influenced in their aspirations for work and family life by growing up with a mother with a successful career –a significant research gap. Intergenerational narrative interviews with 30 mother and daughter pairs explored their observations about the effects on their ambitions, relationships, emotions and identities.

The mothers were most often the prime influence on their daughters' embarking upon high status, satisfying careers. However, neither most mothers, nor their daughters aspired to 'get to the top', which challenges both the idea of progress towards gender equality at the highest levels in organisations and traditional definitions of career success.

The mothers managed work and motherhood thoughtfully and most did not experience disjuncture between their identities (Bailey 1999). Key original contributions are that almost all the daughters thought that having a mother who worked mainly full-time out of the home in a career she found satisfying benefited them or, at least, did them no damage. Despite this, most daughters did *not* think that emulating their mothers would be fine for the children the daughters anticipated having. The main explanations for this are the pervasive idea that working part-time would give them the 'best of both worlds' as mothers and workers, the motherhood culture of 'intensification of responsibility' (Thomson *et al.* 2011, p.277), and the perceived lack of examples of satisfying flexible career paths within organisational careers for women and men. Many of the mothers took a pragmatic approach to their 'emotion management' (Hochschild 1983, p.44) of work-life trade-offs but did not transmit their experience of managing their feelings about working motherhood. I argue that doing so could benefit their working daughters.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Questions

Public and academic attention has recently been focused on women at the top levels of careers (Lanning 2013; Wolf 2013; Tutchell and Edmonds 2015). Whilst there has been progress in the representation of women at senior levels there is still tension between being a mother and career progress. This point is illustrated by the leadership debate in the UK election of 2015. Three of the seven party leaders were women, including Nicola Sturgeon who was later voted by listeners to Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* to be the most influential and powerful women in Britain. However, the four male party leaders had 13 children between them whereas the three women had only one (Turner 2015). This issue is the crux of my study.

Twenty-five percent of women who work have careers classified as SOC 1 or 2 (Managers and Senior Officials or Professional Occupations (ONS 2010). Many women who have reached senior levels in their professional and managerial careers started work in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1981, 23.5% of women were classed as Managerial, Professional and Associated Professional (Dex *et al.* 2006). These women were the beneficiaries of equal opportunity policies, influenced by second wave feminism with its focus on achieving gender equality with men in the workplace and domestically (Crompton and LeFeuvre 2000). Many of these women are also mothers and members of the first generation of highly educated women for whom it was the norm amongst their peers to work and to return to work in some form after they became mothers (Wolf 2013). These mothers are now old enough to have adult daughters in their twenties and thirties, some of whom have children of their own. Their daughters belong to a generation who are often argued to have the potential to achieve professionally as much as men (Harris 2003; Rosin 2012; Wolf 2013). Academics commonly acknowledge that work and parenting values are passed on inter-generationally (Moen *et al.* 1997; Lawler 2000; Walkerdine *et al.* 2001; McGinn *et al.* 2015). These factors combined present an opportunity to examine the views of the adult daughters of women with successful careers in the context of progress in achieving gender equality. Questions investigated by this research are:

- What impact did growing up with a mother with a career who worked mainly full-time have on the daughters' thinking about combining motherhood with work compared to other influences?

- Did observing their mothers work long hours result in the daughters wanting to work fewer hours?
- To what extent did being mothered by women with successful careers encourage their daughters to aspire to high-level positions themselves?

My definition of 'successful' applies only to the career classification of the mothers' generation as professional/managerial, not to their mothering. They simply needed to *be* mothers of adult daughter. This research is relevant to the widely held view that achieving more gender equality in high status jobs in all sectors will be valuable both for women and for society (Women's Business Council 2013). It also addresses the persistent debates over whether mothers who work long hours negatively affect their children (Hays 1996; Bianchi 2000; Milkie *et. al* 2015).

This research is based on qualitative narrative, biographical interviews conducted with 30 mother and daughter pairs. The adult daughters were recruited to represent three life stages; those just graduating and therefore close to making decisions for their future careers, those working and without children and those who had recently had their own children (referred to more succinctly as 'daughter mothers'). It is pertinent to note that almost all of the 22 daughters in this study who did not have children said they wanted children. Professional and managerial women have been argued to suffer more from work life conflict due to their likelihood to be in more continuous employment than women at other occupational levels, to work long hours and to have partners working long hours too (McRae 2003; Crompton 2006; Wolf 2013). The opportunity for women to achieve high level positions and the influence that comes with this is important for gender equality. For these reasons this research focuses on the experiences of a particular cohort of working women who have relatively more access to economic and social capital (Bourdieu and Nice 1990) and does not seek to generalise to all working women. Nevertheless, the findings about continuing gender inequality arising from employment and family norms and the 'gendered nature of caring' are resonant for many women and men in each generational cohort in terms of their expectations and experience of managing work and parenthood (Scott *et al.* 2010, p.5).

1.2 Context for research questions

Progress in gender equality at work is evident in many ways. Women have achieved representational parity with men in SOC 2 (professional) occupations and comprise 33% of SOC 1 (managerial) occupations (ONS 2013c). Economist Wolf estimated that between 15 and 20% of working women combine higher education, good incomes and high skill

occupations which is almost the same figure as for working men. Moreover, the gender pay gap is at its smallest between men and women in their twenties in managerial and professional roles (ONS 2013c). More than 50% of accepted applicants to university have been female since 2007 (UCAS 2012). 59% of newly qualified solicitors were female (Law Society 2011) and the General Medical Council (2011) counted 4250 females out of 6750 doctors in the first foundation year of training in 2010. Researchers have argued that progress in female achievement in education and at work may lead young women to believe that they can achieve professionally as much as men (Harris 2003; Rosin 2012; Wolf 2013). Indeed, evidence suggests that mothers amongst 25-44 year old women with a graduate education are almost exactly as likely to be working as those who do not have children (Wolf 2013, p.59).

However, the narrative of progress in gender equality is challenged by evidence of persistent inequalities when women become mothers, in earnings, in reaching the highest levels in careers and in the responsibility for the 'hard labour' (Gatrell 2005) involved in caring for a family. The proportion of women in the top 10% of earners is 47% between the ages of 25-29 and consistently falls away after the age of 30 (ONS 2013c). This coincides with the fact that graduate women tend to have their first child in their 30s (Dorling and Hennig 2013). In terms of reaching the highest level in careers it is well documented that women are under represented in leadership roles. For example, only 13.2% of FTSE 250 directorships are held by women (BoardWatch 2014) and, speaking at the Kuttan Memorial lecture in 2013, Lady Hale, the Supreme Court's only female justice, commented that since her appointment in 2004, all 13 of the posts for the judiciary's highest echelons have gone to men. Even looking at fields that are more gender stereotypically female, only 35% of head teachers of secondary school and 29% of Civil Service top management were female in 2010-11 (EHRC 2011). Women are often said in business to be stuck in the 'marzipan layer', the layer just below the icing at the top. Moreover, much research suggests that motherhood continues to present a potential limit to career progression (Gatrell 2008; Miller 2012; Mason *et al.* 2013; Lanning 2013). Mothers, including those in dual income households and working in high skill roles, mainly continue to be positioned as having responsibility for the emotional and physical well being of their children (Gatrell 2005, 2007; Miller 2005, 2012; Lyonette and Crompton 2015). It follows that these women experience tension between their responsibilities as mothers and workers and question how their working hours impact upon their children (Gatrell 2005; Miller 2005, 2012; Thomson *et al.* 2011). Moreover, many women decide to work part-time or flexibly as a way of dealing with this tension and much research shows that there are career penalties for women in high status roles who work part-time or work

flexibly (Drew and Murtagh 2005; Durbin *et al.* 2010a; Durbin *et al.* 2010b; Gatrell *et al.* 2014). Conversely, even though men are becoming more involved in the domestic sphere, the idea that a demanding career conflicts with men's domestic role seldom arises within the organisational context (Durbin *et al.* 2010b; Gatrell *et al.* 2014).

The complex trade-offs that women make between work and motherhood is central to the context for my research (Crompton 2006; Everingham *et al.* 2007; Thomson *et al.* 2011). This research is therefore inspired by the ideas expressed by three scholars, namely Gatrell, Thomson and Hochschild, and the common thread between them regarding the importance of collective cultural understanding in informing the strategies of individuals. First, this research seeks to examine the experience of the daughters of mothers with successful careers, many of whom do not have children, so inspiration is drawn from the work of Gatrell who argues that young women's 'potential for maternity' means that they are guided away from or steer themselves away from certain specific career choices (2008, p.3). This is corroborated by other research (Orrange 2002; Bimrose *et al.* 2014; PWC 2014) that shows that many young women who are not, or not yet, mothers are anticipating motherhood and concerned about its potential impact on their working lives. Secondly, Thomson and her collaborators position motherhood within its cultural context by examining 'everyday social practice' (2011, p.7) in order to explore the ways in which women combine and separate home and work and constitute different maternal cultures across the generations. As they observe:

The position that a woman strikes in relation to work appears to be highly consequential in the kind of mothering project on which she subsequently embarks. (2011, p.192)

Thirdly, Hochschild's notion of 'gender strategy' (1990, p.164) posited that as well as individual influences there must also be cultural influences that explain the differences between the women (and men) who exhibit more desire to be the primary parent. This idea encompasses the 'emotion management' (1983, p.7) of tension between one's own beliefs about one's gender ideology and how one experiences life in practice, in the relationships between partners and in the presentation of how motherhood is 'done' in relation to others and wider society.

1.3 Summary of key theoretical framework

This study is built around the twin pillars of women's relationship with work and motherhood. The theoretical framework therefore pivots on issues of the intergenerational transmission of values, issues of identity and how they intersect with

dominant 'cultural scripts' about motherhood (Miller 2005, p.11). The intergenerational transmission of values and behaviours concerning work and work-life balance implies the need to consider how continuity and change are mediated through the mother-daughter relationship. At the core of this issue is the question posed by Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg (1994, p.1) 'how are we to study individuals in change, and not only the change of discourse'? This first prompts the need to understand the changing social context of work and working motherhood because substantial changes have occurred over the lifetime of the mothers and daughters in this sample that could imply a dislocation between the daughters' expectations and the influence of their mother's experiences. Changes evident in the models and nature of work, attitudes towards women and mothers working and in the legislative context are discussed in Chapter Two. One reflection of the profound nature of the changes is the switch in emphasis in the waves of feminist thinking between these generations. Second Wave liberal and socialist feminism's emphasis on equality at work and questioning women's primary responsibility in the domestic sphere was contemporary with the generation of mothers in this study being at the beginning of their careers, whereas Third Wave feminism's emphasis on individual identity and freedom of sexual expression was contemporary with the generation of daughters in this study (Lorber 2010).

Turning to issues of identity, the research findings prompted me to theorise a new definition that seemed to describe aptly this sample of career women and encompass their identities as both workers and mothers. The foundation stone of my thinking about identity was the argument proffered by many (such as Chodorow 1978; Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg 1994; Crompton 2006) that notions of motherhood impinge upon most adult women because the association between femininity and motherhood applies at the level of identity. Himmelweit and Sigla (2004) defined social identity in the context of work and motherhood as 'what I feel like doing' (in my roles as worker and mother) because of 'the kind of person I am'. In order to define 'the person I am' more clearly, I drew on psycho-social researchers Bjerrum Nielsen's and Rudberg's notion of 'gendered subjectivity' (1994, p.92). That is, the idea that gender and individuality are both aspects of 'who we are' and that our desires and expectations are both socially and personally motivated and subject to change. Another building block for my definition of identity was the argument put by Bailey (1999) that women's identities are refracted through the prism of their primary preoccupations as they move through the life course. Therefore the working definition of identity I constructed was 'dynamic gendered subjectivity'. That is, what the 'I' feels like doing because it fits with a sense of self in these circumstances.

I now focus on the cultural scripts of motherhood, defined throughout to mean ‘collective stories of discernible groups in wider society, which provide the contours of the available, and importantly, acceptable cultural scripts’ (Miller 2005, p.11).

Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg (1994) theorised that some of the cultural expectations that form part of our identity display more inertia than others, such as the traditional model of motherhood. Other elements of continuity are found in the resilient notions of maternal guilt felt about mothering well enough (Parker 1995; Blair-Loy 2003; Christopher 2012). Elements of change in the cultural context of motherhood for the generation of daughters in comparison to their mothers were evident in the emergence of ideas characterising intensive mothering (Hays 1996), defined as child-centric, expert guided mothering and echoed by the recent popularity amongst some of attachment parenting that prioritises close physical attachment between the mother and child for prolonged periods of time. Two other strong contemporary cultural notions of motherhood were described by Baraitser (2009) as equipping your children for life’s competition and by Thomson *et al.* (2011, p.277) as the ‘intensification of responsibility’ which both describe a tendency for middle-class mothers in particular to intervene and spend more time with their children with the aim of improving their life chances to meet inflated parental expectations. The effect of these cultural scripts about motherhood is to establish the idea that there is a right and wrong way to mother, which has an obvious link to feelings of maternal guilt. Also good mothering becomes linked to the physical presence of the mother, which is challenging to a mother with a demanding career. These ideas are particularly pertinent to intergenerational research with its focus on personal biographies (Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg, 1994; Lawler 2000; Thomson *et al.* 2011) and the way these intersect with cultural and psycho-social expectations of mothering.

1.4 Contribution of thesis

It has only recently become possible to research the adult daughters of a significant cohort of mothers who reached senior positions in their careers because the large cohort of women who entered SOC 1 and 2 careers in the 1970s and 1980s tended to have their children in the 1980s and 1990s. Consequently this research makes a timely, original contribution in comparing qualitatively the views of mothers and their daughters on work and the impact of motherhood on work. This thesis also addresses the gap in research focusing on the aspirations and motivations of a generation of daughters who have grown up with mothers who have or had a successful career and worked on average of at least 32

hours a week, contrasting their views with those of their mothers. Contributions specific to the findings are presented below.

1.5 Structure of thesis

Chapter 2 locates the research in the context of existing literature. It starts with a largely quantitative and policy related account of the changing patterns over time in the employment of women, with particular reference to mothers employed in professional and managerial roles, and social attitudes towards working mothers and working hours. This chapter then acknowledges and explores the evidence that the availability of legal rights and different ways of working does not necessarily mean behavioural change. Factors considered are the persistent gendered associations between motherhood and domestic responsibility, the relationship between choice and the options available within organisational careers and the nature of the changing role of men. Sociological and psycho-social theory on identity, motherhood and work is then explored with particular focus on the practical and emotional complexity that surrounds the everyday project of motherhood. The focus is then turned on inter-generational transmission of values about work and motherhood and examines the body of research that explores the effect that mothers working hours and career experiences have upon their children.

Chapter 3 discusses the rationale for the selection of narrative, biographical accounts as the method most appropriate to the aims of this research. The particular complexities of intergenerational research are discussed, drawing on Brannen (2004), because of their relationship with time. Participants' views are affected by how the present shapes their telling of the past and the interpretive contexts available according to their position in the generational hierarchy. The role of memory is explored (Kuhn 1995) as an interpretive and generative act that can be revealing about the present and the teller of the family story. Intergenerational research is also discussed as a means of illuminating change in the social context as well as individuals and relationships in change (Thomson *et al.* 2011). Value transmission can be at the unconscious level or simply remain unspoken so biographical narratives are used to draw out subconscious themes by encouraging participants to tell their stories and be self-reflective about their meaning and significance. In terms of the analysis, my approach is informed by the argument of Miles and Huberman (1994) that the process of analysis starts with the approach to data collection and continues through the coding of the data and the thinking that takes place during the process of writing. The aspect of the research analysis specifically concerned with the

coding of the data is informed by, rather than applying, Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Chapter 4 examines mothers' and daughters' reflections on the outcomes of combining motherhood with work and investigates the accounts of mothers on their perception of the positive and negative effect their working lives had upon their daughters. Their accounts are triangulated with the views their daughters express about the impact on them of growing up with a mother with a successful career. Most saw work and motherhood as interconnected parts of their identity and did not depict work and family life in opposition to each other. All the mothers experienced difficulties and challenges in managing their work and family life and two different types – 'Pragmatic' and 'Idealistic' – emerged in terms of their attitudes toward managing both. These terms are suggested as alternatives to the commonly used terms – 'Maximisers' and 'Satisficers' coined by Crompton and Harris (1998) - because they are less suggestive of fixed identities and of motherhood and work being binary opposites. These attitudes to managing life and work are linked to the mothers' sense of the kind of mothers they want to be. By contrast, a key finding is that the concerns of the mothers were not mirrored back by the vast majority of their daughters. The daughters reported feeling comfortable with their experience of growing up with a mother with a career and expressed some specific benefits. These findings align with quantitative research from the US and UK that looked at the impact of working hours on adolescent's perceptions of various aspects of well being and outcomes (Bianchi 2000; Galinsky 1999; Mendolia 2014). The exceptions to this finding are also discussed. This chapter also demonstrates the link between mothers who had a 'Pragmatic' attitude to parenting and the egalitarian parenting strategies of their partners. The accounts of mothers show that having partners who took an egalitarian role substantially mitigated feelings of compromise or stress.

Chapter 5 considers whether the daughters aspired to emulate their mother's career success and explores the career ambitions of the generation of daughters in terms of the type and level of careers they want, the hours they want to work and what work means to them. Complex interplay is evident between social and individual factors as argued by the work of Crompton and Harris (1998). A key finding is that the mothers are shown to be most often the primary influence, on their daughter's choices. This influence was transmitted both directly through actions and verbal encouragement (Moen 1997; Lawler 2000; Walkerdine *et al.* 2001; McGinn *et al.* 2015) and indirectly through the modelling of successful careers (Woodfield 2007; McGinn *et al.* 2015). In triangulating the accounts of daughters with their mothers it became clear that many daughters mirror the language

used by their mothers to describe what they want from work and that many aspire to satisfying careers. However, a key contribution is that, in most cases, neither mothers nor daughters expressed a desire to 'get to the top'. This is relevant to the public and academic debates about women attaining senior leadership positions (Harris 2003; Lanning 2013; Wolf 2013). A related issue is the prevalent feeling of the mothers that their daughters lacked confidence and that this could impede their careers. The link between those daughters who identified strongly with their fathers and more overtly expressed ambition is also noted. Although most of the daughters who did not have children aspired to the kind of fulfilling and enjoyable careers their mothers had, this chapter also examines the view of a minority of daughters who wanted to reduce their working hours.

Chapter 6 addresses the question of how the daughters' *anticipation* of having children affects their career choices. Most started work with a strong sense of personal agency, fostered by their mothers (O'Brien and Fassinger 1993; Procter and Padfield 1998). Nineteen out of the 22 daughters without children were either actively or vaguely thinking about becoming mothers and how this would impact upon their working lives. The rhetoric of choice is embedded in the daughters' accounts of what they wanted to do and also who they wanted to be. Their identity is in flux and, as argued by Bailey (1999), refracted through their primary preoccupations. This is illustrated by evidence of the fall off in confidence that they can get to the top of their professions (Coffman and Neuenfeldt 2014). Also the working daughters are influenced by watching the effect of having children on other women in the workplace, corroborating the work of Gatrell (2008). Many felt conflicted about the possibility of combining a demanding career with motherhood whilst simultaneously hoping that their partners will make an egalitarian contribution. This chapter explores the views and influences upon the minority who are planning to continue to work full-time or close to full-time and the slim majority who were anticipating working part-time. Those who expected to work part-time lack knowledge about possible opportunities for flexible or autonomous work. This underpins their belief that they will have to make a binary choice between part-time and full-time work. The influence of the mothers' experience is shown to be waning as the influence of peers and work colleagues rises. However, some mothers did directly, verbally encourage their daughters' in their career aspirations. These mothers tended to have liberal feminist views about the importance of work and not taking disproportionate responsibility for the domestic sphere. Moreover, the mothers' modelling of combining work with motherhood was also influential. However, in many cases, neither their own positive views of being mothered by a successful working woman (who often worked long hours) nor the influence of the mother was resilient enough to withstand the powerful influence of

contemporary cultural scripts about what constitutes good motherhood (Blair-Loy 2003; Stone 2007; Thomson *et al.* 2011; Christopher 2012).

Chapter 7 focuses on the 'daughter mothers' who had at least one child under 5 and contrasts their views with those of the daughters anticipating that they will become mothers. In common with the older generation of mothers, most see work and motherhood as interwoven and interconnected parts of their identity (Garey 1999). Their attitudes to mothering were also either 'Pragmatic' or 'Idealistic'. This chapter considers the accounts given of the participants' initial decisions about how to work after first-time motherhood, in terms of the characteristic involvement of their partners as supporters and approvers of the decision the mothers make. There was resurgence at this stage in the influence of their mothers (the grandmothers) as theorised by psycho-social researchers such as Baraitser (2008) and Stone (2012). The daughters drew heavily on the emotional and practical support of the grandmothers. Grandmothers with liberal feminist views particularly influenced their daughters' views on the value of egalitarian parenting and the importance of a satisfying working life. However, other influences are shown to be stronger, particularly the gendered associations between motherhood and domestic labour and contemporary cultural script emphasising intensive responsibilities. As was the case for daughters without children, dominant cultural scripts about needing to 'be there' (Faircloth 2013) underpinned the decisions of most about combining motherhood with work and a small majority decided to significantly cut their working hours. This chapter concludes by exploring the view over time taken by the grandmothers in observing how their daughters' experience of combining work and motherhood was different from their own.

Chapter 8 concludes by summarising the research findings in answer to the research questions. Thinking about whether the daughters aspire to emulate the career success of their mothers this chapter pulls together the ways in which the mothers' were the primary influence over the early career paths of the daughters. Neither most mothers nor daughters talked about 'getting to the top'. The chapter discussed the 'quiet ambition' demonstrated by the mothers and the implications of this in conjunction with the view of the mothers that many of their daughters lack self-confidence. The chapter then turns to the question of how the daughters were influenced in the way they thought they would combine motherhood and work. The key, surprising finding is that even though the vast majority of the daughters felt that it had been fine, and positive in some ways, to have a mother who worked long hours out of the home in a career she found satisfying, the majority planned substantially to reduce their working hours when they had children. The

explanation for this finding is not shown to be a rejection of their mothers' working hours. Instead it relates to how they felt about motherhood, the strong influence of gendered assumptions and contemporary cultural scripts and the lack of perceived examples of satisfying flexible career paths. Finally, the chapter explores the implications of these findings for mothers and daughters, partners in parenting, workplaces and social policy in order to challenge the gendered social norms that lie behind continuing gender inequality in work and family life. Recommendations are made that may help in facilitating more positive feelings about and experience of work life balance amongst women and men.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This research is situated on the border between work and family life and explores the relationships between individuals, their social experience and their emotional and cultural views. It draws on both sociological and psychosocial theories of gender, identity, agency and structure and the emotional complexity built into the negotiations women experience within workplaces and within relationships because of the anticipation and reality of motherhood.

Section 2.1 starts by examining largely quantitative and policy related research on the changing pattern of mothers' employment with an emphasis on professional and managerial careers. Changes in the attitudes of and towards working mothers and towards working hours are also considered. In section 2.2, an analysis of theories of gender identity, motherhood and work is examined by focusing on the generation of daughters who do not have children as well as those who do; followed by an exploration of perspectives on work-life balance. Section 2.3 considers the perception of choice experienced by women both in anticipation of and in the state of motherhood drawing upon key concepts such as Hochschild's (1983) work on emotion management and Thomson *et al.*'s (2011) work highlighting the practical and emotional complexity that surrounds the everyday project of motherhood. Section 2.4 brings back the threads of the argument about the formation of gender subjectivity and examines the literature on the intergenerational transmission of values about work and motherhood, juxtaposing this with scholarship on individual agency.

2.1 Changing patterns of mothers' employment in career roles

Once it is recognised that the present has to be studied within the perspective of time, it becomes very important for sociologists to have at their disposal basic descriptive information, in terms of the question they are investigating about the present'. (Thompson 1981, p.290)

With this thought in mind, this section outlines evidence of the changing context for the employment of mothers for the different generations of women who are the subject of this thesis.

2.1.1 *Combining work and motherhood*

The social context in which decisions are made about working motherhood is distinctly different for the mothers' generation in contrast to that of their daughters. The frame for decision-making of mothers starting work in the 1970s and 1980s was about working or

being a stay at home mother. Their daughters' choices are being made in the different context of more mothers working than ever before. Looking at the proportion of women returning to work within one year of childbirth; 24% returned to work in 1979, 45% in 1988 and 67% by 1996 (Walker *et al.* 2001). Moreover, the gap in employment rates between women with or without dependent children has narrowed to 0.8% in contrast to 5.8% in 1996 (ONS 2011b).

Turning to mothers in full-time work, the proportion of women returning to full-time work within a year of having a baby was 5% in 1979 (Callender *et al.* 1997). By 2010, the proportion of mothers with dependent children in full-time work had risen to 29% (ONS 2011b). Full-time is defined as more than 30 hours per week. These figures do not break down the occupational level. These startling changes have prompted researchers such as McRae to comment that women have 'signalled a strong intention to remain in paid work with only minimal disruptions for childcare' (McRae 2003, p.321). McRae's longitudinal study adds weight to her observations because she is able to evidence the behaviour of the same cohort of women over different points in time. McRae's study is of particular relevance to this thesis because her sample of almost 1,000 working mothers had their first child in 1988 and because she breaks down her findings by the class of their own occupation. McRae's sample breaks out those working continuously full-time or mostly full-time between 1988 (their first pregnancy) and 1999 and shows that 83% of these working mothers had occupations classified in their own right as Social Class 1 and 46% Social Class 2 (2003, p.324). This demonstrates a strong tendency amongst this generation of career women to combine motherhood with working full time.

Focusing now on the daughters' generation there is evidence that shows that this trend towards women combining high employment positions with motherhood is strengthening. Joshi (2002) showed that over 50% of graduates born in 1970 who had become mothers by the age of 33 had returned to employment within a year of their first birth. 50% of graduate women with dependent children were working in careers classified as high skill in 2013 (ONS 2013c). To put this figure into context, the same data shows that 53% of all men (with or without children) occupy high skill levels jobs. One way of looking at these trends is to say that they argue for growing equality between men and women in high level jobs even when workers are also mothers. However, it is also true that female graduates are much more likely to work part-time than male graduates, the figures being 32% and 8% respectively (ONS 2013c).

Mothers in high employment positions are also more likely than other women to outsource child care to people outside the family, with around 15% of managerial /professional women in the UK employing a child-minder, nanny or au-pair and around 35% using nurseries (Wolf 2013, p.77). Wolf points out that there is an economic imperative, albeit a culturally constructed one, to work full-time to afford childcare and also entertainment, holidays and home help – ‘the things that make it easier to combine going to work with a nice home and enjoyable leisure time’ (p.32). This suggests a self-perpetuating circle in which the demands of a career bring with it the costs of buying support in the domestic sphere that, in turn, fuels a need for the income a demanding career can bring. Another economic factor that may influence full-time or close to full-time commitment to work amongst this cohort is divorce either because of an increased imperative to earn or because financial security brings with it more freedom to make the choice to divorce. McRae’s longitudinal study of women working 10 years after the birth of their first child in 1988 found that 26% of those working continuously full-time had experienced marital disruption compared to 8% of those working continuously part-time (2003 p.324-6). Conversely, research using the Millennium Cohort Study looking at whether couples with young children are more likely to split up when the mother is the main or equal earner found no link between this and destabilised relationships (Kanji and Schober 2014).

The figures quoted above can be interpreted as evidence of progress towards gender equality. Lanning (2013) looks at the same high achieving cohort differently and asserts that the focus on achievement at work masks the difficult trade-offs that women in particular make when they become mothers. Lanning points to the lack of affordable childcare and the findings of qualitative research that ‘views on motherhood and gender norms are plural, complex and ambiguous’ (2013, p.4). This point is underlined by commentary in the media from individual high achieving women such as lawyer Miriam González Duránte:

While men are able to toy with unlimited options, we still face a series of stark choices...if we have a job, we are portrayed as just “part-time mums”, and sometimes even as bad parents. (González Duránte 2013)

The notion of a working mother somehow being a bad mother is culturally resilient, not least because framing working motherhood as either/or choice between work and the home is a trope often amplified by the media (Hadfield *et al.* 2007). This leads to the need to consider women’s attitudes to balancing work and home and how that changed across the mother and daughter generations spanned by this study.

2.1.2 *Changing attitudes to working motherhood*

Overall, as has been widely noted, attitudes towards working motherhood have changed considerably. The British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey has measured responses to the gender separation of roles over time. In 1984, 43% agreed that ‘a man’s job is to earn the money, a woman’s job is to look after the home’ and by 2012 only 13% agreed (Scott and Clery 2013). McRae demonstrated that the attitudes of working mothers who work full-time or close to full-time vary from those who work part-time or not at all. 92% of those in her sample who worked full-time disagreed with the statement ‘women can’t combine a career and children’ in comparison to 88% of those working mostly full-time, 71% of those working continuously part-time, 69% of those working mostly part-time and showing the sharpest fall to 55% with those who were not economically active (2003, p.327). This demonstrates that a significant majority of working mothers, irrespective of their level of participation in paid work, feel that it is possible to combine a career –rather than just work- with motherhood.

These attitudinal changes are linked with Second Wave feminism. Liberal feminists such as Steinem, who founded the National Women’s Political Caucus in the US campaigned for legal reform (the Equal Rights Amendment 1972) to secure equal rights within marriage and economic opportunity. Socialist feminists such as Rowbotham, Wainwright and Segal’s seminal book, *Beyond the fragments* (1979) argued that across the democratic political spectrum women should unite to campaign against cultural and economic discrimination against women. The views expressed by these and other feminists were influential in the 1970s and 1980s when the mothers’ generation, who are the subject of this study, were in education and starting work. The frame of reference for thinking about work for this generation of mothers was about obtaining equality with men. This is important to this thesis because of the argument made by Mannheim (1952) in distinguishing between passive and active generations. Members of active generations are argued to consciously represent themselves by referring to the collective experience of their generation rather than just their individual experience. Individual middle class women, who were influenced by liberal feminism’s objectives to achieve female equality in the workplace and who therefore considered how their actions impacted upon society’s impressions of women in general, are examples of members of an active generation.

However, there are persistent reservations about whether mothers should work full-time when their children are under school age. BSA data showed that 37% of 18-35 year olds believe that a male breadwinner with a part-time working mother model is preferable,

which is a lower percentage than the 39% of 56-65 year olds who shared this belief (Scott and Clery 2013). McRae (2003) echoed this caveat in the progress of gender attitudes by pointing out that 48% of mothers continuously employed full-time reported that their husbands/partners were only happy for them to work if their employment fitted in with family life. This shows that implicit assumptions about the woman's responsibility for the family remain a concern for women in paid employment.

This data chimes with the theory of Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg (1994) that aspects of gendered subjectivity such as traditional models of motherhood are particularly persistent and that many of our motivations are unconscious and individual as well as socially influenced and are therefore unlikely to be passed down between the generations in a linear fashion. These attitudes co-exist with, and could be driving, a shift to part-time working amongst some women in professional and managerial jobs amongst the generation of daughters who are the subject of this thesis.

2.1.3 Changing behaviour and attitudes to full-time working

Being successful at work is often correlated with long working hours for professionals (Harkness 2003). However, there is growing evidence that some women in professional and managerial jobs are working part-time. British Medical Association data shows that in 2012, 38% of female hospital consultants were working part-time (almost 5400) versus 6% of men (BMA 2013). The TimeWise foundation, a social enterprise organisation promoting flexible working, recently published the Part Time Power List of 50, mainly female, business leaders who are working part-time (2013). Moreover, the language used in public debate is changing from full-time versus part-time work to flexible working. The Right to Request flexible working was introduced in 2003 (*Employment Act 2002*) and was extended by the Coalition Government in 2014 to apply to all workplaces and employees (GOV.UK 2014). Survey data from 2013 indicates that 63% of workplaces have extended this 'right to request' to all employees (CIPD 2012). Despite the growth in the availability of flexible working, opportunities to work flexibly are still limited which suggests that what many women would prefer to do is not what they are able to do. Project 28-40, research focusing on the experience of women in the workplace interviewed some 23,000 women of whom nearly 80% worked full-time and over 50% were in mid level, senior level management or professional roles. Almost 60% of women surveyed felt it was very important to them to have time to take the lead role in caring for family members but only a relatively small number, just over 4,000, were working flexibly (PWC 2014). Given the age of the participants it is likely that family members they are caring for are dependent

children. This foregrounding of flexible working is important because it changes the frame of reference from part-time work (which has always been particularly associated with mothers) to a right applicable to men and women which may, in turn, herald a cultural shift in attitudes. However, a wealth of evidence demonstrates that, despite both legislation and rhetoric from government and employers about flexible working practices, both flexible and part-time working comes with penalties in terms of job satisfaction, demotions and earnings. Gatrell's qualitative research amongst women working part-time in managerial and professional roles found that those with the experience and qualifications to progress professionally were often offered a choice between full-time work or part-time in a demoted position (2008, pp.129-30). Other evidence showed that 25% of women in highly skilled jobs downgraded professionally when they switched to part-time work and that this figure rose to 43% amongst those who changed employers when moving to a part-time role (Connolly and Gregory 2008). This demonstrates that many professional women face difficult decisions if they choose to try and cut their hours and this may result in some remaining in full-time employment. Stone's analysis of why 54 high achieving career mothers in the US left their jobs also discussed the view of many that part-time work was effectively impossible in their role, that applications to work part-time were refused and the single most frequent complaint about part-time work 'was that it wasn't' (2007, p.89). These women experienced the difficulties of having to compress the responsibilities of a demanding work role into fewer paid hours. All of these factors meant they were not getting what they wanted in terms working less which led to the decision to leave. The approach of cutting hours slightly had its penalties too. Crompton and Lyonette (2008) conducted qualitative interviews with women in the banking sector and found that women perceived that even moving to a four-day week impacted negatively on promotion opportunities.

Despite progress in the availability of flexible working it is argued that career roles in organisational life are still underpinned by structures and expectations that reflect a male-breadwinner model of linear progress and presenteeism (Drew and Murtagh 2005). The prevalence of this model was argued, in Durbin *et al.*'s (2010a) study of women managers and professionals who were working part-time or flexibly, to influence the undervaluing by employers of the contribution made in terms of output in reduced hours. Reduced hours were also shown by Durbin *et al.* (2010a) to impact poorly on promotions and employees ability to progress. Employers tend to believe that cutting the amount of time workers are physically present in the workplace, either by working part-time or flexibly, demonstrates a relative lack of commitment to employers and therefore compromises opportunities for promotion or roles which are satisfying. The persistence of these

assumptions is evidenced by the experience of women discussed above and studies of organisations such as Lewis's (2010) analysis of the development of work-family balance policies in the UK in the 1990s and 2000s. Gatrell *et al.* (2014) argued that that the persistence of these ideas about commitment to work are gendered and that it is assumed that mothers are less likely to be engaged at work than women without children or men. This finding is underlined by the self-reports of women who often feel they are more productive and focused in comparison to when they worked part time (PWC 2014). The evidence therefore suggests that if a mother in a high skill job is able to afford to and wants to choose to work fewer hours then the penalties mean that there are complex trade-offs to make and they may not achieve what they intend.

Turning our attention to women who are not parents, which is relevant to the daughters' generation in this study, the Project 28-40 research discussed above found 81% of those who did not have children felt having children would affect their career progression and 76% agreed that they felt nervous about the impact having children would have on their career. This was in the context of most also saying they were motivated to continue and progress in their careers (PWC 2014). This indicated a level of low expectations amongst women about their ability to successfully combine work with motherhood. The report, however, did not state how many in their sample were without children.

A possible implication of these arguments is that women are moving away from the role of 'ideal worker' who works long hours (Williams 2000, p.145). An interesting question is whether this desire to work fewer hours applies to those who are in a position to reach high levels within their chosen careers. Vere's (2007) research in America found that that college-educated women born in 1978/9 were supplying fewer hours to the labour market than their predecessors born in 1972/3. This finding was unique to college-educated women. He ruled out demand-driven factors because women's cumulative labour income to age 27 had risen and increased hours spent in education accounted for only one sixth of the decline in hours given to the labour market. He also ruled out increasing fertility. Therefore Vere suggested that this fall could be attributable to these women being less willing to supply more hours to the labour market 'at any given market wage' (2007, pp.826-7). What Vere's research leaves unexplored is the reasons for this decline in hours which could be related to motherhood, a reaction against the working hours of their mothers or simply wanting more time for themselves. Project 28-40 (PWC 2014) showed that, 49% of senior and 53% of junior/mid management women (who formed the majority of the 23,000 strong sample) did not want the lifestyle and hours of senior people in their organisation.

Aspirations, however, are not the same as behaviour and it does seem that women in professional and managerial roles tend to work full-time. Jacobs and Gerson's cross national quantitative study of working time and families showed that long hours of 40 hours plus per week are often taken for granted by professional and managerial couples (2004). Evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study suggested that mothers who are the main earners are most likely to persist in full time employment and that these main earners made up 25% of all mothers who work full-time continuously in the first 5 years of their children's life. Those in full-time work were also much more likely to have jobs classified as SOC 1 and 2 (Kanji 2011). It may therefore be interpreted that for these women work is experienced as a necessity rather than, or as well as, a choice.

It is therefore relevant to research the views of the (under) graduate daughters' generation about hours they expect to work, how many working hours they feel comfortable with and whether they feel able to make any choice about the hours they work. An important backdrop to studying women's views about the hours they are able to and want to work is the influence of the legislative changes over time affecting maternity leave. This will be discussed briefly in the next section.

2.1.4 Legislative changes

The cohort of women starting work in the 1970s and 1980s did so in a changing legislative context. The Equal Pay Act of 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act both came into force in 1975. However, relatively few women would have benefited from these rights. The Equal Pay Act stipulated that 'a woman is to be regarded as employed on like work with men if her work and theirs is of a broadly similar nature' (Equal Pay Act 1970). This obviously did not protect women doing jobs different from men. The rights of working women were expanded in the Equal Pay Act in 1984 to recognise equal pay for work of equal value and, later, to give part-time workers the same rights as those working full-time (Part-time Directive 1994).

Legislative changes for working mothers started with the introduction of Statutory Maternity Leave in 1973 but again with limited benefits. Women were offered the right to return to the same job with the employer for whom they had worked for 6 months before becoming pregnant. Those starting work in the 2000s benefited from successive increases in the paid maternity leave entitlement, the addition of paid paternity leave and, from 2003, the right to request reduced hours or flexible working when an adult employee has dependent children. The Coalition Government took further steps in this direction by passing The Children and Families Bill in 2013 which gives fathers the right to share

(unpaid) maternity leave with mothers and to take unpaid leave to attend up to two antenatal appointments. This indicates a sea-change in the acknowledgement by UK governments of the joint responsibility of working parents and that parenthood is often accompanied by the need or desire to change working arrangements. However, this still compares poorly to the more generous provision for shared, paid maternity and paternity leave in the Nordic countries such as Sweden where 480 days leave are offered at 80% of salary. In addition, as already discussed, the availability of these rights does not necessarily lead to women, or indeed fathers, taking advantage of them. Swedish legislation allowed fathers to share leave in 1974 but take-up was small (only 6%) leading to a change in the law in 1995 to give each parent an allocation of 30 days leave that only they could use, doubled to 60 days in 2002 (Daswani 2014). This indicates that social change can be slow and can require directive legislative change to accelerate acceptance. Moreover, the availability of these 'rights' can be argued to underpin a sense of being able to choose that is not necessarily reflected by what people actually do (Thomson *et al.* 2011).

Before considering the literature about choice, it is necessary to establish the links between gender identity, motherhood and work that are relevant across the generations spanned by this thesis.

2.2 Gender identity, motherhood and work

Scholarship on gender identity and how it intersects with motherhood and the workplace is crucial to the theoretical framework of this thesis. McRobbie (2007) conceptualised the post-feminist contract where the right to be treated as the genderless worker is traded against the right to assert sexual difference. Conversely, Crompton (2006) concluded that there is no inevitable correlation between female employment and the evaporation of traditional gender roles because ways in which childcare is negotiated can either dismantle or reinforce these roles. What many agree upon is that despite the sweeping changes in the patterns of women's employment over the last 50 years there still exists a deeply engrained association between femininity and responsibility for the domestic sphere, particularly children. It has long been argued that women's sense of identity is interwoven with their relationships (Gilligan 1982) and that the idea and experience of motherhood is particularly powerful because 'the child is the source of the last *remaining, irrevocable unchanging, primary* relationship' (Beck 1992, p118, his italics). Butler's influential work *Gender Trouble* (1990) explained this association by expressing gender as something we 'do' or perform in keeping with long established social norms and shaped

by habits formed in childhood. The idea that women without children factor motherhood into their decision-making is framed by the argument that motherhood is seen as part of the feminine role. Chodorow controversially argued (1978, p.33) that women have a 'psychological need to maintain aspects of traditional roles'. Chodorow built on object-relations theory that emphasised the primacy of inter-subjectivity in relationships and applied this to mothers and daughters, arguing that their relationship in early childhood is crucial to the daughters' developing gender identity. There are acknowledged issues with the elision of motherhood and femininity because not all women want to be mothers. However, her insight that the wish to be a mother is one of the more persistent strands of female subjectivity is relevant to my research.

Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg (1994), writing in a Scandinavian context, built upon the work of Chodorow (*ibid.* 1978) and Butler (*ibid.* 1990) and examined the process through which cultural discourse stimulates adjustment to self-identity. They focused on the profound changes in the traditional social definitions of gender roles that are associated with the rise of working women, many of whom are mothers. A key element of their theory is the acknowledgement that changing definitions of and conflicts within gender roles do not mean that gender identity 'dissolves' (1994 p.8) or loses its psychological significance. They point to the argument of psychoanalytic theory that 'socialisation..."works" *through* its contradictions –at the same time as those contradictions make change feasible' (1994, p.3.). They further argue that girls are both socially and personally motivated and that each generation of women adjusts to new social roles in a way that influences the formation of their identity on both conscious and unconscious levels. This theory is described as 'gendered subjectivity' (1994, p.92) and leads to their suggestion that the desire to be a mother is 'quite unimpaired by the fact that so many women today are not at all content with being *just* a mother' (1994, p.8).

Turning to the impact of working upon identity, as discussed in 1.3, Bailey (1999) interviewed 30 pregnant women and theorised that women's identities are refracted through the prism of their primary preoccupations as they move through the life course. She described the six key different aspects of female identity as mothering identity, the self and the body, the working person, practices of the self, relational self and experience of space and time. Little has been written, prior to this thesis, about the way highly skilled working women conceptualise their own identities. Laney *et al.* (2014) interviewed 30 women holding faculty status in US colleges or universities and with at least one child under 18 at home. The women were aged 34-54 and 27 of them were married. Their conclusion was that 'motherhood emerged to expand the self personally, relationally,

generationally and vocationally' (*ibid.* p1245). This sample of female academics are not equally representative of all professional women but do offer an interesting example of professional working women absorbing all their roles into their identities with different aspects come to the fore, depending upon their specific circumstances at the time. This suggests that the work of Bailey is applicable to the highly skilled working women who are the focus of this thesis. This research also supports the evidence discussed above that notions of motherhood impinge upon most women because the association between motherhood and femininity applies at the level of identity. Supporting evidence is also found in Gatrell's (2008) argument that considerations about combining a career with children influence choices made about professional careers by those who do not have children in anticipation of motherhood. She gave the example of medical students being guided to make decisions about their training regarding medical specialisation on the basis of being more family-friendly, saying they 'experience decisions being imposed upon them at a point before they were ready to make decisions about childbearing' (2008, p.3).

A qualitative study conducted in the US by Orrange (2002) also demonstrated that professionals were thinking about the potential impact of parenthood on their careers. Orrange interviewed students, in their mid-late 20s, well advanced in their courses in law and business and found asymmetry between the views of men and women in terms of how they hoped their family lives would be constructed. Most women wanted a 'strong form of egalitarianism', which Orrange described as fully sharing in career opportunities and handling family responsibilities (2002, p.292). However, some conveyed ambivalence about how realistic were their aspirations for the future because, unlike men, they were actively grappling with issues involving work and family life. They thought it was possible that their male partners may not want to share opportunities and responsibilities equitably with them. Orrange also found a sub-group of women, amongst this 'strong form of egalitarianism' typology, who entertained the possibility of remaining single as a consequence of their career ambitions (*ibid.* p.313). This research suggests that the generation of women starting work in the 2000s are sceptical about whether the more egalitarian approach to family life, that Crompton (2006) argued to be a more optimum model, will be achievable for them and that they are making choices accordingly.

Of course, it is inaccurate to assume that all women want to have children. ONS figures show that 1 in 5 women born in 1967 are now reaching menopause without having children (2013a). It is unlikely, however, that *all* these women planned not to have children. Hakim analysed 1970 survey data from the National Child Development Study and British Cohort study and found that only 8% of women sampled at the age of 42, and

12% of women sampled at the age of 30, had actively decided to remain childless (2005). Moreover, a discourse that competes with the notion that the anticipation of motherhood is a primary concern for young women derives from Beck's individualisation theory (1992) which privileges self-actualisation. This can lead women to choose not to have children or indeed to choose to regulate their commitment to work to pursue other interests. McRobbie reinforces this challenge by describing the emergence of a 'new sexual contract' offered to young women which asks them to 'come forward and make good use of the opportunity to work, to gain qualifications, to control fertility and earn enough to participate in the consumer culture' (2009, p.54).

Charting these theories above leads to the need to unpick attitudes to the impact of managing work and childcare that will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.1 *Work life balance*

The terminology used to describe work life balance is controversial because it is emotionally loaded and can imply a choice between two separate, equal and opposing pulls. Most of the literature is focused specifically on balancing work with dependent children, rather than with the other demands of life such as caring for elderly parents or pursuing interests. Lyonette and Crompton used the term 'work-life conflict' perhaps to more accurately describe the struggles people experience in their everyday lives (2007, p.283). They argued that mothers who are professional and managerial workers experience particularly high levels of work life conflict because they work long hours, tend to be in partnerships with men who also work long hours and yet the women are more likely to take the major responsibility for the childcare and domestic chores (Crompton and Lyonette 2008, pp.218-9). Other studies also suggest that long working hours also have an effect upon feelings of well-being. Kodz *et al.*'s comparison of wave 6 (1996) and wave 7 (1997) of the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) showed that women working long hours were at higher risk of mental distress than all other groups as evidenced by those scoring greater than 3 on the General Health Questionnaire. Those who claimed most distress were those who had worked long hours for more than a year and had partners (Kodz *et al.* 2003, pp.237-8). They point out that this is likely to be correlated to the evidence from the BHPS (wave 7) that the proportion of women working long hours who claim that their partner is mainly responsible for domestic chores is less than 20% for each of the 4 chores investigated. That is, cleaning, washing and ironing, grocery shopping and cooking (2003, p.234). This point about feelings of dissatisfaction about the sharing of caring is echoed by Crompton's finding that the lowest level of work-life conflict

is experienced by Norwegian parents who tend to share childcare and domestic chores (Crompton 2006). Crompton argues that 'making men more like women – that is individuals who routinely engage in both caring and market work is a necessary condition of achieving a true 'balance' between work and family life for men and women in dual earning societies (2006, p.217). Even when women did make changes to the way they work, this did not necessarily translate into solving work-family conflict. As Fagan *et al.* reported following qualitative interviews, 'some had personal autonomy to vary when and where they worked, and often felt their jobs were interesting and satisfying, but they still felt the stress of being squeezed for time' (Fagan *et al.* 2008, p.210). Mothers' experience of emotional stress about combining work with motherhood is commonly linked with maternal guilt. Maternal guilt is generally described in the literature (including Rich 1986; Blair-Loy 2003) as a common reaction of mothers to the cultural belief that holds women ultimately accountable for the development and wellbeing of their children. Rich suggested that the expectations of society encourage unrealistic standards that are hard to attain so feelings of guilt are fostered. Gatrell's (2005) qualitative study of 20 heterosexual partnerships argued that working mothers feel guilt because their work is in competition with their parenting, whereas men do not report this pressure. Overall, research into work-life balance illuminates emotional complexity at both individual and social levels.

