The London School of Economics and Political Science

Paid work and parenthood: Gender, class and cohort differences in the UK

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out
jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

I declare that my thesis consists of 70,189 words.

Statement of conjoint work

I confirm that Chapters 5 and 6 were jointly co-authored with my supervisor Professor Wendy Sigle and I contributed 70% of this work. For both chapters, I conducted the analyses, and initial interpretation of the findings, and prepared the first drafts. Wendy Sigle contributed to the conceptual idea behind both chapters and to the interpretation of the findings, providing guidance on the analysis design and commenting on the initial drafts.

Abstract

Are gender inequalities in the UK labour market narrowing as younger cohorts replace older ones? Over the past several decades, the labour market participation of women, and especially mothers, has increased extensively and the gap in the employment rates of women and men has shrunk drastically. At the same time, extensive educational expansion has been greater among women than men, thus closing the qualifications gap. The gender wage gap has reduced overall and is lowest among younger age groups. These substantial changes have been referred to collectively as a gender revolution. Yet there is also extensive evidence of enduring gendered inequalities in time spent in unpaid work and childcare. Social expectations that childrearing is primarily women's responsibility, also reflected and reinforced in UK leave and benefit policies, mean that mothers are more likely to adjust their employment to accommodate childrearing. The focus of this thesis on parenthood and paid work is motivated by a concern about the cumulative life course costs of such adjustments in the UK policy context. The project describes labour market and educational changes since the Second World War and considers whether and how those changes have promoted greater gender equality at the classed intersection of paid work and childrearing. The research combines original empirical analyses of large-scale UK surveys, with a feminist analysis of policy as gendering practices in order to contextualise the empirical findings with a more structural perspective of gender that is lacking in the survey data. Documenting the persistence of the gendered and classed disadvantage for people born at different points in the 20th century, particularly when they transition to parenthood, the findings provide insight into how gendered social change is unfolding in the UK, and challenge the idea that gender inequality is in the process of disappearing of its own accord.

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1. Introduction: Change and stability at the UK work-family nexus

The extensive changes in recent decades to women's employment over the life course in many Western, (post-)industrialised countries have been described by various scholars as a gender revolution, by others as a (rather unrevolutionary) slow drip of social change. There is a tension then in the existing literature between the extensive change and persistent stability over time in the organisation of paid work and family care work. Substantively, the objective of this thesis is to reconcile the growing body of evidence of women in the UK increasingly participating in the labour market, working longer hours and more years in total, including following childbirth, with recurring themes of entrenched gender roles in the family and women's adjustments to paid work on the transition to parenthood. Politically, as feminist research, the thesis is also motivated by a concern for the cumulative long-term financial disadvantage associated with women's continued adjustments to paid work to accommodate childrearing and care, and the substantial social polarisation among women in this regard. Thus, the thesis investigates gender, class and cohort differences in the UK to explore how inequalities in paid work and childrearing patterns have changed and persisted since the establishment of the post-war British welfare state.

While all focused on the role of paid work in the change in women's lives, the various theorisations of this gendered social change, discussed in more detail later in this chapter, disagree with each other on whether the patterns constitute a stalled revolution, a slow drip of change or the first of a two-stage re-orientation of gender relations (England, 2010; Goldscheider, Bernhardt, & Lappegård, 2015; Hochschild, 1990; Sullivan, Gershuny, & Robinson, 2018). To make sense of the different conceptualisations of this ongoing process of change, I draw on the framework of Ready-Willing-Able, first proposed in Demography to explain the different pace of change and paths taken by countries in the (first) demographic transition to smaller family sizes (Coale, 1974). Informed by this framework, my thesis reconciles the contradiction between the change and persistence by showing that the changes across cohorts are firstly not as extensive as they first appear, and secondly that the changes that have taken place are quite consistent with the gender order that structures the organisation of family and paid work in the UK. Despite the changes to women's paid work, the underlying gender order remains substantively unaltered, which I relate to the willingness aspect of the framework. The thesis shows how policies maintain the gender order, as they produce and reinforce social norms such as fathers being primarily responsible for supporting the family financially and mothers for childrearing and care. In turn, these gender inequalities reinforce class inequalities among women. Progression and success in professional and managerial careers continue to be largely incompatible with the intensive parental involvement, while conversely, high costs of