The significance to my thesis is that the level of work-family conflict felt by the mother could affect the harmony of the household and be communicated to the daughter. If this conflict is related to unhappiness with the compromises made for work, or even having to work at all, it is possible that this will influence her daughter's perceptions of work. However, several longitudinal studies with large samples provide a convincing challenge to the notion that children of mothers who work are likely to experience mental distress. McMunn (2011) reported on her longitudinal study of participants in the Millennium Cohort Study looking at emotional symptoms, problems with conduct, hyperactivity and peer group relations and found that girls with mothers who were not in paid work in all 3 sweeps of the survey were six times more likely than other girls to exhibit behavioural problems. These differences were not explained by household income, level of mother's education or experience of depression in the mother. Galinsky's quantitative study in the US (1999) also found that working mothers experienced better health and fewer episodes of depression than stay-at-home mothers.

Arguments about the division of domestic labour cited above, although valid, have been argued to be somewhat reductive. Starting with the phrase work-life balance that dominates the academic literature Thomson *et al.* (2011) argued that the phrase is

inadequate because it fails to convey the 'practical, moral and interpersonal complexities involved' (*ibid.*, p.175). They contended instead that, in the spirit of the new sociology of work, more attention should be paid to the interaction between unpaid household labour and the market economy of paid work and consumption of consumer products and services (Pettinger 2005). I suggest that this line of reasoning could be taken further still and that our field of vision needs to be expanded to cover the 'emotion management' (Hochschild 1983, p.44) that comes with the negotiations that take place within relationships, within workplaces and within the heads of women who report their feelings of guilt and stress (*ibid.*, p.47). The next section focuses on the cultural context in which women make choices to balance work with motherhood.

2.3 Work, motherhood and the notion of choice

This discussion of the literature on choice takes as its start point the view of Giddens that human agency and social structure - the set of written and unwritten rules upon which actors draw - are inextricably linked and that the repetition of acts of individual agents reproduces the structure. Thus it is necessary to account for both social processes and human interaction (Giddens and Pierson 1998).

It is important to acknowledge that the rhetoric of choice is frequently played back by individual women and yet academics such as Stone, who studied why high flying career mothers leave their jobs in the US, argued that this notion of choice is illusory and contradicted by their lived experience.

Choice rhetoric...often had the effect of obscuring or rendering invisible to them the constraints they faced and under which their decisions were actually carried out. Women are indeed bombarded with messages of choice, but seeing structure is difficult when ideas and practices around mothering as well as professional work are taken for granted. (2007, p.114)

It is hard for individuals to appreciate structural barriers and therefore these need to be examined sociologically. Debates in terrestrial and electronic media are often couched in terms of every individual having the choice to be the kind of mother they want to be; to work or not to work or to work part-time. Williams suggested that the facile media depiction of choices obscures understanding of the complexity of women's motivations and ability to influence outcomes (Williams 2000). One of many of these 'facile' examples comes from *The Daily Telegraph's* report on the day after the announcement of the Coalition's policy of offering shared parental leave: 'Once yesterday's speech is forgotten, parents will no doubt continue to choose the work-life balance that best suits their circumstances' (Kirby 2012).

Women's failure to recognise the limitations of the choices available to them 'is testimony to the power of cultural belief systems and how deeply ingrained they are in our culture and individual psyches' (Stone 2007, p.269). Stone concluded that women are aware of the constraints they face but in the light of the messages they get from society, particularly other mothers, about the motherhood ideal and in the absence of alternative discourses it is hard to connect with just how constrained they are. Moreover, successful professional women tend, according to Stone, to have a strong sense of personal agency and this informs their perception of having choice. Hochschild's phrase 'a cultural cover-up' (1990, p.23) has resonance here as does her notion of 'emotion management' (Hochschild 1983, p.44) that adds to the argument about the complexity of choice. Hochschild's interactionist theory of emotion posits that, as well as having biological functions, emotions are socially shaped and subject to manipulation. She described the ideological strategies used to manage uncomfortable, even distressing emotions and applied this to the stresses involved in managing work, domestic roles and motherhood. Hochschild argued that women have reason to construct stories that protect themselves in social situations, such as managing 'the second shift' and the perceived judgment of other women (Hochschild and Machung 1990). Hochschild called this process a 'status shield' (*ibid.* p.163). The key question raised that has particular importance to this thesis is how much choice do women really have? This will be addressed in the next section.

2.3.1 *Lived experience and mothers' choices*

Contemporary developments in the way academics study motherhood seem to offer a richer and broader perspective on the complexities of negotiating work and motherhood by focusing on mothers' lived experiences; what mothers *do* and where and how they do it as well as what they are and how this intersects with what is reflected back to them by society.

The choices women make about fitting children around work is characterised by Thomson as an emotionally heightened topic that leads to reflexivity about identity, role and relationships with partners and with other women. Thomson posits that 'the juxtaposition of working and maternal identities can be productive of insights and reflexivity, yet it can also produce troubling feelings, defensive responses' (2011, p.191). The significance of this is that motivations behind choices made are emotionally complex as well as being practical responses to concerns about economic factors such what level of income a family unit requires. Moreover so-called practical constraints are also suggested to have emotional influences. Economic need is argued by Duncan (2006) to be, in part, a cultural

constraint because decisions about them are governed by other factors such as women's experience of intense and perhaps unexpected maternal feelings when they give birth that leads to a desire to be more home-based.

Many have argued that women grapple with many, complex push and pull factors when considering how to combine work with motherhood; between their own desires to be good mothers and good workers, the economic pull to earn and push of workplaces that do not flex well enough around their family responsibilities, and between work and family demands (Gatrell 2005, 2008; Stone 2007; Thomson *et al.* 2011). This is particularly an issue for 'middle-class women with careers [who have] a great deal to say about work and motherhood, experiencing the two as competing projects' (Thomson *et al.* 2011, p.175). Thomson *et al.* reported that many of the mothers they interviewed had spent their twenties establishing themselves in careers and 'associate employment with independence and good mothering' because they are earning for their child (2011, p.169). At the same time mothers can feel that they are not performing well enough as either employee or mother. Professional women in particular invoke a strong personal sense of perfectionism that they apply to work and motherhood. This exhibits itself in the positive and negative emotions expressed by Stone's interviewees who reported, in one case:

I give 100%. I was very, very good at what I did. But I can't give it in both places, and I wanted to be really, really good at being a mother. (2007, p.127)

As a worker, pressure comes from the 'setting of goals, targets and standards, and measuring human achievement against these, [which] is an integral feature of late modern society' (Gatrell 2008, p.12). It also comes from employers and women's own sense of what is needed to do the job. Stone's main conclusion was that for most of the professional women in her sample who ultimately quit, 'work, not family considerations were paramount and deciding factors' (2007, p.19). As a mother, social pressure is also coming from the contemporary trend towards 'intensive mothering', a concept first coined by Hays (1998) and developed and reconceptualised by Thomson *et al.*'s research on first time mothers as 'intensification of responsibility' (2011, p.277) to describe both the commercialisation of motherhood (the pressure to buy goods and the help of so-called experts ranging from tutors and coaches, writers on childcare, journalists and mothers writing blogs) and also 'the inflation of parental expectations and the proliferation of interventions aimed at improving children' (Thomson *et al.* 2011, p.277). They observed that this trend is an expression of the desire to help children become more competitive and it has also become an outlet for competition between women who are more home centred and those who work longer hours out of the home. Whilst these social factors

apply to most mothers, they are exacerbated by 'middle class anxiety expressing an increased perception of insecurity' (*ibid.*, p277). Baraitser has conceptualised modern motherhood as being played out in public in mothers' desire to mould an individual who stands out from other children (Baraitser 2009). Motherhood as a more public act also encompasses the use of social media such as Mumsnet (which claims to have 50 million monthly page views), Facebook and the fora offered by the commercial manufacturers of baby products. Social media can also be argued to facilitate comparison and competition. In this way, social expectations on a mother today may be seen as greater than those experienced by those who had their children in the 1970s and 1980s. Cultural pressures about 'doing' mothering and the public spaces in which these pressures are played out are important themes to this thesis.

Another key area to examine when considering the emotional complexity of decisions made about work and motherhood is the role of the partnership. As Thomson *et al.*'s (2011) qualitative research amongst a broad social group of mothers and daughters found, middle class mothers and grandmothers have much more than others to say about how work and education complicate their relationships.

2.3.2 *Negotiating shared parenthood*

The management of responsibilities between parents involves practical considerations; such as who in the domestic partnership is best placed to alter their working habits and hours or what maternity provision is offered by the employer, and emotional considerations; such as perceptions from within and without of one's identity as mother and worker.

The micro-politics through which domestic labour and childcare are shared, delegated and entrusted to others is important moral terrain in the contemporary politics of motherhood. (Thomson *et al.* 2011, p.194)

Hochschild's study of *The Second Shift* (1990) was based on interviews and observation of both men and women amongst 50 working couples living in California in the 1980s. This is contemporary with and therefore of particular relevance to many of the generation of mothers in this research. Her conclusions were that working women were absorbing most of the 'second shift' and that the implications of this for their emotional state of mind was based on their 'gender strategy' (1990, p.198). That is, how they chose to view and manage their own role in relation to that of their partners and, in turn, how well their strategies meshed with that of their partners whose views, on the whole, were slower to change from the traditional model of male breadwinner and female carer. Hochschild

argued that compromises and resultant strains were most evident in upper middle-class households facing the demands of two high-pressure careers. Those women who cut back on work despite their egalitarian aspirations and those who experienced marital conflict because of these competing demands often 'settled for containing their differences without, alas, resolving them' (*ibid.*, p.216). This had a cost, as discussed above, in terms of the 'emotion management' (Hochschild 1983, p.44) required both to maintain marital harmony and women's sense of gender identity.

Hochschild went on to observe that 'sharing the second shift improved a marriage *regardless* of what ideas either had about men and women's roles' (*ibid.*, p.221). Clearly there has been change since this research and there is now a trend towards more equality in the home. The time fathers spend caring for infants increased sevenfold between 1975 and 1997 from 15 minutes to 2 hours in the working day (Burgess 2011). Nearly half of the fathers interviewed by Ellison *et al.* (2009) said they would like to spend more time with their children and less time at work. Miller (2011) tempered these findings on the basis of her longitudinal interviews with 17 men whose partners were at the early stages of pregnancy. Many stated their commitment to being involved fathers before the birth and yet, one year after the birth, she found these intentions had not often translated into practice and that many prioritised their professional lives and roles as breadwinners over their caring responsibilities. She attributed this to practical issues such as men's typically superior earning power and the availability of flexible work. She also emphasised the low social value that is placed on 'women's work' and the reality of daily childcare. These men were mainly skilled workers and the study made no consistent reference to their partner's relationship with work so, whilst the findings are not directly relevant to my sample, it does provide a reminder of how intractable gender norms prove to be. The maturity of the debate around the involvement of fathers is demonstrated by the fact that men are now also getting mixed messages about equality. A 2013 report based on data from the National Survey of Families and Households in the US found that men who take on a greater share of traditionally female chores had less sex than men in more traditional relationships, even though there was no difference in perceived sexual satisfaction between the more egalitarian and traditional groups. This survey attracted much press coverage around the world despite the fact that the data was collected more than 20 years ago (Kornrich *et al.* 2013).

However, Hochschild's comment that 'a gender strategy of resisting the emotional and social work of the second shift is built into the very clockwork of male-dominated careers'

(1990, p.19) resonates still. Deputy Leader of the Coalition government, Nick Clegg commented that:

We need to tackle...the hidden prejudices, which still limit the choices of many men and women. And we need to create the same equal opportunities for both sexes to care as well as earn. Then we also need to challenge the ways in which many fathers are still pushed to see themselves as a breadwinner first and carer second. (Deputy Prime Minister's Office 2014)

In the questions that followed this speech, Clegg's wife succinctly underlined the point he was making about the persistence of social ideas that act as a barrier to equality. When she was asked how *he* was supposed to manage, Miriam sniffed: "No one would ask him how he balances it. For some reason, there is a sort of assumption that it is my role to balance it" (Turner 2014). The cultural script that is implicit here is the notion that it is the mother's responsibility, not the father's, to ensure her child is well cared for. The resilience of the notion of women as primary parent is also attested to by research showing that women take more responsibility for childcare (Breitenbach 2006) and the organising of care that is delegated to others (Doucet 2006). The debates about motherhood and work have mainly been conducted from the perspective of mothers and fathers; therefore it is timely to turn to the perspective of the children.

2.3.3 *Children of working mothers*

The body of research considering the effect upon children of combining motherhood and work is much thinner compared to that focused on the perspectives of mothers and fathers. However, several studies cumulatively argue that there is little evidence of damage that can be attributed to the working hours of mothers.

Galinsky (1999) interviewed over 1,000 children aged 8-18 in the US and asked them to grade their parents on a range of parenting skills. Only 10% said they wished their mothers would spend more time with them and having a working mother was never predictive of children's responses. However, 34% wished their mothers would be less tired and stressed after work. It is particularly relevant to my thesis that Galinsky's conclusion was that parents who were comfortable with their choices about working or not working were more responsive to their children than those who questioned their choices. This positively influenced how well their children fared on measures of social and emotional development and school success. A limitation of this research was that 74% rated their mothers positively and yet no explanation was offered for the remaining 26%. Mendolia (2014) worked with data from the British Youth Panel collected from 1994 to 2006 comparing women who worked fewer than 25 hours per week with those working

35 hours per week. She found that a greater number of hours worked made it no more likely that adolescents aged 11-15 would smoke or suffer more from problems with life-satisfaction or self-esteem. These findings were consistent across socio-economic groups. Similarly, Milkie *et al.* (2015) conducted a study in Canada, based on the Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Development Supplement, looking at the effects of their parents' investment of time on educational performance and behavioural and social well being, including delinquency. They separated out 12-18 year olds (n.778) from 3-11 year olds (n.1,605). They also addressed the time spent by mothers, father and both together and distinguished between 'accessible time' (when parents were present but not interacting with children) and 'engaged time'. They concluded that there was no significant relationship between mothers (or fathers) spending more time with their children and levels of academic achievement, behavioural or emotional problems for younger children. Perhaps surprisingly, they did find differences with adolescents. The amount of engaged time spent with the mother alone impacted upon their likelihood to be involved in delinquent behaviour and time spent with both parents together was related to better overall outcomes in terms of behavioural and emotional health. This is a particularly valuable study in pioneering an attempt to quantify the effects of the time spent with children. What it did not address is the difference between 'engaged time' and 'quality time' that was assessed by Galinsky (1999) to be strongly influential. Also it did not address mothers' influence when they are not physically present, for example being available online or by phone during working hours. Neither did Galinsky's study assess impact of the way mothers outsourced care or arranged their child's social interaction with others that was argued by Christopher (2012) to be important to the way employed mothers took responsibility for their children. Taken cumulatively however, all these studies make a powerful case that mothers who work are not compromising their children simply through the act of working. This is relevant to my thesis in providing a context for exploring a particular maternal target audience – those with successful careers. The final section now seeks to bring together the literature on the inter-generational transmission of values about motherhood and work and juxtaposes this with scholarship on individual agency.

2. 4 Intergenerational transmission of attitudes and values

Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg's theory described above shines an interesting light on how continuity of values is passed on inter-generationally between mothers and daughters whilst simultaneously accommodating social and cultural change. This work is a cornerstone of Thomson *et al.*'s *Making of Modern Mothers* (2011) in which mothers and

daughters are interviewed in order to answer questions about how the arrival of a new generation impacts upon an individual biography and re-works, re-articulates or creates family narratives. Their case study of 'Alex', a surgeon is particularly pertinent to this thesis. Despite many biographical differences between the lives of mother and daughter, largely driven by opportunities to work, there are also examples of continuity. Alex for example, equates her intention to rely upon others for help with childcare with her mother's assertion of 'a lack of maternal instinct' (2008, pp7-8). Both Alex and her mother emphasised that children 'survive' (*ibid.*, p.18) without being at the centre of their mother's lives. The mother illustrates the unconscious transmission of values in her comment that: 'you make your gravy like your mother made, there's things you don't realise' (*ibid.*, p.13). Their findings also illustrated the importance of paying close attention to the language used in describing everyday practice in order to arrive at judgements about the way in which mothers influence daughters and vice versa.

Commentators from the field of psychosocial research have theorised that having a child causes mothers to relive their relationship to their own mothers. This idea is well expressed by Stone (2012, p.147) who argued that 'the mother is a relational subject but doubly so: she inhabits two sets of relations transposed upon one another'. Stone explained that new mothers are prompted to reproduce their pasts because as infants they have schematised 'ways of *being with* the mother' (2012, p.8). However, daughters do not just reproduce the way they were mothered because, as Baraitser (2008) points out, she is more than just a daughter. Baraitser described maternal subjectivity as a fundamentally changed or transformed state (2008, p.52) rather than a repetition of the way one was mothered. This time of being entwined with the other and the all-consuming nature of being with young children, described from Baraitser's own experience as 'desperate days' (2009, p.19) are also the moments in which decisions of being made about work. Careers are associated with linear progression over time and the way in which maternity disrupts this is brought to life by the theories of Baraitser (2008). She argued that the constant disruption of the mothers' lives by the immediate demands of the child may leave the mother feeling she only dwells in the moment (*ibid.*, p. 80) and that her concerns about the future are focused not on herself but on the future of her child (p.43). This can disrupt a mother's ambitions to progress in her career. An example from the business world that confirms this is Sandberg's argument that one reason women hold themselves back in the workplace is because they 'leave before they leave' (2013, p.92) and pass on opportunities because they are anticipating motherhood. These ideas provide explanations for the barriers experienced in progress towards gender equality at work.

2.4.1 *Gender identity and the influence of mothers on aspirations for work*

Just as part of women's gender subjectivity is related to motherhood, it is also related to work. The link between self-concept and work role identity has its foundations in the work of Super who claimed that, 'in choosing an occupation one is, in effect, choosing a means of implementing a self-concept' (1957). Gottfredson's work on occupational choice placed individual choice in the context of the social and psychological influences that accrue up to the point of making that choice. She also emphasised the impressionistic nature of knowledge of occupations that means that choices are often a process of matching their sense of self with a vague impression of a work role. As she stated, 'occupational images deal almost exclusively with the lifestyle that occupation affords an incumbent and the type of person that she or she is' (1981).

Turning to the potential influence of mothers on occupational choice, Gottfredson asserted that impressionist knowledge partly derives from talking about their father's jobs. She was writing in 1981 and therefore it is feasible that, by now, successful working mothers as well as fathers will have given their daughters an insight into their working lives. Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983) argued that that a mother identifies with her daughter due to their shared gender and she behaves towards her daughter unconsciously as she internally acts towards the daughter part of herself. A mother is also a daughter. Walkerdine *et al.* (2001) linked this idea to work, arguing that the middle class mother feels the need to push her daughters to defer gratification and reach their potential. Walkerdine *et al.* described this as 'their destiny to go to university and become professionals' (2001, p.161). Lawler contended that this controlling and shaping of their daughters' behaviour by mothers is a particular issue for middle class children because 'middle class-ness has become synonymous with normality' (2000, p.43).

Evidence of transmission of attitudes on work aspirations is also provided by a longitudinal study using the 90,000 strong National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health in America. Using econometric analysis, Olivetti and Patacchini (2013) compared the working hours of women born in 1978-1984 when they were aged between 22 and 34 with those of their mothers and mother's friends with whom they were in regular contact, controlled for education, family wealth and location. Their key findings were that the influence of the mothers' experience on the daughters working hours was strongest when the mothers were college-educated. The effect is slightly stronger (about 2% more) if the mothers of the daughters' friends worked fewer hours. The inference made by the researchers was that when a variety of role models are present then the model of the

person closest is slightly enhanced. However, there are other possible interpretations of these findings; for example mothers who work particularly long hours are by definition likely to work longer hours than the average of the mothers of the daughters' friends. In addition the daughters were not asked about their knowledge of their mothers' friends who they may well see more of. This suggested an important line of enquiry for this research, to ask about the daughters' knowledge of the work patterns of their mothers' network and contrast this with the influence of their own peer group.

Further evidence that supports the hypothesis that middle class mothers do influence their daughters' work orientation is drawn from research that includes those working and non-working in their sample. American researchers Moen *et al.* (1997) used panel data with a sample of 256 mother daughter dyads and found that middle class women create the expectation in their daughters of long-term employment. This was the case regardless of the mothers' workforce participation, which tends to suggest that attitude is more important than behaviour. This finding was reinforced by comparisons made with research on the same sample in 1956 and 1986, on gender and work role attitudes, which showed that the daughters' attitudes were more likely to correlate with the mother's attitudes than her position in the labour force. This led to the conclusion that socialisation processes 'operate through verbal persuasion rather than role modelling' (*ibid.* 1997, p291). These findings were confirmed by McGinn *et al.* (2015) who used national archive data from 2002-2012 across 24 countries to compare outcomes amongst nationally representative samples for the adult children of mothers who work versus those who stayed at home. They found that the children of working mothers were more likely to be employed, to work more hours, in more supervisory positions and earn more if employed. This suggests (but does not directly address) that the children were not reacting against the model their mothers presented. They argue that these outcomes were partially mediated by the more egalitarian attitudes they identified amongst the children of mothers who worked. The authors speculated, but did not test, that mothers pass on information and skills to their daughters to help them navigate a career. This thesis is able to directly address this speculation. McGinn *et al.*'s (2015) study also demonstrated that mothers who worked did not spend less time with their children than those who did not work. Instead, they spent less time doing housework. They controlled for hours spent out of the home. A limitation of the research of both Moen *et al.* (1997) and McGinn *et al.* (2015) is that they compared working women with non working women and so does not match the situation of the majority of women in the UK who work but work a variable number of hours.

Bourdieu's concept of social capital, the resources linked to one's social network, offers an explanation for the transmission of attitudes discussed above (Bourdieu and Nice 1990). Middle class mothers are argued to be more emotionally and materially equipped than other social classes (Lawler 2000) to advise and assist their daughters both in obtaining the qualifications to give them access to good jobs and in practical help to find them. The same findings came from the perspective of the daughters studied by Walkerdine *et al.* (2001, p.68). They found that middle class girls were more likely than working class girls to envision themselves as being economically successful in good jobs and have the internal and external resources to help them achieve a rewarding working life.

2.4.2 *Other influences on aspirations for work*

On the other hand, evidence that moderates the extent to which maternal influence is significant in daughters' work aspirations comes from Woodfield's (2007) research which focused on the perspective of girls and young women of 16-22 and contrasted these with women working as teachers and firefighters (aged 24-62). She found that girls considered their mothers to 'have significant, although by no means overwhelming, influence on what careers individuals felt they could *expect support* for' (p.217) and also that mothers' modelled career experience for their daughters. However, she also found that mothers' modelling of the management of parenthood and work responsibilities ...did not 'speak' to participants' (p.217). The mothers amongst the sample confirmed that they rarely discussed their experiences of managing work and family life. Instead, Woodfield found that 'young women imagined their occupational life as one that reflects their identity as individuals, rather than their 'future role as wives' (p.208). Woodfield's research did not focus exclusively on middle class girls or mothers of daughters in professional or higher managerial jobs so this finding needs to be set against Orrange's (2002) finding that young female professionals were thinking in-depth about the potential impact of motherhood on their career. It may be that responses are different according to the amount of exposure to the workplace of participants.

Another perspective on daughter's motivations for career choice comes from the more individualist perspective of perceptions of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy (also described as effective agency) refers to an individual's belief that they can accomplish that to which they aspire. O'Brien and Fassinger (1993) argued that girls who are higher in agency are more likely to be higher in career orientation. Conversely, they also found that women tend to have lower levels of self-efficacy than men and this limits their decision making about their careers. Whilst their sample were adolescents, Procter and Padfield studied

the aspirations in relation to work and family of 79 young adult women and identified some highly agential women who were effective in realising their ambitions (1998). The 'Maximisers' identified by Crompton and Harris were described as highly agential women who were successfully managing both family and career (1998). However, little has been written to explain why some women are more highly agential than others and the role of the mother in this remains unexplored.

Mainiero and Sullivan's (2007) career theory research reinforces this more individualist approach. They asserted that women tend to want three different values from their careers at different stages of their life and describe this as a kaleidoscope of careers. These stages are 'challenge' (which is most likely to describe women just starting out in their career), 'balance' (which is most likely to describe women with young children) and 'authenticity' (which is more important to the later stages of women's careers). Whilst this may provide a useful construct to understand the motivations of different generations, critics of this approach point out that this may not reflect the motivations for changes in career trajectory of individuals. Bimrose *et al.*'s (2014) cross-national study of women's career transitions emphasises the importance of context to the way in which women make decisions about what success in personal, family and work domains mean to them at different points in time. This may be a more useful indicator of how personal values, life stage and social pressure influence women's careers.

Demand side factors are also relevant when looking at graduate's aspirations for work. The recession of 2008 left a legacy of a contraction in graduate jobs that will inevitably affect aspirations (Peacock 2013). Quantitative research evidence, from the US and Sweden, shows an allied effect of the contraction in graduate jobs has been to slow career advancement through promotions (Illoong Kwon 2013). It seems likely that this would have an effect upon young middle class women planning for motherhood. I turn finally in this section to examine research that has focused directly on the career aspirations of women.

2.4.3 *Aspirations for progress at work*

Some academic and business sponsored studies argue that women under the age of 30 have the same attitudes as their male cohort to job advancement (Hewlett and Marshall 2014; PWC 2014). A qualitative study that included five group interviews with university students and a sample of 89 firefighters and teachers found that 'nearly all the participants who talked about their occupations ambitions described a desire to climb far in their chosen career' (Woodfield 2007, p181). However, there is also evidence to suggest that

the women's confidence that they can get to the top declines after only two years in the workplace. Corporate research in the US (Coffman and Neuenfeldt 2014) suggested that young women entering careers are more likely than their male counterparts to aspire to a top position (43% versus 34% of men) but that after two years the percentage for men stays the same whilst the percentage for women exhibits a sharp fall to 16%. Women's level of confidence that they can achieve top positions also halves during the same period. Coffman and Neuenfeldt attributed this to lack of support from work supervisors. An important explanation for this fall off in confidence relates to the anticipation and experience of motherhood as described fully above. An alternative explanation lies in the persistence of social notions about gender roles - the behaviours and attitudes that society expects of women - that have been extensively researched by psychologists. As Bem (1981) argued the gendered coding of ambition and achievement is typically coded as masculine. Horner (1972) found that women exhibited more anxiety than men about competitive achievement when their success seemed to be at the expense of someone else. She identified a female tendency to fear success based on their perception of conflict between femininity and success. Sluis *et al.* (2010) researched sex differences in motivations to achieve and showed too that women were less actuated by competition than men. Fels (2004) argued that ambition requires the support of an audience and whereas the male presumption is that their achievements will be valued, the female presumption is that they will do the valuing due to the persistent gendered notion that females provide recognition to males. She further contested that gendered norms in behaviour expected from women mean women tend to shy away from asserting their achievements and instead claim a principled modesty and look for satisfaction from the work itself.

Little specific research has yet been done on the influences on the aspirations of daughters of successful working women want from their work and family lives, which presents an opportunity to study this distinct social group.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the thinking that informed the methodological decisions taken throughout the research process. The complexity of intergenerational research led to the rationale for the selection of narrative, biographical accounts as the method most appropriate to the aims of this research. The thinking of Miles and Huberman (1994) was central to my approach to the analysis in that they argue that the process starts with the approach to data collection and continues through the coding of the data and the thinking that takes place during writing.

The aspect of the research analysis specifically concerned with the coding of the data was informed by, rather than applied, Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998) meaning that the research data was primarily analysed inductively in order to allow themes to emerge from the data and avoid pre-imposed assumptions about the importance of particular topics as much as possible. In addition, a deductive approach was employed in adding some top level codes informed by the literature review of the social and psychological phenomena that may or may not be found to be actors in the narrative accounts of the participants in this study and to establish a clear link between the research objectives and the findings.

Section 3.1 describes the rationale for the research method and the role of the researcher. Section 3.2 presents the research tools used and Section 3.3 lays out the thinking behind the composition of the sample. Section 3.4 explains the ethical considerations and interview process and Section 3.5 discusses the approach to the analysis.

3.1 Thinking behind research method

A qualitative method used to elicit biographical, narrative accounts was considered the most appropriate way to address the research objectives for several reasons. First, the subject is complex as intergenerational research requires women to reflect both upon similarities and differences between the generations and upon their own past, present and imagined futures. Participants' views are affected by how their presents shape the telling of the past and the interpretive contexts available according to their position in the generational hierarchy (Brannen *et al.* 2004). Secondly, relationships between the individual and the social, and the transmission of values between mother and daughter about gender identity and work roles, often operate at a subconscious level (Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg 1994) or concern perceptions of what is said and left unsaid (Brannen *et al.* 2004). Thirdly, intergenerational biographical accounts are dependent

upon memory and are therefore subjective (Kuhn 1995; Thomson 2008). Therefore the qualitative method of eliciting biographical accounts was appropriate to draw out subconscious themes by encouraging participants to tell their stories and be self-reflective about their meaning and significance to them.

My choice of research method was inspired by the analysis drawn from 12 mother-daughter case studies in Thomson *et al.* (2011) *Making Modern Mothers* which showed that intergenerational research is suited to an investigation of social change because 'the qualitative paradigm demands that we take seriously the process through which meanings are made and remade through changing configurations of agents and resources' (2011, p.vi.). In general, the body of research based upon individual interviews about the transmission of gender identity and work roles interviews *either* mothers *or* daughters (for example Lawler 2000; Walkerdine *et al.* 2001). It is only recently that a large cohort of successful working women have reached the age where many have adult children, which provides the opportunity to examine the outcomes of the choices the daughters have made about work and work-life balance and explore how influential were their mothers. I therefore took advantage of this opportunity to interview pairs of mothers and daughters in order to explore how their accounts converged and diverged and to seek to triangulate the findings by having more than one point of view on the same social relationship. Adding to the sample daughters who were recently also mothers offered another level of depth to these narrative accounts because passing from daughter to mother to grandmother enhances women's ability and desire to understand their own relationship with their mother (Thomson *et al.* 2011).

3.1.1 Rationale for qualitative methodology

Seeking biographical narratives, drawing upon the constructivist model, was considered the most appropriate methodology to provide rich information in answer to the research questions. The constructivist argument, posited by writers such as Kvale is that knowledge is not a given but is created in conversation that leads both subject and interviewer to new insight. Kvale's 'traveller' metaphor is apt in describing the process of arriving at insight.

The traveller...asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own story of their lived world, and converses with them in the original, Latin meaning of *conversation* as 'wandering together with'. (Kvale 1996, p.4)

The distinction drawn by Mathieson and Stam (1995) between a conversation and a narrative account is that narratives are used to construct a personal identity. To elicit narrative accounts require that people be self-reflexive. Giddens (1991) argued that,

whilst our selves are complex and changing, a sense of self can be reflexively maintained by making sense of experiences because this is a necessary process for ontological well-being. Theorists such as Adkins (2002) and Miller (2005) critiqued Giddens for failing to take account of gender identity in relation to reflexivity. As Miller argued, 'it is the 'fleshy body' that plays a key part in women's reflexivity and their constructions of social selves in relation to their experiences of their bodies and becoming mothers' (2005, p.17). Gatrell also emphasised that 'women's bodies are central to gendered power relations' (2008, p.173). This thesis centres on the 'mother-daughter' relationship and how they describe their identities and roles in relation to work and motherhood. Using narrative accounts has the advantage of enabling the researcher to access 'how individuals *actively* construct and reconstruct narratives in the process of making sense of their experiences and presenting their self/selves' (Miller 2005, p.19). In addition, events that cause biographical disruption are argued by Becker (1998) to encourage self-reflexivity because they impinge upon the sense of self. Disruptive events encountered included having children, illness and divorce.

A qualitative enquiry based on biographical accounts gave time and space to my participants to describe their experiences, to tell their own stories and to comment about their family relationships. The idea of human lives being 'storied' gained traction within social research in the 1980s. Stories help us discover and reveal ourselves and help us understand social practices and relationships over time (Miller 2005). The telling of stories by participants is mirrored by the researcher eliciting, listening to and reading these accounts in order to produce meaning. The researcher is exposed to unconscious processes through the language used. The definition of language used here encompasses the tone of voice, deletions and body language as well as the meaning explicitly conveyed by the participants. The benefit of paying close attention to the language used by participants is well documented. For example, Ricoeur (1977) argued that capturing the richness of experience in language often requires the use of figurative expressions and that language expressions themselves serve to amplify and give differentiation to experience. Mills (1940, p.904) described the speech content of interviews as 'a vocabulary of motives' that the researcher can use to identify and expose experience because social actors talk about and assign meaning to their actions. Mills went on to say that it is not enough to investigate people's motives in a generalised way but that the task of research is to ask participants to put their motives into the context of specific situations to better understand them.

It was also important to notice implicit and explicit reference to some of the dominant discourses concerning gender equality and working motherhood that are apparent in academic research, in the media and in speech acts. Discourse is defined here as the use of language as a form of 'social practice' (Wodak 1997):

[it] is socially constituted as well as socially conditioned...It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. (Wodak 1996, p.258)

Focusing particularly on media discourse and speech acts; themes prominent in the literature review were the recent focus on 'women at the top', questions about whether it is possible to 'have it all', the related question that is asked of working women but rarely men about how they 'balance' working with family life and the idea that the mother should be the primary parent. In conducting this research attention was paid to whether and how these or other discourses were reflected in the speech of the participants and also direct references made to media projections of gender or motherhood norms.

3.1.2 *Rationale for intergenerational research within families*

The foundation of this research method was based upon Mannheim's (1952) concept that different generations are imbued with values shaped during childhood as well as those of contemporary culture, and combine to define the zeitgeist. The notion that generations are constantly negotiating the present led Thomson *et al.* (2011, p.1) to observe that families can be understood 'as a site of change, where historical and social forces are lived out as family dramas'. Byng-Hall's concept of family scripts (1995) was also helpful here as a means of making explicit the way family narratives reverberate through generations. Therefore by studying families we are given insight into the interaction of psychological and social factors that lie behind actions and attitudes. Moreover, intergenerational research requires consciousness of different relationships between individuals and time and the impact of that on the interpretive view of research participants. Brannen *et al.* pointed out that generational change is not linear, smooth or uniform' and that present exigencies can derail future plans (2004, p203). Relevant temporal issues theorised by psycho-social researchers include the reliving of daughter's relationship to their mothers when they have a child (Stone 2012). In addition, Baraitser described the dwelling in the moment caused by the demands of very young children and the transference of one's one sense of future to the child (2008). These changes influence their sense of gender identity and relationship with work (Becker 1998; Bailey 1999).

Thomson's view was that studies in the maternal have particular power in helping us understand how different generations experience change because 'families express the coexistence of the past and the present, with the past constantly being reworked by contemporary demands' (2008, pp.20-21). This raised the issue of the role played by remembering. Memory is defined as both a reflexive and a generative act (Kuhn 1995; Thomson 2008). Kuhn suggested that memories are produced in the present and are imbued with different meanings shaped by the moment, the context in which one is remembering and are also influenced by the kind of face that one wants to present to the world. Recounted memories are therefore rich with contextual meaning as well as being specific to an individual. As Kuhn argued, 'memories are one individuals, [but] their associations extend far beyond the personal...into a...network of meanings that bring together the personal with the familial, the cultural' (1995, p.4). Autobiographic memory, an aspect of episodic memory was of particular interest here, defined by Schacter (1996, p.162) as 'enduring chronologically sequenced memory for significant events from one's own life'. Cognitive scientists such as Schacter (1996) and Nelson (1995) established that children have episodic memory from a young age. Nelson stressed that memories are valued when they contribute to the individual's ability to behave adaptively and that:

Sharing memories with others is in fact a prime social activity...learned in early childhood, and the result of this learning is the establishment of a store of memories that are shareable and ultimately reviewable by the individual, forming a personal history that has its own value. (1995, pp.726-27)

The strengths of biographical narratives in relation to accessing the stories, memories and projections forward in time of participants also have attendant weaknesses. The word 'story' can imply that the data is fictional and therefore unreliable. Also this study relied upon self-report and therefore the experience the participants describe cannot be expected to be identical to the actual experience, given that accounts of experience are, by definition, stories. A lack of test/retest validity is also inherent to the definition of memory as a creative act. This links to the criticisms often levelled at qualitative methods that they lack objectivity, precision or generalisability (Becker and Geer 1957). However, support for my choice of research method in terms of producing reliable data came from constructivists, Miller and Glassner who saw the idea of creating knowledge and meaning as compatible with the interview producing knowledge of the social world:

While the interview is itself a symbolic interaction, this does not discount the possibility that knowledge of the social world beyond the interaction can be obtained. (Miller and Glassner 1997, p.100)

Also, psychologist Shotter's concept of 'social accountability' (1989, p.141) pointed out that the stories people tell about themselves give us an insight into their sense of self and also illuminate the relational dimension of identity formation. 'One *ontologically* learns how to *be* this or that kind of person in conversation with others' (*ibid.*, p.138). Shotter went on to suggest that 'people not only have a *life* history: they are expected to be knowledgeable about it' (*ibid.*, p.146).

Further defence against criticisms of the lack of reliability of qualitative biographical narratives was supplied by the argument that it is just as true for quantitative research that people do not have complete access to their experiences or their motivations. These criticisms of qualitative approaches have provoked amongst some, such as researchers espousing feminist standpoint theory, a counter-claim that qualitative methods are more truthful because they privilege individuals' own accounts (Harding 1986). However, there are strong arguments that contest the assertion that qualitative research produces more truthful data. Van Maanen (1988, p.74) questioned the realist assumption that direct contact is enough to guarantee 'immaculate perception'. Constructivists, such as Charmaz (2006, p.32), added nuance to this argument in describing qualitative research as seeking to elicit respondents' understanding of situations and events to gain insight into their 'assumptions, implicit meanings and tacit rules':

Interviews are, of course, retrospective accounts that often explain and justify behaviour. Yet they may also be special social spaces in which research participants can reflect on the past and link it to the present and future in new ways. An interview is a performance...but that does not disqualify interviews from providing rich data and sparking analytic insight. (Charmaz and Bryant 2011, p.299)

The crux of their argument is that qualitative enquiry cannot be claimed to provide a definitive or neutral answer, not least because it is impossible to definitively untangle the influences of the social and the psychology of the individual. I support the view that eliciting biographical accounts is a process through which recurring themes can be identified and, as far as possible, assessed in terms of how these themes are correlated with specific types in the research sample. Thomson *et al.* (2011) offered a powerful description that drew upon the work of ethnographer Back. Rather than seeking 'analytical closure', Thomson *et al.* preferred the notion of 'an increasingly thick account' in which:

As the account thickens, it simultaneously acquires greater complexity, yet there is also a growing sense of familiarity as narrative themes recur and a form of biographical triangulation sheds light on phenomena and relationships from different vantage points. (2011, p.25)

Therefore, my view is that there are good arguments to support the appropriateness and validity of biographical, narrative accounts given by mother and daughter pairs as a method to help unpack their intergenerational relationship, their experiences over time and how their aspirations and values intersect. This research relied on the accounts of individuals. To ensure the findings were as robust as possible I solicited recall of outstanding events and feelings and encouraged reflection on participants' personal histories to sum up their experiences over time. I describe this as 'taking a long view'. I paid attention to the significance participants gave to the stories and memories they chose to recount. In addition, in the light of Blair-Loy's (2003) assertion that there is often a disjuncture between women's rhetoric and their experience I also drew on learning from other researchers about the social context relevant to the different time periods being described by the different generations of mothers and daughters. I also made observations about the relationship demonstrated by the mother and daughter *at the time* of the interview. This added levels of contextual understanding to the analysis. In short, this qualitative approach sought to use depth rather than breadth to provide findings that can be generalised to the particular social group who are the subjects of this study.

3.1.2 Role of the interviewer

The role of the researcher needs to be considered in the context of the points made above about the co-creation of meaning between participants and researcher. Feminist thinking spanned the perspectives of Oakley; who argued for a reciprocal relationship between interviewer and participant, and Harding; who put the case for strong objectivity (Harding 1991). Oakley's argument rested on the desire to get away from the depersonalised role of researcher that she likened to a model of male power relations (Oakley 1998). My counter argument to this is that Oakley assumes that the participant wants to know about the life and experiences of the researcher or indeed wants an equal relationship with the researcher. This may well not be the case. My 20 years of professional experience as a career qualitative researcher cause me to argue that sharing the interviewer's perspective can 'lead' the participant and that a strongly objective position can compromise the integrity of the findings in a different way, in limiting the co-creation of meaning and, in practical terms, restricting the participant from feeling relaxed enough to talk in an expansive and therefore more revealing way. I therefore argue, drawing on the feminist position of Oakley to a limited extent, that participants should be respected, made to feel comfortable and treated 'as you would wish yourself to be treated' (1998, p.711) but without sharing personal information of relevance to the research topic.

A further implication of the co-creation of meaning in the process of qualitative research is the need to question from where the subject's viewpoint comes (Silverman 2004). The subjects involved in the qualitative research process are both participant and researcher and so there is a requirement, both in the researcher's role as interviewer and in analysing the research data, to question my own assumptions and reflect upon the lens through which I could be tempted to lead the interview or interpret the data. An interview is a social encounter that can contain a complex power relationship between interviewer and interviewee (Oakley 1998; Rapley 2004). I was therefore conscious of how I was positioned in relation to each participant in terms of what we had in common or what divided us in terms of, for example, age, being a mother or not or levels of professional achievement. Being conscious of how the interview unfolds is as important to the gathering and interpretation of the data as what is being said (Holstein and Gubrium 2011) I was careful in facilitating our conversations to be focused on them rather than myself and to help them feel comfortable. In addition, as a liberal feminist and a full-time working mother myself, the views of Skeggs (1995, p.12) struck a chord. She asserted that feminist research is political in that 'behind each contribution stands a clear desire...for change...to challenge categories of common knowledge, and to deconstruct the representation which damagingly position women'. Consciously recognising this potential for subjective interpretation is understood as strength of feminist research and can help to inform data analysis.

3.2. Qualitative tools used

The following section outlines the rationale for the selection of specific research tools and then describes the pre-tasks set for the participants prior to the interviews. The strengths and weaknesses of the research tools used are also discussed.

3.2.1 Mother and daughter individual and joint interviews

The main qualitative tool used in this study was individual in-depth interviews with both mothers and daughters. The interviews were conducted separately and then both mother and daughter (with their express permission) were brought together for a joint interview. Each individual interview lasted between 1 and 2 hours. Most interviews lasted 1½ hours, which allowed for a full and rich flow of information.

The selection of individual in-depth and joint interviews was influenced by the idea of 'configuration', derived from the work of Norbert Elias (1978). In Elias's view each individual can be understood as 'I', 'You' or 'Them' depending upon where you are

standing. Elias suggested that one's sense of personal identity is closely connected to the 'we' and 'they' relationships within one's group (1978, p.128). He argues that 'it's plainly very misleading to use such concepts as 'I' independently of their position within the web of relationships to which the pronouns refer' (*ibid.*, p.124). Elias goes on to say that because the inner self does not 'stand apart' from others that 'the image of man (*sic*) needed for the study of sociology cannot be that of a singular person...Rather it must be people in the plural (*ibid.*, p.121).

The clear implication for my research is that the transmission of values, ideas and behaviour between mother and daughter can best be understood by hearing both biographical accounts. By conducting separate interviews and following that with a joint interview I was able to access all three positions; their personal point of view, their commentary upon their relationship with each other and any joint point of view that emerged from a conversation between them both and myself, the interviewer. Another strength of this approach was in unpicking as fully as possible the views and experiences of mothers and daughters and allowing them to reflect at length upon the relationship between them.

In some cases both individual interviews and the joint interview were conducted on the same day. In most cases the joint interview was conducted immediately after the second individual interview. We took breaks and participants said that they found the topic stimulating and interesting so fatigue was rarely an issue. All the interviews were held as close as possible in time due to the feedback from the first few participants that it helped them shape questions they wanted to ask the other family member when the subject was fresh in their minds. However, there were also weaknesses in this approach. Although the interviews with participants spanned the past, present and their imagined futures, the interviews themselves were located in particular moments in time that were close together. This means that it was not possible to draw conclusions about causality. In addition, this study lacked the advantage of longitudinal studies that give direct access to the effect of changes in experiences and relationships over time. However, given that inter-generational transmission of attitudes takes place over a whole life-course, even longitudinal studies cannot hope to be there at every key stage of change. The intergenerational female relationship was the focus of my study but I also explored the important role of fathers as far as possible by cross-referencing the comments of daughters and mothers about the father. In this, Hochschild's (1990 pp.15-16) definitions of 'traditional', 'transitional' and 'egalitarian' male attitudes to parenting and the 'second shift' proved useful along with other definitions stipulated such as absent father and those

divorced and sharing care. These definitions were applied to the analysis of both the questionnaire filled in prior to the interviews and the interviews themselves.

It is also interesting to note that the joint interviews did not work as anticipated. They were intended to help ensure that differences in individual accounts of the same experiences could be explored and, as far as possible in subjective accounts, verified. To some extent it was possible to challenge and seek explanations for differences in, for example, perceptions about whether the mother or father had been the main breadwinner. In several cases the daughters mistakenly ascribed this status to their fathers. More broadly, the mothers and daughters were invited to raise any issues that had come up for them with each other in the joint interviews. Some took up this invitation and had free ranging discussions that were useful to the analysis but others asked little. Many participants were unwilling to share or discuss in any detail what they had said and, for reasons of confidentiality, it would have been inappropriate for me to raise directly any inconsistency. This limited the usefulness of the joint interview as a check on inconsistency in both parties' versions of the same events. However, a useful consequence to the analysis was that it was instead possible to raise and discuss the reasons why they thought conversations about their experiences and the consequences of working motherhood had not been discussed between them.

3.2.2 *Interview pre- tasks*

Each interview was preceded by the completion of an online questionnaire. Three questionnaires were prepared for daughters, mothers and the daughters who are also mothers (*See Appendices 1-3*). The questionnaire had four main functions.

First, to record biographical details on age, education, maternity leave taken and work history to provide a clear context for the analysis of the data and to allow more time in the face-to-face interview for the exploration of more complex issues. Secondly, to record attitudes towards work, gender roles and working motherhood. These attitude questions replicated those asked by Crompton and Lyonette (2008) that, in turn, were drawn from the Women and Employment Survey (WES) and the British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA). Other attitude questions, asked only of the mothers, were designed to elicit how much they enjoyed work at different stages in the lives of their daughter (or sometimes sons in the case of the daughters who were also mothers) so I could explore any link between enjoyment of work and the age of their children. Daughters were asked to score out of 10 the influence they thought various people such as teachers and their mother had had on their choice of career. Thirdly, to obtain a more consistent and comparable measure of the

arrangements made for childcare at different stages of the daughters' lives and the level of involvement of fathers/partners in what Hochschild (1990) termed 'the second shift'. Fourthly, every individual was asked what one thing did they think would make the most positive difference to the lives of working mothers.

The benefits of the questionnaire were to add context to the data collection in providing a factual record of key events (as far as possible given that the information is self-report). Also, details recorded in the questionnaire were incorporated into the topic guide for each interview making it possible to hone in on issues raised by each individual and to elicit discussion on how participants had interpreted and answered the questions. The questionnaire was particularly useful in the analysis in helping to ascribe themes to particular women in the sample and also, through the attitude statements, to set the views of the sample in a broader context.

Prior to the interviews, daughters were also asked to make notes on the decision making process behind their choice of, or anticipated choice of, profession. This information was used to draw out more detailed self-reflection in the interviews and also to strengthen the data by having a fuller picture than the partial accounts privileged by the participants in the interviews. This was important in illuminating any direct or indirect role of their mothers in their choice of occupational field.

Both mothers and daughters were also asked, prior to the interviews, to complete a timeline (*See Appendix 4 and 5*). Both were asked emotionally neutral questions that mirrored each other. The question was; 'make some notes on any events or feelings that stand out for you in relation to being/having a working mother and indicate how old you/your daughter was at each of these times'. Daughters who were also mothers and their own mothers were also asked to include comments relating to becoming a mother/grandmother. The timelines were used to compare and contrast the memories and emotions of mothers and daughters.

The benefit of this approach was in illuminating when mother and daughter's accounts mirrored each other and when different emotional observations were made. The limitation was that some interviewees were more diligent than others in the level of detail they gave.

3.3 Research sample

This section lays out the thinking behind the composition of the sample. Purposeful, homogeneous sampling was used, defined by Mason (2002) as the selection of groups to

study on the basis of their relevance to the research questions. My overall concern was to meet the criteria of 'adequacy and appropriateness of data' as described by Morse (2002), to obtain sufficient data to identify common themes and carefully to choose participants to meet the theoretical needs of the study. This section goes on to discuss a limitation that arose from the research design and to explain how the participants were recruited.

In total 30 mother and daughter pairs were recruited and 88 interviews conducted (two individual interviews, three in the case of the twins, and one joint interview). Joint interviews took place with 27/30 pairs and lasted 45 minutes on average. The remaining three interviews were repeatedly postponed until too much time had passed to conduct them. All but three interviews were conducted face-to-face. Exigent circumstances caused two joint interviews to be conducted by phone and one daughter to be interviewed on Skype. It is unusual in qualitative research to have as large a sample of dyads as this. The sample size, and the homogeneous factors applied, was intended to mitigate the difficulties of generalising from an intergenerational sample with historically different points of social reference (Thomson 2014) and in recognition of the notion that the reliance on interpreting memories inherent to conversations about experiences over a long time span means 'making generalisations may be more risky than usual' (Brannen *et al.* 2004, p.3). The 30 mother daughter pairs involved in this study produced over 115 hours of rich and fascinating data.

3.3.1 *Sample of daughters*

In the context of the research objectives, I considered what would be the optimum range of ages and life-stages to ensure representation of key milestones in decision-making about career choice and combining work with motherhood and also to ensure that the sample was sufficiently homogeneous to allow themes to emerge (Thomson 2014). I decided that accounts of influences on the daughter's occupational choice would be more accurate if they were close in time to their decision-making. Entry to most career roles now commonly requires a degree. Therefore, in order to have the potential to emulate the career success of their mothers, the daughters recruited were all graduates or in undergraduate education. Thinking further ahead, I hypothesised that views on work and work-life balance were likely to change once women were in the workplace. For example, those working with others would be in a position to observe differences in the way women and men experience work and how men and women are affected in the workplace by becoming parents. It was considered likely that what young women may want from work-life balance will be shaped, and perhaps even transformed, by the experience of having children. This point of view rested on the well documented notion expressed by

writers such as Crompton (2006, p.206) that women and men are still far from equal in the 'labour of caring' and that women, including those in career roles, still experience restricted career opportunities on the basis of their potential for maternity (Gatrell 2008). I was also interested in comparing the expectations of those without children to those with recent experience of being pregnant and having children. Graduate adult daughters with children are likely to be over the age of 30 (Wolf 2013). Therefore, in order to maximise the opportunity to identify themes and potential changes at each of these key stages it was decided to divide the daughters into three cells and recruit ten mother and daughter pairs to represent each of these stages as follows:

Cell 1	10 x women who were undergraduates in at least their penultimate year or recent graduates and therefore close to the point of seeking employment
Cell 2	10 x graduate women under 35 in employment with a mix of those living with a partner (could be same sex) and those not living with a partner. <i>Interviewed 11.</i>
Cell 3	10 x graduate women who were pregnant or had at least one child under 5. <i>Interviewed 9.</i>

For cells 1 and 2 no assumption was made that the daughters will be considering motherhood. For all cells no assumption was made about sexual orientation.

It proved to be hard to find and secure the participation of the daughters who were also mothers because they were highly time-squeezed, or reported they felt too emotionally vulnerable to discuss their feelings about motherhood and work. Also they had older mothers who were therefore more likely to be ill or deceased. The final sample, as shown above, substituted one cell 3 pair for a cell 2 pair.

3.3.2 Sample of mothers

In the context of the sample I reiterate my definition of 'successful working mothers'. The 'successful' adjective applied only to their careers not to their mothering. They simply needed to *be* mothers. The objective definition of success in their careers was based on the ONS classification SOC 1 or 2 (Managers and Senior Officials or Professional Occupations (2010)). The sample was recruited from a wide range of occupational fields. Teachers and public sector workers were particularly strongly represented amongst the mothers of cell 3 - daughters who are also mothers - because professional and managerial employment

accounted for only 12% of women in the workforce in 1971 (Institute of Employment Studies 1995).

This sample did not seek to represent all working mothers. Neither did I seek out women who were *exceptionally* successful or high profile in their fields, although some were. These qualifications are necessary to make because the notion of 'successful working mothers' is highly charged as evidenced by the media response to the publication of Sandberg's book *Lean In* (2013) that sought to offer practical suggestions to women seeking leadership roles in their careers. Criticisms made by media columnists included questioning whether her message had any relevance to the lives of most working women (Williams, *The Guardian* 13/3/2013). Similarly, the publication of economist Wolf's book *The XX Factor* (2013) was criticised as encouraging the value judgement that ambitious career women were somehow better than mothers who make the choice to work less or not at all (Cossett, *The Guardian*, 26/4/2013). There is an assumption in these criticisms that writing about women should be applicable to all women and yet the changes in women's relationship with work since the 1970s mean women are a more heterogeneous group than was the case when the majority of married mothers did not work out of the home. Wolf went as far as to suggest that the 'end of sisterhood' has been the consequence of the divergence of women's experience in that 'educated successful women today have fewer interests in common with other women than ever before –distinctive in patterns of marriage, child bearing, child rearing' (2013, p.13).

It is not my intention to generalise my findings to all women or to all working mothers or to make value judgements about the superiority of a particular approach to working motherhood. The thesis focuses on a large cohort of women who worked full time, or close to full time hours, for most of their careers and reached high levels in their chosen fields; women who merged their careers with their family life rather than having 'a family life punctuated by jobs' (Wolf, *Prospect*, 23/4/2006) and the impact of this experience on their daughters.

A challenge in defining the sample of successful working mothers was that most research is based on the duality of full-time/part-time work with the emphasis on continuous full-time employed women as the 'ideal worker' (Williams 2000, p.145). Recent work in the US (Moen 2005) suggested that this is an outmoded way of thinking about work and that 'time outs' (p.191), 'second acts' (p.133) and 'scaling back' (p.77) are more typical of the way we work now, taking a whole career into account. Most successful women have worked long hours for long periods of their career but perhaps not necessarily in a

manner that is contracted employment 5 day a week, 8 hours a day. It was therefore decided that the sample should represent those who have worked full-time continuously but should also include those who have trodden a more winding path. The minimum requirement set for hours worked was 32 hours a week for most of their career. This was based on the average number of hours worked a week which, for both men and women, is 31.5 hours (ONS 2011a). In practice most women had, over the course of their careers, worked for a considerably higher number of hours. The vast majority worked long hours as defined above until their daughters entered higher education. The sample also included those who had worked part-time or taken an extended maternity leave whilst their children were under school age or had taken a short career break later in life. Evidence that this reflected a common pattern in mother's employment came from McRae (2003, p.322) who found that amongst a sample of mothers whose children were born in 1987 and 1988, 10% had worked continuously full-time and a further 16% had worked mostly full time between 1988 and 1999. The sample also allowed for the fact that some of the older mothers were now retired or had substantially cut their hours.

The age of the mothers was not stipulated but rather fell out from the age of their adult daughters. A feature of this cohort of career mothers was that they tended to have their children earlier than is now the case. Only 10% of graduates born in 1958 had their first child after the age of 33 (Kneale and Joshi 2008). The implication for the age of the grandmothers was that they were mainly 65-70.

The design of the sample was rigorous in the representation of different professions and life-stages of the daughters. However, a limitation of this research methodology is that all who agreed to take part had, to various degrees, close relationships with their mothers because those who had troubled relationships were not prepared to commit to the joint interviews, as reported by several of those approached. Indeed, several participants commented that they would not have agreed to be interviewed had they had poor relationships with each other. Nevertheless, there were tensions between the views of mothers and their daughters that emerged in the interviews. Inevitably then, this has shaped the findings because these mothers and daughters tended to be generous in their views of each other's behaviour, achievements and their consequences.

3.3.3 Sourcing participants

Several strategies were used to find participants including; contacting alumni associations such as Newnham College, Cambridge and the London Business School, contacting working women in the news or leaders of professional women's networking groups such

as Women in Advertising, women met during qualitative interviews for my commercial research company; asking women in my network to e-introduce me to women they knew who they believed met the requirements of my sample and, rarely, using the snowballing technique of being introduced by participants to other women in their network. I then checked with the people I approached that they met my recruitment criteria. The most successful sources of interviews were alumni associations and introductions from people in my network. In this way I was able to ensure a range of professions and locations were represented. It should be noted that an outcome of this approach to purposeful, homogeneous sampling (Mason 2002) was that only 2 pairs did not identify themselves as white British and 4 in the sample self-defined as LGBT. I chose not to deliberately seek to represent a diverse sample given the particular difficulty of making generalisations from the findings when conducting intergenerational research (Thomson 2014). Following the advice of Patton I used my judgement to take care not to over generalise and to be specific about to whom any generalisations could apply (1990, p. 186).

The locations of the interviews were deliberately geographically spread in order to represent different experiences. Interviews were conducted in London, Cambridge, Oxford, Reading, Trowbridge, Newcastle and towns in Lancashire, Buckinghamshire, Northampton and Sussex.

Most interviews took place in a comfortable, neutral location according to the preference of the participant (e.g. coffee shop) and some interviews took place in the participant's home. To protect my safety I gave details of where I was going to my husband and contacted him after every in-home interview. See *Appendix 7* for Table of Participants.

3.4 Interview process

This section examines ethical considerations, the development and use of the topic guide and the role of the interviewer in the research process.

3.4.1 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval for this research was sought and granted by the C-REC (Ethical Review Committee) at the University of Sussex who classified the application as 'high risk'. Several ethical issues of importance to highlight are; first, the confidentiality policy applied in this research and secondly, the anticipation of the potential for highly charged emotions when discussing mother-daughter relationships and the support given to the participants in response to this.

In formulating the confidentiality policy I followed the recommendations made by Forbat and Henderson (2003) in their work on dyad interviews with participants in intimate relationships. They stated that conflict of interest should be avoided by being careful not to disclose issues both participants had described differently or had discussed in confidence. What this meant in practice was that each participant was assured that what was discussed in each individual interview would not be disclosed to the other party by the interviewer and neither would any specific issues that had been discussed in individual interviews be raised by the interviewer in the joint interview. Each participant was also assured that any quotations or narrations in the thesis that came from them would be anonymised in terms of names and locations so they could not be recognised by others as the source. The confidentiality policy was given to every participant and discussed in the interviews. Everyone signed a consent form and the timescale for withdrawing from participation was supplied. If it had arisen that one of a dyad had decided to withdraw their participation explicit approval from the other to continue or to withdraw would have been sought. Transcripts and all other data are password protected and will not be used in full. Forbat and Henderson (2003) also called attention to the potential for disclosure in writing up the thesis. Whilst it was relatively easy to disguise the participants from others, it was harder to disguise them from each other. To address this I took care to ensure both participants' accounts were given equal weight and to use biographical details sensitively. For example, descriptions of professions have been left general. On the few occasions in the thesis that the views of a dyad were important to convey in more detail and therefore could raise ethical difficulties I was very careful not to share information or points of view that would be 'news' to the other party and after writing up this thesis when in doubt I checked the transcripts and removed any such information.

Turning now to the potential for emotional upset, the pre tasks acknowledged this in writing and also referred to the confidentiality policy as follows:

I understand that what I'm asking might raise issues that may be upsetting to you so please write only what you feel comfortable enough to share with me. I will not share this information with anyone else –including your mother/daughter – and I will leave you free to decide what you want to raise with her in the joint interview we have planned

At the start of the interview the potential for emotional upset was raised again and each participant was invited to tell me to stop any line of questioning they were uncomfortable with, take a break or ask me to turn off the audio recording. I also used my extensive experience as a professional qualitative researcher to recognise and acknowledge any emotionally difficult areas that came up in conversation and check again on their well-

being. Ethical considerations, in terms of managing power relations and steering an appropriate course between building rapport and ensuring I had informed consent, lay behind my decision to send the conclusions in full to all participants (Duncombe and Jessop 2002). I am a member of the Marketing Research Society and I also complied with MRS and British Sociological Association ethical guidelines.

3.4.2 Topic guide and conducting the interviews

The interviews were semi-structured in order to ensure that the same broad topic areas were covered with each of the different audiences included in the sample. The topic guide was structured around four themes; the individual's relationship with work, views on work-life balance, anticipation of and/or experience of working motherhood and their relationship with each other. The order reflected the intention not to lead the participant into discussing potential or actual motherhood as their main or only concern relating to work-life balance. In addition, the views of the daughters on their career choices were always discussed first in the interviews, prior to introducing the mother daughter relationship, so that participants were not 'led' to focus on the role played by their mothers.

The topic guide covered specific question areas within each of these four headings and was amended and expanded upon as interviews progressed. For example, questions were added on how well women dealt with stress and the influence of grandparents because these were topics to which the first few participants kept returning. As previously stated in 3.2.2, the topic guide for each interview was tailored to cover events and feelings disclosed in the pre-tasks. At the end of the first few interviews conducted, feedback was sought on the questions and interview process and a few changes were made as a result of this. For example, I became more careful in separating out comments on work-life balance in relation to children and in relation to other issues.

Whilst the core of the topic guide remained the same, some of the topics covered were different depending upon whether mothers or daughters or which cell of daughters were the subject of the interview. For example, daughters who are also mothers focused more on what had been the anticipated implications and choices made prior to pregnancy in relation to work and the role of their partners and then what actually happened. Some of the daughters who did not have children were encouraged by the use of projective techniques to imagine what they would want the role of their partners to be when they became mothers. The topic guides used are in *Appendix 6*.

As an experienced qualitative researcher, having conducted many interviews over a career of 25 years, I was able to use my tradecraft to build rapport, to facilitate reflective conversations led by the participants and to structure the interview and follow where the conversation led whilst also circling back to ensure all the key question areas were covered. My approach to these academic interviews was different in its power relationship in that I was inviting the views of the participant in an open way, rather than seeking an answer to a commercial issue. I was conscious of no external audience in the interviews and the participants were highly involved with and had vested interest in the topic.

3.5 Approach to analysis

Following the constructivist model that privileges co-creation of meaning, after the analysis was completed I sent a full summary of the findings and my conclusions to all the participants. I also invited comment and this shaped the way some ideas were expressed. Some feminist researchers such as Kitzinger (2007) go further than this in suggesting that inviting their collaboration in the analysis should increase women's participation in the research. I considered and rejected the idea of formally summarising my analysis of each individual interview and allowing participants to comment on its veracity because mother-daughter relationships are complex and emotionally charged. I could not control for the implicit reasons stakeholders may have for rejecting or accepting my analysis of their responses.

The following section covers the theoretical framework used in the analysis and the process used in coding and analysing the data.

3.5.1 Theoretical framework

Mindful of pre-imposed assumptions and in order to let the findings emerge from the data I took the decision to draw upon several theoretical traditions as seemed relevant to the research rather than being potentially restricted by one specific model for the analysis of data. Seale supports this position as follows:

I believe there is a lot to be said for a more local conception of social research as a craft skill, rather than a realisation of philosophical or political schemes. The craft of social research can be informed by but ought not to be over-determined by social theories. (Seale *et al.* 2006, p.380)

Grounded Theory informed my analysis rather than being applied to the process of analysis. I was drawn to Glaser and Strauss's (1967) ambition for Grounded Theory to generate theory that is 'relevant and practical as well as analytic' and that 'offers fresh insights and interpretations of social practice by comparing and recontextualization' (Dey

2006, p.92). Dey also suggested that the word 'abduction' is a more apt term than induction to describe the Grounded Theory approach to analysing data practiced by pragmatists.

The inductive inference does not follow logically from the premise but it infers beyond it. Thus inductive generalizations are always uncertain and vulnerable to further observations, which may prove inconsistent. In abduction, we can start with theory, make an observation and draw an inference...or we can start with an observation, state a theory, and infer a result...Either way...abduction offers a plausible interpretation rather than producing a logical conclusion. (2006, p.91)

I was mindful of the critique of Grounded Theory offered by Riessman (1993) that it can ignore the way in which talk performs a range of actions that can be understood without reference to inner states. The overall importance to this research of language and deletions has already been discussed in 3.1.1. I therefore drew upon (again, as opposed to applied) Conversational Analysis and its emphasis on treating 'talk as *constituting* experience at the moment it is uttered' (Kitzinger 2007, p.115).

This approach was described as critical realist by Miles and Huberman (1994) and was summarised by Thomas (2006, p.238) as a general inductive approach. Miles and Huberman (1994, p.56) comment that 'coding is analysis' and I therefore took inspiration from their description of the three stages of the coding process as data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification. In addition, I followed their suggestion, drawing on Grounded Theory, to ask questions of my coding structure as it developed to ensure it covered conditions, interactions amongst actors, strategies and tactics and consequences. Moreover, Miles and Huberman (1994, p.101) also argue that 'writing is analysis...writing is thinking, not the report of thought'. Thomson *et al.* also argue that analysis is 'a messy business' involving 'collisions between data collection and analysis, the provisionality of interpretation and the presumption and closures involved in writing' (2011, p.2). Therefore, I extend my account of the process of analysis to the writing of the analysis chapters.

3.5.2 Analysis of interview data

Taking the approach informed by Miles and Huberman (1994) resulted in the decision to use a combination of manual coding and coding with the assistance of computer software. Drawing on the discussion of the strengths of weaknesses of computer coding summarised by Welsh (2002), computer software was used to organise the data into manageable chunks, to facilitate more consistent and reliable recording of the data and to use the analytic tools available within the programme to facilitate the illumination and visualisation of themes. NVivo 10, a leading qualitative data analysis computer software

package, was the tool used. Particular strengths of NVivo in facilitating consistent, reliable coding were being able to view and review how each transcript had been coded and in revealing general patterns in the data by using text queries, matrix queries and coding at multiple sources. Training in how to use this software was sought from a course at the University of Sussex and thereafter the help services associated with this software. Participants' own answers in the written pre-task on their observations about having/being a working mother were coded into the nodes in the same way as the interview transcripts.

I was cognisant of the weaknesses described by Welsh (2002) of NVivo in particular and computer coding in general. One weakness is that NVivo has a limited range of analysis tools. Potential weaknesses that can be circumvented include becoming too distant from the meaning of the words of participants in the rather mechanistic process of coding and encouraging quantitative analysis of qualitative data. These issues were circumvented by manual coding (meaning writing memos on my observations as the fieldwork took place) and by printing out and visualising on paper connections between the codes and characteristics of the participants. This process stimulated recoding as deeper patterns emerged and informed ideas during the writing up of the research.

88 interviews were transcribed verbatim. The researcher in order to achieve closeness to the data and identify the initial pattern codes discussed below transcribed the first 30 interviews. A copy typist who was professionally skilled in the transcription of research interviews transcribed the remainder of the interviews. I then read and marked up all the transcripts and identified more codes that resulted in revisiting and recoding the transcripts. In the transcripts of the joint interviews, in order to make clear who was speaking, the comments of the mothers were typed in bold, the daughter in plain text and the moderator's questions in italics.

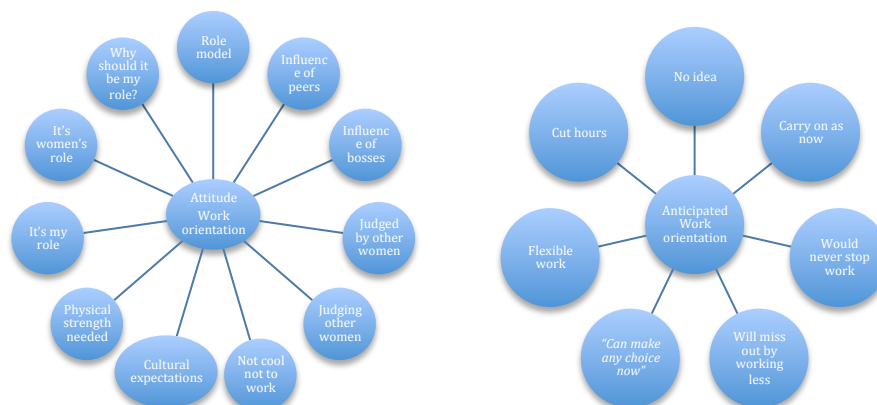
Hypotheses were abduced (Dey 2006) after close analysis of the data, following the principles of Grounded Theory. The data used to develop these hypotheses were a combination of the transcripts, the pre-tasks and notes written with top-of-mind thoughts immediately after each interview. These resources were all used to help identify attitudinal typologies or patterns in the data. First level codes (or 'parent nodes' as NVivo describes them) were developed a priori. Some of these codes were descriptive (for example; influences on the daughters' initial choices of career, did the daughters' want children?). Some of these codes were thematic and derived from the literature review (for example; managing emotions and stress, orientation to work). Some emerged from the

notes I had written immediately after each interview (for example, being judged), and some from the online questionnaires (for example, agree or disagree that work is important even if it gets in the way of family life). Pattern coding was then employed inductively to break down and represent themes that came from close reading of the data that were added as 'child nodes'. The definition of pattern coding used here is derived from Miles and Huberman (1994, p.57) as inferential patterns observed from the events, relationships and language contained in the verbatim transcripts.

For example, the first level code 'influences on daughter's choice of career' had pattern codes that emerged from the data as follows:

- Direct influence of mother
- Indirect influence of mother
- No influence of mother
- Direct influence of father
- Indirect influence of father
- Their own ideas
- Influence of peers
- Influence of others

This resulted in some data being coded in two places, where for example, both father and mother were credited together with influence. The transcripts of each mother and daughter pair were coded sequentially and a summary written of the key themes observed. This was helpful in identifying mirrored themes and differences. I then analysed the same interviews again with the intention of finding other ways of 'seeing' the data that challenged or added to my initial hypotheses. At this stage I paid particular attention to the language used by participants. Nodes representing pattern themes and invivo codes from language used were then added accordingly. As described above, recoding was also done as new patterns emerged from interview transcripts. The final step was to review the coding at each node and then break this down into additional child nodes. With Miles and Huberman's (1994) views on data display in mind, I expressed this process visually:



Each individual subject was turned into a node in order to facilitate direct comparison in the analysis between the mother and daughter pairs, in relation to the nodes coded. Key factual classifications were used so that the codes could be analysed by features such as age, relationship status and presence of father when growing up. Judgements were also applied to classifications including whether the father and/or partner of the daughter was traditional, transitional or egalitarian. These definitions were drawn from Hochschild (1990).

Matrix coding queries proved particularly useful in enabling the analysis to emerge that there was a link between attitude to motherhood ('Pragmatic' vs. 'Idealistic'-see 4.1.2) and feelings of guilt about the effect on the daughters of their work. Queries also showed a link between the attitude of the partners to parenting and the mothers' feeling that their child had been not been significantly affected by the effect of their working. Text searches and word frequency searches displayed as word trees were useful in several ways, such as identifying the language used by the daughters who are also mothers to describe their priorities in deciding how to return to work. Additional NVivo tools used to assist with the analysis were adding memos to each transcript and creating 'see also' links. Memos were used to comment on, for example, emerging themes, 'off tape' comments, contradictions or emphases observed. 'See also' links were used to highlight accounts of incidents or views where the mother and daughter pair mirrored each other (including disagreement as well as agreement on the same issues).

This approach to the analysis was fundamental to understanding each generation's explicit knowledge of the values and behaviours that had been transmitted within the family and specifically by the mothers. The research also sought to identify what of this transmission was unconscious, or at least unarticulated by comparing the accounts of mothers and their daughters made visible by matrix coding of each daughter and their mothers' views of what they felt was positive, negative or neutral in terms of the effects each perceived of the mothers' work. To draw on Thomson *et al.*, 'families forget as well as remember, and we have to look beyond the manifest stories that families tell about themselves, to gain a sense of the latent context that constitutes the family dynamic' (2011, p.1). Mothers and daughters narrated their experiences differently so, as well as searching for similarities in their accounts, I looked for what did not fit and what was omitted. I also considered the temporal, cultural and social factors discussed in the literature review that provided the context for the narratives of the participants.

Miles and Huberman (1994) also stressed the need to avoid confirmation bias in the analysis. I was therefore careful to search for examples that contradicted the assumptions that arose from the literature review. One significant challenge to my initial thinking was the emergence of the view that whilst most experienced work-life conflict this did not necessarily lead to negative feelings. Another important finding was that there was not often a link between the daughters' feeling that they had not been negatively affected by their mother working long hours and the notion that their working long hours would not therefore negatively affect their own children. In summary, the ideas of analysing data by abduction resulted in a top-down and bottom-up approach being taken.

3.5.3 Defining terminology and graphs used in analysis chapters

The names and other identifying features of both mothers and daughters have been changed throughout for reasons of confidentiality. Pseudonyms have been used. The work titles used for the mothers describe the highest position achieved in their formal careers prior to retirement or later career portfolio roles. In order to preserve confidentiality I have not described the ages or professions of mother and daughter when they are mentioned together and I have used general descriptions of their occupational segment at all times.

For the sake of clarity and brevity throughout the thesis, the daughters who are also mothers are referred to as 'daughter mothers'. Their mothers are referred to as 'grandmothers'. The terms, 'grandmothers' 'mothers' and 'daughters' denote the different generations of working women with whom this research is concerned. Ages are given for the daughters because they spanned several life stages but not for the mothers. The mothers were almost all in their 50s and the grandmothers were in their 60s.

In the analysis chapters that follow, data from the online pre-task is sometimes presented graphically as a way of illustrating a point and should not be interpreted as an attempt to quantify the findings.

Chapter 4: Mothers and Daughters: Reflections on Outcomes of Combining Motherhood with Work

There will always be compromises, it's how you manage that. Because of working for myself and having a husband who is an involved father I think it made less of an impact negatively than it might have done but I don't see how it could not make an impact.

(Julie, Managing Director)

What I've got from my mother is the possibility of doing what I want to do. I shouldn't limit my horizons in any way. I think she'd like me to think that I could be very successful and have a family and that would be okay. (Jessica, undergraduate daughter of Julie)

This chapter examines the accounts of mothers on their lived experience of combining motherhood with a successful career and triangulates these accounts with their daughters' descriptions of growing up with a working mother. Lived experience is defined as self-reflexively ascribing meaning to experiences (Van Maanen 1988). This chapter also draws on the idea that motherhood is a way of behaving as well as a state of being (as conceptualised, for example, by Miller 2005).

A key point of context is Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg's (1994) argument that forces for change are in conflict with some of the cultural expectations that display more inertia than others, such as the traditional model of motherhood and maternal guilt. Bjerrum and Rudberg (1994) also argue that mother-daughter relationships are complex and fluid. The experience of relationships is constructed in the space between people rather than in the fixed qualities of either (Giddens 1991) and interviewing twins demonstrated that the relationship with the same mother did not lead to identical conclusions about the impact of being brought up by a mother with a career. Equally, the mothers reported different views about the impact of their employment upon different children or the same children at different times in their lives. The personality of the child and specific events that are particular to each child influenced the way in which the child felt affected by their mother's career. The key findings of this research therefore take account of mothers and daughters cumulative perspectives over time about how work in career roles was perceived to have positive, neutral or negative effects upon the daughters. Three main original contributions are made within this chapter. First, the identification of different attitudes women in successful careers displayed in relation to combining motherhood and work. My definition of the word 'attitude' used in this context is an enduring organisation of feelings and behavioural tendencies. The research suggested an alternative use of language to the commonly used 'Maximiser' and 'Satisficer' terms coined by Crompton and Harris (1998) to better describe these attitudes match the observation that identities are not fixed and change over time. Secondly, this chapter presents evidence that shows that

the level of concern expressed by many of the mothers about the potential negative effects of their working on their daughters was not matched by the daughters. Only three out of 30 expressed the view that they had been negatively affected. The vast majority had a few complaints about specific incidents but, in general, felt that their mothers had managed work and motherhood in a way that was comfortable for them. They gave specific reasons for this belief and also saw advantages in terms of having a role model for a strong work ethic and a successful career. Other advantages perceived were having access to interesting environments and ideas and benefiting in terms of learning to be independent. Thirdly, a clear link was apparent between the experience of egalitarian parenting and the mothers expressing fewer feelings of compromise or stress in relation to managing work and motherhood. In addition, those with 'Pragmatic' attitudes who reported fewer fundamental concerns about the effect on their children of their careers tended to be in relationships characterised by egalitarian parenting.

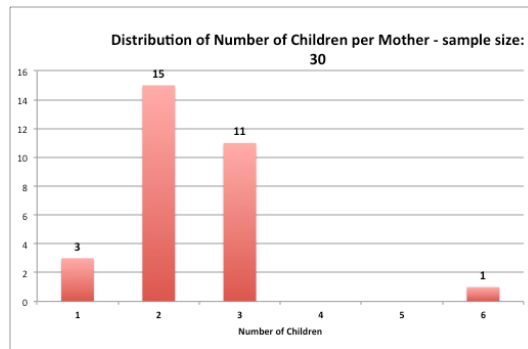
The reporting of the research findings below starts in section 4.1 with how mothers characterised their experience of work and motherhood and demonstrates that two distinct types emerged in terms of their attitudes towards managing both. Section 4.2 presents mothers' stories concerning the effects they believed their careers had on their daughters; positive, neutral and negative and compares the mothers' accounts with those of their daughters. The lens is then focused on the effect mothers thought the demands of motherhood had upon their career outcomes. Section 4.3 discusses the role played by the fathers of the daughters. Section 4.4 concludes this chapter with key findings.

The ages of the daughters only are reported below to make clear when the daughters, rather than the mothers are being quoted.

4.1 Mothers on managing work and motherhood

The mothers in this sample, shown in Table 1 below, had on average 2.4 children, close to the current national average of 2.7 (ONS 2012). Indeed, many of those who were at the highest levels in their professions had 3 children or more, which facilitated insight about career women in senior positions of responsibility who also had several children.

Table 1: Distribution of the number of children per mother: (n.30)



4.1.1 Identity as mothers and workers

The mothers were recruited to work more than an average of 32 hours a week during the course of their careers, mainly out of the home. Most worked longer hours than this. Only two in this sample were examples of a 'careerist by necessity' (Crompton and Harris 1998, p.138) who would rather not have worked when their children were pre junior school but felt compelled to, in one case due to the circumstances of her divorce and, in the other case, having a husband who was not earning enough for her not to work. Both these women expressed that they loved their careers after their children reached secondary school. All the other women, including those who were lone mothers, wanted to work in a satisfying career. In almost all cases mothers worked around the career path they had started on prior to the arrival of the first child. This confirms the research of Thomson *et al.* (2011) who found that women's relationship with work tended to dictate their approach to motherhood. What was noticeable about this sample was that all felt work to be an important part of their identity that was *combined* with a strong sense of their identity as a mother. There was no sense of one role being more important to them than the other. Valerie, a senior manager in retail expressed this vividly as the 'twin pillars' of her life.

Many of the mothers, who were already committed to their careers, described being surprised by the intensity of feeling evoked by the birth of their children and the sense that their lives had changed profoundly as illustrated below:

Before I had Isabelle my thoughts were rather practical about how...I would cope with the baby. Her first day in the world was an epiphany –one look at that little face and my life was changed forever with 'big love'. (Imogen, lawyer)

On the other hand, most felt just as strongly that they did not want to be at home for most of the time. One of many expressions of the fear that this would be boring to them was:

To be honest I would have gone bonkers doing that. I would really have found it so boring. I couldn't have done it, couldn't. I would have felt sort of pointless.
(Christina, judge)

This interconnectedness also resulted in the comment of many mothers that they applied their family rearing skills to work and vice versa. As Eiona, CEO, in finance, said:

The mixture of settling boundaries and encouragement I do with my children is just the same as the way in which I manage my team.

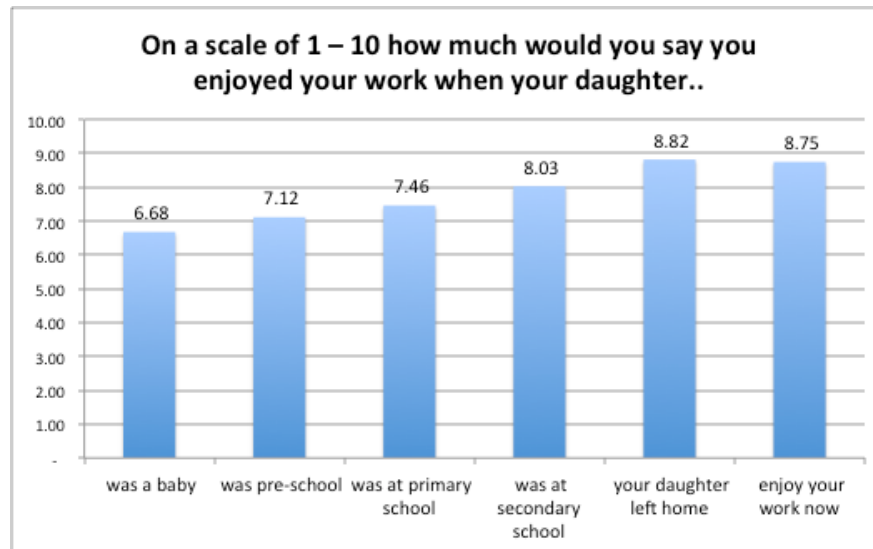
These findings confirm the theory of Bailey (1999) that women do not necessarily experience disjuncture in their relational identities. This research also adds evidence from a broad sample of occupational groupings to Laney's (2014) research on academics, in demonstrating that women working in higher skill roles conceptualise their identities in a way that does not set up motherhood and work as binary opposite parts of their identity that are in competition with each other. This adds nuance to what is implied by the phrase, 'work-life conflict' (Crompton *et al.* 2007, p.283) and to the findings of Thomson *et al.* (2011, p.175) who stated that middle class mothers with careers experience the two as competing projects. However, for all these mothers who identified with and enjoyed work, it was also true that managing work and motherhood involved feelings of compromise. Xanthe summed up the views of most of the mothers as follows:

I have always liked work... That doesn't mean I haven't made compromises because I have children because I have, but actually going to work wasn't one of them. (Xanthe, arts Director)

One measure of their level of discomfort with the competing demands of work and home is what number out of 10 they said they enjoyed their work at different periods of their children's lives (in the online questionnaire). The mothers sometimes explained that the nature of their job at the time accounted for these scores, but more often they reported that these scores reflected times of particular stress in managing both pillars of their lives. As shown in Table 2 below, the times of greatest difficulty were prior to secondary school and the older the children got, the more they were likely to give the highest scores to their enjoyment of work. The table also showed that the mothers experienced a small peak in the enjoyment of their work when their children left home. This was expressed by many as a relief from having to factor their children into what they were doing day by day. These different scores given at different times correspond to Bimrose's (2014) research on career transitions that describe the contextual ways in which mothers make decisions about work in relation to their family circumstances. However, most of the career women interviewed here did not report they changed their working hours. Explanations for this are that fewer opportunities existed to work less than full-time and could also plausibly be

related to their identification with and enjoyment of work that will be discussed in 4.1.2 below.

Table 2: How much mothers enjoyed their work over time: (n.30)



All had experienced challenges or major life changes along the way and some of these challenges were profound such as; serious illnesses in the family, the end of relationships, and changes of sexual orientation. Procter and Padfield (1998) and Crompton and Harris (1998) have attested to the effects of 'fateful events' that cause work-life biographies to change. In all cases, when faced with exceptional problems such as serious illness these mothers reported they put their children first without hesitation and, in the words of one solicitor, 'side-lined' work when necessary. They also reported that they were fully supported in this by their employers. It is impossible to fully isolate the effects of the 'fateful events' that change work- life biographies from more everyday challenges. Nevertheless, the mothers in the sample spent most of their time dealing with the challenges of everyday working life and this will be the focus of this chapter.

All the mothers shared stories about the trade-offs involved in negotiating their way through the everyday challenges life presented. An over-arching theme upon which all agreed is that managing home life and work life takes hard work as illustrated by these comments: Anita, a teacher and grandmother said: 'Motherhood and work can be mixed successfully. It just takes a lot of hard work and effort'. Julie, MD of a research company said:

I think people who are energetic and conscientious tend to be across all of their lives and I think I'm like that and a lot of the working women I know are as well.

This supports Crompton and Harris' (1998, p.143) characterisation of mothers with careers as highly agential 'Maximisers' who are effectively making the most of their opportunities and achievements. However, what my research adds is an emotional perspective. The mothers with successful careers mostly enjoyed their work and they worked thoughtfully, meaning that day-to-day they considered the trade-offs they were making, to arrive at a solution they felt comfortable enough with for their daughters. Where differences between mothers were obvious were in how mothers felt cumulatively about the trade offs they were making and the effects of these trade offs. This was characterised by Hochschild (1983, p.44) as 'emotion management'. The next section discusses these differences.

4.1.2 Different attitudes to managing motherhood and work

The attitudes of mothers to the everyday trade-offs they made were different and specific to their circumstances and also to their thoughts and feelings about motherhood. Martha, CEO in local government expressed elegantly how much of a mother's sense of what is best for her child is a projection of her own values:

In my NCT class there were 6 of us...all relatively professionally advancing our careers. When we talked beforehand they all planned to go back to work. When the babies arrived they all had a very different narrative. But none of us talked about it in terms of what we wanted. We all talked about it in terms of what's good for our babies. So me; "Megan's a very sociable baby so she's going to need to be with other children", whereas my friend Anita would say, "well, I don't know, Matthew needs a little bit of extra care, so maybe a few days a week will be enough with a child-minder". Jennifer said, "It's quite clear that Amy won't thrive if she's not home with me". And isn't it interesting that none of us had a clue about what our babies personalities were at that point (laughs) so I suspect there's a lot of that rationalisation.

The mothers' reports conveyed the emergence of two attitudes to managing motherhood and work that I have described as "Pragmatic and 'Idealistic'. In describing these attitudes I have used adjectives (I behave like this) rather than nouns (I am like this) because the theoretical framework I have drawn from to characterise identity emphasises its fluid nature (Bailey 1999; Laney 2014). These different attitudes were evident not in their level of identification with work but in the way they thought they should mother. What therefore followed was that differences in attitude were correlated with how much and how often they felt maternal guilt (Parker 1995). There was no clear link between 'Pragmatic' and 'Idealistic' attitudes and the way childcare was arranged. For example, those with children who were in nursery for long hours were found amongst each type. Nor was there a clear link to working hours. The hours of both types had varied over the

course of their careers and included mothers who had been able to flex their hours, who had worked four day weeks at times or who had worked 50 plus hours.

Those who were 'Pragmatic' in attitude shared the feeling that they did not get everything right but their children had not suffered as a result of them working. Some, not all, felt guilt sometimes about specific incidents and, as described by Emma, consultant doctor, felt uncomfortable about the 'equal and opposite pulls' of their responsibilities, particularly at the end of their working day:

She was cross, quite rightly...if I rolled up at the bus stop even a quarter of an hour late and that was an uncomfortable demonstration of the fact that...genuinely you can mean you are my top priority but actually today you are not...something happened at work that made me late.

'Pragmatic' mothers did not identify themselves as feeling generalised guilt about being working mothers. As Naomi, a solicitor put it: 'We're all hyped up on this guilt thing but I'm not sure how many of us really feel guilty or should'. 'Pragmatic' mothers commented that they were not making a choice between their children and work and that their children were at the centre of their lives. As expressed below, they felt that it was not helpful to see family and work in opposition to each other because then the gain in one area would inevitably mean a loss in the other:

I think it is important that young people in the workplace know that you don't have to get it right and perfect all the time and understand it's not a set of binary choices. (Martha, CEO, local government)

There's a difference between when you measure things relative to perfection or relative to the alternative. I think if you measure the children's experience of growing up relative to perfection then I'm sure that leads to all sorts of regrets. (Orla, stockbroker)

Some also described their feelings from the point of view of their daughter:

I don't think I compartmentalise very much between home and life and work...I've never seen those two role in any way in conflict...I feel I've always been a bit keener on hanging out with Jessica than she is with me. (Julie, MD in research)

Several mothers with 'Pragmatic' attitudes also reported that they actively negotiated boundaries with their colleagues and employers that allowed them to have a level of flexibility to meet the demands of their families. They had done this first early in their careers after they returned from maternity leave, which speaks to a high level of self-confidence. This behaviour at work was described by two of the mothers, both of whom had risen to the highest level in their professions:

I have always been clear that I wouldn't sacrifice my kids at the temple of my ambition which is why I've been very clear with employers about what I will and

will not do and that sometimes has been a deal breaker...I'm a family person. That's what comes with me. (Ruth, arts CEO)

I have known lots of women who have invented a dental appointment when they needed to go to the school play. I've always thought it was important to be upfront because it's just as important as work to be at the school play. (Eiona, CEO, finance)

In part the attitude of 'Pragmatics' seemed to derive from their attitude to life in general and in part was a response to having compressed time as described by two mothers of three, which is likely to influence their feelings about compressed time:

You don't have time or headspace to rethink what you are doing. You just have to do it. It's fairly relentless. But as long as it stayed relentless in a mostly good way then that's all right. (Bridget, GP)

I wouldn't feel guilty about it because I think your children will get the benefit of whatever arrangement you made. As long as they're loved and secure I don't think it matters enormously personally. There's no sense of neglecting your children, you just have to make the time and space to make it all work, even if that time is limited. (Christina, Judge)

For others, 'Pragmatic' thinking derived from the corollary of the hard work that is required to manage a demanding career and motherhood. A few mothers felt they did not have the stamina or resilience necessary to climb the career ladder and had backed off the hours they worked because of physical or mental health issues (this applied to more of the 'daughter mothers'). This point adds to current learning because it appears to be absent from the work-life literature. A few could also be described as 'Pragmatic' because they rarely engaged in a debate with themselves about the way they combined motherhood with work because, as expressed by one mother in this position, they felt they had no option financially to make any significant changes: 'I had no choice. What's the point in feeling guilty about it?' (Donna, teacher and grandmother)

Overall, those with a 'Pragmatic' attitude felt that as long as their children felt loved and secure the trade-offs, that came when work and family life were in competition for their time and attention, were not something to feel guilty or regretful about. There may be an element of post-hoc rationalisation in these views given that most of these mothers were no longer in the moment when they were facing the emotional fall-out of day-to-day problems. In addition, looking backwards many acknowledged that they had their fair share of good luck and stated their belief that any problems their children have are not related to their working. This was well expressed by Xanthe, mother of three and arts director:

I'm in the happy position... of knowing that they are all pretty happy, balanced, independent people and if there are things in their make up that are less comfortable it's not because I worked. It's for many more complex reasons that...I always knew there'd be a time when I'd look back and it would be alright because I knew I loved them enough and looking back now I think that's true.

I turn now to those with 'Idealistic' attitudes who tended to measure themselves against their ideal in terms of how they would like to behave as workers and mothers, often found themselves lacking and often felt guilty. Valerie, senior retail manager's description of combining work with family exemplified this 'Idealistic' attitude:

Feeling I was not doing anything properly. Lurching from crisis to crisis...never getting it right...almost never getting it right

Interviewer: What would right have been like?

Being the perfect employee and mother. But you'd need 48 hours in a day...time is one constraint. A bigger constraint is energy and headspace. I have already mentioned my need to do things properly or not at all.

A dominant idea heard from the 'Idealistic' was their feeling that they were not doing either job well enough. Some used highly charged emotional language such as feeling they were 'abandoning' either their colleagues or child. A few reported making big changes, such as setting up their own companies in order to wrestle back control. This type talked more often about feeling guilt. Some said this guilt came from within themselves as reported by Caroline, mother of one, grandmother and head of an NHS research body: 'The only person judging me was myself. But that was enough'. Some of this guilt was reported as coming from sensitivity to cultural judgement. For example, judgement from family members or from other mothers, not for working but for 'working a lot', especially when this entailed 'abandoning' their children to nursery. These women clearly felt that they were not adhering to the dominant cultural script about being a good worker (Williams 2000) or a good mother (Parker 1995, Miller 2012). Both good workers and good mothers are assumed to be available to meet the demands of the workplace or children respectively which causes obvious conflict.

Situational difficulties also played a part in underpinning the feelings of the 'Idealistic' mothers. Those who had experienced relationship difficulties such as Una, an academic, spoke of 'a generalised sense of guilt' that was amplified by their emotional situation. Lone mothers were particularly self-critical because all the responsibility lay on their shoulders, especially when they had moved away from where their parents lived. 13 of the mothers in this sample had been lone parents at some time, of whom 5 had been single for long periods during their daughter's childhoods. Some of the lone mothers had

particularly ad hoc childcare arrangements because of their relatively lower salaries and they also reported guilt about some experiences with child carers that they felt had put their children at risk, as exemplified by Una again:

She ran away from a friend who was supposed to be looking after her after school and went home...and climbed in through a broken pane of glass in the back door. She was about 10. The friend was a bit mad and didn't let me know what had happened or check that she was ok.

What seemed to lie behind the feelings of 'Idealistic' mothers was the idea that they had choices. A strong sense comes from their comments that there could be a better way, an answer, if only they tried harder to find it. This complements Gatrell's view (2008) that the setting of goals, targets and standards against which to measure achievement is a feature of late modern industrial society. These observations also build on the work of Stone (2007) who points out the illusory nature of idea of binary opposites to choose between and Hochschild's use of the phrase 'cultural cover up' (1990, p.22) to describe the cultural over simplification of the context in which women are making their decisions about managing motherhood and work. Williams (2000) in particular questioned the facile language such as 'having it all' often used in the media to frame these choices.