formal childcare and joint assessment of means tested benefits pose a disincentive to paid work for many mothers with low levels of education and low earnings potential. Highlighting the stability of the underlying gender order amidst the extensive but more superficial change to specifically women's paid work, this thesis thus provides insight into how gendered social change is unfolding in the UK context.

In this chapter, I firstly provide an overview of some of the broad changes in the UK relevant to the study of paid work and families. In the second section I discuss some of the theoretical demographic and sociological literature that has framed these patterns of change as a gender revolution but disagree over whether this process of change has stalled or has merely progressed through a first phase, with the second yet to gather momentum. I introduce the Ready-Willing- Able framework and suggest it can help reconcile these different understandings and make visible the underlying reasons for persistence amidst change. With an eye to the persistence of gender norms around parental roles, the third section turns to feminist theories of gender as a structure to raise questions about the depth of the change while the final section of this chapter sets out the structure of the thesis and how the component chapters contribute to the overall objective.

1.1. Setting the scene: An overview of work-family change in the UK

Women's paid work in the UK: A brief overview of change in the post-war period

Before the Second World War many women in the UK left paid work when getting married; in 1951 the employment rate among married working age women was 25% (McCulloch & Dex, 2001). The period since the war has been characterised by substantial changes to women's paid work over the life course. Over time women first started to remain in work until they had their first child and from the 1950s onwards increasing numbers of mothers also started returning to, usually part-time, paid work after some years out of the labour market for childrearing (Elliott, 2002). This increase was greater among middle-class mothers, from a lower starting point, so that participation rates by social class converged in the early post-war period (Joshi & Hinde, 1993). At first, the gap between the first childbirth and the initial return to paid work generally lasted many years, but cohort comparisons have shown a reduction in the average gap in employment over time (Joshi, 2002; Joshi & Hinde, 1993; McCulloch & Dex, 2001). More recently, the rise in the employment rate of mothers with young children, and among lone mothers, has been particularly notable. The employment rate of mothers of pre-school aged children has risen from 31% in 1980 to 58% in 2008 (Fagan & Norman,

2012), while for lone parents with dependent children (of any age) it has risen from 43% to 60% between 1993 and 2013 (ONS, 2013).

Patterns of change over time in women's employment over the life course in the UK need to be set in the context of changing long-term labour market conditions (as well as changing social norms and policy, discussed in Chapter 2). Skilled manual work, generally undertaken by men have declined, firstly in the heavy industries of coal, steel, textiles and ship-building and then in electronics, car and consumer goods manufacturing. As these industries shrank, their relative importance as sectors of employment was overtaken by growth in services and non-manual sectors, including the public service sectors of education, health and social care as the early post-war welfare state expanded (Brannen, Moss, & Mooney, 2004). As a proportion of all employee jobs, the manufacturing sector has shrunk dramatically from accounting for 26% of all employment in 1979 to 9% in 2009, while over the same time period there has been a relative growth of services sector jobs from 63% to 84% of all employment (Spence, 2011). This has been paralleled with a decline in male employment rates, which fell from 92% in 1971 to 76% in 2013 (ONS, 2013), especially among those without qualifications. As an example, inactivity rates among men without qualifications rose from just below 4% in 1979 to 30% in 2001 (Nickell & Quintini, 2002). As a result, there has been a convergence over time in men and women's employment rates.