Whilst many have discussed the 'Idealistic' approach to motherhood (including Parker 1995; Miller 2012) an original contribution of this research is the identification of mothers with a 'Pragmatic' attitude to the way they felt they should mother whilst also working in a demanding career. Moreover, this research offers my definition of the terms 'Pragmatic' and 'Idealistic' to describe the different types of feelings and attitudes to mothering whilst also being committed to a career. These definitions derived from my opinion that the terms 'Maximisers' and 'Satisficers', coined by Crompton and Harris (1998), to describe the work-life strategies of female members of the banking and medical professions, did not fit the accounts I heard from the mothers in this sample. I also revisited economic theorist Simon's (1956) original definitions of the terms 'Maximisers' and 'Satisficers'. The differences are précised as follows and demonstrate potential for confusion: 'Maximisers' were defined by Crompton and Harris as women who 'seek to maximise goals in respect of employment and family' whereas Simon's definition is to 'consider and review all possibilities comprehensively to strive to find the best option'. 'Satisficer' behaviour was defined by Crompton and Harris as 'conscious scaling down of employment or family goals in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome' whereas Simon's definition is a 'decision making strategy aiming at an adequate, reasonably satisfying result rather than the optimum outcome'. Psychologists (such as Schwarz *et al.* 2002) also note that 'Satisficers'

tend to feel more positive than 'Maximisers'. As already noted, Crompton and Harris described as 'Maximisers' those who were most highly agential in effectively making the most of their opportunities and achievements. I theorise that the 'Pragmatic' in this sample more closely demonstrated what economists call 'Satisficing', by aiming at an adequate, reasonably satisfying result rather than the optimum outcome. However, they were not scaling down their goals. 'Pragmatic' seems to be a more apposite term because they challenged the notion of binary choices, were amongst the most evidently self-confident amongst the sample and included some who had reached the highest levels in their careers. The 'Idealistic' label used here captures their objective to make the best possible choices for themselves and their children and does not suffer from the trivialising, negative connotations of 'having it all'. The word 'Idealistic' has a negative aspect given that it describes what is often unachievable. This, however, seems apposite in the context of the notion of illusory choices expressed above.

Whether their attitude to motherhood was more 'Pragmatic' or 'Idealistic' many of the mothers tried to mitigate the effects of their working on their children and, in this sense, worked thoughtfully. However, all also thought that because they had worked for long periods out of the home that it was inevitable that this had an effect on their children. The next section therefore looks at mothers' perceptions of the neutral, negative and positive effects on their children and compares the views of the mothers to those of their daughters.

4.2 Mothers and daughters' stories on the effects of working

The start point for this section is how the mothers arrived at their opinions about the effects of their careers upon their daughters and vice versa. Commentators have theorised that it is not until the second peak in early adolescence that children let go of the safety of parental protection and start to perceive and interact with their parents as people (Blos 1979; Steinberg 1990). In some cases no direct conversations had ever taken place about how the daughters felt about their mothers working until, prompted by participation in this research, a direct conversation took place in the joint interviews. The main explanations given for not having talked about feelings about the mother working were that the daughters simply did not express any interest or that having or being a working mother was a normal, unremarkable part of life that both mother and daughter just got on with. Also, for most mothers, working was, as described by Bridget, a GP: 'an irrevocable choice' for financial reasons and/or because of the satisfaction they got from working. However, even though some had never had direct conversations it was clear from their

accounts that almost all in this sample had close relationships and that they often thought they knew what the other thought or felt even when topics were not discussed. Daughter Megan, aged 24, working in marketing, whose mother worked full-time until after Megan went to university illustrated this finding:

I can tell when we are discussing things if she's not fully invested in her response and then I'll ask what she actually thought. I'm relatively good at it. And vice versa. She's very good at knowing when I'm worried about something and not talking about it. Or if I've talked around the subject and not said the actual thing that I want to discuss. She'll realise this and ask me about it.

Further evidence for the divining of unspoken opinions is found in the fact that most daughters did demonstrate knowledge about their mother's jobs and motivations for working and these will be fully described in Chapter 5. Moreover, in many cases conversations about how mothers and daughters felt about combining work with motherhood did take place when their daughters reached their late teens or university years and were starting to contrast their own experiences with those of their peers.

4.2.1 'My daughter was unhappy about the long hours I worked'

This section examines the three exceptions in the sample where their daughters' unhappiness with their mother working had been clearly and consistently expressed, both verbally and in the behaviour of their daughters. These stories are relevant to Galinsky's (1999) finding that 26% of 8-18 year olds gave their mothers negative scores. Two cases were lone mothers with absent fathers and both of these were 'Idealistic' in attitude. The third example was the only one in the sample whose husband stayed at home to raise the children and the mother had a 'Pragmatic' attitude. In all three cases mother and daughter had discussed the daughters' feelings about the mothers' working hours.

Lone mother and senior social worker, Yvonne, said that after being left by her partner when her daughter, Yasmin, was aged 3, her financial situation had been very difficult and had meant that Yasmin was in after-school club between the ages of 6 and 10. During this time she knew that Yasmin experienced periods when she suffered severely from anxiety when separated from her mother. Later, when she had been able to negotiate more flexibility at work, her daughter was a 'latch key kid' for 3 days a week. Yvonne reported that her daughter's narrative was that Yvonne's only option was to work because they needed the money and that she would have been home with her if she had not had to go to work. Yvonne reported feeling guilty often but also explained that she got much satisfaction from her job and did not want to downgrade her responsibilities by working part-time. She felt that Yasmin would have preferred her to be at home every day after

school and in the holidays but Yvonne's view was that Yasmin's anxiety was rooted in her perceived abandonment by her father and that part-time working would not give Yasmin the level of contact with her mother that she craved. Yvonne reported that Yasmin felt different from other children of separated parents because her father was hardly in her life and because of being the only child consistently in after-school-club. It was this latter point that Yvonne regretted because that was theoretically more within her control:

I felt that if I'd just been able to spend a little more time with her after school...I think she would have still struggled but I think it would have helped because she went to an after school club...5 days a week...and I think she felt it when other kids got picked up from school. (Yvonne, social work director)

Her undergraduate daughter, Yasmin, described herself as suffering from severe anxiety and told me that she felt rejected by her father and that her mother's absences at work also made her feel rejected by her other parent. She hated summer camps and the after school club and said how awful it was to be 'in care' until five or six o'clock every day. Yasmin contrasted her experience with those of her peers, most of whom she believed had 'parents that chose to stay at home, and have a lot of life despite that choice'. She also described her family as 'different'. Yasmin sought to absolve her mother of blame by saying that Yvonne had no choice but to work for financial reasons, matching what Yvonne reported to be her daughter's narrative. Simultaneously she did blame her mother for underestimating how bad she felt and her: 'continual belief that it was a phase'. Yasmin ultimately felt that:

She was away so much it was difficult to feel like there was some kind of stability...If she had worked less I could have got some of my issues resolved and she would have had time to listen to and understand me. I think a child with mental health problems was not a pressure my Mum could afford at that time.

Tara, now a managing director, was a lone mother whose daughters' father was entirely absent. She said her: 'big fear was that by working I'd become an unsuccessful mother' because, after having Tanya in her teens, she had chosen a career that meant she often worked long hours and worked abroad and therefore did not spend enough time with Tanya when she was younger. She reported that Tanya had often told her she hated this and missed her mother. Tanya reported missing her Mum when she was away for long periods, feeling very sad about this and that reflecting on her feelings over the last few years had made her realise that she was angry and thought: 'it really wasn't ok to prioritise work to that level'. She attributed her problems to her unusual situation of only having one parent. She had many friends with divorced parents but not with wholly absent fathers. Her final verdict, however, on growing up with a mother with a successful career was more balanced:

I am so proud of her and in a way those travelling opportunities were exactly what made me want to go into [the same field] but I also question whether it is a good idea as I wouldn't want that for my children. I think having a single parent is a big part of that though...I secretly do think having a stay at home Mum would be quite boring. I might not be able to look up to them in the same way and it would feel like a lot of pressure to know that they had given everything up for you...so I am glad I have had a working mother, even if at times it was hard.

The third daughter who reported profound problems with having a full-time working mother was Olivia, an undergraduate. Her mother, Orla, felt strongly that one parent should stay at home to bring up children and that the person best fitted for the job by temperament and financially was her husband. Orla reported that her daughter, Olivia, appreciated the value of having a parent at home but would have preferred the parent at home to be her mother. Olivia expressed her issues with her upbringing in emotionally charged language calling her situation 'unnatural' and talking about her Dad's 'resentment' of this role even whilst also saying he was emotionally responsive. In the joint interview Olivia told her mother that she had not been a good mother because: 'if you are working so much you are not a mother'. Olivia said that she did not feel as a child that she got enough affection from her Mum and that she felt jealous of her friends' stay-at-home mothers who picked her friends up from school and did their homework together at the kitchen table. Orla attributed some of Olivia's problems to the comparisons she made with her peers at school:

Most of the mothers had worked but given up...I think the Mums coming to the gate... I think she would have liked that. She's conformist. I don't think she enjoyed being in a non-conventional situation.

She recounted that her husband has suffered from depression for a time and this had 'heavily coloured Olivia's view as to the quality of her overall family life'. She also reported reacting to Olivia's view by going part-time when Orla was 13 (although Orla thought she was about 15 when this happened).

Two out of the three daughters who had a profound problem with the number of hours their mothers worked were in their early 20s and had not yet fully left home. I therefore considered if there could be a link between these more negative views and recent emergence from childhood but the eight of the ten daughters in the sample who were still undergraduates or very recent graduates did not feel their mothers' working hours had had a negative effect upon them. Therefore the explanation for these more negative views is likely to lie elsewhere. The fact that two of these three were children of lone mothers is not an adequate explanation because there were three others in the sample who had grown up mainly with lone mothers. A possibility to consider is that two out of

these three daughters had no siblings and absent fathers. There were two other daughters with absent fathers in the sample but they had siblings. Due to financial difficulties these two daughters also experienced ad hoc child-care arrangements and they too reported occasions when they felt sadness or anxiety that their mother had been in an accident and would never come home, as described by teacher and 'daughter mother' Hannah, 34. They did not, however, feel that their mothers' work had affected them negatively. The verdict of recent graduate Ashley, 21, was that: 'I didn't like her being away but I never saw it as her putting work above me'. What did stand out about the daughters with absent fathers and no siblings (who did feel that their mothers' work had affected them negatively) was that they had particularly close relationships with their mothers and when their mothers worked they felt her absence keenly. There is little literature written from the point of view of the children of lone parents. From the perspective of single mothers, Morris argued in her PhD thesis (2013) that relationships between lone mothers and only children can be particularly intense. Gagnon (2014), currently interviewing the children of lone parents, argued that there are many subtle ways in which social pressure is exerted in a way that makes the children of lone parents feel different from their peers in so-called 'normal' two parent families. Both these factors may suggest that being an only child with an absent father explained the participants' problems with their mothers' working hours. However, Golombok (2015) concluded from her analysis of 35 years of global research that children are more likely to flourish in families that provide love, stability and security, whatever their structure. I therefore find more convincing the explanation that these daughters who thought their mother's working had affected them negatively all felt different from their peers in a way that troubled them. 10 years ago it was uncommon for a father to be the principal parent (ONS 2013d) and other differences were perceived because he was a manual worker at the gates of a private school. Yasmin felt different in having a father who was rarely around and in being in after-school-club for longer periods than her peers. Tanya felt that having a completely absent father and a mother whose work took her away from home for long periods made her different. They seemed to feel that their mothers had flouted dominant cultural scripts about motherhood, described by Thomson *et al.* (2011, p.277) as 'the intensification of responsibility' and by Miller (2012, p.41) as 'good mothers' who are assumed to be selfless and available to meet their children's demands.

4.2.2 *How work affected their daughters - Concerns*

The majority of the other mothers (both 'Pragmatic' and 'Idealistic' in attitude) expressed concern that their long working hours outside the home had *sometimes* negatively affected

their daughters, which had prompted examination of their choices and sometimes led them to change their relationship with work. Many mothers reported worrying that their children must have been aware of their tiredness or stress that led to their doing less with their children or focusing on them less than they wanted to. An important theme was that work, especially travelling for work, got in the way of being on the spot when their daughter needed them for emotional support. This was thought to be an issue for the teen years as well as when their daughters were younger.

Almost all of the mothers recounted a few specific examples from their daughters' childhood and adolescence of complaints about them working or having reacted badly when younger to separation. Usually only one or two instances had stuck in their minds over the years but they recalled these instances as having cut them deeply as the stories below attest:

When Emily was about 5, I spent every day of a two week holiday with them and came to the shocking realisation at the end of that time that I knew them better at the end of that two weeks...and that I hadn't known them too well until that point (Emma, consultant doctor)

I had been promoted to Director and my working day was very long. I often arrived home just before bedtime. I would immediately ask the girls about their homework ...or something they needed to do. I realised later that this ritual was seen by them as my emphasising the irrelevant in their lives...I had brought my office persona home with me and I was guilty of treating the girls as a project (Faith, director, law)

Another theme was concern expressed that their daughter had missed out by not having a parent home after school. These worries were often based on comparing themselves with other mothers who were there after school or at more school events which also reflects cultural scripts about what is expected of mothers (Doucet 2006; Miller 2012).

The main point of concern was, as expected, when childcare arrangements went wrong because that went to the heart of there being a cost to their children of them not being at home. One of many specific examples given was:

We found a book behind the sofa and I asked... "why was it here?" and Willow said "oh that's [the child minders]. I hid it because she would just read and she wouldn't play with me, talk to me." And again that awful feeling of guilt that there you are thinking your child is happy and looked after while you're at work and finding out that's not the case. (Wendy, MD, IT)

This confirms the findings of much research that has pointed out that mothers, more often than fathers, take the main responsibility for organising childcare to substitute for them

when they are working (Gatrell 2008; Thomson *et al.* 20011; Miller 2012). It therefore follows that mothers feel the consequences when things go wrong.

The mothers' responses to the problems they experienced were to act upon them as far as they were able or thought vital. Mothers had the opportunity to look for more flexible hours in only a few cases (switching for example to self-employment) which is unsurprising given that the Right to Request Flexible working only came into force in 2003. One mother, who was 'Idealistic' in attitude, decided to leave her job and take a career break for three years. This was an option affordable to her, which was not the case for many of the mothers. Despite the specific incidents they recalled, most mothers looked back over all their experiences and thought that their daughters were either neutral about or did not have a deep-seated problem with their mothers' commitment to work. The main explanation they offered for this view was that having a working mother was a normal and accepted part of their daughters' lives.

Turning now to the accounts of the daughters, it was noteworthy that they recounted far fewer negative incidents or concerns related to having a mother who worked long hours, either in the pre tasks that most completed prior to the interviews or in the interviews themselves. The incidents that were recalled were felt to be transitory, such as their Mum being away when the cat got run over, missing their Mum after a trip to the dentist, or having to sit in their mothers place of work whilst they were off school with minor illnesses. Only Florence, 24, the working daughter of a lawyer, said she had missed out 'a bit':

When I think of my childhood I don't think of her being too much in it. Which I think she would be slightly gutted to hear...I probably did miss out on things just in terms of a bit of face-time and kind of knowing my mum when I was younger...maybe that feeling of being a mummy's girl

She went on to tell me she was a 'massive daddy's girl' even though her father also worked full-time. Arguably this indicated that she felt her mother had more responsibility to be there than her father which again illustrates the resilience of cultural scripts about motherhood. More typically, when asked open questions about any feelings about growing up with a working mother many said, just as their mothers predicted, they had never given it much thought. This was exemplified by Chloe, 26, an academic, who said 'I can't remember wishing she was around more...I think your parents are quite incidental'. Many daughters thought that their absence of strong feelings was indicative of them having no significant problems with their mothers working. Several explicitly said they had no

feelings of having 'missed out' or feeling 'resentful', or 'neglected' or 'tension as a result of her working'.

Instead, many daughters talked more about how their mothers had managed their work and home lives in a way that meant their daughters did not feel compromised. Most mention was made of feeling that that were loved and important to their mothers, mainly demonstrated by spending time with the family at weekends, on family holidays and, for some after work. Most had vivid recall of times spent together. Many daughters also said that they valued their mother being more than just physically present when she was home. Several had noticed that their mother limited the amount of work they did at home or worked when they were in bed or otherwise occupied. Academic Chloe, 26, raised the importance of being genuinely present and pointed out that, in contrast to her father:

My Mum works long hours as well and I had a sense that her work was very important to her...[but] she was very good at switching off and having evenings and weekends and holidays.

This was linked by many of the daughters to feeling secure because they knew when their mother planned to be away, what time their mother would be home or that they were able to contact her at work. As recent graduate Gina, 22, explained: 'We always ring her at work. She never says we can't. She's always available to us unless she is in a meeting'.

The importance of knowing the routine was also described by Jessica, 22, undergraduate daughter of a company director:

Knowing her routine maybe as a child was very important. We had this Spanish woman who came every Wednesday when they were both working...Tuesday was the day when my Dad came back early. I guess that helps. You know Mum is never there on a Wednesday so that's fine.

It was also important to all the daughters that their Mum was there for what the daughters considered to be important events, such as sport or arts performances or parent's nights. The importance of comparisons made between peers at the school gates was confirmed by the fact that there was only one significant difference between the accounts of daughters of mothers with 'Pragmatic' or 'Idealistic attitudes. Several daughters of 'Idealistic' mothers said that they did not want to replicate, with their own children, their experience of being cared for away from home after school. This view seems to have come from a mixture of their own memories and conversations with their mothers who did have concerns about their daughters' after school care.

The daughters often commented that it was more important to them that their mothers were at their school events than their fathers, which also reflects deep-seated cultural

constructs about motherhood. Even if some occasions were missed knowing that their mother had wanted to be there was often enough. The big point was about feeling they were important to their mothers as illustrated by recent graduate Isabelle, aged 23:

We had nannies and we missed her when she went away for work but... we were aware that she loved us. So I never felt like she wasn't there even when she wasn't.

Little directly comparable research exists that examines the perspectives of mothers and daughters and that focuses on mothers with successful careers. However, some corroboration comes from the Timescapes qualitative longitudinal interviews with much younger (primary age) children that inquired about the impact of having working parents. They found that the children did not feel ill-affected but also highlighted that many of the children said they disliked not being able to go home straight after school (Backett-Milburn *et al.* 2011). Thinking about research amongst older children, psychologist Apter (2001) in her book, *The Myth of Maturity* discussed the importance to young adults in their late teens and twenties of feeling that their mothers are attentive and supportive of them even as they also strive to separate themselves. She also commented that it is little acknowledged how young adults remain emotionally invested in their parents. It was clear from my research that, including the three exceptions discussed in 4.2.1, these were positive mother daughter relationships and that the vast majority of the daughters felt their mothers had managed to combine work with motherhood in a way that meant they were not ill affected. Turning again to the accounts of the mothers, it was evident that the mothers had actively tried to manage this positive outcome.

4.2.3 *Ways in which mothers mitigated the effects of working*

Just as was reported by the daughters, all the mothers said they made every effort to attend school events such as parents' nights and concerts because they thought that important. They did this partly because they were aware that mothers who worked less would be present and so their daughters would be likely to notice the absence of their mothers and feel let down in some way. Another example of this was, if possible with their working arrangements, trying to pick them up from the school gates once a week.

Mothers also corroborated the impressions of their daughters in highlighting that they made the most out of compressed time by establishing stable routines and clear boundaries around family life. This included doing things together every day or at least every weekend as a family, including regular activities such as swimming and taking family trips at the weekend. Solicitor Zadie spelt out her strategy as follows:

You do have to maintain a very fine balance... at weekends and holidays we did compensate for all that running around we were doing during the week and made sure we did set aside time for the children.

An important finding was that many mothers thought that the effect of their working, on their daughters, had been minimised because they had: 'absorbed most of the compromises' themselves (Valerie, senior manager, retail). The compromises most frequently mentioned were their relationships with their partners and friends and sleep:

I've missed out on friendship definitely. All the friends I had were to do with the children, parents of their friends. (Karen, advisory teacher and grandmother)

'I think [we] definitely compromised on our relationship...I think we were too knackered to think about it. I think we were surviving...and we definitely compromised there without realising it. (Ruth, CEO, arts)

The lone mothers with one child believed they had compromised on having a family (meaning a relationship and other children) in order to devote enough mental attention to their daughters. Other compromises mentioned were having missed out on some of the everyday joy of having children as described below:

I sometimes look back and think 'do I remember enough about when they were little' ...maybe I was always thinking about doing the next thing and didn't spend enough time in the moment. (Martha, CEO, local government)

Almost all of the daughters felt that their mothers' work had not affected them negatively, which suggests that the mothers were mainly successful in absorbing the compromises themselves. There were no references to mothers passing their work stress onto their daughters. Interestingly, several of the daughters worried more that their mothers, rather than themselves, had suffered from the effects of managing work and motherhood as exemplified by Willow, 26, a doctor:

I know how difficult it was for her then...one of the things I felt was really positive about...becoming a bit more of an adult was that opportunity to be supportive of her...I want to know that she is not too stressed at work, that kind of thing. I tell her to slow down.

4.2.4 How work affected their daughters - Positive effects

Many mothers also gave examples of the way they felt their careers had positively affected their daughters. Many pointed out that their daughters were the beneficiaries of many experiences because of their salaries. Examples included entertainment and fun such as holidays, making a big event of birthdays and bank holidays.

A key benefit to their daughters was felt to be showing an example of: 'a woman having a successful career' as described by Julie, MD of a research company and presenting work as

fulfilling and enjoyable. Lawyer Faith, said that, 'because I was a working mother they identified that as being a possibility for them' and academic and grandmother Stella, added:

I think it's good for children to know that women get their satisfaction from different places don't they? From happy families...from children but I think its good for them to know there's satisfaction to be had outside of that environment as well.

Mothers involved their daughters in some of the work they were doing, if their daughter was interested. This had resulted in introductions and exposure to opportunities that Stella called 'bigger and...interesting worlds'. Ruth, Arts CEO, echoed this point:

The kids have had exposure to some fantastic things and... people, an intellectually and culturally rich world. I think it's been really good for them.

Most of the daughters agreed, as illustrated by the quotes at the start of this chapter. In addition, Ruth's daughter, Rachel, described her mother as a role model and said, 'I want to be like her'. Stella's daughter, Sophie, expressed pride in her mother's achievements and said this had led her to assume she would seek a satisfying career too.

Some mothers also argued that the benefit of not always being available to their daughter was to encourage independence and personal freedom. These mothers said that their children valued and benefited from being independent as young adults. The daughters corroborated this by observing that they were more independent and confident than their friends, attributing this to growing up with mothers who worked:

This girl I travelled with she was really 'mummied' and was just crying all the time and skyped her Mum every day... It wasn't good for her, she just had no confidence at all, not even to get on a bus first. (Gina, 22, recent graduate)

Many mothers also felt that work gave them satisfaction and a world outside the family that they believed made them better mothers as illustrated by solicitor Naomi:

I think intellectually you are more stimulating as a mother if you are working. I don't think I worried so much to that naval-staring degree so in that way I was a better mother.

There is limited literature on which to draw which looks at the effect on children over time of having a mother working comparatively long hours in a career role. This is because it is only since the 1970s that many women have been in SOC 1 and 2 careers. An original contribution of this thesis is to demonstrate that even though a significant proportion of the mothers expressed maternal guilt about specific trade-offs they had made over time between work and their families; their daughters rarely mirrored the mothers' concerns.

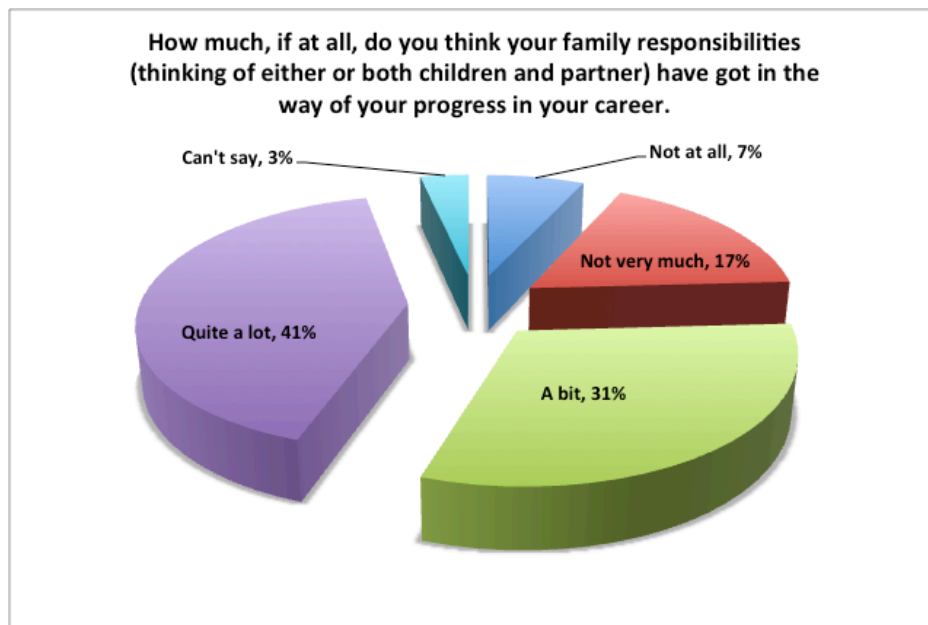
Moreover, mothers and daughters were in accord in terms of the benefits of having a working mother with a career. Corroboration for these findings comes from recently released longitudinal quantitative research. Mendolia (2014) worked with data collected from 1994 to 2006 comparing self-reported measures of psychological well being and incidents of smoking and found no significant difference between negative effects and hours worked. The limitation of this study was that it did not examine what happened in the hours the mothers were not working. Instead, Mendolia drew on the work of Bianchi (2000) and suggested that one reason that long working hours do not undermine outcomes for children is that working mothers do not necessarily spend less time with their children than part-time working mothers, theorising, for example, that they spend less time on household chores. This theory was verified by McGinn *et al.* (2015). Milkie *et al.*'s (2015) longitudinal study of children age 3-18 sought to address differences between the time mothers (or fathers) were simply present and when they were engaged with their children also concluded that there was no significant relationship between mothers (or fathers) spending more engaged time with their children and levels of academic achievement, behavioural or emotional problems except for more positive outcomes in delinquent behaviour in adolescence when more engaged parental time was evident. Milkie *et al.* acknowledged that engaged time did not necessarily mean quality time and therefore cited Galinsky's (1999) work to posit that when parents are not stressed and think they are doing the right thing for themselves and their children, the children are more likely to fare well because the parents' attitude is reflected in their responsiveness to their children.

Having examined the perceptions of mothers and their daughters on the effects of having a working mother with a successful career, it is interesting to turn the focus onto how the mothers thought motherhood affected their careers.

4.2.5 *How motherhood affected their progress at work*

The mothers were all asked, in the online questionnaire, how much they thought motherhood had affected their career and 24% said that their career had not been affected. Some of this 24% had got the highest levels of their career. They attributed this to being able to work flexibly and to having genuinely meritocratic employers. On the other hand, 72% reported that being a mother had affected their career quite a lot or a little.

Table 3: How much did your family get in the way of your career? (n. 30)



Those who felt that motherhood had inhibited their careers offered several explanations. Several of the grandmothers, who had started their careers in the late 1960s at a time when it was exceptional to work, had started in a career that they or their partners thought would fit around the children. This was usually teaching and some felt they had unfulfilled ambitions for other careers. Some had turned down opportunities that would have meant uprooting their families to other cities or countries. Lone mother Tara, media MD said: 'I worked for a few months in New York. I could have stayed but it just didn't feel right'. Valerie, senior manager in retail added:

If you are in the Midlands the number of roles is more limited than they are in London. I did not want to uproot the kids again.

Another example given was they had not been able to make time for the networking required to become aware of and be invited to take advantage of opportunities, the importance of which is noted by Eagly and Carli (2007).

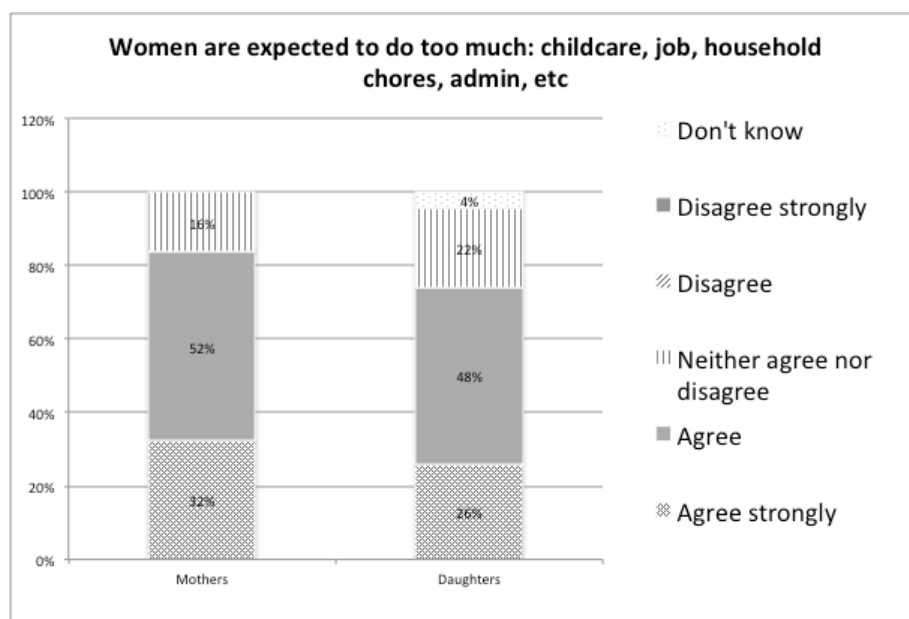
Overall, the fact that mothers did not talk about well-established concepts such as the motherhood pay penalty (Woodroffe 2009) confirms the points made by many about how difficult it is for individuals to perceive economic, cultural or structural barriers to the progress of their careers (Hochschild 1983; Crompton and Harris 1998; Stone 2007). It is, however, important to clarify that few of these mothers thought that the inhibition of their careers was a real problem for them. With the exception of those few who would have preferred another profession altogether, most felt no strong regrets that they had not

‘done better’. This links to the way the mothers talked about ambition, a topic that will be addressed in Chapter 5.

4.3 The impact of the daughters’ fathers

Turning now to the role of fathers in facilitating these mothers relationship with work. The weight of evidence in existing literature shows that, even though men are increasingly spending more time caring for their children and doing household chores, working women still shoulder a greater amount than their male partners of the responsibility for caring for or organising care for their children and doing domestic chores such as cleaning, laundry and cooking (Hochschild 1990; Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Burgess 2011). This research confirmed this inequality of responsibility in terms of the belief of most of those interviewed that this was still the social norm. Donna, teacher and mother commented that: ‘at the moment you’ve got women worrying about what’s happening with the children. It’s not going to change’. When mothers were asked in the online questionnaire about their level of agreement with the statement that women are expected to do too much, 84% agreed and agreed strongly. This level of agreement was lower amongst the daughters’ generation but only by a small margin. In some cases the main issues negotiated between couples were about looking after the children and cooking because they paid for support with housework.

Table 4: Are women expected to do too much? (n.51)



In order to unpick the perceptions of mothers about the role of their partners it is useful to borrow Hochschild’s model of describing fathers as traditional, transitional or egalitarian.

Traditional fathers leave the responsibility for childcare to the mothers, egalitarians share the parenting and transitional lies somewhere in between. Of the 13 mothers who were not living with the fathers of their daughters, most fathers were involved in their daughters' lives, one shared care equally with her former husband. Only three daughters had no active relationship with their fathers and are recorded here as absent partners. Some of those divorced also reported some domestic support from their current partners but that has not been recorded here either. Two of the divorced mothers were now in same sex relationships and that had no bearing on the classifications used here because in both cases the daughters researched had been born to their former husband with whom the daughters were still in close touch. The accounts of the mothers and daughters led to the characterisation of the fathers as follows:

Table 5: Partner is what type of father? (n.30)

Partner is what type of father?				
	Traditional	Transitional	Egalitarian	Absent
Mothers	11	7	9	3

The presence of a range of parenting strategies endorses the view of Crompton (2006) and Thomson *et al.* (2011) that there is no inevitable correlation between a mother's commitment to working and traditional gender relations. Using NVivo the types of fathers were mapped against the comments made by mothers and daughters about positive and negative effects of working. Some of both mothers and daughters commentary about their partner's role and the effect on them was associated with problems in the relationship so where possible these remarks have been excluded from the analysis. This is because the focus of this enquiry is about the effect of working motherhood and also because existing literature does not express an uncontested point of view about the correlation between divorce and working in demanding high status career roles (McRae 2003; Kanji and Schober 2014).

4.3.1 Mothers' stories: Role of their partners

The mothers' reported that the roles taken by their partners were influenced by their attitude, as illustrated by grandmother and teacher Anita saying: 'he is not very domestically minded'. Sometimes the influences were situational in, for example, having jobs as journalists and hospital doctors that often required them to work away from home

or work unpredictable or unsocial hours. However, given that most of the couples had established careers before the birth of the children this researcher observes that the fact that it was almost always the mothers who adapted their careers to be more flexible or predictable to work around parenthood is indicative of normative gendered parenting roles (Hochschild 1990; Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Burgess 2011). Indeed, some mothers were also irritated by their perception that their children thought their father's career the more important as illustrated by the story Wendy a company MD, told about her daughter phoning her at work asking her to do something for her school:

I said, "Why can't you ask your Dad?" and she said, "he's at work" and I said, "Yes I'm at work too". Willow had somehow picked up that my work was not real work.

Traditional models of fatherhood predominated, although this is partly accounted for by the grandmothers in the sample who started work in the 1970s when it was common for women to work in roles that had fewer, more predictable hours than their partners (McRae 2003). This meant that the majority of the 'second shift' (Hochschild 1990) of childcare and domestic chores fell to the mother. According to many mothers this was derived from the fathers' traditional attitude that it was and should be the primary responsibility of the mother to take care of the children. In the online questionnaire six out of 28 mothers (21%) agreed that their partner was only happy for them to work if it fitted into family life. The implication for most was exemplified by teacher and grandmother Karen, who said that, 'he was very supportive of me working in principle but he was not in any way active or responsible for anything [domestically]'.

The effect of this had been to add to the difficulties involved in the 'emotion management' (Hochschild 1983, p.44) involved in combining career with motherhood because participants always had to work around their responsibilities for childcare. Many reported annoyance about their partner's assumption that they would always be the one planning family life and that it was taken for granted that their male partners could go out of work late without prior notice. Sometimes the effects of this on the relationship were perceived to be severe as expressed by Alison, divorced mother of two and marketing director in these terms: 'Neither of us could understand the perspective of the other. It was not a very happy period.'

The examples of transitional parenting fell into three main camps. Some mothers reported that their own attitude to holding on to responsibility for their children was a barrier to their partner becoming more involved as illustrated by consultant doctor Emma:

He's been a very involved parent...I think I could have empowered him a lot more and he would have done a lot more if I hadn't said leave it, fine, I'll do it.

Many described their partner's support for them working as enthusiastic but also reported almost everyday negotiation about managing the family that was said to be stressful. Neither person wanted or thought they should be fully responsible. The mothers often said they got lots of help with practical tasks but the worry and the planning was their province as illustrated by Xanthe, arts director: 'He does a lot of the day-to-day domestic tasks. It's just not shared head space.' On the whole, transitional fathers provided much support that facilitated the management of dual careers and childcare in this sample. However, the level of negotiation involved and the emotional cost reported on the relationship adds support to those who have commented (Breitenbach 2006; Doucet, 2006) about the resilience of the cultural notion that women are the primary parent and domestic worker.

By contrast, nine of the relationships were egalitarian and in some families the father did more of the second shift than the mother as illustrated by lawyer Christina: 'To be fair he did pretty well everything in terms of domestic shopping and cooking...it was really a hugely supportive partnership'. In other relationships the childcare was shared according to their availability and playing to their personal strengths as described below:

He's always been able to finish fairly promptly so on the 3 days I was working from the office he could do a lot more picking them up. I would tend to work longer days on those days. [I valued] the willingness and enthusiasm for sharing...There was just a complete expectation that we would share it. (Julie MD, research)

The joke in the family is that I do policy and he does implementation. He's always been much, much better at playing with them. (Martha, CEO, local government)

Egalitarian parenting strategies included a 'tag team' approach to being the one in charge of pick ups and drop offs. Sometimes, but not always, this had meant that the couple were running on separate tracks which was reported to have negatively effected the closeness of the relationship. In addition, whilst there were reports of talking about taking it in turns to prioritise each career there was little evidence of that happening.

An obvious benefit of egalitarian parenting was that there was much less sense of compromise or stress in the stories told by the mothers either in relation to their partners or children. This builds upon the view of Thomson *et al.* (2011, p.175) that the emotional ramifications of shared parenting needs to be accounted for when looking at the distribution of household labour. A linked point is that that many of those with 'Pragmatic' feelings about motherhood had much more support from their partners, with whom they

practiced egalitarian parenting. Those with a 'Pragmatic' attitude reported fewer fundamental concerns about the effect on their children of their careers. The evidence of this link is an original contribution made by this research. There was only one case in this research where the father was the full-time parent whilst the mother worked but it was interesting that that the notion of this being different to the norm, described as 'unnatural' by the daughter, was also one of the examples in this study of the daughter feeling her mother's career had caused her unhappiness.

It was also noticeable that couples in this research from the mothers' generation were much more likely to model the fathers' own upbringing than that of the mothers. However, although several had mothers who worked, only one had a mother who worked consistently in a high status role. This implies that those men now brought up in households with an egalitarian approach to combining work and childcare may well take this model into their own lives and fits with research that shows the coincidence of the growth in women's employment in Managerial and Professional roles (Dex, Ward and Joshi 2006) and the research demonstrating that fathers spend more time with their children compared with previous decades (Burgess 2011).

4.4 Key findings

All the mothers in this research had successful careers but the stories they told made it clear that they did not identify more strongly with work than motherhood. Being a mother was central to their identities (defined here as 'dynamic gendered subjectivity' as a way of capturing the idea of 'what I feel like doing because it fits with my sense of self in these circumstances'). All were thoughtful about the way they managed their careers and motherhood meaning that they considered the implications of the day-to-day trade-offs they were making. These findings confirm the work of Garey (1999, p.75) who described working mothers as being in the process of constructing a 'mutually supportive' identity in which work and motherhood are interwoven. This process of construction required women to negotiate and renegotiate the boundaries, strategies and tasks for meeting the everyday requirements of their families and work.

The research identified two main differences in attitude in the way mothers felt they should mother whilst also working in a demanding career. To reiterate, the word 'attitude' is used in this context to describe a relatively enduring organisation of feelings and behavioural tendencies. My contribution is the identification of those taking a 'Pragmatic attitude' and the language used to describe their feelings about combining motherhood with work offered as an alternative to Crompton's 'Maximisers' and 'Satisficers'.

'Pragmatics' challenged the notion of binary choices in the trade-offs they made between the demands of their work and families. They shared a view that they did not get everything right, treated trade-offs as a fact of life and also felt that their children had not suffered as a result of them working because they felt the decisions they made on a daily basis were good enough. This was underpinned by their belief that their children felt loved and secure. Those with a 'Pragmatic' attitude included some who had reached the highest levels in their careers and this is probably related to the fact they did not often feel regretful or guilty about the way they managed their work and life. Another possible explanation for this is that many of those with 'Pragmatic' feelings about motherhood had much more support from their partners, with whom they practiced egalitarian parenting. This does also imply that is more challenging for those without partners or with traditional partners to have a positive experience of work and mothering.

Another type were described as 'Idealistic' in attitude to capture their focus on making the best possible choices for themselves and their children. This type reported feeling maternal guilt more frequently because they also felt that they were not living up to their own expectations at work or as mothers. Therefore they were more uncomfortable in their identities. Whilst many of the 'Idealistic' expressed greater concerns than the 'Pragmatics' that their work had sometimes negatively affected their daughters, their overall view was that their daughters felt neutral about the effect of their mothers' careers upon them because they had taken most of the compromises upon themselves.

Most of the daughters expressed a more positive view than their mothers. The daughters gave specific reasons why they had not felt disadvantaged by their mothers' working. They stressed the importance of knowing their mothers' (and fathers') routine and also their feeling that they were of central importance to their mothers. This had been demonstrated by their mothers in ways such as; making the most of compressed family time and being there for the events where parents (especially mothers) were expected to be and that were important to the daughters. The daughters also enumerated advantages to them that included having a satisfying career as well as family life modelled for them by their mothers, having learned to be independent and the lifestyle and opportunities that came with relative affluence.

Three daughters were exceptions in their belief that the way in which their mothers had worked had affected them negatively. Their view appears to have derived from their sense of being different from their peers and was compounded, in two cases, by being the only daughter of lone mothers with absent fathers. These three daughters were simultaneously

close to and critical of their mothers. In fact, all of the daughters had close relationships with their mothers and epitomised Benjamin's (1995) characterisation of the process of separation between mothers and daughters experiencing favourable conditions and positive emotional development as 'renunciation' rather than 'repudiation'. Benjamin explained that renunciation combined recognition of the daughters' individual difference with feelings of 'identificatory' love for their mothers (Benjamin 1995, p.8).

Many of those with 'Idealistic' attitudes to mothering had felt more guilt and sometimes communicated that directly to their daughters. As already explained, few of their daughters without children had translated this into feeling that their mothers' work had affected them negatively. However, the daughters of 'Idealistic' mothers tended to be those who did not want to replicate the same model for their own children. This could mean that they had unconsciously absorbed their mothers' feelings of guilt. As leading researchers in this field point out, individuals' own accounts conceal economic and cultural constraints and structural barriers that are hard for them to perceive (Hochschild 1983; Crompton and Harris 1998; Stone 2007). It could also mean that over time the influence of their peers and contemporary motherhood scripts out-weighed the influence of their mothers. This debate will be continued in Chapter 7.

Finally, a key original finding is that the views expressed by the daughters showed that they did not need a constant maternal presence in order to feel well loved and well mothered. It was, instead, important for their mothers to be there for important events, making the most of time together and that this time together was predictable. Moreover, many had absorbed the benefits and rewards that came with a career and the message conveyed by the mothers who identified as feminists that they should not shoulder a disproportionate domestic burden. Gina, 22, the recent graduate daughter of the director of a consultancy summed up the themes of this chapter well in describing her mother in reference to her own anticipated relational identity as mother, worker and partner:

She's definitely a very involved mother. She always has been and in no way rejects that role. But I think she does take it on in conjunction with a career and I would want that. I wouldn't want to feel like I'd compromised my role as mother...but it would be equally horrible to feel you'd compromised who I am or that the responsibility has been delegated to me, in terms of taking care of the family, more than it should be.

Chapter 5: Daughters' Career Aspirations and Influences

*I think she did well but she never talked about it as much as my Dad did.
(Natalie, solicitor)*

This chapter addresses the career ambitions of the daughters' generation. It examines where they report their influences came from in deciding upon their initial career paths and key changes in direction made in the early stages of their career. This research focused on the decisions the daughters made about the type and level of the careers they wanted, the hours they envisaged working and what they wanted work to mean to them.

A key finding of the research discussed in this chapter was that, for the vast majority of the daughters' generation, their mothers were highly influential, and in many cases the primary influence over their career expectations. Some level of maternal influence was expected based upon the work of Walkerdine *et al.* (2001) who found that middle class mothers were emotionally and materially equipped to advise and assist their daughters in obtaining the qualifications and getting the help necessary to secure good jobs thereby passing on their social capital (Bourdieu and Nice 1990). Evidence of these ideas being transmitted by verbal persuasion were offered by Moen *et al.* (1997) and Lawler (2000) and of being transmitted by mothers' modelling their experience of long term employment in a career by Woodfield (2007) and McGinn *et al.* (2015). An original contribution of this research is to show a greater level of specific influence from the mothers than has been argued elsewhere in terms of what the daughters wanted from work and in helping facilitate the achievement of their aspirations in the early phase of the daughters' careers. I theorise this maternal influence as 'direct'- meaning actions bearing unambiguously on the outcome and 'indirect'- meaning shaping the context for their daughters' decisions.

An original contribution is in showing that the language used by the daughters to describe what they wanted from work mirrored the language of their mothers. For example both generations prioritised enjoyment, social worth and independence. However, in the vast majority of cases, neither the daughters nor their mothers expressed that they aspired to 'get to the top'. Even those mothers, who had reached the summit of their careers and those who had a high public profile, reported that they rarely talked about their ambition or their achievements to their daughters and therefore did not present this level of career achievement as a possible outcome for their daughters.

Section 5.1 starts with the early career aspirations of the daughters and their thoughts about what influenced their career choices. This is followed by the daughters' views on the 'direct' and 'indirect' influences of their mothers. Section 5.2 triangulates these views with

those of their mothers. Section 5.3 compares the daughters' accounts on their career aspirations with the accounts of their mothers. Section 5.4 explores other influences including self-efficacy, fathers and peers (including partners). Key findings are summed up in Section 5.5. In service of clarity, this chapter focuses solely on the daughters' ambitions for work and influences over their choices of career direction whilst they were without children. Chapter 6 will examine how these decisions intersected with their views on combining motherhood with work.

5.1 Daughters' early career aspirations and influences

To reiterate, the views of the daughters on their career choices were always discussed first in the interviews, prior to introducing the mother daughter relationship, so that participants were not 'led' to focus on the role played by their mothers.

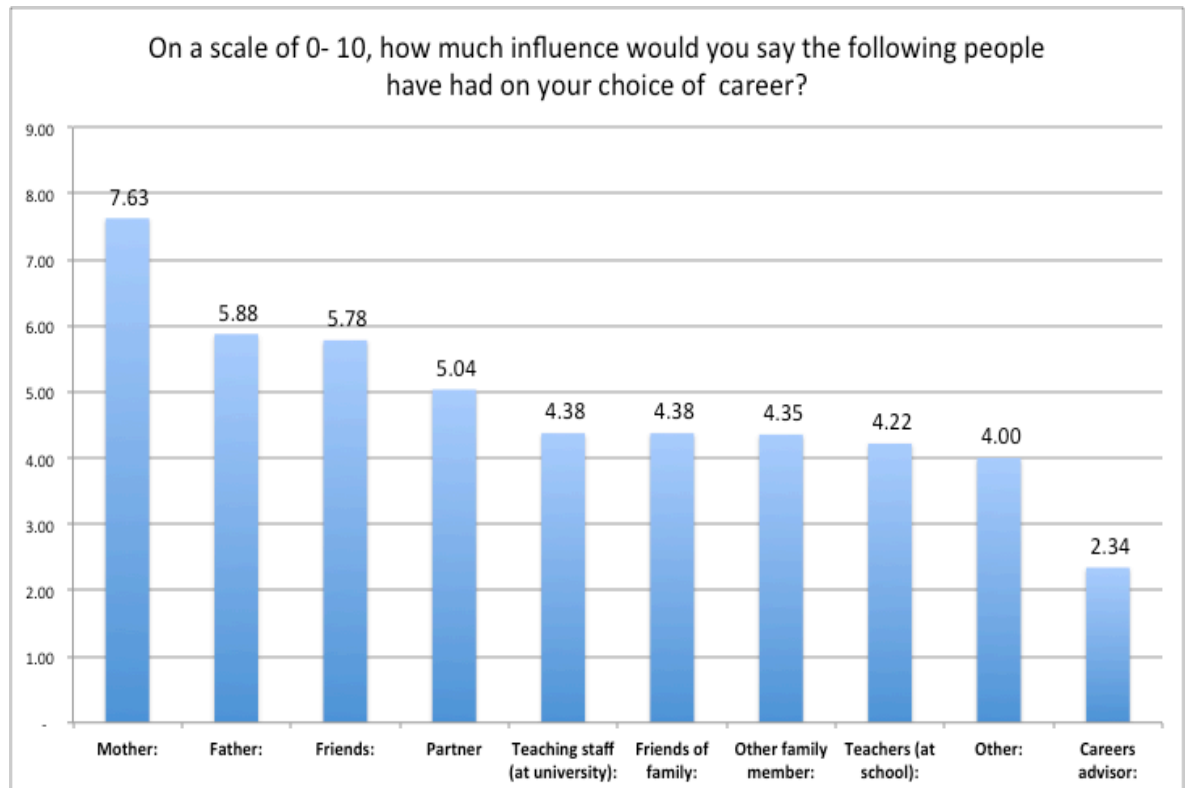
All of the 31 daughters assumed they would work and also that their work would be 'a career' rather than a job, even in the case of the undergraduates who had no clear plans about the type of career they might pursue. All but four of the daughters had, before children, careers classified as SOC 1 or 2, the same classification used for the recruitment of their mothers. Of the four exceptions; one was working in an administrative role whilst trying to get a legal training contract, one had been an actress (before children), one was a fashion designer and the other was currently an officer in a university student union and wanted to be an art therapist. Almost all the daughters went to Russell Group universities and this tends to lead to higher status jobs, as illustrated by the finding that 67% of recent Russell Group graduates were working in high skilled roles versus 53% from other universities (ONS 2013b).

5.1.1 Daughters' views on their career influences

It is not surprising to find that mothers are a key influence over their daughters and there are many approaches to theorising this relationship spanning genetic and social explanations. Social Learning Theory (Bandura 1971) has long posited that children imitate same sex parents. Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983) and Lawler (2000) theorised that the mother produces the daughter's social self. Lawler's thinking is particularly relevant to this thesis in arguing that knowledge of selfhood rests on a socially specific conceptualisation of what is a 'good self' (2004, p.4). She goes on to argue that this 'good self' is felt by middle class mothers to be educational attainment and reaching their potential. What this research added was evidence that mothers are the *primary* influence over their daughters' career choices in 'direct' and 'indirect' ways as defined above.

The online questionnaire filled in prior to the face-to-face interviews asked the daughters to rate out of 10 how much influence different people had on their choice of career. The importance of asking this question prior to the interviews was to get a spontaneous, unmediated response. The following table shows that the primary influence was considered to be their mother.

Table 6: Career Influences: (n.30)



The importance of the mothers' influence was directly confirmed in many of the interviews as illustrated by Jessica, 22, undergraduate daughter of a company MD:

My Mum probably is the biggest influence in terms of talking about my career I think because...we are quite similar...and what she's done I would also find interesting. I think we would go in similar directions

It should, however, be noted that several daughters characterised their parents as a team. They tended to talk about them as a unit ('they pushed us on at school massively') and had had more difficulty in separating the role and influence of their mothers from their fathers. The specific influence of their fathers will be discussed later in 5.4 2. In most cases the daughters reported that the mother did not expect or push a specific career. Instead many of the mothers were active in guiding their daughter towards or away from choices and in setting expectations of a long term, satisfying career. The following sections examine

daughters' views on the 'indirect' and 'direct' influence of their mothers over their early career choices.

5.1.2 *'Indirect' Influence of Mothers*

The definition of indirect used here is 'shaping the context for their daughters' decisions'. The following examples of 'indirect' influence, from the perspective of the daughters, are concerned with the climate fostered by their mothers that influenced the daughters to emulate them in pursuing a career. The themes that emerged as most salient from my analysis of the interviews include: educational achievement, communication of a strong work ethic and, reflecting more middle class assumptions about work, facilitating with money the ability to follow an attractive (and therefore competitive) career direction and modelling the expectation of enjoyment and satisfaction in one's work-life.

The first theme concerns the early patterns of socialisation established in relation to prioritising educational achievement and continued during the process of seeking a career (Crompton 2006). Two undergraduates who were studying at Oxford and Cambridge made these points: 'I knew as a student I should be a really good student and so I was... I always knew my roles' (Isabelle, 23).

She instilled in us the sense that we can do well and should...our parents have been very involved, active and putting in a lot of time with projects and homework (Jessica, 22).

In some cases this influence was characterised as pressure by the daughters, as exemplified by Zara, 28, who reported that:

My Mum is all about 'tough love' especially academically... We have a joke in our family where we say "Mum I got an A", to which we joke she would reply "why didn't you get an A star?"

Many talked about their mothers' communication of a strong work ethic that started in relation to schoolwork and extended to a 'mantra' for life. This maternal communication of the necessity to work hard, to 'keep going', to 'have stamina' was also often reported by the mothers' generation about their own upbringing. This message about work ethic was often accompanied by the communication of the idea that they could do whatever they strived for as a career as described by Eve, 26, a fashion designer: 'She always said that if you work hard there is no reason why you shouldn't achieve whatever we set our minds to'. This confirms the findings of Walkerdine *et al.* (2001) on middle class mothers advising, equipping and assisting the progress of their children although far from all of the mothers in this sample were from a middle class background.

It is also pertinent to discuss the role of money in acting as a facilitator for the career ambition of the daughters. All the mothers in the sample had attained a level of security because of their work income and all but four of the mothers had partners who were also contributing financially to the household. This had allowed some of the daughters' time to travel and decide what they wanted to do. Money also paid for support when doing unpaid internships that were thought to be necessary to get a job in competitive fields, such as advertising, and paid for further education leading to professional qualifications. Indeed, some of the daughters acknowledged they were lucky to have 'a financial safety net' to enable them to make their career choices without needing to consider money at all. For recent graduate Isabelle, 23, the wealth of her parents prompted her observation that to them, coming from working class backgrounds, making money was 'super-important' but 'very self-interested' and that this had prompted her to want to 'work with the under-privileged' and 'do something nice'. Beth, 27, had spent several years doing unpaid internships before securing her first rung on the career ladder in TV and commented that: '[Money] never really crossed my mind...it was much more important to me that I be happy doing something I want to do'.

Most of the daughters explicitly reported that they had been influenced to want to work by the fact that their mothers worked. This point was illustrated by Sophie, 37, who worked in marketing.

As a result of growing up seeing my Mum working from as early as I can remember, I simply thought that everyone went to university and all women worked; I still cannot comprehend the idea of not working.

Indeed, many expressed the idea that for them *not* to have an interesting career would be reprehensible, either because they felt their self-respect or respect from others would be compromised or because of fear they would be bored or boring to others. As Tanya, 22, who had recently started a job in TV production, put it:

It can be the most interesting thing about a person, what their job is...so I would probably be a bit disappointed with myself or think my life was a bit boring if I didn't go into something interesting.

Almost all of the daughters had also been encouraged in their desire to have a career by the fact that their mothers had conveyed their enjoyment of work. Time and time again the daughters stressed how much their mothers 'loved their jobs'. This had been communicated directly in words, through the stories told about things that happened at work and also by bringing home the friends their mothers made at work. Tanya, 22, who had recently followed her mother into the same media career, expressed this theme well:

I know over her career she has really loved it. All her friends are from the industry...She's got all these amazing stories.

Some daughters also reported that their mothers had cemented this impression by encouraging them to choose a job they would enjoy because it was interesting to them. Xenia, 20, an undergraduate who was aspiring to be the third generation of successful career women in her family said:

I always felt this strong sense from both my parents that I had to do something that was interesting to me, not just something that...made loads of money.

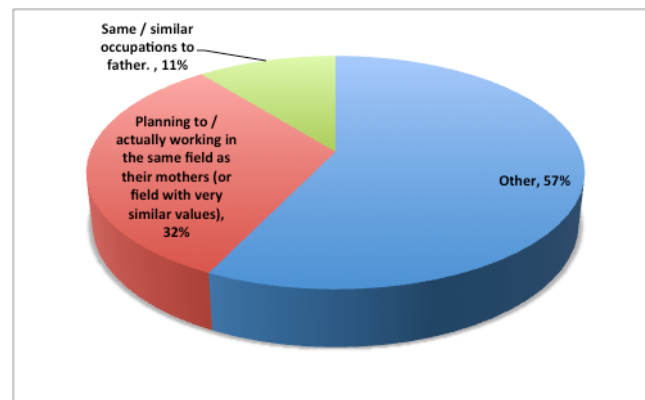
The importance mothers ascribed to enjoying work was reflected by their daughters' prioritisation of enjoyment and satisfaction when asked what they wanted from work. This was explained as finding enjoyment in the variety of content within their role, the social side of work and not wanting to feel bored. Enjoyment and satisfaction also meant feeling intellectually challenged and that they were making a contribution to a bigger outcome. This corroborates other academic and business sponsored studies where enjoyment and intellectual fulfilment were given primary importance across age groups of women (PWC 2014; Bostock 2014).

5.1.3 *'Direct' Influence of Mothers*

'Direct' influence is defined here as actions bearing unambiguously on the outcome. Themes that came from the research included entering the same or similar careers to their mothers, direct conversations about career choices and practical help opening the door to specific careers. The perceptions of the daughters have been triangulated with those of their mothers in order to demonstrate the strength of the influence.

First, a direct measure of the daughters' emulation of the career paths of their mothers is the decision taken by many to go into the same type of career, or a career with similar values. This research finding builds upon Gottfredson's (1981, p.570) observation that information about occupation is strongly influenced by an individual's immediate social setting and that ideas are more easily accepted when no effort is required to access them. Of the 28 daughters who were already in work or knew what careers they wanted, nine were planning to or actually working in the same field as their mothers or a field with very similar values (such the daughter of a teacher becoming an educational psychologist). In addition, two were in the same or similar occupations to their father as shown overleaf:

Table 7: Following in the footsteps of their parents careers: (n.30)



Following in their mother's career footsteps resulted from the daughters talking to their mothers about their jobs and/or experiencing them first hand through work-experience as illustrated by Tara and Tanya:

Tara (mother): She ended up doing the same course at university that I did...and going into TV production. It's really interesting.

Tanya (daughter): We've talked about my career loads...I feel like she has been a guide telling me you'll have loads of fun doing this...she's travelled loads and got these amazing stories...it seems quite normal that I want to do something similar.

Gina and Gayle discussed the effect of facilitating work experience:

Gina (daughter): I think I genuinely went into advertising because my Mum worked in advertising.

Gayle (mother): If I didn't suggest for you to do that first work experience you never would have imagined that it was fun.

Not all the daughters were interested in talking to their mothers about their work but most were as illustrated by Jessica, 22, undergraduate who said: 'I talked it through with my Mum quite a lot. She has always encouraged me to think about what I want to do'. This confirms the findings of Lawler (2000) and Moen *et al.* (1997) that work values are transmitted by verbal persuasion. These conversations about jobs also led many daughters to other outcomes such as rethinking initial ideas and shaping their thinking about the kind of careers they wanted as follows:

My Mum sold me the idea. She used to say to me 'we've got this lovely educational therapist and it's such a lovely job! (Kelly, 35, educational psychologist)

I just knew that they didn't think it [drama school] was a good idea. More Mum than Dad, I think, but they were totally right. (Beth, 27, now working in TV Production)

Clear evidence of direct transmission of work values came from analysing the language used in the transcripts of the individual interviews. Daughters frequently mirrored the language of their mothers when describing what they wanted from work. Both generations emphasised the importance of enjoying work as discussed in 5.1.2 above. Other key themes were status and perceived social value, both of which are illustrated by extracts from the separate interviews with mother and daughter. Status was linked to job satisfaction:

Willow (daughter): I want a career...I don't want my work to totally define my life but equally I want to be in a job I have satisfaction from.' 'It's nice to do something that is recognised...I think most Doctors do want the status, but they won't readily admit it.

Wendy (mother): I do have a reputation within the field, which I suppose is a measure of success...there aren't many [in my field] who become Managing Directors and run their own profit making business...[Success] is external recognition and being able to do what I want, enjoying my work.

Social value was also prioritised:

Una (mother): You should work to be socially valuable. To contribute to society. We are both amazed by people who don't work.

Ursula (daughter): You should make a contribution to society. Everybody should.

Many of the daughters also pointed out the direct help they got from their mothers at the start of their careers. Examples included arranging internships or helping by finding job advertisements and drafting job applications. Two of the daughters who had mothers who run businesses had been given projects to work on by their mothers. They reported this had taught them valuable skills such as how to manage accounts and how to talk to people. Both daughters said this had increased their confidence in their own abilities.

The balance of evidence suggests that mothers with successful careers exercise more influence over their daughters' career aspirations in both direct and indirect ways than has been argued by those who privilege individual self-efficacy in motivating career aspiration (O'Brien and Fassinger 1993). As Woodfield discussed, research findings are inconclusive on the relationship between career aspirations and parental attitudes, aspirations and support (2007, p.31). The comments of the daughters illuminated the specific ways in which their self- efficacy was guided and shaped by their successful career working mothers; including a substantial number of this sample following their mothers into the same or similar careers, having the same work values and having doors opened to their careers by their mothers. I turn now to compare the views of the daughters to those expressed by the mothers.

5.2 Mothers on their influence over their daughter's careers

Mothers' aspirations were nuanced, complex and differed by child. However, it was clear that most were ambitious for their daughters. Many of the mothers acknowledged that it was important to their parenting strategy that their daughters should achieve their potential and that they should, from a secure and safe base, be encouraged to be independent as illustrated by Christina, a judge:

My role is to support her in the world and give her a strong self of self. But to sort of protect and comfort her as well. There's an absolute assumption that she would always come to me if she needs help or is distressed in any way and yet I feel pleased that she can look after herself.

The notion of working hard came up in this context too, as expressed by teacher and grandmother Patricia: 'We just expected them to work hard and achieve...so they did' and Xanthe, arts director: 'Work hard, do things for yourself, achieve'. Many mothers described themselves as encouraging and supporting what they saw as their daughter's own ambition to have a career. The mothers reported that they conveyed these values indirectly, through their actions and 'negotiating' about specific situations such as schoolwork and their daughters' thoughts about careers. Many, such as CEO Ruth, stated they were conscious of not: 'putting too much pressure about what you have to live up to or do' and also reported intervening when they thought their daughter was putting undue pressure on herself. For example Bridget, a doctor, reported that she saw her daughter struggling to get a career in the field she wanted and applied: 'not so subtle pressure to choose an easier career path'.

This mixture of ambition for their daughters with encouragement to be independent applied equally to their sons. However, many of the mothers described two views that were of particular relevance to their aspirations for their daughters. First, even though they acknowledged that the situation of women in the workplace had improved over time, most believed that the odds were still stacked against full gender equality in the workplace. Secondly, they thought their girls had confidence issues that could get in the way of achieving their potential or cause them to lose out to men in some way.

Seeing their daughters' careers through the lens of gender inequality chimes with Mannheim's (1952) theory about members of active generations who consciously represent themselves by referring to the collective experience of their generation rather than just their individual experience. Many of the mothers felt, in relation to work, that they had been and continue to be in competition with men. Several had achieved career 'firsts' for women or had been among the first to hold the positions they had reached.

Almost all also volunteered examples of personal experience of gender discrimination or sexist attitudes at work including sexual harassment, sexist assumptions, not having equal access to opportunities and being one of a small minority represented at senior levels. Many mothers also reported that their own decisions about going back to work after the birth of their children were made in conscious reference to feeling the need to represent the progress of women. Examples of this included doctor Emma: 'I do feel we had a duty to demonstrate that, yes, we are going to be worth your training'. Lawyer Imogen, said:

I think it was fear of letting the side down that tipped the balance. I was one of the first female partners to have children as a partner in an environment that was still fairly sexist.

Imogen went on say that the example of her home-based mother influenced her sense of wanting to change outcomes for women:

I grew up feeling my mother was very frustrated being the person at home all the time, so I think I swung to the other extreme of I'm not going to be bored at home.

Many of the mothers with these views had communicated their desire that their daughter should not limit her horizons because of her gender.

I think I did say this. That you can do anything you want to do...I don't think you should let your sex get in the way. (Tara, Media MD)

I've tried to teach them that being a woman is every bit as valuable as being a man and that anything that men can do, with a few exceptions, women can do. (Anita, teacher and grandmother)

It was clear from the accounts of their daughters that they had absorbed this message as illustrated by academic, Lily:

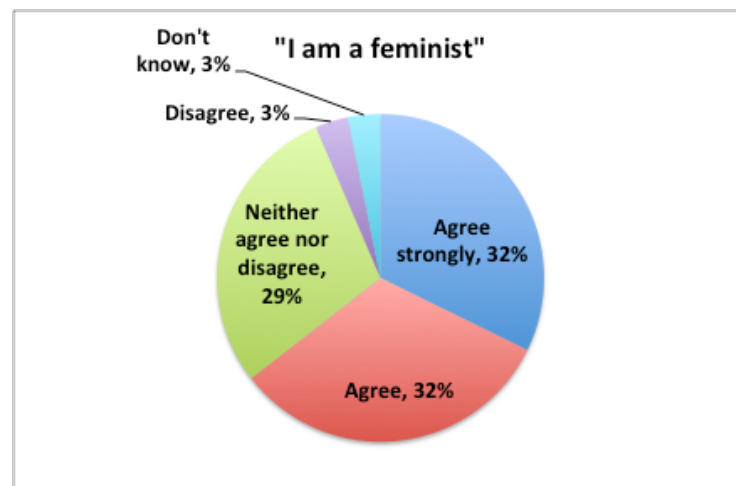
My Mum taught me to value my own ideas. To think that you've got a brain. To use it well. Not to be put down by men.

The mothers who had been lone parents for some or all of their daughters' childhood were most likely to emphasise the need to be financially independent as illustrated by Sophie, 37, mother of one working full-time in marketing:

She believed we should never have our backs against the wall in the same way that she did when my Dad went. So she believed strongly that we should have a squirrel fund that our husbands can't access. So that in the crisis situation of 'he's left with the secretary'...we'll always be all right.

The mothers' consciousness of gender inequality was also illustrated by the fact that 64% identified themselves as feminists when asked this question in the online questionnaire as shown in the table below.

Table 8: 'I am a feminist': (n.30)



Unsurprisingly, therefore, many of the mothers reported conversations that applied this lens to their daughters' careers. This is consistent with the fact that this generation of mothers grew up with the arguments made by Second Wave feminists about equality of opportunity at work and in the domestic sphere (Greer 1970; Rowbotham *et al.* 1979). I would suggest that this correlation renders it likely that these beliefs underpin the close involvement of many mothers in their daughters' early career choices discussed above.

The issue of their daughter's self-confidence or self-belief also arose strongly from the research. Every mother was asked, 'what quality did she think would be of most benefit to her daughter?' 24 of the 30 mothers answered self-confidence. What some meant by this was that the daughters should recognise their qualities and achievements. What most meant by self-confidence was having the strength to achieve what they wanted to achieve rather than going with the flow or buckling to pressure from others as described below:

Jessica is hardly a shrinking violet but I think the forces on you can be quite powerful...it can be quite easy to... [deletion]...I know lots of very clever women who, I think, haven't fulfilled their potential because they have...um... found it easier to go with the flow. (Jessica's mother and company MD)

Sense of purpose was the next most frequently mentioned metaphoric quality the mothers would gift their daughters. This too related to their aspirations for their daughters and was explained in the interviews as achieving their potential by realising that no direction is set in stone and that flexibility is important to success. However, this is not the same as saying that they wanted their daughters to be successful in the sense of reaching the top. The mothers' identification of self-confidence as an issue for their daughters is interesting because it could affect their career ambition. These findings raise the question of how gender role issues intersect with the influence of the mothers. The next section therefore

looks in more detail at how the daughters talked about their ambition for work and compares this to the language the mothers used to describe their own career success.

5.3 Career ambition

One of the research questions was ‘did the daughters want to emulate their mothers’ career success’? The sections above have discussed what they wanted from work but I now want to focus on their longer-term ambitions

5.3.1 Do daughters want to emulate their mother’s success?

I expected to find references made by the daughters to reaching senior positions due to the level of attention paid in public and academic debates to women attaining leadership positions (Harris 2003; Lanning 2013; Wolf 2013) and to the notion of the ‘genderless worker’ who takes workplace equality for granted (McRobbie 2007). Moreover, some academic and business sponsored studies have found evidence that women under the age of 30 have the same attitudes as their male cohort to job advancement (Hewlett and Marshall 2014; PWC 2014). Woodfield’s large qualitative study of students and early career workers found that ‘nearly all the participants who talked about their occupational ambitions described a desire to climb far in their chosen career’ (2007, p181). Therefore, one of the unexpected findings that emerged from detailed analysis of the interview transcripts was that many made reference to women in senior positions when talking about the public debate about women and work, but did not use the language of ‘getting to the top’ and ‘success’ when talking about their personal career aspirations. Instead, all but three talked in terms of wanting an interesting career that would develop and continue to interest and satisfy them over time. The daughters described personal career ‘success’ in ways that were inwardly focused on their self- image. For example, knowing that they excelled at something and feeling satisfied that they were doing a job well. The only three mentions of upward ambition were: ‘I always thought I would just naturally progress upwards, and it matters a lot to me’ (Fiona, 24, working in finance). Eve, 26, a fashion designer, said: ‘I am ambitious. I don’t just want to be an artisan, I want to build a big brand’. Jessica, 22, said: ‘my Mum has taught me to be ambitious, to know what I want from work and life and know I can get it’. Conversely, when the daughters described their mothers’ careers as successful, their language was mainly focused on external measures of success, including the status conferred by job titles such as ‘Managing Director’ or describing their mothers’ chairmanship of charities or social enterprises. Willow, 26, a doctor, described her mother’s success as: ‘being able to give an important sounding job title when asked, “what does your Mum do”? Many also spoke with pride about their

mother's career success in relation to men. However, perhaps surprisingly, this did not lead them to say that they hoped to achieve similar, high positions. This corroborates research conducted amongst academic and administrative staff, identified by their peers as successful, at Cambridge University that found seniority was not a primary concern when assessing career success (Bostock 2014). Seniority was only considered important in terms of the change it allows one to effect. This presents a challenge to the idea that gender equality at the highest levels in organisations is an adequate indicator of gender progress. It also raises the possibility that these daughters did not want to work the long hours associated with success at work (Harkness 2003).

5.3.2 Daughters' views on working long hours

One of my research questions was whether observing their mothers work long hours had resulted in the daughters wanting to work fewer hours. This question was prompted by the work of Vere (2007) discussed in 2.1.3 whose research on college-educated women in the US suggested that women born in 1978/9 were prepared to give fewer hours to the workforce than those born six years previously. The understanding my research added to this issue was that the majority seemed to accept that the demands of a career comes with the necessity of working long hours as illustrated by recent graduate Emily, 22, an aspiring journalist:

This seems like a patch where career focus might seem quite natural...I wouldn't mind it [my job] being the main focus of my life.

However, there were exceptions in that a small minority expressed reservations about having a high-ranking position. Several imagined that this would involve long hours and/or be stressful and they questioned whether their physical or mental health would be to equal to the strain: Verity, 25, a post-graduate researcher two years into her career expressed how little she wanted responsibility:

I wouldn't want a very high-ranking position if it was stressful and involved a lot of extra hours. And where there is a lot resting on me. I just wouldn't.

Fewer simply preferred the idea of enjoying life including Natalie, 25, a solicitor who reported having conversations with her friends about wanting more time to themselves and expressed a wish to work part-time to achieve this:

I'd quite like to do part-time, sometime. My friends were talking about how...that whole cliché of work life balance is becoming quite relevant for us I think regardless of whether you have kids...just having a day a week to do something for you. It might be more important than working 5 days a week for more money.

More pertinent to the research question posed above were several direct references made to not wanting to work as hard as they had seen their mothers work. The daughters who made these comments were, however, in a small minority. Florence, 24, and currently working extremely long hours in marketing, felt that she did not want this to continue. Her hours reminded her how hard both her parents had worked to become 'super senior' and she was therefore now thinking: 'I don't want to run a big company. If I'm giving up this much of my time now I'd literally have to live in the office'. Isabelle, 23, and a recent graduate was aspiring to a career that would not be as demanding of her time as that of her parents:

Both of them have had huge careers...and they don't have much time...they have given me a lot of money so I can reject that kind of career.

Isabelle also felt that her parents had an unhappy relationship that had been negatively affected by her father working away. The daughters of lone mothers who did not have fathers readily available to them also often commented negatively on how hard their mothers had worked because they were more acutely aware of time spent away from them.

Surprisingly few comments about hard work were made in the context of combining work with family life. This confirmed the finding of Woodfield that the mothers' modelling of the management of parent and work responsibilities did not 'speak' to participants who instead saw work as an individual project (2007, p.217).

My research therefore added some evidence in support of the idea that the (child-free) daughters of successful working women are reacting against the idea of having careers that also come with long hours, particularly when other factors such as lone parenthood and working away from home for long periods are also present. Close examination of the family circumstances of those daughters who wanted to work fewer hours did suggest a reaction against the organisational full-time careers of their mothers. An alternative explanation was offered by American research from Olivetti and Patacchini (2013) which found that daughters tended to model the working hours of their mothers when their mother's hours were dissimilar to the mothers of their friends because when a variety of models are available the tendency is to look at that which is closest to you. However, in the case of the daughters in this sample who did express a desire to work fewer hours, there was no discernible bias in terms of whether or not the mothers of their friends worked. An intergenerational difference is that more flexible ways of working are available in career roles than was the case for the generation of mothers in this study (Gardiner and Tomlinson 2009). Some of the daughters did not seem to be reacting against their mothers

experience but rather were drawn to the idea that more autonomous careers may be available to them. Overall, however, the main finding is that most of the daughters did aspire to fulfilling careers but not necessarily reaching the top and therefore we need to ask whether, in this, they were emulating their mothers?

5.3.3 *Mothers on their own career success*

A key question is whether the omission of thought about 'getting to the top' was different from their mothers' descriptions of their evidently successful careers? In other words is this omission evidence of the daughters' lack of desire to emulate the success of their mothers?

As described above, mothers expressed a wish for their daughters to reach their potential. When asked to be more specific, it became clear that the mothers meant that their daughters should follow their own interests, with commitment. Moreover, this was also the way in which most described their own careers. This point is illustrated below by comments made, in separate interviews, by some of the mothers who had reached high levels in their careers and their daughters. Mother daughter pair Xenia and Xanthe talked about their feelings about success:

Xenia (daughter): One of my friend's Dad's mantra for his three sons is 'ambition is everything, success is everything'. And I don't feel that way...I don't need to be the best... I'm more ambitious in doing something I think is worthwhile and makes me happy rather than being the most important person in the room. [On her mother's career] I think she is respected by a lot of people, probably more than other people. I think she's prone to ignore that. I think maybe as a woman you're not expected to be too proud, it's expected that you are modest. But yeah I think she's successful.

Xanthe (Mother): It's not completely a career that's always been straight in one direction; it's been a bit what happened. I think I've been relatively successful but not super duper successful.

Emma and Emily prioritised being interested in their work:

Emma (mother): I don't think of myself as particularly ambitious, it's not that what drove me was getting to the top of things. It's more an interest in things, in what I was doing.

Emily (daughter): I want enjoyment, satisfaction and a comfortable income.

Mother daughter pair Fiona and Faith emphasised hard work and quality of output:

Fiona (daughter): She was the most senior woman in the world at a [US Fortune 500 company]...women's progression at the time must have been difficult. Especially considering she's not the archetypal shout down the phone [boss], she must have got there through pure brilliance: I don't think she's been into progression for its own sake, she's always been quality driven...to do something

that matters. If I make MD because I'm good at it, that sounds fantastic...that comes very much from Mum.

Faith (mother): I realise success isn't about paper and qualifications. It's about making a difference in the workplace...anything is possible if you work for it. Yes [laughs]. Work! Work! Work!...that's my mantra.

Arguably this reflects a difference between men and women described as the 'ambition gap' by Sandberg (2013, p29) who quoted studies in multiple industries that show that women consistently underestimate themselves. These findings also echoed the influential work of Gilligan (1993, p.ix) who characterised women as having an internal voice that interfered 'with their ability to speak'. Both these writers suggest these are socially constituted issues. What is clear from the above is that many of the mothers had left their daughters with a sense that their career success was merely a by-product of hard work and being good at what they do. In other words, the mothers downplayed their career success to their daughters, one of who described this as 'quiet ambition'. I theorise that this underemphasises the career achievements of many of the mothers and offers a convincing explanation as to why most of these daughters did not talk about 'getting to the top'.

5.3.4 *Mothers' reservations*

One possible explanation for this 'quiet ambition' is that some of the mothers worried that they had exerted too much pressure on their daughters to succeed academically. Some wondered aloud whether their own achievements would lead their daughter to put too much pressure on herself to be high achieving:

I half-wonder whether she feels she needs to be high achieving. Umm...but she shouldn't. She should do whatever...I wonder if Rachel needs to say 'I don't need to be achieving. I worry that she feels a weight of emulation. I might be completely wrong. We have never spoken about it in that way. (Ruth, Arts CEO)

The daughters of three of the women who had achieved a high public profile did not report feeling this kind of pressure. Their view was that it was unlikely they would be as successful as their mothers because they expected not to be in as senior position as their mothers had been when having their first child and that this would make it more difficult to maintain career progress. They also felt that few people reach the top so the chances of them doing so are slim. In short, they attributed the unlikelihood of being as successful as their mothers to external rather than personal circumstances. The daughter of the mother quoted above made the following observation about her mother's career:

I'm really interested in what my Mum does. I really admire her career... that there are a million very important people who know her. If I were to have a career anywhere near as good as hers I'd be very happy. (Rachel, 21, Undergraduate)

An alternative explanation for these findings lies in the persistence of social notions about gender roles - the behaviours and attitudes expected of women. This may link to the mothers' depiction of their daughters as lacking in confidence. Psychologist Horner (1972) identified a female tendency to fear success based on their perception of conflict between femininity and success. More recently, psychologists Kray *et al.* (2001) showed women performed less well than men in a negotiation task unless they were told that this often happened in which case they outperformed men. This illustrated that reluctance to 'win' was culturally conditioned rather than being explained by biological essentialism. Inhibitions felt by women about appearing to be competitive and ambitious in organisational careers and the idea that women are less associated than men with the agentic qualities of leadership have been frequently researched and are well summarised by organisational psychologists Eagly and Carli (2007).

5.4 Other influences

This chapter has focused so far on the influence of mothers on the daughters' career choices because daughters most reported mothers to be their primary influence and because of the key research questions. Other factors were influential in their career choices that will now be discussed. Individuals cited a plethora of different personal influences but the focus here is on the themes that emerged most strongly; namely self-efficacy, fathers and their peers.

5.4.1 Daughters on self-efficacy

The evidence presented here that the mothers' and (to a lesser extent) fathers' influence is strong in shaping and facilitating the early career choices made by the daughter is only part of the story. The daughters made many decisions themselves based both on their identity and the circumstances that presented themselves. This builds upon the work of Crompton and Harris (1998) who highlight the complexity of the interplay of individual and social actors and particular circumstances in determining occupational choices.

Self-efficacy and self-image came into play at the early stages of career choice in two ways. First, the idea of fit between an occupation and their personal qualities as illustrated by two participants. Olivia, 20, an undergraduate considering nursing: 'I've always been a great helper...at school...I was voted the nicest girl in the year...so I'm thinking 'why don't I just look at nursing'? Academic researcher Chloe, 26, said:

I just noticed that I had a different relationship to the [academic] work than other friends who also did well, in that it felt more personal, more connected to me, to who I think I am.

Secondly, self-image and self-efficacy were relevant to their choice of a career with a clear link to a subject that has interested them at university as in the case of Verity, 25, another academic researcher: 'My degree was environmental science and I'm researching management of the environment'.

Choices made to change direction were also often made without apparent reference to others presumably because by then they had far more first hand knowledge on which to base decisions as shown by two of the young mothers in the sample: 'A lot of the skill set from physiotherapy transferred quite well into dentistry' (Paula, 35, dentist).

My work...in the education department had made me sure I liked working with teenagers and was interested in education... and I thought I was doing so much teaching I might as well train properly and be paid properly too. (Hannah, 34, teacher)

Interestingly, evidence of *lack of* self-efficacy lay behind the career indecision of three of those who had no plan prior to graduation. Some, such as Belle, 34, now mainly a stay-at-home mother, described being unable to focus both on their degrees and on the process of getting a job: 'I couldn't cope with exams and doing interviews'. Others, such as undergraduate Diana, 21, articulated their lack of confidence to make a decision:

I'm quite scared of everything...it's like I always wait for the time to be gone and wishing I'd done better rather than pushing myself at the time.

5.4.2 *Daughters on their fathers' influence*

It has been argued above about that the mothers' influence over career choices was stronger than that of the fathers in most cases. This was obviously influenced by the level of close contact daughters felt they had with their fathers. 13 of the daughters did not live with their fathers when living at home but all but four reported they remained close to their father or were close to their stepfathers and did discuss their career choices with them.

It has already been noted that several daughters characterised their parents as a team and had had more difficulty in separating the role and influence of their mothers from their fathers. There appeared to be no obvious link between the daughters who talked in this way and the type of parenting described by mothers and daughters (for example egalitarian parenting where both parents took roughly equal responsibility for child

rearing). The one daughter who was brought up by a stay-at-home father identified more closely with her mother and discussed her career options mainly with her mother:

I always talk to Mum because Dad always says the same thing and it's not what I'm interested in or good at. He made me do a Saturday job as a vet, not taking into account that I'm not good at science. (Olivia, 20, undergraduate)

An important finding was that some of the daughters who expressed more self-confidence identified more strongly with their father than with their mother and were encouraged to achieve by their fathers. Amongst these women were those who had work experience organised at their father's place of work and had gone into a career similar to their father. They also talked about how much their father enjoyed their job. This parallels what has been reported about the influence of mothers above: 'I don't know that I had the same impression that she...loved her work...in the same way that Dad loved his work' (Chloe, 26, academic researcher). This builds on the findings of American researcher Nielsen (2012) who found that daughters whose fathers were actively engaged throughout childhood in promoting their academic or sports achievements and encouraging their self-reliance and assertiveness were more likely to graduate from college and to enter higher paying, demanding jobs. She also pointed out that girls who have no brothers are overly represented among the world's political leaders. She related this to receiving more encouragement from their fathers to be high achievers.

Interestingly, the few mothers in this sample with a high public profile and several of those who had reached the highest level in their career said that they identified more with their fathers than their mothers. One expressed her view that women with robust self-belief tended to have had this installed by their fathers: 'Somehow girls believe it more if it comes from their Dad' (Eiona, CEO). This again raises the notion that gendered coding of ambition and achievement is typically coded as masculine (Bem 1981; Sluis *et al.* 2010). Tutchell and Edmonds (2015) also argued that a father's active support seemed to give the successful women they interviewed permission to be ambitious and to admit to their ambition.

This research did not triangulate the views of the daughters with those of the fathers. However, the daughters' perspective raised an interesting question for future exploration about the differences between career outcomes for daughters who identify more closely with their fathers in contrast to the more normative close identification of mother and daughter.

5.4.3 *Daughters on their peer's influence*

Peers acted mainly to help the daughters develop a clearer sense of who they were and therefore what type of work might best match their sense of self as exemplified by Verity, 25, an academic researcher: 'I've got a friend who is training to be a lawyer and another a doctor, so a lot of people I know want to do something useful'.

Peers, and sometimes peers who were also partners, were reported to be primary influences by those who were struggling with their sense of self. Meeting like-minded people at university in particular helped some to find a direction more comfortable to them. Examples included those whose friends influenced their interest in feminist politics and work in international development: 'I fell into a really good group of friends who helped me learn a lot and are just the coolest group of people...I got very into women's campaigning' (Isabelle, 23, recent graduate). This aligns with the revival of feminist debate about gender inequalities post Third Wave feminism as evidenced by the Everyday Sexism project (Bates 2014) and academics such as Phipps (2014).

Conversely, a theme concerning the influence of peers, especially in discussion about jobs held at university, was to help the daughters articulate what they did *not* want to do, such as undergraduate Diana, 21: 'I don't want to do like (*sic*) banking...any kind of business related thing is just not me', and Megan, 24, market researcher:

It's funny actually, they impacted me massively in a negative way making it so clear what I didn't want to do, the mind-set I didn't want to be in.

Some of the daughters enjoyed the competitive environment they were in at university and felt their peers spurred them on to try hard to get impressive jobs as exemplified by Oxford undergraduate Xenia, 20: 'I think Oxford people are quite driven. Everyone wants to do something interesting or impressive in some way'. This desire to impress was particularly true of those in postgraduate, more vocational education who were actively competing with the same group for jobs, such as Tanya, 22: 'I guess I want to do something other people think is cool so I can show off'. Finally, this research coincided with a recession in job opportunities for young people and an exceptional few reacted to this with a sense of 'why bother?' They tended to seek reinforcement for this attitude from their peer group.

5.5 Key findings

A contribution of this research was in demonstrating that these middle class mothers were in most cases the primary influence over their daughter's career expectations. This builds on the findings of Moen *et al.* (1997); Lawler (2000) and Woodfield (2007). Ways in which the daughters' attitudes to work were guided and shaped by their mothers with successful careers included: a substantial number of this sample following their mothers into the same or similar careers, having the same work values and having doors opened to their careers by their mothers. This research suggested that daughters have absorbed from their mother that work can be interesting, enjoyable and satisfying and that that they should aim for a career that delivers them these qualities. That competitive roles are open to them was also a consequence of educational achievement that was encouraged by their mothers, as argued by Walkerdine *et al.* (2001). Most mothers fostered purposefully a sense in their daughters that they 'could do anything'. This applied equally to their sons but what the mothers felt they particularly needed to do for their daughters was to help build up their sense of self-confidence. In some cases the mothers expressed concern that this lack of self-confidence would be compounded by gender inequality and lead to their daughters not achieving their potential. This reinforces the argument made about the strong influence mothers had over their daughters early career aspirations and also links to an additional key finding. A further original contribution of this research is that it shows that the language used by the daughters to describe what they wanted from work was mirrored by most of the mothers who had already achieved career success. Even those mothers who had reached the highest levels did not characterise themselves as consciously aiming for the top. Therefore they did not communicate this ambition or present this directly as a possible career outcome. This is not to argue that getting to the top is or should be the aim of all. Many of the mothers in this study loved their jobs and were not motivated to get to the highest levels of their chosen careers. Some, as discussed in Chapter 4, deliberately traded-off their ambition for a career that they felt worked around their children. There was also evidence to suggest that some of the daughters who had started out on professional career paths had the view that they did not want to continue to work long hours. In these cases some made an explicit link to not wanting to work as hard as they had watched their mother work. This supports arguments made by Cahusac and Kanji (2014) for raising the quality and availability of flexible work, because the benefits need to outweigh the burdens of work. However, given that it is broadly accepted that the inclusion of more women at the highest levels in society is desirable, these findings also present a challenge to the idea of progress towards gender equality at

the highest levels in organisations and definitions of career success that prioritise linear progress.

One implication of these findings is a need to question the link often made between success at work and 'getting to the top' and broaden the definition success at work to better match the aspirations of many women with careers, as argued by Bostock (2014). For example, being recognised for leading a team that advances issues important to them rather than the focus being on individual achievement. A further implication is to persist in challenging social scripts about gender roles that exist within organisations and within individuals. As discussed in this chapter, researchers continue to find evidence of inhibitions felt by women about appearing competitive and ambitious in organisational careers (Kray *et al.* 2001; Eagly and Carli 2007; Sluis *et al.* 2010).

These theories were echoed in this study in that the mothers were found to have much influence on their daughters' career expectations and ambitions and yet the accounts of daughters also suggested that some mothers underplayed their own success. This point was illustrated by Isabelle, the daughter of one of the mothers who was at the highest level of her profession: 'My Mum just did really well by accident...she always talks about...just needing to do it because it was happening and she was doing well'. The mothers' motivations for downplaying their success could be related to their own insecurities and/or sense of what sense of self they wish to project. As Tara, Managing Director of a media company said: sometimes I can feel quite guilty about my salary. I think 'do I deserve that?' ...Moments of self-doubt when you think 'I'm terrible'. Another commented that when listening to the women being interviewed who were on the Radio 4 Woman's Hour Power List many of them had said they did not feel powerful and were waiting to be found out in some way. This phenomenon has been recognised often enough to have a name; 'imposter syndrome' and many researchers have linked this to high achieving women (for a discussion see Gibson-Beverly and Schwartz (2008)). It was certainly the view of some of the mothers at the top of their professions that self-belief was installed for their daughters more convincingly by their fathers. Alternatively, not talking to their daughters about their successes at work could be another example of the maternal guilt some felt about their commitment to work discussed in Chapter 4. Conversations obviously need a listener as well as a talker and it was also the case that some of these daughters were not very interested in their mothers' jobs. Nevertheless, given the finding of this research that successful working mothers do profoundly influence their daughters' early career path; the lack of evidence of celebrating achievement or the transmission between mother and daughter of a sense of long term ambition to reach leadership roles is

likely to impede the future inclusion of more women in positions of power. This prompts the suggestion that it would be valuable if mothers talked more to their daughters about their career and particularly how continued enjoyment of work is affected by being recognised for your achievement and how having status and seniority puts you in a stronger position to effect change. The last words in this chapter are given to Isabelle, the recent graduate daughter of one of mothers who had reached the highest level in her career. She too had reached the conclusion that she would have liked to hear more about her parents' jobs and achievements:

I think I would talk to my kids a bit more... about adult stuff. Like there was always adult stuff that we weren't involved in, their jobs and news basically...I would have liked to hear more about jobs and news...because it's only now that I look back on their lives and think wow! I was looking at Dad's C.V. and he was amazing. And I never knew because he was just always silly, bumbling, fat old Dad, and Mum is amazing too. And that's a shame I think.

Chapter 6: Daughters: Anticipating Motherhood

I just think it would be really nice to have children. I think part of it, truthfully, that as a woman...probably throughout history and still to this day...I don't feel like a proper grown up without a child. It's a big thing about womanhood. (Ursula, 27, aspiring lawyer)

Chapter 5 showed that mothers had been a major influence on their daughters' early career aspirations by their modelling of successful careers. They also facilitated opportunities to enter careers in indirect ways, such as encouragement of educational achievement, and by giving direct help. This chapter now examines the role played in their career choices by the daughters' anticipation of having children. Nineteen of the 22 daughters who did not have children said that they wanted children. This corresponds to the argument proffered by many (such as Chodorow 1978; Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg 1994; Crompton and Harris 1998) that notions of motherhood impinge upon most adult women because the association between femininity and motherhood applies at the level of identity, even when identity is in change in response to changing social roles. It has long been argued that women's identity is interwoven with their relationships (Gilligan 1982) and that the idea and experience of motherhood is particularly powerful because the child is the source of the last *remaining, irrevocable unchanging, primary* relationship' (Beck 1992 p118, his italics). This links with Gatrell's (2008) argument that embodied gendered social norms influence women to take decisions about work, in anticipation of combining work with motherhood, long before they are mothers. Therefore, the key question addressed by this chapter is how did anticipating having children influence the career choices of the daughters?

It is a complex task to unpick the role of the various influential factors because no one in the study was fully conscious of what was influencing their aspirations and expectations. The rhetoric of choice was embedded in the accounts of many of the daughters, because, as already discussed, many had a strong sense of personal agency. However, because individuals have imperfect access to the cultural context in which their decisions are made (Hochschild 1983; Crompton and Harris 1998; Blair-Loy 2003; Stone 2007), the findings of many researchers will be drawn upon to reveal some of the less conscious dynamics.

A key contribution of this research was to illuminate ways in which their mothers continued to be a significant influence in shaping the daughters' attitudes to managing work with motherhood. The mothers influenced their daughters' view that they should work and also influenced their perceptions about working hours that best fit with the children most anticipated having. However, the influence of their mothers is shown to be

beginning to wane in favour of their peers in the workplace. Those starting on career paths in high status jobs were noticing the struggles experienced by women with children in their workplaces and, as a result, felt conflicted about how it is possible to continue to work at a high level. This was significant in shaping the views of the daughters in this sample who were in their 20s, working and child-free. Moreover, it was also clear that the dominant cultural scripts about motherhood, coming mainly from their peers and the media was influencing the view of a small majority that combining children with part-time work is the ideal.

The presentation of the research findings in this chapter starts in section 6.1 by looking at how the daughters anticipated they would combine motherhood with work and the social narratives that were evident in their thinking. Section 6.2 examines the role played by the mothers of daughters, who are undergraduates or in the early stages of their careers, specifically in shaping career-making decision with motherhood in mind. It then examines other significant sources of influence, those being their peers in the workplace and how the daughters view career opportunities and structures in their employing organisations. Section 6.3 considers how their views intersect with their expectations of their partners in terms of the division of responsibilities for caring for family and the home. Section 6.4 sums up the key findings of this chapter.

For the nine daughters who had their own children reference will only be made here to the choices made before they returned to work after having their first child. This cohort will be the subject of Chapter 7.

6.1 Expectations of combining motherhood with work

It is important to establish that the daughters expected to combine motherhood with work. The vast majority of the daughters wanted to work and assumed that they would combine working with motherhood, as illustrated by Chloe, 26, an academic who said: ‘the person that I am is someone who works...I expect to work. It wouldn’t ever cross my mind not to.’ Many used emotional language to express that they would not want their identity as workers to be subsumed by motherhood or as one put it ‘giving up myself’. One thought life without work would be life without a purpose:

I don’t think I ever thought about not working after having children because I don’t want to be left with nothing in my life and without a purpose. (Denise, 37, marketing business owner and mother of two)

This confirms the work of many scholars who suggest that women now identify as both mothers and workers (Bailey 1999; Garey 1999; Laney *et al.* 2012). Many also felt, as

argued by Adkins (2006), that women, including those who are mothers, are expected, by society, to work. Indeed, some thought that work was the role that was most valued for women:

School and university really promoted the idea of your career. When you discussed not going to work it was deemed that you were a failure, it would be a waste of your education. It's not in any way promoted, staying at home. It's not seen as a good thing. (Olivia, 20, undergraduate)

Many perceived the social expectations about combining work with motherhood as pressure that is not experienced by men. Willow, 26, a doctor described:

The pressure to do everything at once... the standard image of what we are meant to be doing. Whereas men don't have to be defined by their status with their children or whatever. They are just men with their own identities. Women think much more deeply into it all...to be able to bake a lovely roast dinner...all that stuff that women put on themselves to do and to dress well and have nice skin and hair and everything.

Only one of the daughters, Olivia, 20, aspired to be a full-time mother. In her words: 'it's the only thing I've ever known I definitely want to do. I want to stay at home for kids'.

Turning now to expectations of motherhood, almost all of the daughters said they wanted children. This corroborates the work of Gatrell (2008) who described the socially constructed association between femininity and motherhood as an embodied gendered social norm. Brand manager Zara illustrates this point:

In Indian culture women get married quite early. My sister was... 24 and I'm 28...I want 2.4 children and a white picket fence. I want the ideal.

Of the 22 daughters who did not have children, only four had given having children no thought at all beyond conversations similar in nature to 'do you think you will ever get married' and did not want to engage with imagining how they might combine work and motherhood. Their view was, as expressed by Florence, 24, working in marketing: 'I'll deal with that when the time comes'. Eleven had actively thought about having children and what this could mean for their careers. Seven wanted children and had thought more vaguely about what this may mean for their careers. Those whose thoughts were more vague were mainly, but not exclusively, undergraduates or recent graduates who were preoccupied with getting a good job. In addition, three of the 'daughter mothers' had chosen their careers based on the expectation of having children. Therefore, across the whole sample of daughters, only a tenth had consciously factored having children into their *choice* of career. Most focused on how their work could be *shaped* around having

children and were mostly concerned with the *hours* they would ideally work after they had children.