As noted above, the post-war growth in women's, and especially mothers', employment rates was largely in part-time work. Conversely, part-time work was often only available in low-paid service-sector jobs and generally done by women with children. Thus, the switch to part-time employment after becoming a mother was often accompanied by downward occupational mobility and related reduction in (hourly) pay. A subsequent switch back to full-time employment was less likely associated with upward mobility, indicating the longer-term implications of part-time spells for women's life time earnings (Bukodi, Dex, & Joshi, 2012; Dex & Bukodi, 2012; Fouarge, Manzoni, Muffels, & Luijkx, 2010; Joshi & Hinde, 1993).

Over time, the proportion of women working part-time has remained stable at about two-fifths of working women since 1983 (40% in 1983 and 41% in 1991, Lewis, 2002a; 42% in 2013, ONS, 2013). By comparison, 12% of men worked part-time in 2013 and the reduction in male employment does not appear to be due to men increasingly taking time off to raise children; on average fathers are more likely to be in work than men without children (ONS, 2013), and to work longer hours (Biggart & O'Brien, 2009).

In addition to the overall difference between women and men, notable differences exist among women, by class and ethnic group in terms of continuity of employment and the likelihood of

working full-time while children are young (Fagan & Norman, 2012; Kanji, 2011). While younger cohorts are more likely than previous cohorts to return to paid work between births, and to work full-time following the transition to motherhood (McCulloch & Dex, 2001; Smeaton, 2006), many studies have also pointed to diverging patterns among women, with higher educated women more likely to follow continuous and full-time work trajectories. With maternity leave a key enabler of labour market continuity on the transition to motherhood, this polarisation among women has been attributed in part to strict maternity leave eligibility rules. As late as the early 1990s, almost two decades after the introduction of maternity provisions in employment legislation, only about half of employed women were eligible for statutory maternity leave (McRae, 1993). In turn reduced labour market gender inequalities among younger cohorts has generally been limited to those following continuous full-time employment trajectories (Bukodi et al., 2012).

For many women, lack of childcare constrained the return to full-time, or any, paid work after childbirth. A study of maternity in the late 1980s found a third of mothers overall, and nearly half of those in 'skilled manual' occupations, who had expressed a preference for paid work reported being unable to do so because of lack of childcare (McRae, 1993). While private nursery places increased rapidly during the 1980s, the high costs and variable availability and quality meant that for many British families in successive cohorts the only feasible option was maternal part-time work that fit around school hours and/or when fathers or grandparents were able to care for the children (Brannen et al., 2004). While initially enabling British women to re-enter the labour market and undertake paid work alongside family care, and as such is often appreciated by mothers as a route to balancing paid and unpaid work (Lyonette, Kaufman, & Crompton, 2011), part-time work is also a central component of how gender inequalities in the labour market and the family manifest in the UK, suggesting a life course perspective is useful in researching gender and paid work.

The gendered cumulation of disadvantage over the life course

The life course refers to the sequence of life phases, multiple roles and events that an individual experiences during their life, summed up by Susan McDaniel as "the accumulation of choices made at earlier stages, as well as non-choices" (McDaniel, 2001, p. 198). Inherent in the notion of the life course is that an individual's decision-making and future aspirations in the current moment are not the only influences on outcomes and behaviour. The possibilities available to decide on are themselves constrained or shaped by past decisions and non-decisions, the social context and historical period in which lives are situated, as well as by the support, pressure, needs and decisions of partners, children and other family members (Elder, 1998; Giele & Elder, 1998). In much research that is not directly focused on understanding the shape or structure of the life course (Macmillan,

2005), taking a life course perspective indicates a commitment to a longer-term and contextualised view of outcomes or behaviours; situated in the structural context perhaps but more importantly in the individual's history of what came before and the future implications of the path taken to date. A focus on the life course draws attention to how the changing historical, economic and policy context interacts with cohort and life stage timing as well as gender and class, affecting the choices that are perceived to be available and feasible to take up by differently situated individuals.