6.1.1 *Choosing careers with children in mind*

Examples of those who had chosen their careers with children in mind were only found amongst the 'daughter mothers'. Kelly, 35, an educational psychologist, is quoted several times in this section because she was on maternity leave with her first child and often articulated themes of importance to many because the issues were fresh in her mind. She reported she had chosen her job on the advice of her mother who was in an allied profession because it was a suitable job to combine with having children. She had planned her career path since before going to college and had worked full-time until the birth of her first child. Her planning for the time she had children also extended to moving house to be close to her parents so her mother could take care of her daughter when she returned to work. The attraction of the job was that it was common to work part-time, the hours were predictable and that it could still be a fulfilling career whilst also satisfying her professional view that children below primary school aged thrive better being with their mother. She linked this view to the feeling that she had taken with her from childhood that she had not enjoyed being cared for away from her home after school but the primary explanation for her choice was her feeling that part-time work was the best way to combine the children she had always planned to have with working, rather than a reaction against her own upbringing.

Two others who had chosen their career with having children in mind had switched careers after they married. Hannah, 34, had left behind her career as an actress to become a teacher, like her mother with whom she had discussed this choice. Paula, 35, switched from physiotherapy into dentistry. She considered medicine but had been deterred by her own observations and those of her doctor husband because: 'if you want children it's not particularly conducive, and we've both seen friends, both medics, married together, really struggling to juggle everything'. Paula worked 29 hours a week and commented that the predictable, sessional hours and the fact that there was no after hours working except for professional training made dentistry 'a great job for women'.

Two of these accounts show evidence of direct influence from their mothers. All three were the daughters of older mothers who were teachers who had started their careers at a time when it was more unusual to work full-time after children (Callender 1997; Dex *et al.* 2006). In addition, their mothers' decisions had been made in the 1970s in the context of a narrower cultural view about jobs that were suitable for women (Fogarty 1981).

It was also interesting that these three women raised issues of thematic importance that recur in the accounts of many participants that will be described below. All three expressed misgivings and irritation that their husband's careers took priority. In addition all felt that work was an important part of their identity and should be important for their daughters too. In response to the question, 'what do you get from working' Kelly said:

Self-esteem...I'm good at my job, I enjoy my job. It is alien to me to be a woman who a man has to pay for...I definitely want my daughter to be an independent woman...Part of [my] working is that it is important for her to see me as that role-model.

The views of those who had chosen their career with children in mind and the use of the phrase 'a great job for women' in particular corroborate the generally acknowledged existence of deeply embedded notions about the primary responsibility of women for their children (for example, Hays 1996; Williams 2002; Miller 2005;).

6.1.2 Shaping careers with children in mind: Full-time expectations

Amongst the daughters who did not have children slightly fewer than 50% thought that they would be likely to continue to work full-time or close to full-time if and when they had children. Most demonstrated that they were thinking about how to shape motherhood around their careers. This group included the three who had expressed ambition to go far in their careers. Their hope was to have autonomy, probably through having their own businesses, and so flex around their children. An example of this was fashion designer Eve, 26, who had based her views on observing a colleague. This colleague ran her business from home and, although she had a nanny, her children were often present in her studio and she was able to spend time with them that would otherwise have been spent on commuting. Financial analyst Fiona, 24, described her ideal work scenario as:

Becoming self-employed, taking on private clients...I can see myself making that kind of compromise...where I can work flexibly. I would still imagine myself working hard

Fiona confirmed that working hard to her meant about 55 hours per week.

A few who were working and had observed some models of flexible working aspired to this model for themselves. Examples included those working in TV production who talked of working intensively on a project basis for several months whilst their husbands took charge and then taking some time off between contracts to spend with their children: 'I know that's what some women do...they work really hard for four months or so and then they take a couple of months off' (Beth, 26).

Most of this group imagined themselves working full-time because they felt they would have little choice because of economic reasons. If they wanted to fund the kind of lifestyle they had in mind then they thought that would necessitate two full-time salaries.

Undergraduate Diana, 21, said:

I've always pictured two working parents...I like the idea of being able to send [my children] to good schools, like I went to...the reality of that is I have to get a good job and earn the money to support all of that...I suppose [that will mean] working full-time

Those who thought they would work full-time often also espoused the notion of being able to make any choice they wanted about combining work with motherhood in the wake of all the work done by previous generations of women to achieve equality of opportunity.

Megan, 24, a market researcher, described this as 'normalising' her generation's expectation of gender equality. Another example of this expectation of having choice was expressed by solicitor Natalie, 25, as:

Everyone seems to suggest that you have the right to make a choice...so before you were expected to stay at home and now you can choose between work and home...I don't feel there's something that says you have to do one or the other. I think it's accepted that you can choose.

Some, such as undergraduate Yasmin, 20, took this idea further and related their own feminism to the position that all women should be allowed to make any choice they wanted:

As a feminist, choice is one of my favourite words. Whether a woman chooses to stay at home with children, or balance work and children, or just focus on a career alone. All of these choices I believe are equally valid and a choice that each individual should be allowed to make.

Arguably, these views reflect what McRobbie (2009) identified as 'the illusion of equality'. She described the many ways in which young women depict their own situation as evidence of the 'complexification of backlash' to feminism and highlights in particular the changing 'horizon of authority' away from the idea of competing against men and towards the idea of the self as a project to work on.

I theorise that the absence of specific debate about the desirability of full-time working in the context of motherhood was revealing of the feeling that full-time work was not what they wanted, although it is what they expected. The only conversation that took place positively comparing full-time with part-time was between Megan, who worked in market research, and her mother Martha who had been a public sector CEO. Both were commenting on something they had separately observed at work:

I've noticed that women who are mothers tend to introduce themselves [when talking about their job] as 'I'm a full-time'. Where men would never say 'full-time' (Megan)...Yes, part-time suggests you are flaky and all those other value laden things so actually it's a point of pride. (Martha)

By contrast, there was considerable debate around working part-time that will now be discussed.

6.1.3 *Shaping careers with children in mind: Part-time expectations*

The narratives of the daughters who did not have children made it clear that the majority imagined that they would reduce their working hours in some way when they had children. Many felt they should and would want to take some time off after the birth of a child and that they would prefer to work part-time whilst their children were of pre-school age. A frequently used phrase was that part-time work would give you 'the best of both worlds'. The dominance of this part-time narrative was demonstrated in the views of two of the daughters who were working full-time when they were interviewed:

Working part-time gives you the best of both worlds. You get to have a career although it might not be as successful as you want it to be because of the perceptions about people who work part-time. But you still get a career, respect and human civilisation...and you also get to bond with your child and have a balance. (Zara, 28, brand manager)

I quite like the idea of working three or four days a week, or maybe every morning and having the afternoons off. I can see in my head...the children coming home from school and me being there at three o'clock in the afternoon. (Willow, 26, doctor)

One undergraduate also reported that her friend had taken a traineeship in a top law firm knowing that she would switch into a less demanding branch of law later:

I think because a lot of people who are choosing jobs that could be problematic with having children would be quite happy to only do these jobs for a few years. When they have a child at 30 they will re-evaluate everything. (Xenia, 20, undergraduate)

The view that they should work part-time was based on an idea almost all of these daughters expressed, as exemplified by Ursula, 27: 'I sort of feel like what's the point of having kids if you are never going to see them'. In other words, if you work full-time, you will never see your children. This seems to be an example of generalised thinking about binary choices that conceals strong cultural narratives associating mothers with the role of primary parent (Miller 2005; Breitenbach 2006).

The views of the majority of the daughters' generation in this research were clearly aligned with the dominant social discourse that part-time work is thought to be the most

appropriate choice for a mother of pre school aged children. The British Social Attitudes survey (Scott and Clery 2013) showed that, whilst support for traditional gender roles of a full-time working father and stay-at-home mother has fallen over time, by far the most popular model supported for the care of children under school age is a full-time working father and part-time working mother. 43% thought women should work part-time and only 9% of those surveyed supported options that did not involve the mother being ascribed the role of main carer. This finding was the same when broken down by age. Support for the mother part-time and father full-time model was 37% for 18-35 year olds, rising to 44% for 36-45 year olds. These figures could either indicate change over time or changes in attitude when people become parents themselves.

Interestingly, those who felt they should work part-time also demonstrated that they had misgivings about this view. They were aware that conflicting messages were coming from society as illustrated by Jessica, 22, an undergraduate:

It's a bit 'rock and a hard place'. One the one hand, as a mother, your duty is to your child, you don't want to be an absent mother or let your child be brought up by nannies, but on the other hand you don't want to be frustrated by the limitations of your life if there's nothing external to your family. I think those are the contrasting pictures that are filtered through film or books.

The daughters were also conflicted about the implications working fewer hours would have for them. One main fear was that that they could be losing all the investment they had put into their education and careers. This was felt at the level of identity:

I think to keep respect you've got to earn your own money and...even if I were a mother I'd think, "goddammit I'm a straight A student". You've got to maintain your own respect and your own sanity. (Zara, 28, brand manager)

We're all having children later, so I've spent 15 years building my career, so to drop it all is a nightmare...I wouldn't be me...This is my identity isn't it? I couldn't just be a Mum...Otherwise what are we training our women to do? Train for years and then just give up...Thinking about it women are in an impossible position aren't they. (Kelly, 35, educational psychologist)

Those anticipating maternity also thought that their careers would be compromised by staying away from the work force too long: 'You might lose the momentum...I think that's a given for so many careers' (Tanya, 22, TV Producer). This fear was self-induced and amplified by their employers short term targets and requirements as reported by Fiona, 26, a financial analyst:

I would be worried about what I would be coming back to afterwards...I think there's pressure to come back sooner than you are ready...from the fear that projects would have moved on without them and that they shouldn't stay off too long or they'll be behind.

Some expressed concern that even being on maternity leave could compromise their careers, as exemplified by Natalie, 25, a solicitor:

You do get career compromise because you are going to take a year off and therefore you have lost out on a year's worth of progress. People will have changed, networks, systems so yeah you're going to compromise by virtue of the fact that you are having time out.

The daughters who did not have children expressed views that were impressionistic and, for many rooted in the powerful cultural construction of the motherhood ideal (Miller 2005; Breitenbach 2006). What is perhaps more surprising is that so many of the daughters should alight on the idea that part-time work is the best option given that they had already invested heavily in a career path and in the light of the belief of most that their experience of growing up with a mother who worked full-time or close to full-time hours in a demanding career had not affected them negatively. However, a key factor influencing this view was their lack of knowledge about working options that led many to think that they had a binary choice between full-time and part-time work. The accepted definition of part-time work is a flexible working pattern that reduces the amount of contracted hours in which employees perform their roles. Flexible working also describes flexi-time (varying start and finish times), compressed hours, regular working from home, working in term-time only, working an agreed number of days per year and job-sharing where two or more people perform one role. (Tipping *et al.*, 2012). These participants did not have access to the arguments of scholars such as Gambles *et al.* (2006) that the traditional perception of part-time work as being the best way to combine work with motherhood is a myth as shown by the experience of part-time working mothers that work spills over into life. Nor did they express any knowledge of the penalties in terms of career rewards and satisfaction that come with part-time work despite the facts that these have been studied and described for many years (Gatrell 2007; 2008; Connolly and Gregory 2008; Durbin *et al.* 2010b). It was apparent that there was little knowledge of what flexible working meant beyond vague views about working school hours or working from home and a few mentions of job sharing. As one acknowledged they had also not thought through the financial implications of childcare:

I just realised, when I've been thinking about this, it's been without thinking that you can pay for childcare, nurseries, babysitting and things but obviously that's enormously expensive. And that just changes everything doesn't it? (Megan, 24, working in market research)

As mentioned in Chapter 4, a sense comes through these daughters' narratives of searching for the answer. Undergraduate Tanya, 20, underlined that motherhood and work was: 'talked about a lot. It doesn't feel like an issue that has been dealt with'. Kelly,

35, said: 'We're a bit confused really. I don't know if we really know what the holy grail is really for working women, with motherhood'.

6.2 Influences of mothers, peers and workplaces

This section looks first at the role played by the mothers of daughters, who are undergraduates or in the early stages of their careers, specifically in shaping career-making decision with motherhood in mind. It then examines other significant sources of influence, those being their peers in the workplace and how the daughters view career opportunities and structures in their employing organisations.

6.2.1 Influence of the mothers

Many mothers had not had any conversations at all with their daughters who did not have children about motherhood and work. One explanation for this is that they were just getting on with living life as previously discussed in Chapter 4. The mothers also gave specific reasons why they preferred not to pass on advice to their daughters about managing work and motherhood in advance of them having children. A reason often given was that they did not want to 'poke their nose in' (Donna, teacher and grandmother) and feel like they were putting pressure on their daughters to deliver them a grandchild. Other mothers considered it inappropriate to discuss career choices with their child free daughters because so many unknown variables may come into play, such as not knowing much about what other people's jobs are like, changing your mind about your priorities over time, not being able to have children and also the danger of making your career decisions through the prism of your intention to have children. These themes were well exemplified by mother Valerie, a senior retail manager who had a working daughter in her early 20s:

I would probably not recommend making career choices around having a family because you never know what's around the next corner. There are careers that will give you an easier or a harder life when you are having children. ...but I don't really know about many careers, you only see them from the outside....I also think that if you make a choice other than the one you really want to, for example to become a G.P. when you really want to be a surgeon, then that will eventually catch up with you and make you feel unfulfilled...You could make all your decisions around having a child and then find you can't get pregnant and that surely would made you feel worse. You can't suppress yourself forever.

Several of the daughters reported that their mothers or their mothers' friends had proffered suggestions of routes within the professions daughters were considering that were more family-friendly but the daughters were unreceptive to suggestions because a much more immediate issue for them was getting a job to start their careers. These

accounts corroborate Woodfield's finding that 'young women imagined their occupational life as one that reflects their identity as individuals, rather than their 'future role' (2007, p.208).

There was more evidence of the mothers' views having an impact upon their daughters with more general encouragement about how it was possible to combine work and motherhood, as reported by undergraduate Jessica, 22:

My Mum has taught me to be ambitious, to know what I want from work and life, and know that I can get it. I guess it's encouraged me to know I could be successful if I wanted to in whatever career I wanted to but then equally to think that I can do that and be a successful mother. To have both.

Conversations of this nature were, unsurprisingly, played back as a positive influence by those daughters who felt positive about growing up with a working mother, as discussed in Chapter 4. It was clear from the analysis that this encouragement of the desirability and feasibility of combining motherhood with work was most often offered by mothers who identified as feminists. Often these conversations were also about 'not making life harder' by taking on a disproportionate amount of the work involved in caring for families in relation to their partners. What was said was often extended to apply to all women and therefore was a political, feminist statement rather than just a private observation. An example came from, Xenia, the undergraduate daughter of a director in the arts, both of whom identified as feminists, the mother more strongly than the daughter. Xenia said:

She's definitely said to me, "be careful as a woman you don't get forced to do all the childcare or all the cleaning", and there's definitely an impetus behind what she's saying, you for you but you for women as well, which I think she feels really strongly, maybe more than I feel or my peers feel.

These comments reflect the identification of the mothers' generation with the aims of liberal feminism in encouraging equality of access to the most senior positions in work and contesting the assumption that women should be primarily responsible for the domestic sphere. They thought that these issues were still unresolved, as argued by academics such as Epstein and Kelleberg (2004) and Gerson (2011). By contrast, many of the daughters felt more comfortable with the idea that caring for children would be their role as will be argued in 6.3.

It was also the case that some of the daughters who expressed aspirations about flexible working were the daughters of women who had professional reasons to have thought about, and talked about, work-life balance. One, for example was the daughter of a political researcher, one the daughter of a sociologist and others were the daughters of women

who held very senior positions in their organisations and so had input into employment policies. An example was Ruth, Arts CEO who commented that:

I don't believe in compressed hours. I think that's an excuse for working less and being paid more...We're very, very strong on flexible working. We've got every shape and form of parenting. It's always a negotiation and it depends upon what works and we expect them to be flexible about reviewing that. I think it works pretty well.

A further, key finding was that, even though the link was rarely appreciated or articulated by the daughters, there was clear evidence that the way mothers modelled combining work with childcare had been observed by and influenced the daughters. Some daughters who wanted to work flexibly or autonomously had mothers who had run their own businesses and had flexed their work around important moments in their daughters' lives. Few made this link directly in the interviews but Jessica, the undergraduate daughter of a serial business owner did:

I don't think I would ever stop work, I mean I haven't really thought it through but my idea would be to do something similar to my mum...do flexible hours so kind of have the best of both worlds

Also, those who felt two full-time salaries would always be necessary to fund the kind of lifestyle they hoped to have, tended to have parents with the same dual income model. Moreover, two of the three daughters who thought their mothers' working hours had affected them negatively wanted themselves to work part-time or not work at all. They were both examples of daughters who had actively thought about combining work with motherhood. The third daughter had followed her mother into the same media production career and her mother had talked to her about the greater prospects now available for flexible working. There was also evidence of a link between mothers who had an 'Idealistic' attitude to combining work with motherhood and daughters who anticipated cutting their hours when they had children. Again, the daughters tended to have reached this conclusion by observing their mothers' attitude rather than hearing these reservations directly expressed. A typical example of this came from Isabelle who reflected on what her mother Imogen, who had reached the highest level in her career, had communicated to her:

I have seen Mum really struggle with work and not being with her children. She often talks about work and motherhood and how she felt about it and I think she has a lot more guilt than my Dad. But I think if Dad had been more equal with Mum she wouldn't have felt like the c**p one in going off to work. That's probably why we always moaned at her for going to work because she's always be like, "your Daddy is doing very important things. I'm just going to work" because she's very self-effacing.

Isabelle also reported how pleased her mother had been to hear public reassurance that it was possible to do both motherhood and work well.

[Mum and I] went to a Women's Dinner at college...and Zadie Smith was talking about career and motherhood and Mum cried and I was like oh nooo! But I think it's because she was saying, "you can be a mum and have a career that you love and integrate both into your life".

Isabelle's conclusion was that she would combine work and motherhood herself but that she did not want to work as many hours as had her mother. Interestingly, the daughters of mothers with 'Pragmatic' attitudes did not show a particular tendency towards either working full-time, flexibly or part-time. This may be because there was no clear idea governing the 'Pragmatics' notion of the way they should 'do' motherhood.

These findings build on the work on Moen *et al.* (1997) and McGinn *et al.* (2015) in showing that attitudes about work and gender roles are transmitted inter-generationally. What my research adds is that position in the workforce also plays a role. The mothers who had a professional interest in employment policies and who had experience of autonomous working environments passed on the advantages of both to their daughters. Moreover, this research makes a contribution in showing a link between the feminist views of the mothers and their direct communication of the desirability of combining motherhood with work and the need to avoid taking on a disproportionate amount of the labour of caring to achieve this. In addition the communication of the mothers' ambivalent feelings about combining work and motherhood also registered with their daughters, whether they said anything or not.

However, it was also evident that far from all wanted to emulate their mothers' way of combining work and motherhood. This aligns with Thomson *et al.*'s observation that: 'Women respond differently: some daughters of working mothers are keen to reproduce something like the model provided by their mothers, while others embrace the possibility of being at home full time' (2011, p.174). The accounts of the daughters in their 20s who were working also showed that the influence of their peers and their experience of the workplace was becoming a more important influence.

6.2.2 *Influence of the workplace*

Almost all of who were working reported having conversations about the effect of motherhood on women at work, based on their observations on the women working around them. These conversations took place with their peers much more often than with

their mothers. This was explained both by the fact that most no longer lived at home and also in the view exemplified by brand manager Zara:

You get to the point when you are 28 and a woman and you can make up your own mind about things and actually, the world 30 years ago and now are very different places.

For many of the daughters, watching the experiences of other women at work was the first time they had become aware that gender inequalities may affect their lives:

I feel like I was naïve for years about how sexist the world is and I feel that my experiences [at work] of late show me that it's far more of a boy's club that I thought and I feel that I've been treated quite badly because I'm not one of the boys. (Fiona, 24, financial analyst)

The main messages they were receiving were about how hard it was to maintain a senior position and have children and that most women chose to work part time or even leave altogether. Comments illustrating these points were as follows:

I think it's really difficult in my job, in everybody's job because everyone expects you to be able to work the same in spite of your kids. And a lot of people give up. They work...ridiculous hours and the rest of it, to try and get their career to a certain point and then they give up for a number of years...you're lucky if you can get a part-time post. (Beth, 27, TV production)

You certainly see women's priorities change...I see some very tired women...it surprises me in some cases the people who have dropped out. Some were quite senior. (Fiona, 24, finance)

Many, including brand manager Zara, 28, also expressed the view that they watched mothers who were ostensibly working part-time working close to full-time hours, for less money:

What I think about part-time is you end up doing a full-time job in fewer hours and you have to be ruthless...and pretend to be someone you are not so they take you seriously.

Some had also had it impressed upon them by their colleagues that children should not be referred to at work, and certainly not as a reason for not being able to make a meeting. A further theme heard was about the resentment of those who did not have children felt to those taking time off for maternity leave. Examples came from those who did not have children as well as from the daughter who was on maternity leave as follows:

People say we've all noticed a change in the ladies who are pregnant. There's a sense of aren't you lucky, it's all right for you, the state is paying for you to have time off...there's an acknowledged slight whiff of jealousy. (Kelly, 35, educational psychologist).

As discussed in 6.1 most of this generation of daughters feel that work is part of their identity and that they can make choices about managing their career. These feelings are in conflict with the uncomfortable emotions described above about the potential impact of motherhood on their careers. As Hochschild (1983) posited, this leads to the necessity to do 'emotion work' necessary to manage their feelings. The findings of this research suggest that many women start to experience negative feelings about managing work and motherhood well in advance of having children.

The structure of the organisations they worked in also made many of the daughters question how hard it might be to combine motherhood with working. Some took the view that companies played a role in making it harder for women to progress in their careers because of the prospect or experience of having children. Several observed that men were favoured in promotions because the company seemed to be anticipating that they women would, at some point, want to take a year's maternity leave. This view came from women working in American firms.

Maybe because we are an American firm...and they have a different attitude to it, so I think if you are getting married...you might be side-stepped by a guy because they would think, well, the guy isn't going to have his career impacted in the same way. (Fiona, 24, finance)

Others, particularly those working in the private sector, looked at the top level in their companies and saw that there were few women with children in those posts. Natalie, 25, a solicitor said:

Someone we know is a very successful lawyer in a firm and she's not going to get a partnership and the suspicion is that it's because she had two children...and in this situation the father does a lot of the parenting, but it seems that the firm is looking at it conventionally.

Several of the daughters also questioned whether their companies were genuinely delivering on their promised flexible working policies despite the diversity training sessions offered by their companies. Zara, brand manager in a company specialising in baby products observed:

I just feel that a lot of these companies say, "oh we do all this flexible stuff for mothers" but they do it for P.R. I'm not sure from what I've seen that many of them live and breathe it.

The way flexible working was delivered was also thought to be an issue for men. A few, commented that their male colleagues were obstructed by their companies when they attempted to give more support to their partners in the months after they had become parents, as illustrated by Megan, 24:

He has used up all his holiday taking every Friday off for the last few months...so his wife can have a day out of the house where she goes back to do her work, knowing that it would irritate his boss and that he would end up working at home despite it being a day off. Work creeps in.

On the whole, however, many of those working in the public sector, especially government and the arts, did not think they experienced many examples of gender inequality at work. Some of those in their late 20s who had worked in several companies also took a more nuanced view of the role of employers in helping or hindering the progress of women's careers based on their perception that that a different tone was set from the top of different companies.

These impressions prompted worry for many that they would not be in a senior enough position when they arrived at the point of becoming pregnant to be able to negotiate a way of combining work with motherhood that would satisfy them. These concerns were, for some, reinforced by the fact that several had taken a long time to get to their current positions because of the effect of the UK economic recession of 2008-2013 and confirm the work of Peacock (2013) and Illoong Kwon (2013). TV Producer Beth, 28, claimed that: 'there are much (*sic*) fewer jobs because of all the cutbacks so it's taking a lot longer than it used to, to get to where you want to go' and that the implication of this was, 'if you don't get far enough up the ladder you won't be able to progress afterwards' because of the long hours and travel involved in the more junior roles. For the doctors and lawyers their issue was the length of their period of training. Willow, 25, doctor said:

I could do medical training in the hospital, but it's hard work and working with other doctors who are going through that...[who are] a couple of years ahead of me...it's such a difficult job, lots of unsociable hours...and at 25 you are coming up to that aged where I know I'm gonna want children at some point in the next decade (*laughs*).

The views expressed by these daughters about the barriers they observed within the structure of their workplaces and from observing the experience of their peers had an impact on the career decision-making of many. Specifically, it seems likely that these observations are fuelling the intentions of a small majority in this sample to work part-time. The structures of some occupations also appear to be particularly likely to cause women to bend their ambitions around the idea that they may have children in the near future. Willow (25), reported that the way doctors are trained has recently changed and decisions need to be made, about the branch of medicine they will train for, within a year of qualification. She said: 'We all talk about it in kind of (*sighs*) fatalistic way, kind of like, 'oh well if I want to have children I might as well be a GP'. This corroborates Gatrell's (2008) observations about women working in the medical profession being guided, or

guiding themselves away from specific career choices. Willow preferred Accident and Emergency medicine and, after splitting up with her long-term boyfriend, had decided to defer her choices to think through the implications of taking a path into a specialism with challenging hours. These findings corroborate the argument made by Sandberg, based on her business experience, that one reason women hold themselves back in the workplace is because they 'leave before they leave' (2013, p92.) and pass on opportunities because they are anticipating motherhood.

The narratives reported above show that these daughters felt under social pressure to combine work with children but, at the same time, watching other working women was adding up to a sense that managing demanding jobs once you had children was very challenging, more challenging than the younger undergraduate daughters realised. This seems to reinforce the idea that combining children with part-time work is the ideal. McRobbie (2007) argued that post-feminist women expect to be treated as a genderless worker but this research suggests that 'can do' girls are becoming less sure they 'can do' as a result of seeing other women struggle to manage their careers with motherhood as they move into a different stage of their life course.

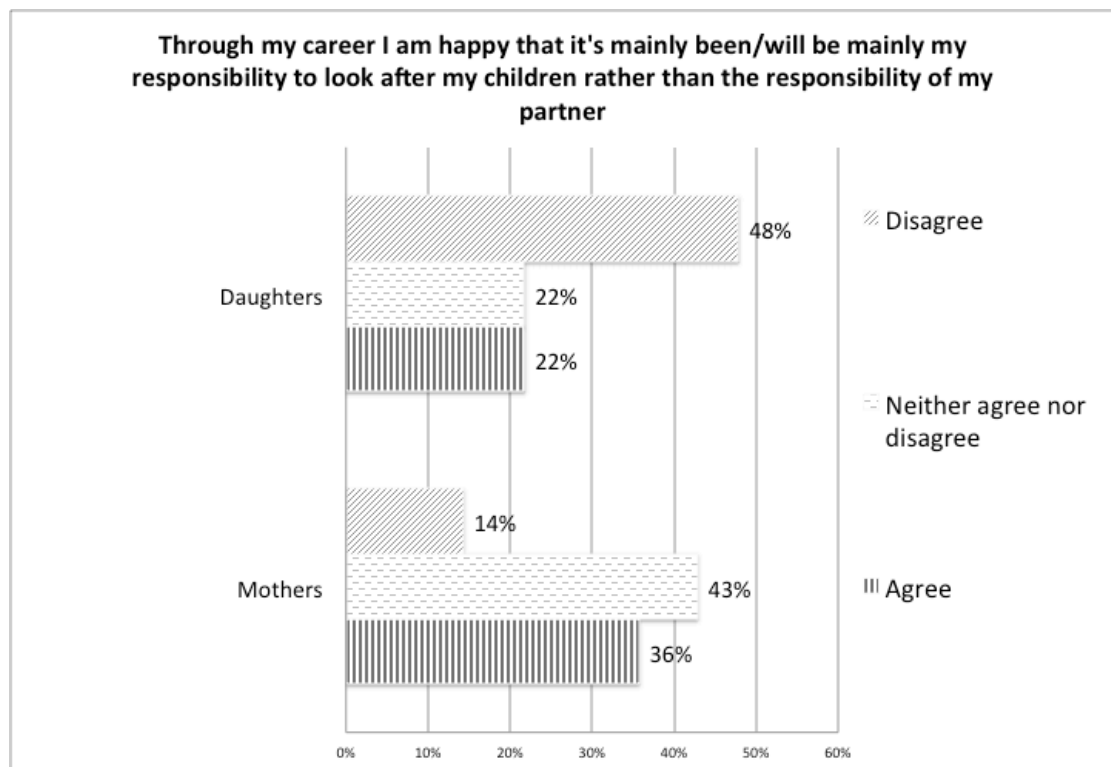
Given that only very few of the daughters imagined themselves working full-time hours in an institutional career, it is interesting to put this in the context of how they imagined they would share responsibility for the domestic arena with their partners. The daughters talked a lot about the way in which caring for children and doing household chores should be allocated between both parents because many of the daughters were negotiating relationships now whereas how they might combine work with children was more hypothetical.

6.3 Expectations of partners

A few of the mothers' generation offered their opinion, in the joint interviews, that their daughter's view that it would be better to work part-time was a response to the fact that: 'it's quite normal for mums to work but they are still the person who is in charge of everything else as well' (Ruth, Arts CEO). What was interesting, whether their parents had shared responsibilities or not, was that almost all of this generation of daughters expected (or were hoping for) egalitarian arrangements with their partner. However, many still felt they wanted to work part-time because, even though they wanted their partners to be fully involved, emotionally they wanted the role of primary parent to be theirs.

In the online questionnaire a question was asked about whether the mother should have primary responsibility for her children and the answers were as follows:

Table 9: Responsibility for children (n.52)



The participants in this research were split in views between those who wanted to take primary responsibility for looking after children and those who did not. The level of agreement varied by age with more of the daughters' generation disagreeing that the responsibility should be mainly theirs. Conversely, the mothers who were also grandmothers almost all agreed or strongly agreed that they had been happy to take the lead role. This reflects changing social attitudes over time (Scott and Clery 2013). Some were in relationships and were taking equal responsibilities for the domestic chores and others were adamant that they would not tolerate a relationship that was not equal. This is consistent with the characterisation of well-educated middle class girls as highly agential by researchers such as O'Brien and Fassinger (1993) and Walkerdine *et al.* (2001).

Even though five of the daughters felt comfortable that the role of looking after their children would be mainly theirs, what they said in the interviews made it clear that they were expecting a lot of help from their partners. Ursula, 27, working and currently without a partner exemplified this rather contradictory attitude:

Would I like my partner to be actively involved with our kids? Yeah. I'd definitely like an equal relationship... But I think I want to be in control of the cleaning...I would want to be the prime carer...even if they were the better parent. If it were

completely equal...I'd still want to be 1% better at taking care of them and making their life better.

The views of the daughters who expected an equal approach to both parenting and work were exemplified by the comment made by Ashley, 21, a recent graduate with an absent father:

I'd want it to be pretty equal. We'd both be able to look after the kids and work as much as we both wanted and both be really equal.

Those who had observed the way their parents worked together in an egalitarian way had a more detailed view of how the responsibilities might be shared:

I would definitely be looking for support in terms of active, hands on parenting. I would hope I would never have a partner who would solely delegate child rearing to me. I would like a partnership in that sense, equal division of these things. As my parents have done, you play to your strengths a bit. If one person tends to be better [at something] then that becomes their role. (Jessica, 22, undergraduate)

A further theme was imagining an egalitarian model where both partners worked less than full-time and shared responsibility for the children. Also, a few said they would be willing to accept that their career would be side-lined whilst their children were young as illustrated by Fiona, 24, financial analyst who said:

I wouldn't mind [giving up work] as long as I felt it wasn't assumed it would be me because it's my role in life, and it was my choice.

It needs to be remembered that these were the hopes expressed by those who do not yet have children. Their behaviour if and when they do have children will not necessarily follow their attitudes. However, the strength of feeling that they wanted egalitarian relationships is interesting and may facilitate shifts in the role of fathers towards being actively and regularly involved in bringing up their children that are being reported by, for example, ESRC (2013) and Baxter and Smart (2011) who found that the more hours mothers work, the more involved the fathers tend to be.

6.3 Key findings

Almost all the daughters saw work as an important part of their identities but many also identified with the idea that they would like to become mothers too. This research corroborates the findings of other studies, including Gatrell's (2008, p.3) argument that women 'experience restricted career opportunities on the basis of their potential for maternity' and the idea that the 'boundaries' of women's work are more 'shifting and permeable' than those of men (Glucksmann 2005, p.21). Specifically, some, albeit few, of the daughters in this sample had chosen their careers on the basis of their view that it

would fit in well around motherhood. The majority, however, were thinking about how to shape their working hours around the children they anticipated. The individuals in this sample tended to espouse one of three competing social discourses (Wodak 1996) about combining work and motherhood. These were, having the choice to follow any path, work being more valued by society and, for a slim majority, that part-time work will offer the best-of-both worlds. This speaks to the strength of cultural concepts about motherhood, as argued by many experts in the field, including Miller (2005). Slightly fewer than 50% did expect to continue to work full-time but it was clear from what they did *not* say that most did not feel that this is what they wanted to do, especially in careers that offered few opportunities for flexibility or autonomy.

This research makes a contribution to the debate about intergenerational transmission of values that shape the way their daughters think about constructing work around motherhood. My contribution is in showing a link between the liberal feminist views of the mothers and their direct communication both of the desirability of combining motherhood with work and in contesting the assumption that women should be primarily responsible for the domestic sphere. The mothers who identified as feminists thought these issues were still unresolved, as argued by academics such as Epstein and Kelleberg (2004) and Gerson (2011). In addition, this research demonstrated that the aspirations of some of the daughters were unconscious echoes of the way their mother had managed motherhood and work. This aligns with the findings of Thomson *et al.* 2011. My contribution is in illuminating the connection (usually not a conscious connection) between many of the daughters who wanted to work part-time and mothers who had an 'Idealistic' approach to combining motherhood with work and had felt guilt about working long hours out of the home whilst their children were growing up. Interestingly, the daughters of the 'Pragmatics' did not show a particular tendency towards either working full-time, flexibly or part-time. This may be because there was no clear idea governing the 'Pragmatics' notion of the way they should 'do' motherhood.

Chapter 4 argued that the vast majority of the daughters felt that they had not experienced any serious ill effects as a result of growing up with a mother with a career who worked long hours outside the home. Moreover, many expected that they would have egalitarian relationships and would share responsibility for childcare. It is therefore perhaps surprising that this research amongst young women who had embarked on professional careers in emulation of their mothers showed that many expressed ambivalence about their ability to successfully combine work and motherhood and were anticipating cutting their working hours. This aligns with the research of Durbin *et al.* (2010b) who tracked

UK men and women who graduated in 1995 over time and found that *prior* to having children the women prioritised their partners' careers over their own even when earnings were equal or greater for the women. In addition the 28-40 project backed by City CEO Helena Morrissey sampled more than 25,000 and found over 75% of women who were not parents said they were nervous about the impact having children will have on their careers (PWC 2014).

A further contribution of this study is to add evidence that those starting on career paths in high status jobs are noticing the struggles experienced by women with children in their workplaces and, as a result, feel conflicted about how it is possible to continue to work at a high level and be good enough mothers. The influence of watching these experiences unfold seemed to make a particularly strong contribution to shaping the views of the daughters in this sample who were in their 20s, working and child-free. This research therefore builds on Gatrell's argument (2008) that the issue of how to manage work and motherhood continues to be troubling to many and that many women are reflecting on the subject long before they become mothers. Given the observation that many women start to experience negative feelings about managing work and motherhood well in advance of having children, I theorise that these troubling emotions are likely to influence their decision making about jobs and hours when faced with the experience of motherhood in a way that could restrict their career development.

Another explanation of the dominance of the daughters' part-time narrative was that most of the daughters were uninformed about alternative ways of working. Most conceptualised their choice as being between full and part-time work. An implication is that it would be helpful for a broader debate to be had, perhaps within companies and also within families, about potential options. Recognising and acting upon the fact that many career women are anxious about how to manage career and motherhood even in advance of becoming pregnant might help women experience more of the choice that many, unaware of the constraints they face, currently believe that they have.

For 22 of the daughters in this sample combining children with work was a hypothetical situation. However, what the daughters think they will do may not be what they actually do so I turn in the next chapter to the daughters of successful working women who had their own children under 5 to assess whether, in the words of Tina Miller 'for the most part it remains the mother who is left holding the baby' (2011, p.1107).

Chapter 7: Daughters After Becoming Mothers

What I found is you have a baby...there's this hormonal thing that goes wild where you just can't believe how much you love it...but that fluffed up, sentimentalised love lasted as long as the breastfeeding hormones. Then they go and there I am, still underneath and I'm also a mother and you have to reconcile that...it's kind of an existential thing that you probably spend the rest of your life trying to resolve. (Belle, mother of two)

This chapter focuses on the experience of a sub-set of nine of the daughters of successful working mothers who had at least one child under five at the time of interview. My intention in separating out this group is to explore how they *felt* about managing work and motherhood, rather than remembering what it was like, as was the case of the older generation of mothers, or those anticipating motherhood as discussed in Chapter 6. Also my aim is to explore what and who was influencing these feelings, following Thomson's observations about the importance of studying the way in which new mothers negotiate change and continuity in their relationships in the context of contemporary cultural ideas about motherhood (2008). Having children under 5 was set as a criterion because of the normative view that a preschool child should be looked after primarily by the mother (Miller 2005; Breitenbach 2006; Scott and Clery 2013). Given that three generations are discussed here, for the sake of brevity and clarity the daughters who are also mothers are referred to as 'daughter mothers' and *their* mothers are described as grandmothers.

The 'daughter mothers' exhibited some of the same qualities of the grandmothers in terms of having interwoven identities as mother and worker (Garey 1999). This also corroborated the work of Bailey (1999) in whose theory of refracted identities aspects of identity, including the working self and the mother, come to the fore according to the primary preoccupations of the moment. The key contributions of this chapter are in demonstrating intergenerational transmission of attitudes, both verbally and more unconscious emulation of what had been modelled by their mothers. The verbal influence of the grandmothers was mainly evident in the period in which the 'daughter mothers' were pregnant and deciding how to go back to work. Most had embarked on a high status career path prior to becoming mothers but, afterwards, many started to question the number of hours they worked. At an unconscious level and despite changes in working practices available in the workplace some of the 'daughter mothers' followed similar paths to their mothers in terms of hours worked, being in similar careers or having flexibility or autonomy in their jobs whilst their children were of preschool age. To reiterate, many of the grandmothers had extended maternity breaks (often three years or more) or varied career paths as was common in the early 1970s (Walker *et al.* 2001). This was different from the experience of many of the mothers in their 50s who had short maternity breaks

of three months or less partly because it was not until 1999 that the provision of 18 weeks paid Statutory Maternity Leave was extended to all women. Moreover, some of the 'daughter mothers' exhibited the same 'Pragmatic' or 'Idealistic' attitudes to combining motherhood with work as the generation of mothers in this study. There were also examples of discontinuity between the grandmothers and 'daughter mothers' in their attitudes.

Whilst their mothers were influential on the way 'daughter mothers' felt about combining work with motherhood, stronger influences were their peer group of other mothers, in the context of cultural scripts (Miller 2005) about mothering, and the role in parenting taken by their partners. Feeling that they could work flexibly and/or autonomously also seemed to be vital to how positively the 'daughter mothers' felt about work.

A key, original finding was that, in the eyes of most of the 'daughter mothers', their own mothers had modelled their experience of combining enjoyable and satisfying work that involved mainly full time working hours with being a hands on, encouraging and emotionally involved parent. However, this view did not seem strong enough for many to withstand the cultural belief that being a successful mother means working fewer hours. This is significant because of the potential negative impact of a substantial cut in working hours to the progress of a satisfying career (Durbin *et al.* 2010a).

The reporting of the research findings reflects the distinction between the views and influences of the 'daughter mothers' when making their initial decisions to return to work and their subsequent experience of combining work with motherhood. 7.1 starts by describing how and in what way they decided to return to work and discusses the influence of the grandmothers, their partners and their peers. 7.2 then turns to their subsequent experience of combining work with motherhood and how the influencing factors changed. 7.3 explores the comparisons made by the grandmothers about how their daughters' experience of combining work and motherhood was different from their own. 7.4 presents the key findings.

7.1 Returning to work after motherhood

All of the 'daughter mothers' had careers prior to the birth of their children. Most had worked full-time but one had worked fewer days partly because of ill- health and partly because of the way her role was structured. Three in the sample had one child and six had two or more children. I have chosen to focus first on their accounts about returning to work after the birth of their first child in the light of Himmelweit and Sigla's (2004) findings that as women continue to work the attitude they have to the effect work has

upon their children changes so that their attitudes become aligned with their behaviour. Thomson *et al.* (2011, p.166) pointed out that pregnancy and motherhood change women's relationship to work, but in a way that is particular to their circumstances and often experienced in isolation. This was reinforced by my finding that even this group who were relatively homogeneous, in terms of being on career trajectories, fragmented in terms of the ways in which they approached working motherhood.

Most had embarked upon high status careers prior to becoming mothers and valued working. One was a mainly a stay-at-home mother with a small internet business venture. She had enjoyed and valued her work as a teacher and her decision to leave formal employment resulted from severe health problems experienced in pregnancy and after the birth. For everyone else their decision was about *how* they would continue to work. Therefore this section describes the working patterns of the participants immediately post children. Three 'daughter mothers' were main or roughly equal earners in relation to their partners and these women worked longer hours in comparison to the rest of this sample. Only one of these worked formal full-time hours on the employer's premises (including out of hours working). The rest of these mothers of young children had a range of different approaches to working hours and therefore epitomised the findings of Gardiner and Tomlinson (2009) that flexible working strategies are pervasive in the UK. Flexible working is defined here as variation in working time, space, place, or structure that makes it different from permanent, fixed hours worked on an employer's premises (Hill *et al.* 2010). Of the three main or roughly equal breadwinners who worked comparatively longer hours; one worked four days a week in sessional work as a dentist, another worked autonomously (sometimes from home) as a director of a marketing agency and the third worked full-time hours flexibly over four days. All of the others worked (or planned to work) after maternity leave part-time hours. As will be obvious from the work biographies described above, motherhood did affect the labour force participation of most. The range of working strategies displayed was more varied than the full-time, part-time dichotomy imagined by the daughters who were anticipating motherhood, discussed in Chapter 6. However, most 'daughter mothers' did cut back their working hours, which aligned with the expectations of the majority of the daughters who were anticipating motherhood.

7.1.1 *Motivations behind decisions about how to work after children*

Having children has been described as a major career event (Acker 1992) because it prompts reappraisal of one's relationship with work. The different behaviours towards work reported above were accompanied by different attitudes. Two out of the three in this sample who worked long hours were primarily motivated by their view that their work

could not be done in fewer hours, together with the economic incentive and imperative of a good salary. Denise, mother of two and the only main breadwinner amongst the 'daughter mothers', founded her own business and recounted that: 'It was about having a better lifestyle for our family. Shorter hours, less travelling, more money'. Sophie, mother of a 17 month old, felt her income was vital to her family and could not allow herself to think about doing less than full time hours because she felt that her role in marketing demanded this: 'It's not do-able part-time. You are in it or not in it'. She was alone in speaking about the problems associated with part-time work identified by many scholars (Gatrell 2007; Connolly and Gregory 2008; Durbin *et al.* 2010b):

I think the problem with part-time is it's not valued, it's not appreciated and you end up doing full-time work on a part-time schedule and then you end up feeling guilty because you've got to leave... I don't think I see that working satisfactorily either. So I think that's where we get stuck. (Sophie, one child, marketing)

For all of the others, their accounts of decision-making were not focused on work but focused on *being with their child*. Interestingly, the repeated use of this phrase or its antonym *not leaving them* echoes the work of Baraitser (2009, p.80) who argued that the constant disruption of mothers' lives by the immediate demands of a child may leave the mother feeling that she only dwells in the moment. Examples are quoted below:

I was trying to think what can I do that will fit round having her...to give me the flexibility to enjoy being with her. (Amy, two children, clinical network manager)

I knew I didn't want to leave [her] in full-time care. I didn't really see the point in having her if I was dropping her off at 8 in the morning and picking her up at 6 at night. (Belle, two children, mainly full-time mother)

In addition, about half of the 'daughter mothers' wanted the role of looking after children to be primarily theirs. This echoes the idea expressed by many feminist scholars about the naturalisation of gendered parenting roles (discussed by Gatrell 2005, 2008; Miller 2005; Faircloth 2013). Their desire to be primary parent influenced their decision-making about work as reported below:

I'm much better at it [being the main carer]. We [women] are much more natural at it. I think I do think it's the woman's role actually. (Kelly, on maternity leave with her first child, educational psychologist)

Their decisions about work were often crystallised whilst on maternity leave. Beforehand they had imagined getting back to work much sooner as, exemplified by Hannah:

I remember telling the head that I was pregnant...she said, "don't feel pressure to come back early" and I thought, "I'm not going to take more than six months off. I'm sure babies and nappies are so boring"...In the event that wasn't true at all. I

wasn't bored and was too tired and so I had a year off and I was really sad to go back... You don't realise, do you, how emotionally attached you are going to be to your child? (Hannah, on maternity leave with second child, teacher)

Across the sample of recent mothers, all but one had decided to work flexibly in some way and most planned to substantially reduce their hours which, as has been comprehensively demonstrated, is likely to impact negatively upon their salaries and the progress of their careers (Drew and Murtagh 2005; Gatrell 2007; Durbin *et al.* 2010a). Given that these women enjoyed and identified with work and that they had invested in their careers prior to pregnancy, it was surprising that the evidence that cutting back working hours has a negative effect upon careers did not appear to play a significant part in the decision-making process of these 'daughter mothers'. It is unlikely that this finding is explained by lack of knowledge of the penalties, given that many were aware of debates in the media about the gender pay gap and because, as described in 6.2, many had observed for quite a few years the difficulties and trade-offs faced by other women in their workplaces who chose to work part-time. The explanation may be connected to the observation made by these participants that maternity leave was largely experienced in the moment as Hannah, who was on maternity leave with her second child at the time of her interview, described:

Really it's just nice to be on your own. I didn't know how precious that was. So little moments like that even are lacking. Let alone mental space.

They also reported that the majority of their conversations about returning to work revolved around sorting out the immediate practicalities of childcare, as exemplified by Sophie, who had returned to work full-time in marketing:

I had this all sorted out before I gave birth. I had a whole spreadsheet comparing prices, expectations, locations. The spreadsheet made its way around my NCT [National Childbirth Trust] group.

This focus on the immediate and pressing demands of their children and the practical arrangements necessary to return to work anchor new mothers in the present, as argued by Baraitser (2008) and Stone (2012). These concerns are much more likely to outweigh the hypothetical future experience of a different contract with work. The next section turns to explore the influences of their relationships on the 'daughter mothers' thoughts and feelings about returning to work.