As an example, the increased access to higher education, the removal of the 'marriage bar' (rules permitting dismissal of women employees on entry into marriage), the introduction of sex-equality legislation, equal terms and conditions for part-time work, the introduction and incremental extensions to job-protected and paid maternity leave and increased availability of childcare have changed the opportunity structures faced by more recent cohorts more than earlier cohorts. Meanwhile, despite these more recent changes, as earlier decisions have lasting influence on the life course trajectory, older women's employment trajectories and current labour market position reflects the legacy of the more 'domestic' gender regime under which they took major educational, labour market and family decisions (McDaniel, 2001; Walby, 1997, 1999).

A central motivation for feminist research concerned with women's employment outcomes relative to men is that over the life course the adjustments made by mothers to paid work have cumulative effects on lifetime earnings, pension accrual and risk of financial insecurity and poverty in old age or following relationship dissolution. It should be noted that this disadvantage is not necessarily specific to women; men who adjust their careers to accommodate caring responsibilities are also at risk of incurring a fatherhood penalty. Rather, it shows the way that the combination of the 'clockwork' of male-typical careers (Abendroth, Huffman, & Treas, 2014; Folbre, 2008; Hochschild, 1976), whereby the most intense career-building phase typically coincides with the life course stage of family formation, the gender pay gap, and childrearing being socially coded as a primarily female responsibility, together disproportionately affect mothers' paid work and earnings (and also constrain many fathers' involvement in parenting).

Thus, overall, motherhood is more commonly associated with a penalty, while fatherhood is more commonly associated with a premium in income over the life course. There are however important class differences in the parenthood premia/penalties. For example, fatherhood is linked to a small penalty, rather than premium, among low income men (Cooke, 2014). For mothers, non-employment spells and part-time work are obviously associated with immediate reductions in income. However, a number of studies have also pointed to these having 'scarring effects' that last even after the return to (full-time) work (e.g. Francesconi & Gosling, 2005; Sigle-Rushton &

Waldfogel, 2007), in part explained by any previous occupational downward mobility less commonly being reversed when returning to full-time work (Dex & Bukodi, 2012). Nonetheless, the lower pay penalty for work interruptions among low qualified mothers should also be noted (Stewart, 2014). For those who wish to look after their own children and whose paid work options are often limited to low quality (precarious and/or low paid) employment, the rationale for the strong emphasis and privileging of paid work, in policy but also in much research, may thus be questioned. A support system that both values care and protects their economic security and pension income, might be preferable.

Yet this is not the case in the UK context, which in part at least explains the focus in much research on continuity of employment. The longer the time spent out of work, or in part-time work, the lower the probability of receiving additional earnings-related pension income in retirement, with low skilled mothers particularly disadvantaged in terms of personal pension income (Bardasi & Jenkins, 2010; Davies, Joshi, & Peronaci, 2000; Warren, 2006). With the long-term trend in UK pension policy of moving away from a universal state pension provision towards increasing reliance on occupational and personal pension schemes, a key source of pensioner income inequality is the gender gap in private pensions.

On the other hand, other research finds that the increase in women's employment over time has not improved their financial position in old age as much as might be expected due to the increase being predominantly in part-time work (Sefton, Evandrou, & Falkingham, 2011). Even privileged professional and managerial women are much less likely than men to spend in excess of 75% of their working life in full-time work and they accrue substantially smaller pension pots than men in those occupations (Warren, 2003).

Nevertheless, a range of research has found that more highly educated women are more likely to follow the sort of labour market trajectories that minimise the gendered labour market disadvantage associated with motherhood (i.e. continuous, full-time employment; Bukodi et al., 2012; McMunn, Lacey, Worts, McDonough, Stafford, Booker, Kumari, & Sacker, 2015). Thus, the educational expansion that has taken place since the 1960s in the UK may have played a central role in the change over time in gendered life courses.