7.1.2 *Influence of their partners*

It was striking that the 'daughter mothers' led the decision-making about how they wanted to work, irrespective of the hours they intended to work or the level of involvement expected of their partner. Most reported that they decided what they wanted

to do, often having discussed the issue with their friends, and then they discussed the financial implications with their partner including the practicalities of how childcare would be organised. In short, most wanted their child's father to support their decision. This does not seem to be much mentioned in the motherhood and work literature but is consistent with research on breastfeeding decisions (Mannion *et al.* 2013). A quantitative survey amongst 296 first time fathers and 866 first time mothers on the first 1,000 days conducted by the National Childbirth Trust (Easter and Newburn 2014) also showed that the views of their partner in their decision to return to work was ranked in 12th place out of 14 criteria seen as very important factors. This implicitly suggests that parenting is assumed to be the primary responsibility of the mother, as already referenced above.

The supporting role played by fathers in decision-making was illustrated by Denise, the main bread winner who talked about the '*kind of*' a discussion she had with her partner:

He's obviously seen me work long hours before we were married and he knew that was kind of what I did...so I think he knew I would always go back and be main breadwinner...there was kind of a discussion about whether he would give up work and look after the kids while I worked but that was before a screaming baby arrived and he was like, "I'm going back to work" (*laughs*).
(Denise, two children, director of marketing company)

Paula, roughly equal breadwinner with her husband, said that she had not really discussed the way she would work whilst being the main carer for their children at all. She described bending to social expectations as follows:

It's not really something I ever thought about, worried about...it's just the, you know, society's expectation that the woman looks after the children...[my husband's] Dad was a doctor as well and his mum was at home so his stereotypes were different. His mum was always there. (Paula, three children dentist)

The women partnered with the men with the strongest opinions (according to the women) about gender roles in relation to looking after children also reported that they had made the decision about what to do. These women were Lily, an academic, whose husband had an egalitarian approach to parenting and Hannah, a teacher, whose husband was traditional and; 'would definitely not want me to go back to work if we could afford it'. The influence of their partners in the initial decisions about returning to work was therefore comparatively weak.

7.1.3 *Influence of the grandmothers*

Some mothers and their daughters commented that they had become closer after the arrival of the third generation and the idea, expressed by many researchers, that

daughters reconnect with their mothers when they become mothers themselves was obvious from the accounts of sharing experiences of labour and asking their mothers advice about childcare issues (Baraitser 2008; Thomson *et al.* 2011; Stone 2012). This, however, seems applicable to most women, not just women with higher skilled careers, so it was interesting to note that discussions with their mothers on the subject of combining work with motherhood had come up much more for the 'daughter mothers' than was the case for the daughters who did not have children. It seems that when the daughters announced their pregnancy this was a relevant moment for this intergenerational conversation to occur and absolved the mothers from the feeling they were putting on pressure as has been described in 6.2. The influence of the grandmothers was apparent in verbally encouraging or discouraging their daughters to carry on with their careers whilst their grandchildren were young. Their influence was also sometimes transmitted through the example they presented, even though the employment context in which they were working had changed over time. Given that this influence is subtle and not always consciously acknowledged (as argued for example by Hochschild 1983; Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg 1994; Brannen *et al.* 2004) I have given biographical context to the examples used to illustrate the themes coming through the analysis.

To start with those who encouraged their daughters to sustain their career; direct influence came from the mothers who defined themselves as feminists. This applied to a slim majority of the grandmothers who often initiated conversations with their daughters about the desirability of combining work with motherhood. One example was Anita who had been obliged to leave her position as a senior civil servant when she got pregnant and had an extended maternity break. She then retrained and became a teacher, a career from which she was very reluctant to retire. She pointed out that, despite her extended career break, she had worked for exactly the same number of years as her husband.

I've tried to show them [her two daughters] that you can be a working woman and a mother. I have set them an example and been quite a good role model to them and I've never glossed over the fact that...it will be tough...When they both said they were pregnant and going back to work and we talked about how... and why I didn't go back to work and what it was like not going back to work.

Anita had been at home for an extended period when her children were young and this had influenced her daughter Amy to work compressed hours; an approach she felt happy with. As she said: I wouldn't have swapped more money for less time with my Mum'. Several other 'daughter mothers' also drew comparisons between how they worked and how their mothers had worked and demonstrated that they had been influenced by their mother's approach as exemplified by Paula, mother of three, dentist:

It's a very structured day so I know I'm going to be there 8.30am-5pm and I don't have to do anything in the evenings...It's probably in between my Mum's job in that she had the longer holidays, she had time off in school holidays but had the downside of doing work in the evenings once we were in bed.

Another perspective was offered by Barbara, the mother of Belle who had two children under four and was mainly not working outside the home. Barbara had been one of the first women to work as a senior journalist in radio. She was concerned that her daughter was downgrading her ambitions too much as shown by their conversation in the joint interviews:

Belle (daughter): It will always be the case that [her husband] he'll earn far more than I do so I would take second place because of my salary.

Barbara (mother) *interrupts*: That's a very generous statement! [*then addresses me rather than her daughter*]. I think Belle has got great skills than perhaps when her children are less demanding of her time...she could...end up doing very well. But I think to write yourself off as never going to be the better earner [*tails off*].

Barbara was encouraging her daughter not to give up on work but also thought her daughter's experience was symptomatic of a social problem and said:

It needs to be accepted at a deep level of society that women do work and do need a supportive environment, not one that induced guilt because loyalties to work and family are divided. (Barbara, journalist, then portfolio career)

The grandmothers who gave advice about the desirability of continued commitment to a career were, as reported too in 6.2, likely to identify themselves as feminist and also express strong opinions about inequality in the labour of caring. Donna, a retired teacher and the mother of Denise, exemplified this point. She perceived that the message sent by the media is: 'that women are not valued in the workplace'. Her view as a feminist was also that the debates in the media, about the way women should look, what they should weigh and how they should mother, divided women when it would be better if they espoused a common cause: 'to get better, cheaper childcare and encourage men to help more in the house'. As previously noted this confirms the work of Epstein and Kelleberg (2004) and Gerson (2011).

Conversely, a few of the grandmothers encouraged discontinuity with their experience as full-time workers because they were worried that their daughters were doing too much and were trying to support their daughters' mental and physical health. The conversation recorded here centres on 'swapping stories' about the difficulties of managing work and childcare and ends with grandmother Harriets's advice about putting work on a back burner whilst the demands of her daughter's children are so great:

Harriet (mother): I think Hannah is quite anxious not to have...precarious arrangements like I used to have...when your children are ill. I mean everything just kind of falls apart then.

Hannah (daughter): It happens a lot...we do swap stories don't we Mum...because I'm always complaining and she always say, "yep, it was horrible for me too!"...I suppose her advice has always been...do the minimum amount of work you need to stay in your job.

Harriet (mother): Yes that's true. Get by. In this situation you cannot be a perfectionist.

Stella, who had been a lone mother for most of her children's upbringing, worried that what she had transmitted to her daughter Sophie was that she should do everything, even at a cost to her own well being:

The only trouble is, I think she's learned this thing of you actually drive yourself into the ground trying to do everything. That's unfortunate...She's just driving herself into the ground at work, working all hours. She's really doing the same thing that I did.

To turn to a different example of maternal influence; Denise, mother of two and director of her own marketing company was the only participant who overtly made the link between her opinion that she had not been ill affected by having a mother who worked long hours and her own expectation that her working long hours would also be fine for her children:

I didn't have that 'mother's guilt' thing of thinking "is my daughter going to be okay" because my Mum worked and I was personally fine. I didn't have that separation anxiety.

Seeking the practical help of the grandmothers with childcare was also a prominent theme. Several retired mothers were asked to help out regularly in caring for their grandchildren, for one or two days a week, and several who were still in work stayed for weeks at a time to help. As already reported, educational psychologist Kelly, moved house to be close to her mother so her mother could be her primary source of childcare. Grandmother Caroline, head of an NHS research body, described her daughter and grandchild as 'the owners' of her time outside work.

These accounts provide further support for the arguments made in Chapter 5 that the successful working mothers of these daughters had a significant impact upon the approach to work taken by their daughters. This research also corroborates the view of Baraitser (2008) and Stone (2012) that their influence was most potent for these daughters at the time of the birth of their own children when they reconnected, often subconsciously, with their relationship to their own mothers. Once the 'daughter mothers' were established back at work the role of the grandmothers' influence was by this stage

mainly giving emotional support. Whilst this support was highly valued by the ‘daughter mothers’ it was evident that other influences played a more important role in determining how the daughters worked and how they felt about this. The daughters renegotiated their relationship with their employers as individuals and were operating in a different social and legislative climate from their mothers. Also, the influence of peers who were mothers and the beliefs inherent in the contemporary cultural context were highly influential in shaping their ideas about the way they wanted to mother and shape motherhood around work. This influence was particularly strong after the daughters returned to work, as was that of their partners. These other influences will now be discussed, starting with peers and the cultural context.

7.1.4 *Influence of other mothers and the cultural context*

The ‘daughter mothers’ were aware of the many practical, economic and emotional factors they were grappling with, as argued by Stone (2007). They were also aware of feeling the influence of friends who were also mothers and what they were *expected* to do by society in general. This influence applied from the moment they became pregnant and got stronger as they built their networks around other mothers-to-be and, subsequently, mothers. They often characterised the influence of their peers as ‘feeling under pressure’ about many things including style of parenting, what to do about feeding and what to do about work. This corroborates the body of work on intensive mothering and attachment parenting (Hays 1996; Faircloth 2013). Whilst acknowledging these pressures, these working ‘daughter mothers’ seemed to be more aligned with Christopher’s (2012) concept of extensive motherhood, meaning delegating tasks whilst still retaining responsibility. The comments below illustrated this tension between the idea of choice and social expectations:

There is too much choice about what kind of parent are you going to be. Are you going to be a naturalistic one who does baby-led weaning and real nappies or are you going to be a routine Gina Ford one? I think there is an overwhelming amount of choice, which makes it almost, *(sighs)* a lot harder.
(Amy, two children, clinical network manager)

I was always going back to work early, I think my NCT friends probably think I’m a bit obsessive about work; they’d struggle to understand why it’s so important.
(Sophie, one child, marketing)

A clear theme heard from all was the amount of conversations that were had with other women at NCT coffee groups, at ante natal groups, at yoga classes, in cafés, online and in all the places women meet. Baraitser (2009) described these public spaces where mothers mass as locations in which a mother has to learn what is and is not acceptable behaviour

for her and her child. This seems to be a process involved in the reshaping of their identities and was perceived by the 'daughter mothers' in this sample to start from pregnancy:

You feel it [pressure] because it is so much discussed and articulated. You start to feel the discourse wars when you're pregnant. About how you'll do your birth, whether you'll breastfeed, whether you'll have a glass of wine.
(Lily, three children, academic)

Many reported that they felt that pressure turned into judgement from non-working women, especially about childcare which reflects debate about the importance of 'being with' children (Faircloth 2013) and goes to the heart of the concerns of working mothers; how their children are looked after when they are not there. Sophie, speaking dramatically to make her point, paraphrased conversations with other mothers as follows:

"Are you back at work full-time? "Yeah she's at nursery from 8 in the morning to 1 minute past 6 in the evening". "There are criminals that spend less time locked up than she is, poor child". (Sophie, one child, marketing)

Many of these mothers also made reference to a culture of competitive parenting that confirms Thomson *et al.*'s identification of the notion of 'intensification of responsibility', the feeling of being fully responsible for outcomes for your child (2011, p.277). Hannah, part-time teacher on maternity leave with her second child, commented that:

It feels like you've got to be doing stuff. That could be going to the library and reading stories, or going to the playground and having a lot of exercise but it's...sort of a need to be doing, or feel like you're doing something. Having objectives.

The feeling of most recent mothers was that social media was amplifying this sense of competition. Whilst social media could be a useful source of advice and information it was also where they witnessed what Belle termed 'humble bragging' about the achievements and activities of other people's children that could make them feel inadequate as mothers and shape their behaviour:

The pins [Pinterest] that come my way very much emphasise perfect parenting...I suppose people select, or create a brand image for themselves that they put forward in social situations and on Facebook and the like and you don't see the rough steps around the edges...that stuff is edited out for public consumption.
(Belle, two children, mainly full-time mother)

I don't think that it's easy and with social media (*sighs*)...all your choices are more painted out there in bold technicolour but also all the guilt is given to you that way as well, "you should be doing it this way", "you should be doing it that way", and "if you want your baby to be intelligent you should be doing x, y and z".
(Amy, two children, clinical network manager)

Many also commented that there are still few positive examples in films or TV of professional working women. Amy said: 'Mum' is never seen doing anything self-developmental or getting a job or anything' and Belle commented that: 'the policewomen in TV drama are all portrayed as neglecting their children for their job'.

These stereotypes about it being negative to be a mother and a worker are clearly still perceived to be held in the popular consciousness and this arguably gives people, other women in particular, permission to criticise working mothers. As Lily, said:

I think some people have said some outrageous things to me... "And how *are* your kids doing, it must be really hard"...but you never feel as a working mother you can say "you've not worked for eight years and its made you really dull". So the moral high ground is very much against the working mother.

This resulted in Lily feeling that some women, whilst generous in many other ways, were ungenerous and unsupportive of the way in which others decided to combine motherhood with work because 'motherhood creates anxieties for people':

I find the yacking about motherhood...people talking at length about breastfeeding, immunisations about the food you give your babies, about childbirth, about everything... can be very oppressive and not very helpful for women. So I think I didn't find motherhood a great place of sisterhood.
(Lily, academic, three children)

The findings of this research confirm Baraitser's (2009) argument that modern mothers are under increasing social pressure to actively mould a child who can win against other children in the competition for school places and, ultimately high status careers. This requires time to be spent with the child and this notion is clearly incompatible with a career that comes with long working hours. However, even those 'daughter mothers' who worked the longest hours in this study, recognised that competitive and target driven motherhood had affected them and was adding to the emotional pressure they felt. Thomson *et al.* (2011, p.277) framed this debate as the 'intensification of responsibility' amplified by middle class anxiety and insecurity about the way they mother and it is this definition which best fit the views expressed by the 'daughter mothers' in this study. The accounts above also show that the 'daughter mothers' were more aware of the cultural constraints they were working within than has often been argued, as exemplified by Hochschild's concept of cultural cover-up (1990, p.23). Plausible explanations include the high level of public debate in the media about working motherhood and awareness that working long hours is necessary to pay for the holidays and out of school activities that are believed to be important in moulding a middle class child. It is also likely that the participants were not entirely reliable witnesses regarding how much these cultural

scripts had influenced them as evidenced by the fact that only one was working full-time hours, over five days a week plus overtime in a traditional organisational career. Most of the 'daughter mothers' were working fewer hours than the average of 43.2 hours per week for those classed as Professional (SOC 2) and 46.2 for those classed as Manager and Senior Official (SOC 1) level (ONS 2011a, p.7).

7.2 Working after motherhood

7.2.1 Influence of the workplace

I turn now to the 'daughter mothers' accounts of their experience of working whilst mothering. Almost all of the mothers who participated in this research reported feeling torn between being ready to go back to work and feeling the wrench of leaving their child when they first returned and then, for many, they reconnected with what they enjoyed about their jobs. All their jobs, in theory, met what they wanted from work such as doing something with social value. It was notable that their negative or positive feelings about the way they managed work and family life were unrelated to a particular model or hours of working *as long as* they felt they had some flexibility or autonomy. Several, but far from all, of their workplaces offered this. Examples of women who felt positive about the way they combined work with motherhood were Lily and Amy.

Lily's work decisions were shaped around the way she wanted to mother:

I just feel that they need my mind to be on them. Not in a supervisory way but...to think about what they might need or what they might need to talk about...In a way part-time work protects me and gives me some mental space for them.
(Lily, three children, working part-time as an academic).

Amy was working full-time hours compressed over four days in her role as manager of a clinical network. She found her job very satisfying because the content of the role was interesting and clearly helpful to people and also because, as she reported, her employers cared about her output rather than the time she was present. She contrasted this with her sister's experience as a corporate lawyer who felt her firm had grudgingly allowed her to reduce the number of days she worked and then made it clear to her that they would be happy for her to leave because of her reduced availability to them. Thinking about the effect of her work on her children she said: 'we've never had any conflict about "well you're at work and I want you to be here with me"'. Indeed she talked about the benefits to her daughter of her work.

You can show a lot of benefits to them as well. So when she talks about what she wants to be when she grows up, she says she wants to be a doctor because she's

seen these very positive examples around her.

Conversely, examples of those who were unhappy with their relationship with work included full time worker Sophie and part-time worker, Hannah. Sophie, mother of one, was clear about how important work was to her sense of self:

I get a tremendous sense of identity from work. It's not enough to be a home mother, I would go crazy even if it was for a short period of time...so that's who I am. I like to be doing stuff and have things to show for it...I like interacting with interesting people...I need to earn my own money.

However, she worked long and inflexible hours and was also frustrated by her job. As a consequence, despite how important work and her income was to her, she let me know after our interview that she had recently left her job to study and find a different career field, probably also with the full-time hours she described as her 'template for life'. Hannah was on her second maternity leave at the time of her interview and she felt that she was not enjoying work enough to justify the money she earned:

The only real reason I went back to work is...to get the maternity leave and I was a bit scared not to have a job and sometimes I enjoy my work.

Ranged emotionally against this ambivalence towards her work was her feeling that she was not mothering in the way she wanted and that the support from her employer was not as good as it needed to be, in terms of acknowledging and dealing with the realities of mothering young children:

It's just such an anxiety thinking about how it's all going to work. There seems to be no straightforward system... of allowing women to come back into work. You've got to really fight to get a nursery place, You've got to fight your workplace to organise your time, then once you're doing it you've got to fight to make it seem like you're totally in control and not about to have a nervous breakdown. There's no sensible system that says, "yes you are probably knackered and mad but we want you to work so we're going to make it all happen in a sensible way.

When they found their jobs unrewarding it was also hard to change jobs because of the restrictions on their time caused by being the mother of a preschool child. Both Hannah and Sophie spelt out this problem:

I don't think great jobs just happen. You have to plan, look, network and all that takes time... I don't have any time of my own. I'm down to the core of like eat, sleep, people in the right place, out of the house, that kind of thing.
(Sophie, mother of one, working full-time in marketing)

I do feel quite trapped... it just feels like a constant amount of cooking and cleaning and feeding and making sure someone's sleeping, got clean clothes on and then suddenly it's the end of the day.
(Hannah, mother of two, working part-time in teaching)

These accounts show a correlation between not enjoying their jobs and being unhappy with their work-life balance that corroborates the work of Stone (2007). Some workplaces are more supportive than others, but even in supportive environments when they are working reduced hours Thomson *et al.* (2011) argued that women feel that they are rendered as 'bad workers' as soon as they become pregnant. Gatrell (2008) conceptualised pregnancy as a form of work, the demands of which are onerous and have to be undertaken at the same time as blending in with the norms of male embodiment in their jobs. She argued that this obliges women to work 'even harder than usual' (p.68). It is therefore probable that, for many, work becomes less enjoyable for those who are pregnant or recent mothers.

The realities of combining work with motherhood, expressed by mothers living these difficulties in the moment, counter the notion expressed by many anticipating motherhood discussed in 6.2 that working part-time is the 'ideal' way of working. However, having flexibility or autonomy clearly made a positive contribution to how working mothers felt about managing children around their work. It was also clear that most of those who were more content with the way they were managing their feelings about combining work and motherhood in a more 'Pragmatic' way. For example, Denise, director of a marketing company, had a 'Pragmatic' attitude and therefore did not get upset about the *idea* that her children *might* suffer because she worked:

It's funny because my business partner always used to have that mother's guilt... and I never had it...and I don't know whether that's because [my working] is right for us or if I'm just quite a practical person...I'm not a highly emotional person and maybe that has influenced it.

Building on these ideas, I theorise that the accounts I heard show how interconnected are feelings about work and about motherhood. Each can influence the other negatively or positively. The fear of these 'daughter mothers' was of transmitting negative feelings to their children. This was well expressed by Belle, mother of two and the only one in this sample who was a stay-at-home mother:

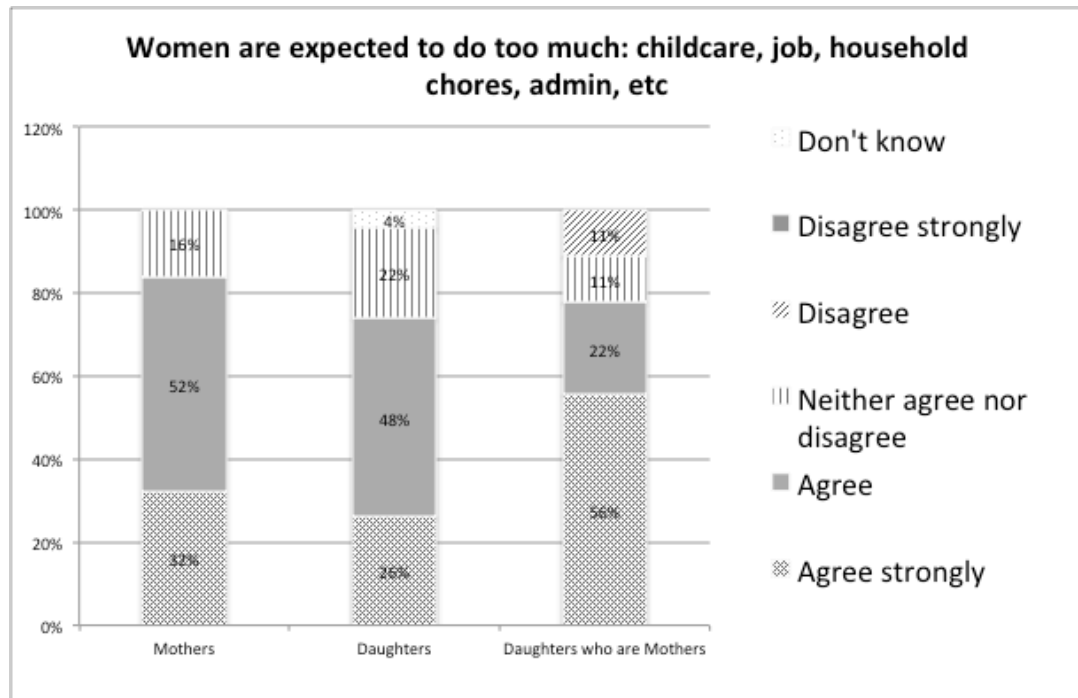
I think the more I see of life and motherhood, the more important I think it is that the mother is happy and fulfilled with what she's doing and that she has on her plate what she can cope with. Because if you're quashing your personality and trying to put a brave face on your situation, your children are going to see that.

7.2.2 *Role of the fathers*

After they returned to work, how the 'daughter mothers' felt about managing motherhood and work was strongly influenced by the role of their partners in parenting. Their

negotiations aimed to balance the needs of both, within practical constraints such as the sector and company they worked in, the cost of childcare and other household costs. Eight of the nine daughters in this cell of the sample were living with partners and, as illustrated by the table below, they were more likely than the older generation of mothers to feel that women are expected to do too much.

Table 10: Women are expected to do too much: (n.60)



The differences between the older generation of mothers and those now experiencing the burdens of responsibilities at work and within the family are likely to be attributable to the difference between living with the life load and remembering it.

Miller (2011) and Gatrell *et al.* (2014) have reported a trend towards fathers wanting to be more involved, hands-on parents. In this study, there was a clear link between those mothers who were happier about their work life choices and their experience of egalitarian parenting and those who were less happy having partners with traditional or transitional models of parenting. Three of the fathers of these recent mothers displayed egalitarian attitudes, four followed a traditional model and two were transitional (as described in 4.3).

An example of the link between mothers who felt more negatively about their work-life balance and traditional parenting came from Hannah. She commented that her husband embraced the example of his father's traditional approach to being absolved from family

responsibilities and said he would have preferred her not to go back to work if they could afford it. Hannah expressed resentment about how little help she got even though she was at work three days a week: 'He doesn't see the problems that might arise and he doesn't think, "Oh, everyone looks a bit mental, I'll cook some dinner"'. She referred to the 'silent warfare' that ensued in their relationship and others with partners exhibiting traditional relationships described 'resentment creeping in' and 'feeling trapped and knackered'.

Conversely, Amy and Lily had more involved husbands. Lily made the point that her partner was very helpful practically but that the 'emotional work' she felt important was all done by her. By 'emotional work' she meant paying attention to the children's friendship groups and wellbeing. This was a key reason for her decision to work part-time. Several others also argued that whilst their partners took on many practical tasks it was they who were expected to be in charge of childcare unless something exceptional was negotiated and they who did the planning and noticed and dealt with any emotional problems their child was having. Most also reported that worries about childcare arrangements were experienced almost entirely by the mothers. This perhaps accounts for the disparity in the accounts given by men and women about their level of involvement in caring for children and the household. A survey of over 2,000 parents living with their partners found that 31% of fathers said they shared primary responsibility for their children whereas only 14% of the mothers reported the responsibility was shared (EHRC 2009).

Miller's (2011) research also pointed to a disparity in fathers' stated commitment to become involved and the practice that is evident after a year. She attributed this to the relatively low social value placed upon daily child-care as well as the lack of flexibility in the workplace. This chimed with the experience of most of the mothers in this sample but not with all. I theorise that given there are different attitudes towards parenting amongst mothers it is unsurprising that there are differences amongst fathers and that changing social attitudes are starting to translate into changing behaviour particularly in the types of families studied here where both parents value work and identify with their career roles as well as their role as parents. This theory is supported by the quantitative findings on the first 1,000 days of first time parenthood (Easter and Newburn 2014) who identified three attitudinal types of new father. These were 'Incorporators', the largest group, who saw their main role as provider, 'Conflicted', who expressed negative feelings about reconciling work and family demands and a smaller group of around 1 in 6 called 'Balanced' who thought they had a good balance between work and involvement with the family. The source of these differences was not explained and would be an interesting

topic to explore further. Differences could be based on their own upbringings, the dynamics of the relationships, individual preference or economic concerns. Other differences from Miller's (2011) findings were the acknowledgement of some of these mothers that they were not good at involving their partners and the view described above that many got quite a lot of practical help from their partners but not the emotional help that they did not know they needed before they became parents. On the other hand, in two cases, the transitional men were reported to be more egalitarian in attitude than they were able to be in practice, due to the attitudes of their employers.

Even in the egalitarian relationships described here, the accounts of these mothers demonstrated that the workplace is lagging behind the changing attitudes of recent fathers and presents barriers to the fathers who want to be involved. Fathers who were sharing parenthood were reported to have met with resistance from their employers that was affecting the level of responsibility that they were able to take:

They're all right and they allow him to do a long day on Monday and a short day on a Wednesday so he gets to pick the children up one day a week but when he's needed to take time off if they've been poorly they've asked him, "why can't your wife do it"? (Amy, mother of two, clinical network manager)

The existence of these barriers is supported by Gatrell *et al.*'s (2014) study. The same study also emphasises that, contrary to the perceptions of fathers, mothers also experience difficulties accessing flexible arrangements.

Once the working lives of the 'daughter mothers' were established, their partners were the most important influence on their feelings about the day-to-day management of work and childcare. This corroborates the observation of Hochschild that the emotional state of mind of mothers was based on their 'gender strategy', meaning how well they felt they managed their role in caring for the family in relation to their partner and how well the views of their partner meshed with their own (1990, p.198). The negotiations involved in the management of dual careers were crucial because work was important to the identities of almost all these 'daughter mothers'.

Academic research by Ely *et al.* (2014) amongst male and female Harvard MBAs of working age explored the issue of inequities between male and female levels of job satisfaction and career attainment. They found that whilst ambition and time taken out of the workforce to look after children were factors, the key explanation lay in how couples distributed career and family responsibilities. Traditional arrangements prevailed in which women took the main responsibility for childcare whilst most often also working

themselves. The women who had egalitarian expectations often had their hopes dashed and this frustration appears to be linked with higher levels of dissatisfaction expressed about their career progression in contrast with those women who had expected to be primary carers. This research also found that 42% of women aged 26-31 expect to take primary responsibility when they have children. Tellingly, 66% of men in the same age group expect their partners to take primary responsibility. This suggests many women's aspirations for shared parenting will be disappointed. This research corroborates my qualitative findings that most of the mothers took an unequal amount of domestic responsibility and that over 50% adopted a male breadwinner, female part-time model. Conversely, those who had partners who were willing and able to take an egalitarian approach to caring for their children reported more positive feelings about their experience of combining work with motherhood. As reported in 4.3, the role of the partner was a key influence in enabling 'Pragmatic' attitudes to combining motherhood and work. Returning to Hochschild's (1983) idea about emotional management, there was evidence of negative emotions creeping into relationships because of perceptions about an unfair distribution of domestic labour amongst most partnerships, even some of those where the partner had more egalitarian attitudes. These negative emotions tended to simmer in the background rather than being talked about. I theorise that whilst the needs and desires of both parents changed over time and are contingent upon the weight of the domestic life load at any given moment, there is little evidence of individual families renegotiating how well their needs are being met in terms of what both partners want from work and family life. Rather the focus of discussion is on who is doing what on a daily basis.

7.3 Gains and losses of contemporary motherhood

The grandmothers reflected on their personal histories over time, which I describe here as 'taking a long view', and the differences between their daughters' and their own experiences of combining motherhood with work. There were many ways in which the grandmothers thought that now is a better time to be a working mother. Chief amongst these were thought to be better entitlement to maternity leave, easier access to child carers of a higher standard and the sea change in the attitudes of fathers, many of whom want to be more involved in the everyday care of their children. As Barbara, former local radio producer and mother of Belle commented with laughter: 'well, the difference between your father and your husband is pretty phenomenal isn't it?'

However, there were many more references in this study to the ways in which the grandmothers perceived working motherhood to be harder. Many commented on the high cost of housing and childcare that took a greater proportion of their daughters' income

that it had theirs. Their concern was that the punitive costs of running a family might force their daughters into giving up on careers they have invested in and enjoyed. Anita, a teacher, said:

I think that the amount of money people pay for childcare now is just horrendous...and a lot of people are prevented I think from going back to the high powered jobs they had before they had children because they can't afford the cost of childcare. My daughter lives in London...every month she says "when I look at my bank balance there is a massive sum of money going on childcare so I can go to work and the money I've got left in my hand is quite small, but I do want to be doing the job. I don't want to be at home".

The grandmothers also voiced their concerns about culture of 'intensification of responsibility' (Thomson *et al.* 2011, p.277) in two main ways. First, that the child becomes too much the focus of the mother, as described by Barbara, former radio producer who worked in a portfolio of jobs whilst her children were under school age partly to be more available to them:

I find it deeply troubling. I always managed to have a life as well as being a mother. It was important to me and I think it was good for the children. I think both my girls are excellent mothers but I think they are almost too focused on it. And I'm not convinced it's good for the child. I think the child becomes too important...I don't think it's a comfortable place for the mothers and I'm not entirely convinced it's a comfortable place for the children in the end.

Secondly, the grandmothers thought their daughters were under more public scrutiny and given more advice by 'experts' than they had experienced as parents and they thought that this could be unhealthy because it led to competition and their daughters putting themselves and their children under more and more pressure. An example of this came from Donna, a retired teacher whose observations applied both to her daughter and from her professional experience of parents:

I think you are more judged now. In the past...it wasn't so judgemental, whereas now women have been out in the workplace and they are used to things like targets and deadlines and then...they turn that on their children and the next thing is, "they are at that level or this level" and they are always monitoring.

Retired academic, Stella, commented on a similar theme:

There are so many experts on everything. You read all the books and you do all the right things and it doesn't necessarily work. I think that can contribute to a sense of incompetence...or that you are not keeping up.

These findings corroborate those of Thomson *et al.* (2011) who commented that the grandmothers' generation think that there are more demands upon their daughters to

combine work with being expert parents. The same themes were also talked about by many of the mothers of daughters who did not have children, several of whom had picked up on the phrase 'professionalisation of motherhood' that had been used in the media. Valerie, retail senior manager, said: 'there are rule books and there are handbooks and there's a right way to do it'. Tara, Media MD, said:

If you are a middle class mother then perhaps you are under more pressure to do it all right...I wonder whether, because of social media, we are more competitive in every aspect of our lives...being a parent it's like your job to get them into the right schools and everything. When I grew up you just went to the school that was near.

The intergenerational view confirmed some of the problems the 'daughter mothers' encountered when mothering.

7.4 Key findings

The aim of this chapter was to unpick what 'daughter mothers' felt about managing motherhood and work in the light of the comment of Thomson *et al.* (2011, p.175) that the way mothers feel is infrequently acknowledged in the work-life literature.

A key contribution was that, in comparison to the working daughters who did not have children, the 'daughter mothers' were more influenced by the advice of the grandmothers in their feelings about combining work with motherhood. The grandmothers' influence was most evident during and shortly after their daughters' maternity leave. This corroborated the findings of several that new mothers tend to reconnect with their own mothers (Baraitser 2008; Thomson *et al.* 2011; Stone 2012). As well as offering practical help, the influence of the grandmothers was apparent both in verbally encouraging or discouraging their daughters to carry on with their careers whilst their grandchildren were young. Their influence was also sometimes transmitted through the example they modelled, even though the employment context in which they were working had changed over time. Those grandmothers who encouraged their daughters to sustain their careers often defined themselves as feminists. This echoed what I learned from the daughters who were anticipating motherhood. Moreover, the grandmothers also offered valuable emotional support when their daughters were struggling with their life-load. Another potential point of comparison between those anticipating motherhood and those experiencing motherhood is my observation, made in 6.3, that daughters who were anticipating working part-time tended to have been mothered by those who measured themselves against a motherhood ideal. There were too few 'daughter mothers' to make this comparison so this would be an interesting topic for further research.

What was most surprising was that only one daughter explicitly concluded that it would not be a problem for her children to grow up with a mother who worked long hours out of the home because it had not been a problem for her. Therefore, an important original contribution of this research was to show that other influences played a stronger role. A primary influence was cultural scripts about mothering and work. Perhaps surprisingly given that this group were mainly on career trajectories, the main thoughts of most that governed the *way* in which they returned to work were about 'being with their child' (Faircloth 2013). This led a small majority to decide to substantially cut their working hours. This matched the expectations of over 50% of the daughters who were anticipating motherhood and had embraced the discourse that working part-time would give them the 'best of both worlds' when they became mothers. It was remarkable that evidence that cutting back working hours has a negative effect upon careers (Durbin *et al.* 2010a) did not appear to play a significant part in the decision-making process of most of the 'daughter mothers'. It is unlikely that this finding is explained by lack of knowledge given that many were aware of debates in the media about the gender pay gap and given the many opportunities they had to observe the experience of other mothers in the workplace. A plausible alternative explanation is that their immediate present experience whilst their children are very young is of being emotionally intertwined with their baby as discussed by Baraitser (2008) and therefore their present feelings about being with the child is more likely to influence their decisions than ideas about a hypothetical future career. After the 'daughter mothers' were re-established in the workforce and their networks of other mothers grew in strength, the influence of cultural scripts about mothering persisted. Whilst these participants put distance between themselves and many of the discourses around motherhood such as attachment parenting (Faircloth 2013), three factors cause me to theorise that they were more influenced by cultural scripts that they acknowledged. First, only one of the daughter mothers was working full-time hours, over five days a week plus overtime in a traditional organisational career. All the others were either working part-time or flexibly in some way. Secondly, 50% agreed that they were happy that it was mainly their role to look after their children whilst simultaneously saying that they thought women are expected to do too much. Thirdly, many of the grandmothers commented that motherhood was more pressurised for their daughters than they remembered it being for them partly because of increased exposure to public scrutiny about how motherhood should be done.

A further key positive influence on how they felt about combining work and motherhood was the level of flexibility and autonomy that their employers offered. However limited,

the quality and scope of flexible working (Gardiner and Tomlinson 2009), the prevalent discourse in politics and the media about family friendly working practices discussed in the literature review is suggestive of a nascent trend away from the full-time, present in the office model. Several of the 'daughter mothers' had flexible working arrangements which, as previously discussed, the daughters anticipating motherhood were only vaguely aware were available to them.

The older generation of mothers who felt more positive about their experience of managing motherhood and work were those who parented in egalitarian partnerships. It was equally true for the 'daughter mothers' that having a partner who was actively involved in parenting was linked to a more positive emotional experience of managing motherhood and work. However, thinking about Hochschild's (1983) idea about emotion management, there was evidence of negative emotions simmering beneath the surface in relationships because of perceptions about an unfair distribution of domestic labour amongst most partnerships, even some of those where the partner had more egalitarian attitudes. My observation is that partners who are parents do not seem to re-evaluate whether both parties are getting what they want and need from work and family life as events unfold. Mothers in the moment of combining work with caring for under 5s reported more dissatisfaction with the demands of their life load at work and at home than the older generation of mothers. This is likely to be explained by the difference between remembering the strain of having too many responsibilities and experiencing the strain. This supports the conclusions of many motherhood experts (Gatrell 2005, 2008, Gatrell *et al.* 2014; Miller 2005, 2011; Thomson *et al.* 2011) that there are still pressing work, childcare and relationship issues to address to help lessen the life load of working mothers. Flexible and part-time working arrangements still tend to be feminised and often associated with diminished career outcomes (Drew and Murtagh 2005; Durbin *et al.* 2010a; Gatrell 2013). It is also evident that many factors conspire to influence negative feelings including the age and number of children in the family, support from partners and the demands of employers.

I theorise that popular discourses about motherhood are arguably and ironically becoming more draconian whilst attitudes to work become more malleable with the trend towards and debate about the desirability of flexible working for parents. However, the availability of flexible approaches to work is still limited for both women and men working in professional and senior managerial roles. Counterpointing this is the view, expressed by many daughters who were anticipating motherhood and those who had become mothers, that significantly cutting back on hours of work was the best way to combine motherhood

with work. Moreover, it was clear from the accounts of both groups that their views on what it meant to mother were being shaped by what Thomson *et al.* (2011) defined as the 'intensification of responsibility', by increasing public scrutiny and expert advice about what is expected of mothers and children and by the experience of many mothers that the primary responsibility for childcare was theirs and not their partners. For many, striving for success in a career seems to be combined with or even outweighed by the idea of being a success as a Mum as eloquently put by Hannah, mother of two under 5 and working as a teacher for three days a week:

In the nursery...they [other Mums] are all very on it, about you know nurseries or what different primary schools can offer and blah, blah, blah. So there's definitely an element of the way they talk about mothering as being a bit like a job. And how you succeed at it. How you succeed at being a mother.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

8.1 Research questions and key findings

This research set out to answer the following questions:

- What impact did growing up with a mother with a career who worked mainly full-time have on the daughters' thinking about combining motherhood with work compared to other influences?
- Did observing their mothers work long hours result in the daughters wanting to work fewer hours?
- To what extent did being mothered by women with successful careers encourage their daughters to aspire to high-level positions themselves?

Chapter 1 of this thesis identified that 25 percent of working women occupy managerial or professional roles but only a minority reach the top levels of their careers. This research is therefore relevant to the policy objective of achieving gender equality in high status jobs in all sectors, which will be valuable for both women and for society (Women's Business Council 2013). The experience of these women is also relevant to the achievement of wider gender equality in the workplace and family in wider social groups. Moreover, this research is relevant to the persistent debate over whether mothers who work long hours negatively affect their children (Hays 1996; Bianchi 2000; Milkie *et. al* 2015). This thesis has identified that most of the mothers' generation interviewed for this study worked on average more than 32 hours a week and none worked less than this. Their daughters comprised those in higher education and close to the point of deciding upon their career path, those in work and those who had recently had their own children. This enabled a contrast between expectations of combining work with family life with 'in the moment' experience. Nineteen of the 22 daughters who did not have children said they wanted children. Of these, eleven had actively and eight had vaguely thought how becoming mothers would impact upon their working lives. As discussed in Chapter 4, an original contribution of the research has been in highlighting that many mothers in this sample displayed a 'Pragmatic' attitude to combining motherhood with work and felt positive, on the whole, about the way in which they had managed both and challenged the notion of binary choices in the trade-offs they made. Definitions of 'Pragmatic' and 'Idealistic' attitudes are offered in refinement of the often quoted 'Maximiser' and 'Satisficer' terminology of Crompton and Harris (1998) to better reflect the participants accounts of their feelings about combining motherhood and work.

The key findings of this study are:

- Almost all the adult daughters felt positive about having a mother who had worked long hours in a career she found satisfying.
- Despite feeling well mothered, most daughters had substantially cut their working hours when they had children or were anticipating doing so. This was *not* a reaction to their mother's full-time working hours.
- Powerful cultural scripts about being successful as a mother are outweighing many daughters' aspirations for success in a career. Many feel conflicted about how it is possible to continue to work in a demanding career role and be good enough mothers.
- Positive feelings about combining work with motherhood are determined by the level of flexibility and autonomy experienced at work, the support of partners in joint parenting and the attitude of the mothers who took a 'Pragmatic' approach to managing their feelings about work-life trade offs.
- Mothers have been the primary influence over their daughter's aspirations at the early stages of their careers.
- Both mothers and daughters seem reticent about expressing ambition even though some mothers have reached the top levels of their careers. Daughters directly expressing ambition had been encouraged in this more by their fathers.

Section 8.2 draws key conclusions on the research questions regarding the impact of growing up with a mother with a career on the daughters' thinking about combining motherhood with work compared to other influences, including their views about working hours. Section 8.3 examines the implications of these findings for social policy, for workplaces, business and to benefit individuals and families by better addressing the emotional and practical constraints placed upon women and men in combining work with young families. Section 8.4 draws conclusions on the research question regarding the role of intergenerational transmission in shaping the daughters' work ambitions. Section 8.5 examines the implications of these conclusions for gender equality at the top level of occupations. Section 8.6 explores implications for further research and section 8.7 concludes the thesis.

8.2 What impact did growing up with a mother with a career who worked mainly full-time have on the daughters' thinking about combining motherhood with work compared to other influences?

8.2.1 Daughters' feelings about how their mother's worked

In answer to this research question, the thesis has identified a variety of impacts from growing up with a mother with a career who worked mainly full-time on daughters' thinking about combining motherhood with work. Almost all the daughters thought it did them no damage to have a mother who worked long hours away from the home. Many daughters gave specific reasons why having a successful working mother was of benefit to them. This included, for example, seeing the advantages of a satisfying career as well as family life modelled for them by their mothers, having learned to be independent and the lifestyle and opportunities that came with relative affluence. Only three daughters out of 31 are exceptions in thinking that the way in which their mothers had worked had affected them negatively. The reason for this seemed to be best explained by their feeling of being different from their peers. These negative feelings were compounded, in two cases, by being the only child of lone mothers with absent fathers. They therefore felt their mother's absences from home most keenly.

8.2.2 Did observing their mothers work long hours result in the daughters wanting to work fewer hours?

Questions have been raised about whether the daughters of full-time working women want to give as much time to work as did their mothers (Vere 2007; Gerson 2010). Almost all the daughters were planning or had entered careers classified at the same level of skill as their mothers and research shows that SOC 1 and 2 career roles are strongly correlated with full-time employment (ONS 2011a).

Chapter 5 of this research shows that only a small minority of the daughters said they did not want to work as hard as their mothers. The daughters did not base this judgement on how stressed/conflicted they thought their mothers were because most daughters did not think that stress or negative emotions typified their mothers' relationship with work or with their daughters. Therefore, observing their mothers working long hours did not, for the majority, result in the daughters wanting to work fewer hours. This corroborates the findings of Galinsky (1999) that parents comfortable with their choices were more responsive to their children whether they worked or not. Instead, the main reasons the minority of daughters gave for not wanting to work the same long hours as their mothers

was their feeling that they did not have the physical stamina to work as hard. Some were also concerned that their mother's work had impacted negatively on their parent's relationships or their physical health. The mothers who had experienced divorce, separation or severe relationship problems agreed that this had a more negative effect on their daughters than their working hours. Very few observations were made about their mothers' experiencing difficulties combining work and motherhood so consequently the daughters did not think that their mothers working hours had been damaging to them.

This research contributes to the debate because little directly comparable research exists that examines the perspectives of both mothers and daughters and that focuses on mothers with successful careers. However, the finding that there is no significant relationship between mothers working long hours and specific negative outcomes for their children is broadly confirmed by several qualitative and quantitative studies (Backett-Milburn *et al.* 2011; Mendolia 2014; Milkie *et al.* 2015; McGinn *et al.* 2015).

A key and surprising finding, discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, is that even though the vast majority of the daughters felt that it had been fine, and positive in some ways, for them to have a mother who worked long hours out of the home in a career she found satisfying, this did not lead most to think that their working long hours in a demanding career would be fine for the children they anticipated having or had. The significance of this finding is that over 50% of the 31 daughters who participated in this study intended to or were working part-time. Of the 'daughter mothers', only one was working full-time hours over five days a week. Most of the others worked part-time (substantially reduced hours from their pre-pregnancy roles) and the others worked flexibly in some way. The daughters' decision to work part-time is partly explained by maternal influence, even though this was rarely consciously acknowledged, in that many had mothers who expressed an 'Idealistic' attitude to combining motherhood with work. These mothers had felt guilt about working long hours out of the home whilst their children were growing up. An original contribution of the research, made in Chapter 4, has been in identifying a subset of mothers who, by contrast, displayed a 'Pragmatic' attitude to combining motherhood with work and felt positive, on the whole, about the way in which they had managed both. The daughters of the 'Pragmatics' did not show a particular tendency towards either working full-time, flexibly or part-time. This may be because there was no clear idea governing the 'Pragmatics' notion of the way they should 'do' motherhood. However, the more powerful explanations for this desire to substantially cut working hours are: the cultural script that working part-time would give them the 'best of both worlds' as mothers and workers, the perceived lack of examples of satisfying flexible career paths within organisational careers

for men and women, the role of partners and gendered assumptions about maternal roles. These influences will be summarised below.

8.2.3 *The belief that part-time work gives you the 'best of both worlds'*

Chapter 6 has identified that the notion that part-time work offered the 'best of both worlds' was firmly entrenched in most of the daughters who did not have children. This idea is mainly influenced by the sticky cultural idea that mothers should take primary responsibility for their children (Stone 2007; Miller 2005). Most of the daughters who did not have children did not report having career role models to follow in terms of flexible working and were only vaguely aware of potential working models other than part-time working. This study adds evidence that many of the daughters notice and discuss the struggles experienced by women with children in their workplaces. The greater the daughters' exposure to the workplace, the more the idea of combining motherhood with work made its way into their accounts and many started to feel conflicted about how it is possible to combine work in a demanding career and be a good enough mother. The findings confirmed Gatrell's argument that the *idea* of having children impinged upon many of these daughters' decisions about work (2008). The 'daughter mothers', discussed in Chapter 7, knew more about different flexible working practices. They did not tend, however, to be thinking ahead about the effect on their careers. A plausible explanation is that their experience of the immediate present, whilst their children are very young, is of being emotionally intertwined with their baby as discussed by Baraitser (2008) and therefore their feelings in the present about 'being with their child' (Faircloth 2013) is more likely to influence their decisions than ideas about a hypothetical future career path. These findings are important because that the idea that part-time work offers 'the best of both worlds' is contested by the growing body of research that shows that there are career penalties for women in high status roles who work part-time or work flexibly (Drew and Murtagh 2005; Durbin *et al.* 2010a; Durbin *et al.* 2010b; Gatrell *et al.* 2014).