Educational expansion: an overview of change since the 1960s

Over the time period considered in this thesis (broadly the post-war period up to early 2010s), average educational attainment has risen as successive cohorts have remained in education longer and attainment of higher education qualifications has expanded greatly. The 1960s was a decade characterised by strong governmental commitment to educational expansion, with government

backed building of a number of new universities and vocational or technical higher education institutions ('polytechnics'). The expansion was in part to accommodate the larger post-war baby boom cohort reaching school leaving age, but also in recognition of the general trend of young people increasingly staying on past compulsory education. In 1960, about a fifth of school-leaving aged pupils stayed on, rising over the decades to over two-thirds by the late 1990s. The rate of post-compulsory educational enrolment among young people under the age of 20 increased from under 5% in 1960 to 14% by the end of the decade, and again from 15% to 32% during the 'mass tertiary education' phase between 1988 and the mid-1990s. Consequently, the proportion of working age adults aged 26-60 *without* qualifications has declined from a majority in 1981 (58%) to a small minority in 2011 (5%) while the proportion with a degree increased (from 5% to 31%). The expansion has been greater among women so that there has been a gender convergence in qualification levels. However, among both men and women the growth in young people undertaking higher education studies has been greatest among those from higher occupational family backgrounds and substantially lesser among those from manual worker family backgrounds, thus maintaining rather than reducing class inequality (Blanden & Machin, 2013; Boliver, 2011; Lindley & Machin, 2012; Mayhew, 2015; Perkin, 1972; Purcell, Elias, & Wilton, 2006).

Because the gap in level of qualifications between women and men has closed over successive cohorts, researchers sometime express optimism or expectations that this equalisation in education will bring greater convergence and gender equality in the labour market, and eventually also in the home. This would be compatible with for example economic theories which suggest that women's lower educational attainment relative to men in earlier cohorts was a reason for their weaker bargaining position in the home and in the labour market and therefore linked to the gendered division of paid and unpaid work. Perhaps supporting this expectation, evidence from the US suggests that among higher educated women in professional and managerial jobs a delayed entry into motherhood is associated with a smaller motherhood penalty in earnings (Amalia Miller, 2011). In the UK, the postponement of childbearing over time among more highly educated women has also been established in the literature (Berrington, 2004; Berrington, Stone, & Beaujouan, 2015; Ní Bhrolcháin & Beaujouan, 2012). Whether this is related to increasing gender equality is unclear, but it at least points to relevance of changing patterns of family formation, and how these relate to educational expansion, when considering changing gender differences in paid work over the life course.

An overview of changing family patterns

Alongside, and related to, the educational and labour market changes already outlined there have been important changes to the probability and timing of childbearing and completed family size. A broad set of trends relating to family life since the mid-1960s, often summarised under the heading of the Second Demographic Transition (SDT; Lesthaeghe, 1995; Lesthaeghe, 2014; van de Kaa, 1999), include the postponement of partnership formation, increased prevalence of cohabitation, delayed or foregone marriage, postponement of childbearing and de-coupling of marriage and childbearing, increased separation and divorce, and subsequent re-partnering.

On average, completed family sizes have slowly been shrinking (from an average of 2.19 births per woman born in 1945 to 1.89 births per woman born in 1972)[1] in England and Wales (ONS, 2018), and the transition to motherhood has been progressively delayed by successive cohorts of women. While in 1991-1994 more than half of women in their late 20s were mothers (59% of those aged 26-29), by 2005-2007 the reverse was the case, with 57% of women aged 26-29 having no children (Ní Bhrolcháin, Beaujouan, & Berrington, 2010).

As noted in the previous section, in part the postponement is directly linked to larger proportions of younger cohorts staying in full-time education for longer. The proportion of women leaving education at the age of 21 or over increased from 14% to 38% over the course of the 1980s and 1990s but the time between leaving continuous education and having a first child did not increase much on average, from 7.8 years to 8.4 years (Ní Bhrolcháin & Beaujouan, 2012). This seems to indicate that more recent cohorts of women are not so much following a very different life course as following the same sequence as previous cohorts but one with an extended early adulthood educational phase.