8.2.4 *Role of partners*

This thesis has shown that most of the daughters who did not have children expected that they would share responsibility for childcare. Despite these expectations, women continue to be positioned as having primary responsibility for the emotional and physical well being of their children (Miller 2005, 2012; Lyonette and Crompton 2015). It is therefore probable that many of these daughters would not go on to experience parenting with equally involved partners. However, more fathers are highly involved with parenting responsibilities than ever before (Burgess 2011; Miller 2011). Of the mothers and

grandmothers who participated in this research, more than 25% had egalitarian relationships. An original finding of this research has been the demonstration of a clear link between egalitarian parenting and those mothers with a 'Pragmatic' attitude who reported fewer fundamental concerns about the effect on their children of their careers. Having an involved partner and father mitigated the effect of the everyday stresses and trade-offs that come with busy lives upon both the mothers and daughters. This conclusion also applied to the 'daughter mothers' who were currently experiencing the challenge of managing work and childcare. A key factor influencing women's positive feelings about combining work with motherhood is the way parents share the caring. However, this leaves 75% who were taking primary responsibility for their children whilst also working and had much to say about how this added to their negative feelings about the project of combining motherhood with work. This confirms the work of many that the level of domestic involvement of fathers is strongly linked to work-life conflict (for example, Crompton and Lyonette, 2008) and the 'emotion management' affecting mothers' relationships with work and family members (Hochschild 1983, p.44). These findings illustrate the need to reframe parenting as an issue for both women and men in order to remove barriers to women's equality in the workplace.

8.2.5 'Other Mums': Gendered social attitudes

The views described above were reinforced, especially for the 'daughter mothers' discussed in Chapter 7, by contemporary cultural scripts about mothering that they access in all the public spaces, both virtual and physical worlds, where mothering takes place (Baraitser 2009). The accounts given by these women with careers suggested that they identify with the 'intensification of responsibility' (a term coined by Thomson *et al.* 2011) to describe increasing social scrutiny and advice from 'experts', the media and other mothers about what is expected of them. Individual mothers are expected to take charge, with little support from outside the immediate family. At the same time, almost all of the participants identified as both mothers and workers (Bailey 1999; Garey 1999; Laney *et al.* 2012) and the social expectation that mothers will work (Adkins 2006). The effect of these cultural scripts is to set expectations that are unrealistic for those who work long hours which leads to negative feelings about not doing anything well enough. These findings add support to the conclusions of many motherhood experts (Gatrell *et al.* 2004, 2008, 2013, 2014; Miller 2005, 2011; and Thomson *et al.* 2011) that there are still pressing work, childcare and relationship issues to address to help lessen the life load of working mothers.

An original contribution illuminates a key difference between the feelings of the mothers' and daughters' generations. That is, as motherhood has become more public, daughters feel that striving for success in a career seems to be combined with or even superseded by the idea of being a success as a Mum. I theorise that the popular discourse about motherhood is arguably and ironically becoming more draconian whilst attitudes to work become more malleable with the trend towards and debate about the desirability of flexible working for parents. The greater availability of flexible working represents a change between the generations and one key difference that lay behind the more positive feelings of some 'daughter mothers' about combining work and motherhood is the level of flexibility and autonomy that their employers offered. However, progress in gender equality has not been straightforward between generations. Gendered inequalities still persist because flexible work is still largely constructed as women's work. That so many women feel that to be good enough mothers is possible only by substantially cutting their working hours presents a significant barrier to gender equality in the workplace.

8.3 Implications for combining motherhood with work

8.3.1 Implications for business, workplaces and social policy

One explanation for the dominance of the daughters' part-time narrative was that most of the daughters were uninformed about alternative ways of working. Most conceptualised their choice as being between full and part-time work. Recognising and acting upon the fact that many career women are anxious about how to manage career and motherhood, even in advance of becoming pregnant, will be beneficial to both individuals and businesses. Discussing options earlier means it will be less likely that women make decisions that negatively impact their careers without being fully aware of their opportunities and the strengths and weaknesses of potential options. It would be beneficial for organisations to strategise, discuss and mentor potential options for flexible working in advance of parenthood with both men and women in order to retain more contented and committed employees. However, it is important to acknowledge that potential opportunities for flexible work are not only a communication issue. There are also fundamental problems with the way flexible working is now largely positioned as a feminised issue and a solution to a problem of how to work around having children. There are strong arguments that it will be beneficial for private, public and third sector businesses to find more creative solutions to flexible working in acknowledgment that the relationship with work of both women and men has changed. Neither men nor women want to be 'imprisoned' in outmoded roles of 'instrumental' economic provider or

‘expressive’ child-centred carer (Gatrell *et al.* 2014 pp.484-5). Both parents increasingly want to combine their family lives with committed and successful careers. A significant contribution could be made by measuring roles by output rather than input of time spent in fixed locations. These issues could also inform social policy in supporting change by leading by example in the public sector and facilitating recognition of this new work paradigm.

The participants singled out childcare as a crucial area to address to improve the situation of working women. The availability and cost of childcare is a problem that is more acute for working parents in the UK than in other European countries and more acute in London than in the rest of the UK (Ben-Galim and Thompson 2013; Family Daycare Trust 2014). A reframing of the debate about childcare from a women’s issue to an issue for parents has been argued for many years but perhaps the growing evidence that many men do aspire to egalitarian parenting makes it more plausible that change could come. At a policy level, the government are currently running three schemes that aim to provide tax-free childcare to working families. The Institute of Fiscal Studies, however, suggests that there is a lack of clarity in government about the aims, objectives and rationale for state intervention in the provision of childcare (IFS 2015). A potential strategy to shape policy would be to incentivise workplaces to provide more in-house care by contributing to start-up costs or facilitating the availability of suitable sites. Less than 10% of employers currently offer on-site nursery provision and much of this is biased to the public sector (Department of Education 2013). Having good and affordable childcare near the workplace could help relieve the time squeeze caused by commuting and help parents feel comfortable that they are close at hand if problems arise. In terms of parental leave, more progressive policy solutions that mimic policies in Sweden and Iceland of allocating a substantial period of maternity leave to fathers as a non-transferrable right would assist in reframing childcare as an issue for both parents (Ben-Galim and Thompson 2013). Moreover, offering greater rights to paid parental leave for fathers are likely to challenge the persistent association between motherhood and being primarily responsible for children, from which gender inequalities persist. In both cases, parental leave policy needs to be reconciled with breastfeeding policy which currently adds to the constraints women in particular feel about combining work with caring for infants (Faircloth 2013). Improving policy for parental leave is likely to have a more receptive popular audience than arguing for affirmative action to put more women on boards or having all female shortlists for parliamentary candidates. Many participants in this research were resistant to affirmative action because of their opinion that there was a fine line between this and tokenism. Tokenism risks exposing women to unfair scrutiny and therefore potentially undermines

perceptions of women's abilities. However, many economic cases exist that show the positive effect of women's inclusion at Board level and support the current policy of the government (GOV.UK 2011).

8.3.2 Implications for families: Mothers and Daughters

To reiterate, a surprising finding was that even though, in the eyes of most of the daughters, their own mothers have modelled their experience of combining enjoyable, satisfying and largely full-time work with being a hands on, encouraging and emotionally involved parent, this awareness seems not to be strong enough to withstand the cultural concept that being a successful mother means working fewer hours in order to be physically present for much of the time. In the light of this finding it would facilitate the achievement of wider gender equality to reconnect adult daughters with their own views of their childhood and share this research finding that the vast majority of the daughters of successful career women did not feel ill-affected in any profound or prolonged way and indeed saw benefits in growing up with a mother with a demanding career. Moreover, an important implication of the views the daughters expressed in this research suggests there is little need for the mothers with an 'Idealistic' attitude to feel guilty. Examples of what both mothers and daughters thought important in mitigating potential negatives of their working lives was: keeping to a routine or at least keeping the daughters informed of when their mother would be home, being there for important events (especially at school when other people's mothers were likely to be there) and being attentive to them, not just physically present for some of the time, when home together.

Mothers who were advanced in their careers had the benefit of the perspective of time to appreciate that social expectations about being a good mother and a good worker simultaneously are set impossibly high. Given that many mother daughter relationships are emotionally supportive, this prompts the thought that it would be useful for mothers to talk to their daughters about how they managed their feelings about work and motherhood both before and after their daughters become mothers themselves. In addition, talking about their personal experience privately and publicly could also help change perspectives about what good mothering can mean by challenging the cultural scripts that I characterise as being increasingly draconian. This recommendation is relevant to all working women because all working women grapple with the same fundamental issues.

8.3.3 Implications for families: Partners

Led by my sample, my findings about partnerships have been focused on fathers. However, the implications of these findings are relevant to all partnerships in parenting. Thinking about Hochschild's (1993) idea about emotion management, there was evidence of negative emotions simmering beneath the surface in relationships because of perceptions about an unfair distribution of domestic labour amongst most partnerships, even some of those where the partner had more egalitarian attitudes. One observation arising from my findings is that women who argue for joint parenting will also need to be prepared to make more room for fathers to be fully involved. Another observation is that partners who are parents often do not seem to engage in sufficiently re-evaluating whether both parties are getting what they want and need from work and family life, as events unfold. On a family level, implications are that it would be helpful to broaden the practical day to day negotiations about who is doing what to include periodic reviews of aspirations for work and life in order to arrive at strategies for fulfilling this, given that demands and opportunities presented by careers change from year to year. Indeed as some of my participants noted, it could be far less emotionally bruising to relationships than the alternative of day-by-day negotiations. This chapter now turns to conclusions on the research question regarding the role of intergenerational transmission in shaping the daughters' work ambitions and the implications arising from the findings.

8.4 To what extent did being mothered by women with successful careers encourage their daughters to aspire to high-level positions themselves?

8.4.1 Intergenerational transmission of career ambition

Chapter 5 presents an original finding of this research in showing that mothers were, in most cases, the primary influence, at the early stages of their daughter's careers, over most daughters' aspirations to pursue career paths as professionals and managers. Indeed, a third of the daughters who knew what careers they wanted to pursue had followed their mothers into the same or very similar career paths, compared with just two who were following in the footsteps of their fathers. Therefore, being mothered by women with successful careers did encourage the aspirations of almost all the daughters at the start of their careers. Around a third of the daughters who did not have children imagined that they would continue to work in the same field without much adjustment to their hours, although they also hoped that they would have flexibility or autonomy. This group included those few who overtly expressed ambition. The influence of their mothers (again, not always consciously acknowledged) was also apparent in the views of those who

wanted their careers to carry on after motherhood in much the same way as before. The evidence for asserting this maternal influence is twofold. First, the daughters who did not envisage cutting back their hours were often mothered by those who had autonomy or flexibility at work, due to working in their own businesses or because they had explicitly negotiated the ability to be present at important events for their daughters. Secondly, mothers who expressed liberal feminist views directly communicated the desirability of combining motherhood with work and contested the assumption that women should be primarily responsible for the domestic sphere. These are key tenets of the liberal form of feminism contemporary with the early adulthood of the generation of mothers, when they were building their own careers (Epstein and Kelleberg 2004; Gerson 2011). The focus of this research has been on intergenerational parental influence within SOC 1 and 2 but also acknowledges the impact of material influences such as income, availability of good childcare and their experiences of employment.

An important finding shows the prevalent opinion amongst the mothers that their daughters lacked self-confidence. The concern of many of the mothers is that this lack of self-confidence will be compounded by gender inequality and hinder their daughters in achieving their potential. A high proportion of the mothers who identified as feminist and/or had been pioneers of women's achievement in the workplace had transmitted the idea that work could be personally satisfying and socially valuable and that their daughter should strive not to take on disproportionate responsibility in comparison to their partners for caring for children and domestic work. These aims reflected their subjectivity as a relatively socially privileged group.

8.4.2 *'Quiet Ambition'*

Chapter 5 identified that almost all of the daughters mirrored the language used by their mothers to describe what they wanted from work. An interesting original finding is that neither mothers nor daughters talked about 'getting to the top' despite the fact that many of the mothers' generation had indeed reached the top of their professions. Instead, they tended to describe their success as a by-product of hard work and enjoying their work. One daughter summed this up as 'quiet ambition'. This is significant because the mothers have been shown to be strongly influential at the start of their daughters' careers. Equally significant for those mothers and daughters who explicitly aspired to the highest levels in their careers there is evidence they had been actively encouraged by their fathers.

Ways of working have changed dramatically between the generations as explored in Chapter 2. The mothers' generation working in careers classified as SOC 1 and 2 mainly

worked full time (McRae 2003) whereas (albeit limited) opportunities have increased for the daughters' generation to work part-time time or flexibly in the same kinds of careers (PWC 2014). However, it seems that feelings of lack of self-belief and reticence in expressing ambition have remained similar. The importance of these findings is that they help explain the persistent under-representation of women in the most senior roles in society (EHRC 2011; Lanning 2013) given that these are the very women who have started on a career trajectory that could lead to the top. This is not to argue that getting to the top should be the aim of all women. Rather, my argument is that aspirations should not be restricted because of what society expects of women. Moreover, what seems to be particularly motivating to women is 'getting to the top' for the sake of what can be achieved from positions of power.

8.5 Implications of daughters' career aspirations

8.5.1 Implications for workplaces

Implications for facilitating wider gender equality within workplaces are to acknowledge there is a growing body of evidence (Bostock 2014; Hewlett and Marshall 2014) to suggest women's definitions of career success and their approaches to an organisational career require subtly different ways of encouraging their talent. For example, perhaps defining roles in a way that allow for a team, rather than an individual to take responsibility for outcomes. Moreover, it would be beneficial to challenge current norms concerning the age at which individuals are expected to progress upwards in organisations. This is obviously a particular issue for women given the age at which it is most common to have children. Setting a longer time frame for the achievement of career milestones will be consistent with the increasing length of women's careers given their retirement age will be 66 by 2020.

8.5.2 Implications for families: Mothers and Daughters

This research suggests that mothers have an important role to play in encouraging their daughters because almost all have been shown to have significant influence over their daughters' career aspirations. The importance of this finding is that the daughters' generation are likely to benefit from their mothers celebrating their achievements at work and talking more about the way in which they navigate the 'snakes and ladders' of a career. This prompts a recommendation that it would be valuable if mothers talked more to their daughters about their career and particularly encouraged their daughters to appreciate how continued enjoyment of work is affected by being recognised for

achievement and how progressing vertically through the organisation provides the status and seniority that puts individuals in a stronger position to effect change. Mothers who have achieved career success are also in a good position to challenge, privately and publicly, the social stereotyping of women that is still evident in the workplace as diligent and hard working rather than talented and effective (Meyer *et al.* 2015). Of course, a barrier to achieving this recommendation is that every conversation needs a willing audience and not all adult daughters expressed interest in hearing about their mother's jobs. A career is, however, a long game and there are moments when many daughters seem particularly receptive to the advice of their mothers and when the daughters start to reconcile work and motherhood is such a moment. An observation of relevance to a wider audience is for working women to talk more openly with younger women at work about the challenges of negotiating work and caring responsibilities that present barriers to career progress. It would be beneficial to share their strategies and combine to campaign in the workplace for the changes needed to facilitate more gender equality.

8.6 Implications for future research

Two potential future research projects would deepen the findings and impact of this thesis. First, to study those who thought that their mothers' work in successful career roles had affected them negatively in order to gain a better understanding of the reasons for their view and how it compares to the daughters studied in this thesis. The methodology should not require direct conversations between mothers and daughters because I found this to be a disincentive to participation. A second potential research project would be to interview both partners, longitudinally, to assess the everyday emotional and practical impact of their experience of managing dual careers and parenthood. This arises from my recommendation that family flexible working practices be framed as equally applicable to men and women. Also from the observation that partners who are parents often do not seem to engage in re-evaluating whether both parties are getting what they want and need from work and family life as events unfold and that this is causing friction in relationships. The benefit of this study would be to inform suggestions about facilitating flexible working practices within families and in workplace policy in the context of changing social shifts in aspirations for parental engagement with work and family. The debates that continue to rage on the borders of work and family life argue for using audio visual techniques facilitated by modern technology as well as words to communicate the findings and enhance their emotional affect both for the participants in the research and its wider audience.

8.7 Concluding Remarks

The main recommendations informed by this research are:

- More publicity should be given to the finding that daughters are not ill-affected by their mothers working mainly or close to full-time hours and therefore guilty maternal feelings derived from working are misplaced.
- It would be of benefit for mothers with careers to openly challenge the contemporary cultural scripts propelling young mothers into substantially cutting their working hours.
- Organisations should consider discussing potential options for flexible working in advance of, and unrelated to, parenthood with both men and women.
- Definitions within organisations of successful career milestones need to stretch in time to take account of child-bearing years.
- It would benefit 'emotion management' (Hochschild 1983, p.44) in families to deliberately plan the sharing of caring in the context of relatively short-term career aims and opportunities rather than working it out on a day to day basis.
- Public policy on childcare needs to be reframed to be an issue for both parents.
- Good, affordable childcare is a key enabler of successful female careers.

Improving the way in which work is reconciled with caring for children, in social policy, in workplaces and in families, is critical to ensuring that there are opportunities for women to occupy the highest occupational levels and thus the achievement of wider gender equality for both men and women in their family and working lives. One way of recognising and acting on the changes in both women's and men's aspirations for combining work with involved family lives is to facilitate creative ways of adding more flexibility and autonomy to working lives. This is likely to be beneficial to both the life satisfaction of individuals and to the economy. On an individual level, the evidence added by this study is that working comparatively long hours outside the home is compatible with being thought by your child to be a positive influence and a good mother. The voices of those arguing that being a 'good mother' means 'being there' by working substantially reduced hours seem to be stronger than the voices of mothers who are combining motherhood with a successful career and working longer hours. It is hoped that the evidence of this research encourages mothers, and those who are anticipating motherhood, to question assumptions that part time work inevitably 'gives you the best of both worlds' and assert with confidence that being committed to a career can be consistent with being committed to your family.

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Appendix 1

Jill Armstrong DPhil Research - Pre interview Questionnaire:

Daughters

About you

1) What is your age?

2) How many brothers and sisters do you have?

3) What is your position in your family (e.g 2nd child)

4) Please insert Participant code provided

Education

5) What level of educational qualification have you reached?

☐ A level

☐ Studying now for undergraduate degree

☐ Undergraduate degree

☐ Studying now for post graduate degree

☐ Post graduate degree

☐ PhD/DPhil

6) Was your secondary education primarily?

☐ Single sex

☐ Mixed sex

7) Are you still studying?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Employment

8) If still studying what type of job would you most like? (Write in n/a if working and go to Q9)

9) If still studying what type of job do you think you are most likely to get in the short term?
(Write in n/a if working and go to Q9)

10) If you have started your career what position do you hold in your current job and in what field do you work?

11) Please outline your career history (in broad terms) noting the years in which you worked in each different role and indicating any changes in type of occupation you have had

	Type of occupation	Level held when left	Approx dates
Job 1			
Job 2			
Job 3			
Job 4			
Job 5			
Job 6			

Influences on Career choice

12) On a scale of 0- 10, how much influence would you say the following people have had on your choice of career?

[illegible]

Friends of family										
Mother										
Father										
Other family member										
Partner/person you are in a relationship with										
Other										

13) If you entered a value above for "Other" higher than 1 please describe who they were

Relationships

14) What is your relationship status?

☐ Single

☐ Single and dating

☐ Cohabiting

☐ Married

15) If you are living with a partner, what is their occupation (write in n/a if not relevant)?

Upbringing

16) Thinking about your own upbringing, which of the following best describes the main way your parents took care of you during most of pre-school age

☐ Female main breadwinner/male main carer

☐ Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny

☐ Male main breadwinner/ female main carer

☐ Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care/childminder / nanny

☐ Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

17) Thinking about your own upbringing, which of the following best describes the main way your parents took care of you during most of age 5-11

☐ Female main breadwinner/male main carer

☐ Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny

☐ Male main breadwinner/ female main carer

☐ Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care/childminder / nanny

☐ Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

18) Thinking about your own upbringing, which of the following best describes the main way your parents took care of you during most of age 11-18

☐ Female main breadwinner/male main carer

☐ Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny

☐ Male main breadwinner/ female main carer

☐ Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care/childminder / nanny

☐ Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

Parents work

19) What are your parents' jobs?

20) Thinking about your parents jobs, whose job do you think is most interesting and for what reason?

21) And whose job would you say you know the most about?

Attitudes to current work

22) I'd like you to think about how people in your kind of job move up the career ladder. Do you agree or disagree that this involves working long hours?

☐ Agree strongly ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐
☐ Disagree strongly ☐ No-one moves up the ladder ☐ It depends ☐ Don't know

23) Say you had to take a day off work at short notice for family or personal reasons? In general, which of the following would you do to cover the lost time.

- ☐ Use holiday or flexi hours
- ☐ Put in extra effort in the normal working week
- ☐ Work extra hours unpaid
- ☐ Take unpaid leave
- ☐ Take paid leave
- ☐ Other

24) If you answered "Other" in the question above please give details

Attitudes to work

25) Work will always be important to me even if this gets in the way of family life

- ☐ Agree strongly ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Disagree strongly ☐ Don't know

26) It's not good for the family if the man is the primary carer for the children and the woman is the main breadwinner

- ☐ Agree strongly ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Disagree strongly ☐ Don't know

27) Through my career I will be happy if it will be mainly be my responsibility to look after my children rather than the responsibility of my partner

- ☐ Agree strongly ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Disagree strongly ☐ Don't know

28) If a person can't manage their family responsibilities then they should stop trying to hold down a demanding job

- ☐ Agree strongly ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Disagree strongly ☐ Don't know

Role of women

29) The position of women is better today - but it has not gone far enough

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

30) Women are expected to do too much: childcare, job, household chores, admin, etc

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

31) I am a feminist

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

One thing....

32) The one thing I think would make the most positive difference to the lives of working mothers is

Thank You!

Appendix 2

Jill Armstrong DPhil Research Pre interview Questionnaire- Mothers

About you

1) Please insert Participant code provided

2) What is your age?

3) What level of educational qualification have you reached?

() A level

() Studying now for undergraduate degree

() Undergraduate degree

() Studying now for post graduate degree

() Post graduate degree

() PhD/DPhil

Employment

4) What position do you hold in your current job and in what field do you work?

5) Please outline your career history (in broad terms) noting the years in which you worked in each different role and indicating any changes in type of occupation you have had

	Type of occupation	Level held when left	Approx dates
Job 1			
Job 2			
Job 3			
Job 4			
Job 5			

Job 6			
-------	--	--	--

Relationships

6) What is / was your mother's main occupation?

7) What is / was your father's main occupation?

8) What is your relationship status?

☐ Married

☐ Cohabiting

☐ Single

9) If you have a partner currently, is this partner the father of the daughter I will be interviewing?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10) What is your current partner's occupation?

11) If father is not current partner what is father's occupation?

Children

12) In which year did you have each of your children and how long was your maternity leave in each case?

	Year of birth of child	Gender of child	Length of maternity leave
Child 1			
Child 2			
Child 3			
Child 4			

13) Can you confirm that the daughter I will be interviewing has lived with you until she entered further education - or , in the case of separated parents, that your daughter lived with you at least half of each normal week?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Childcare

14) Thinking about your childcare arrangements for your daughter, which of the following best describes the arrangements you had in place for pre-school age

☐ Female main breadwinner/male main carer

☐ Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny

☐ Male main breadwinner/ female main carer

☐ Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care/childminder / nanny

☐ Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

15) Thinking about your childcare arrangements for your daughter, which of the following best describes the arrangements you had in place for most of age 5-11

☐ Female win breadwinner/male main carer

☐ Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny

☐ Male main breadwinner/ female main carer

☐ Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care/childminder / nanny

☐ Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

16) Thinking about your childcare arrangements for your daughter, which of the following best describes the arrangements you had in place for most of age 11-18

☐ Female main breadwinner/male main carer

☐ Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny

☐ Male main breadwinner/ female main carer

- () Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny
- () Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

Upbringing

17) Thinking about your own upbringing, which of the following best describes the main way your parents took care of you during pre-school age

- () Female main breadwinner/male main carer
- () Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny
- () Male main breadwinner/ female main carer
- () Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care/childminder / nanny
- () Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

18) Thinking about your own upbringing, which of the following best describes the main way your parents took care of you during age 5-11

- () Female main breadwinner/male main carer
- () Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny
- () Male main breadwinner/ female main carer
- () Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny
- () Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

19) Thinking about your own upbringing, which of the following best describes the main way your parents took care of you during age 11-18

- () Female main breadwinner/male main carer
- () Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny
- () Male main breadwinner/ female main carer
- () Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny
- () Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

[illegible]

21) If you had another partner whilst your daughter was under 11, in the main what percentage of time would you estimate they spent on the following activities in comparison to you? (if not applicable leave blank).

[illegible]

childcare											
Meeting teachers at your daughter's school											
Laundry											
Cooking for family											
Grocery shopping											
Cleaning											

Attitudes to work

22) On a scale of 1 – 10 how much would you say you enjoyed your work when your daughter was a baby

1= did not enjoy at all

() 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 () 5 () 6 () 7 () 8 () 9 () 10

10 = really enjoyed

23) On a scale of 1 – 10 how much would you say you enjoyed your work when your daughter was pre-school

1 = did not enjoy at all

() 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 () 5 () 6 () 7 () 8 () 9 () 10

10 = really enjoyed

24) On a scale of 1 – 10 how much would you say you enjoyed your work when your daughter was at primary school

1 = did not enjoy at all

() 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 () 5 () 6 () 7 () 8 () 9 () 10

10 = really enjoyed

25) On a scale of 1 – 10 how much would you say you enjoyed your work when your daughter was at secondary school

1 = did not enjoy at all

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

10 = really enjoyed

26) On a scale of 1 – 10 how much would you say you enjoyed your work when your daughter left home

1 = did not enjoy at all

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

10 = really enjoyed

27) On a scale of 1 – 10 how much would you say you enjoy your work now

1 = did not enjoy at all

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

10 = really enjoyed

Attitudes to work 2

28) I'd like you to think about how people in your kind of job move up the career ladder. Do you agree or disagree that this involves working long hours?

☐ Agree strongly ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Disagree strongly
☐ No-one moves up the ladder ☐ It depends ☐ Don't know

29) Say you had to take a day off work at short notice for family or personal reasons? In general, which of the following would you do to cover the lost time.

☐ Use holiday or flexi hours

☐ Put in extra effort in the normal working week

☐ Work extra hours unpaid

☐ Take unpaid leave

☐ Take paid leave

[] Other

30) How much, if at all, do you think your family responsibilities (thinking of either or both children and partner) have got in the way of your progress in your career.

() A great deal () Quite a lot () A bit () Not very much () Not at all () Can't say

Attitudes to work 3

31) Work has always been important to me even if this got in the way of family life

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

32) It's not good for the family if the man is the primary carer for the children and the woman is the main breadwinner

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

33) Through my career I have been happy that it's mainly been my responsibility to look after my children rather than the responsibility of my partner

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

34) If a person can't manage their family responsibilities then they should stop trying to hold down a demanding job

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

Role of women

35) My husband / partner is / was only happy for me to work if it fits / fitted in with family life

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

36) The position of women is better today - but it has not gone far enough

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

37) Women are expected to do too much: childcare, job, household chores, admin, etc

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

38) I am a feminist

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

One thing....

39) The one thing I think would make the most positive difference to the lives of working mothers is

Thank You!

Appendix 3

Jill Armstrong DPhil Research - Pre Interview Questionnaire - Daughters who are also mothers

About you

1) Please insert Participant code provided

2) What is your age?

3) How many brothers and sisters do you have?

4) What is your position in your family (e.g 2nd child)

5) What level of educational qualification have you reached?

() A level

() Studying now for undergraduate degree

() Undergraduate degree

() Studying now for post graduate degree

() Post graduate degree

() PhD/DPhil

Employment

6) In which year did you have each of your children and how long was your maternity leave in each case? If you chose to become a full-time mother, write that in the 'length of maternity leave' box adjacent to the birth of the child after which you made the decision not to go back to paid work.

	Year of Birth of Child	Gender of Child	Length of maternity leave
Child 1			
Child 2			
Child 3			

family										
Mother										
Father										
Other family member										
Partner/person you are in a relationship with										
Other										

10) If you entered a value above for "Other" higher than 1 please describe who they were

Relationships

11) What is your relationship status?

☐ Married

☐ Cohabiting

☐ Single

12) What is your current partner's occupation?

Childcare

13) Thinking about your childcare arrangements for your children, which of the following best describes the arrangements you had in place for pre-school age

☐ Female main breadwinner/male main carer

☐ Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny

☐ Male main breadwinner/ female main carer

☐ Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care/childminder / nanny

☐ Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

Upbringing

14) Thinking about your own upbringing, which of the following best describes the main way your parents took care of you during pre-school age

- ☐ Female main breadwinner/male main carer
- ☐ Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny
- ☐ Male main breadwinner/ female main carer
- ☐ Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care/childminder / nanny
- ☐ Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

15) Thinking about your own upbringing, which of the following best describes the main way your parents took care of you during age 5-11

- ☐ Female main breadwinner/male main carer
- ☐ Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny
- ☐ Male main breadwinner/ female main carer
- ☐ Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny
- ☐ Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

16) Thinking about your own upbringing, which of the following best describes the main way your parents took care of you during age 11-18

- ☐ Female main breadwinner/male main carer
- ☐ Female main breadwinner / nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny
- ☐ Male main breadwinner/ female main carer
- ☐ Roughly equal earner/ nursery/ after school care / childminder / nanny
- ☐ Roughly equal earner/family member main carer

Domestic work - partner

17) What percentage of time would you estimate your partner spends on the following activities in comparison to you?

	Less than1 0%	10 %	20 %	30 %	40 %	50 %	60 %	70 %	80 %	90 %	100 %
Managem ent of/or actually doing childcare											
Meeting teachers at your child's school											
Laundry											
Cooking for family											
Grocery shopping											
Cleaning											

Attitudes to work

18) On a scale of 1 – 10 how much would you say you enjoyed your work when your child was a baby

1= did not enjoy at all

() 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 () 5 () 6 () 7 () 8 () 9 () 10

10 = really enjoyed

19) On a scale of 1 – 10 how much would you say you enjoyed your work when your child was pre-school

1 = did not enjoy at all

() 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 () 5 () 6 () 7 () 8 () 9 () 10

10 = really enjoyed

20) On a scale of 1 – 10 how much would you say you enjoyed your work when your child was at primary school

1 = did not enjoy at all

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

10 = really enjoyed

Attitudes to work 2

21) I'd like you to think about how people in your kind of job move up the career ladder. Do you agree or disagree that this involves working long hours?

☐ Agree strongly ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Disagree strongly ☐ No-one moves up the ladder ☐ It depends ☐ Don't know

22) Say you had to take a day off work at short notice for family or personal reasons? In general, which of the following would you do to cover the lost time.

☐ Use holiday or flexi hours

☐ Put in extra effort in the normal working week

☐ Work extra hours unpaid

☐ Take unpaid leave

☐ Take paid leave

☐ Other

23) How much, if at all, do you think your family responsibilities (thinking of either or both children and partner) have got in the way of your progress in your career.

☐ A great deal ☐ Quite a lot ☐ A bit ☐ Not very much ☐ Not at all ☐ Can't say

Attitudes to work 3

24) Work has always been important to me even if this got in the way of family life

☐ Agree strongly ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Disagree strongly ☐ Don't know

25) It's not good for the family if the man is the primary carer for the children and the woman is the main breadwinner

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

26) Through my career I have been happy that it's mainly been my responsibility to look after my children rather than the responsibility of my partner

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

27) If a person can't manage their family responsibilities then they should stop trying to hold down a demanding job

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

Role of women

28) My husband / partner is / was only happy for me to work if it fits / fitted in with family life

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

29) The position of women is better today - but it has not gone far enough

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

30) Women are expected to do too much: childcare, job, household chores, admin, etc

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

31) I am a feminist

() Agree strongly () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree ()
Disagree strongly () Don't know

One thing....

32) The one thing I think would make the most positive difference to the lives of working mothers is

Appendix 4

Jill Armstrong:

Pre interview task instructions: Daughters

It will be really useful to my research to ask you to prepare some thoughts prior to the interview we have arranged.

Please type your thoughts into this document and email this to me by two days before our interview

1. Task 1

- With your first 'career' job in mind, please could you make some notes about key events or factors that you think most influenced your decision about the type of work you chose to do
- *Factors might include something you've done, something that happened, feelings about what you want from work, what you know is on offer out there, what you've heard or been advised from others or anything at all. Please write about anything important that comes to mind that's true for you.*
- ***Please type in thoughts below***

2. Timeline Task 2

- Please make some notes on any events or feelings that stand out for you in relation to having a working mother.
- *For either task, there may be a lot for you to write or very little*
- *I understand that what I'm asking might raise issues that may be upsetting to you so please write only what you feel comfortable enough to share with me. I will not share this information with anyone else –including your mother – and I will leave you free to decide what you want to raise with her in the joint interview we have planned*

Please type in each specific key event/feelings you want to mention below and tell me how old you were/think you were at that time

e.g. Event 1: I was x years old

Description of event and feelings

Appendix 5

Jill Armstrong: Pre interview task instructions: Mothers

It will be really useful to my research to ask you to think about and prepare some thoughts prior to the interview we have arranged. Please email this to me by two days before our interview

1. Timeline

- Please could you make some notes about key events/situations that stand out for you in relation to being a working mother (with particular reference to your daughter) and how these events/situations made you feel
- *There may be a lot for you to write or very little*
- *I understand that what I'm asking could raise issues that may be upsetting to you so please write only what you feel comfortable enough to share with me. I will not share this information with anyone else –including your daughter- and I will leave you free to decide what you want to raise with her in the joint interview we have planned*

Please type in each specific key event/situation that you want to mention below, write about the feelings you associate with each event and tell me how old (approx.) your daughter was at this time

e.g. Event 1: Sophie was x years old

Description of event and feelings

Appendix 6

Jill Armstrong
Topic guide: Mothers

Note: Adapt questions to probe on role as grandmother and how this changes their observations as relevant to the participant

1. Introduction

- Brief introduction to topic and logistics of today's interview.
- Explanation on confidentiality, no obligation to answer questions, what to do if the questioning makes them uncomfortable at any point and confirmation of permission to make an audio recording of the interview. Ensure consent form is signed.

2. Explore motivations behind their career histories

- *Check on key work history events moderator learned from pre questionnaire*
- Starting with your current job what do you most value about it and what do you most dislike?
- What do you get from work? *Probe on emotional and well as practical aspects.*
- Thinking back have there been times when work has meant something different to you?
- What conversations do you recall having about your choice of first career job and with whom?
- Probe on motivations behind any big career changes.
- At these key periods (including first job) what conversations in society in general were going on about women and work and what, if anything, left an impression upon you?
- What are your views about the hours you spent working – now and at other times?
- Looking at your career history: How would you sum up your career in a sentence? And your feelings about your career in 3 words?
- If you could wave a magic wand and change something what would that be?
- Would you describe yourself as having been successful at work? What does success at work mean to you?
- What are your ambitions for the near future in terms of your career and what lies behind that?

3. Work-life balance issues

- Is work-life balance a term you use or would another phrase better describe what you want out of life and work? *Change my language to match theirs.*
- What is important to you to make space for outside work (factors other than motherhood)?
- Are there times when the hours you worked caused you problems for reasons other than to do with motherhood?
- Have you experienced any issues at work to do with your gender (unrelated to motherhood)?

4. Work and Motherhood

- *Take them back to when they were working and decided/found they were having a child.* What went through your head about combining motherhood and career? What conversations can you recall having about this? With whom?
- What happened when you went back to work after maternity leave? Was this what you wanted to do?

- How did that feel? Was being a working mother different to what you had expected? Had you expected anything in particular? If so, talk about what was different?
- Probe on key phrases that come up (e.g. judgement, stress, guilt)
- What was your experience of your employers in terms of how you managed your family responsibilities as well as work
- In what way do you think your work has impacted upon your daughter?
- What stands out for you?
- *Probe on the time during babyhood, pre school years, adolescent years. Compare these comments with what they have written in their pre-task*
- Anything you feel you missed out on?
- Your daughter missed out on?
- What is your experience of the role of your partner (*as relevant*); in supporting your career with childcare and in terms of domestic chores? *Probe on differences over the years in their experiences* and online questionnaire answers about attitudes of partners and the way they split domestic roles. Tell me more about the times of most harmony? And the times of most stress?
- How much compromise did you feel you were making at different times? Probe on partnerships, their daughter, work and any other aspects of their lives?
- Probe on answers in online questionnaire to how much they felt family had got in the way of the progress of their careers and views about the importance of work, even if it got in the way of family life
- *At key periods they have mentioned* what conversations in society in general (such as in the media and amongst friends or your peer group at work) were going on about working mothers and what, if anything, left an impression upon you?

5. Perceptions of their role as a mother

- How would you describe your approach to motherhood?
- Is there anything that stands out that you would say is different in the way to mother your daughter in comparison to your sons (*as appropriate*)?
- How do you feel about your relationship with your mother?
- What kind of role model was she?
- Did you identify more with your father or your mother? (or neither)
- What main things have you tried to teach your daughter?
- What do you think she has learned from watching your life?
- What are the tensions in your relationship?
- Have there been times when your relationship was worse/better than it is now? In what ways?
- If you could give her one gift (a quality, something you think she needs) what would that be and why?
- *What changed about your relationship when you became a grandmother? What are the main areas in which you have given advice or help to your daughter now she has children?*

6. In what way do the mothers' perceive they are influential in their daughters' work aspirations?

- What, if any, aspirations do/did you have for your daughters' choice of work and what lies behind that? How long have you felt that way?
- What, if any, aspirations do you have for your daughter's work-life balance?
- Is there anything you have said or done that you think has influenced her choice of career or the way she works? *Probe carefully on each.*

- Tell me in detail about some of the key conversations you've had that are relevant here?
- What do you see as being different about your daughter's view of work and yours?
- What about the differences between her working now and when you started work?
- What do you think is the same to all intents and purposes?
- ***For grandmothers/grandmothers to be probe on the conversations they've had with their daughters that pertain to work in any way***

7. Thanks and close

- Anything else you think I should have asked? Expected me to ask?
- Explain that in the mother/daughter interview I will not disclose anything the other has said but I will give them an opportunity to ask each other any questions or raise any issues that have come up for them
- I will also (without breaching confidentiality) pick up on areas where their stories are different in order to explore a little more what might lie behind these differences
- I will pick up upon big themes I am noticing across all my interviews and expand the discussion with both of them together
- I will give them an opportunity to ask me questions at the end of the joint interview and inform them of my intention to write a short summary of the key findings of my thesis when it is completed and send it to them

Note: The content of the mother/daughter interview will be determined by what comes up in the preceding interviews. The key objectives will be to explore:-

- ***In what way do the views of daughters differ from that of their mothers and what lies behind this?***
- ***What are their observations about the position of women in society/the issues women face and how do they think that has changed between the generations?***
- ***How do their views on feminism differ?***
- ***What would they change to make a positive difference to the lives of working mothers?***
- ***Have you talked about being a working mother? In what context or why not?***

Topic guide: Daughters

Note: Different questions for those who are about to become or have become mothers themselves covered in point 6 and where type is bold below

1. Introduction

- Brief introduction to topic and logistics of today's interview
- Explanation on confidentiality, no obligation to answer questions, what to do if the questioning makes them uncomfortable at any point and confirmation of permission to make an audio recording of the interview. Ensure consent form is signed.

2. Explore motivations behind their career histories with particular emphasis on first career job

NB. Questions below need to be tailored for those close to making a career choice but have not yet started work

- Check on key work history events moderator learned from pre questionnaire
- *Take them back to when they started their first career job. What were they key reasons you chose the type of job you did?*
- *Draw on pre-work done on key events/choices of first career job*
- What do you want from work? *Probe on practical and emotional factors*
- What conversations do you recall having about your choice of first career job and with whom?
- *If there have been any big career changes probe on the motivation behind the change*
- Again, what conversations do you recall having about these changes and with whom?
- What are your views about the hours you spend working?
- *In the above make sure I understand how work-life balance issues are important to them in any way. E.g. what's important to them about life outside work. Does motherhood come up immediately (and if so, park discussion until later)*
- Probe on answers in the online questionnaire about influences on their career choices
- Did either of your parents have expectations that they conveyed to you?
- Is there any way in which your choices have been a surprise to them?
- Are you more interested in your mum's job or dad's job? For what reason? Any link to what they have said about influences?
- Do you anticipate/have you experienced any issues at work to do with your gender (unrelated to motherhood)?

3. Relationship with their mother in general and observations about experiences of growing up with a working mother

- How would you describe your mother?
- How do you feel about your childhood and your relationship with your mother?
- What are the tensions in your relationship?
- In what way has she influenced your approach to life or values? In terms of what she tells you? What you observe?
- Tell them about the gift she would give question –what do they think she said/will say?
- How has your mother's work impacted upon your life? *Think about this from the perspective of any age that stands out for you. Then move to the next significant memory etc. Probe on what they wrote in their pre-interview task.*
- What are the good things about growing up with a successful working mother?
- What are the more negative things?
- Is there anything you feel you have missed out on?
- Is there anything you think you will do differently? *Probe reasons*
- Any differences you notice in comparison to friends whose mothers worked less?

4. Observations on similarities and differences in views about work

- Standing back and thinking about your mother's career, how would you characterise that? Would you describe her as having been successful at work? How are you defining this?
- How do you think your mother feels about her work? In what way might that be the same, or different for you?

- In what ways do you think your career path could be similar to your mother? In what ways might it be different?
- Do you see yourself climbing the career ladder in the way that she has?
- Do you want to work the same kind of hours? Is that OK or not OK for you?
- Is work-life balance a term you use or would another phrase better describe what you want out of life and work? *Change my language to match theirs*
- What is important to you to make space for outside work (*factors other than motherhood*)

5. Thinking about motherhood

- *Ask only those who do not have children:*
 - Do you have a view about becoming a mother in the future? What makes you think that?
 - Do you imagine you will combine work with motherhood? If so, how?
 - What conversations have you had about working motherhood? With whom?
 - What kind of support do you imagine wanting from your partner?
 - Who is the main carer is likely to be? *Probe reasons.*
- **Ask only those pregnant/have children:**
 - **How might that/has that changed when you become/became a mother? Probe on childcare and domestic chores.**
 - **How it that similar or different to your experience of your parents?**
- Do you notice any big differences in the way your friends are mothered by mothers who are not so successful at work/do not prioritise work in the way your mother does?
- Summing up: thinking first about your first job. What influence has your mother had, either directly because of what she *said* or indirectly because of what she *did*. *Repeat for later key events that they have reported like job changes or moving in with a partner*

6. Explore combining work with motherhood for 'daughter mother'/pregnant women

- *Take them back to when they were working and decided/found they were having a child.* What went through your head when thinking about what it would be like to combine motherhood and career? What conversations can you recall having about this? With whom?
- What was the story with their employer?
- What happened when you went back to work? How did that feel? Was being a working mother different to what you had expected? Had you expected anything in particular? If so, talk about what was different?
- Probe on key phrases that come up (e.g. judgement, stress, guilt)
- What was your experience of your employers in terms of how you managed your family responsibilities as well as work
- In what way do you think your work has impacted upon your child?
- What stands out for you? *Probe on the time they were pregnant, during babyhood, pre school years, adolescent years*
- *Compare these comments with what they have written in their pre-task*
- Anything you feel you, or your child is missing out on?
- What is your experience of the role of your partner (*as relevant*); in supporting your career with childcare and in terms of domestic chores? *Probe on differences over the years in their experiences* and online questionnaire answers about attitudes of partners and the way they split domestic roles.

- How much compromise did you feel you were making at different times? Probe on partnerships, their daughter, work and any other aspects of their lives?
- Probe on answers in online questionnaire to how much they felt family had got in the way of the progress of their careers and views about the importance of work, even if it got in the way of family life
- *At key periods they have mentioned* what conversations in society in general (such as in the media and amongst friends or your peer group at work) were going on about working mothers and what, if anything, left an impression upon you?

7. Thanks and close as for mothers' interviews above

Appendix 7

Table of Participants

PAIR	MOTHER	DAUGHTER	SAMPLE CELL <i>(see 3.3.1)</i>
1. Alison & Alice	Marketing Director	Recent graduate (looking for work at time of interview)	Cell 1
2. Bridget & Beth	Doctor	TV Production	Cell 2
3. Christine & Chloe	Lawyer	Academic	Cell 2
4. Diana & Donna	Retail business owner	Final year university	Cell 1
5. Eve & Emily	Doctor	Recent graduate (looking for work at time of interview)	Cell 1
6. Faye, Fiona & Faith (twins)	Lawyer	Financial Analyst & Marketing Assistant	Cell 2
7. Gayle & Gina	Director of Consultancy	Recent graduate (looking for work at time of interview)	Cell 1
8. Harriet & Hayley	School Inspector (retired)	Teacher (on maternity leave)	Cell 3 2 children under 3
9. Imogen & Isobel	Lawyer	Student Union Officer	Cell 2
10. Janet & Jessica	Company Director	Final year university	Cell 1
11. Karen & Kelly	Teacher	Educational psychologist (on maternity leave)	Cell 3 1 child under 1
12. Leah & Lily	Mainly worked as a teacher, now psychotherapist	Academic	Cell 3 3 children – youngest <5

13. Monica & Megan	CEO public sector	Marketing executive	Cell 2
14. Naomi & Natalie	Solicitor	Trainee Solicitor	Cell 2
15. Orla & Olivia	Stockbroker	Final year university	Cell 1
16. Patricia & Paula	Teacher	Dentist	Cell 3 3 children under 5
17. Rose & Rachel	CEO Public sector	Final year university	Cell 1
18. Stella & Sophie	Academic	Teacher	Cell 3 1 child under 2
19. Tara & Tanya	MD Media Company	TV Production	Cell 2
20. Una & Ursula	Academic	Admin whilst seeking law training contract	Cell 2
21. Victoria & Verity	Head of Market Insight - Retail	Academic research assistant	Cell 2
22. Wendy & Willow	MD and owner IT company	Doctor in foundation training	Cell 2
23. Xanthe & Xenia	Director of Arts organisation	Final Year University	Cell 1
24. Yvonne & Yasmin	Senior Social Worker and owner of own company	Final Year University	Cell 1
25. Zadie & Zara	Solicitor	Brand Manager - Marketing	Cell 2
26. Alice & Amy	Civil servant, then accountant, then teacher	Manager of NHS Clinical Network	Cell 3 2 children under 6
27. Bella & Bethan	TV and Radio Producer then	Retail Management. Mainly full-time	Cell 3

	teaching/farming	mother	2 children under 5
28. Cheryl & Cara	Senior Manager in NHS	Retail assistant	Cell 3 1 child under 5
29. Daria & Danielle	Teacher	Director of marketing consultancy	Cell 3 Children 9 and 5
30. Eileen & Eilidh	CEO of several financial companies	Fashion Designer	Cell 2

Biographical details were all correct at the time of interview and have been kept vague because giving specific detail, even of occupations, for mother and daughter risks recognition and therefore would breach confidentiality. Within the legal profession a judge, an in-house barrister, partner in a magic circle law firm and solicitors were interviewed. Within the medical profession hospital consultants, junior doctors, G.P.s, NHS managers and dentists were interviewed. Careers in the commercial sector were in journalism, TV production, retail, brand management, marketing, market research and advertising. Several had founded and run their own businesses employing many other people. 4 participants worked in the City as stockbrokers, chartered accountants and financial analysts. From academia, teachers of school students, school inspectors, educational psychologists, academics and researchers were represented. Other public sector careers were Chief Executives or Directors of local authorities, museums and arts funding organisations. All names are pseudonyms.