However, the same study also found that the most highly educated women have extended the period between leaving education and childbearing by more than those in the medium educated group, while the time to first birth among (the shrinking proportion of) women leaving education by the age of 17 reduced over time (Ní Bhrolcháin & Beaujouan, 2012). Along with evidence of increasing polarisation by education over cohorts in the proportion of women remaining without children and in completed family size among those who have children (Berrington et al., 2015; Sigle-

[1] This is the most recent cohort of women for whom the completed or cohort fertility rate can be calculated as they had turned 45 (the age after which it is assumed women will have no more births), by the time the most recently available data were collected.

Rushton, 2008), the differentiation in timing suggests that women's family life courses may have become more patterned by class over time.

Patterns of partnership formation and stability have also changed. For example, marriage rates were at a peak high in the 1960s and early 1970s in the UK and have since declined. Partnership formation has also been postponed over the period and cohabitation has become more common, and since the 1980s it has increasingly become a precursor to marriage (Beaujouan & Ní Bhrolcháin, 2011). While births outside marriage have increased sharply from about 10% in the early 1970s to over 40% in 2006, this trend has been matched by an increase in births registered to unmarried cohabiting couples (Cabinet Office, 2008). Further, as separation and divorce among couples with children have increased, both lone parent families and step-families following parental re-partnering have become more common. The proportion of all families that were lone parent families more than doubled between the early 1970s and the early 1990s, to 19% of families with children in 1991 (Millar, 1994), by 2005 it had reached 25% where it has remained stable since (ONS, 2015). While partnership trends are not of central interest in this thesis, these general patterns do contribute to the contextual back-drop of change over time and likely influence how couples and individuals navigate paid and unpaid work. As an example, with rising divorce rates gender specialised division of labour is a risky strategy, especially for women (Oppenheimer, 1997; Warren, 2006; Warren, Rowlingson, & Whyley, 2001), which may affect how some arrange paid and unpaid work, including whether and how many children to have.

In the home, the total time spent on average by women reduced by almost an hour and a half between the 1960s and early 2000s. Conversely, men increased their involvement in unpaid work in the home over the same time period, although this increase of just under an hour a day did not compensate for the reduction by women (Gershuny & Kan, 2012). Women in the UK continue to do the bulk of unpaid care and housework in the home. Further, men's increased time has been primarily in non-routine housework rather than the routine work of cleaning, cooking and childrearing, with indications of persistent interactional and institutional obstacles to gender equality in unpaid work (Kan, Sullivan, & Gershuny, 2011).

Having briefly outlined the general themes of change over time of relevance to the research presented in this thesis, the next section focuses on some of the theoretical discussions of these patterns of change in the scholarly literature.

1.2. Theories and possible processes of gendered social change

A number of scholars have conceptualised these changes in terms of a gender revolution. Arlie Hochschild (1990) described it as having stalled in the 1980s US context. She observed that as women had entered employment outside the home in large numbers, the lives of the women in her study had changed greatly compared to the lives of their mothers. More so than had the lives of the men, whose limited contribution to housework and childcare was similar to their fathers and resulted in a 'second shift' for their wives. Similarly, Paula England (2010, 2011) described the gender revolution as asymmetric and also as stalling, or losing momentum. She attributed these features to the lack of social value and low financial reward associated with activities traditionally done by women, meaning that women have had economic and status incentives to enter the labour market and specifically to enter traditionally male occupations. Conversely, men have not only had minimal incentives to, and faced substantial social opprobrium for, taking on traditionally female occupations or roles. She further drew attention to the classed unevenness of the change to the gender system.

Francis Goldscheider and colleagues, by contrast, reject the idea of a stalling and argue that the gender revolution emerges in two stages. The first stage, consisting of women's entry into the labour market and increased presence and power in the public sphere, is according to this theorisation of the gender revolution eventually followed by men's increased involvement in the home and family. These scholars argue that while slow and not yet far advanced, evidence suggests that the second stage has begun in several countries (Goldscheider et al., 2015). Analysis of time use data in the UK that shows men slightly increasing involvement in housework over time (Sullivan, 2004), may be seen as compatible with the beginnings of the second stage. On the other hand, research based on the two-stage framework raises questions about its fit for different-sex couples with young families. Early parenthood is a life stage when gendered expectations and roles come to the fore. Research suggests that while a portion of paid parental leave dedicated for fathers was associated with greater maternal labour market attachment, it was also associated with the maternal second shift of unpaid work, as fathers did not participate equally in work in the home (Derose, Goldscheider, Salazar-Arango, Corcuera, & Gas-Aixendri, 2019).

Strengths of the two-stage gender revolution theorisation of change include the centring of gender relations as structural, and its insistence on the completion of the 'revolution' being conditional on men's full participation in unpaid work and care in the home, a view widely shared by feminist scholars (e.g. Fraser, 1997). However, I would argue, the optimism of the article suggests that having been set in motion, obstacles to its completion should, given time, be overcome. This implies that if

not inevitable the eventual egalitarian division of paid and unpaid work between women and men is in the longer term at least highly likely.

Using diary data over time, Oriel Sullivan and colleagues (Altintas & Sullivan, 2016; Sullivan, 2004; Sullivan et al., 2018), also argue against the idea of a stalling, but further also reject the notion of the change as a 'revolution' (with connotations of dramatic but especially *rapid* change),[2] preferring to conceptualise the process as a slow 'drip' and as lagged generational change. This multilevel framework, with recurrent cross-level influences over time, sees change as slow because individuals are influenced by their childhood socialisation and observing the behaviour of their parents but negotiate their current roles in interactions with partners, employers and other institutions within current constraints; putting pressure on these institutions, individually, in aggregate or through political and social organisation, to change over time. Emphasising the continuous and bi-directional (macro to micro and micro to macro) influences for change, with potential for substantial lags and variations in the speed of change, the authors highlight that change may not always be dramatic enough to be perceptible in the short term and that a cumulative long-term perspective may be needed.

Importantly the authors (Sullivan et al., 2018) also warn against complacency about future change. While they do not expand on or unpack this notion further, my reading of it is that while they do not agree that the momentum has entirely stalled, the slow and fluctuating tempo of change means continued progress is not guaranteed in the absence of policy support, or at least not at a pace acceptable to proponents of gender equality. Relatedly, Jennifer Hook (2006) concludes that men's share of unpaid work cannot be assumed to increase further simply with the passage of time, that while it may occur with women's increased (full-time) employment it may also require this to be paired with policies encouraging male involvement.

These theories, like much other scholarship on social change, place much emphasis on cohort replacement as a vehicle for change over time. Cohorts born at different times experience a different context, socially, economically and politically, during their formative years and early adulthood, which influences their outlook on education, partnership, paid work and parenthood. As a result, their behaviour as observed in various administrative and survey data can appear distinctly patterned by cohort. For example, removal of the marriage bar and introduction of sex-equality

[2] To be fair, Goldscheider and colleagues at least do not give the impression of the term revolution being used to indicate the speed of change, but specifically to draw attention to how profoundly the changes have affected the organisation of gendered lives. In particular they argue strongly against trivialising the (social) meaning of men's increased involvement in care and housework over time.

legislation altered the opportunity structures faced by all women, but the effects will be more noticeable in the behaviour and life courses of cohorts completing schooling and entering the labour market after these changes. Decisions made under the previous structures have a lasting influence on the life course trajectories of women from earlier cohorts. At the macro-level then, social change over time can be observed through this demographic turnover of more recently born cohorts slowly replacing earlier groups (Elder, 1998; Mannheim, 1970; McDaniel, 2001; Ryder, 1965; Shu & Meagher, 2018; Walby, 1997, 1999). Cohort replacement has indeed been identified in US data as a core driver of the general trend towards more egalitarian gender attitudes, alongside period and diffusion effects (Cotter, Hermsen, & Vanneman, 2011; Firebaugh, 1992; Pampel, 2011; Shu & Meagher, 2018). Drawing on classic theories of ideational change, Ron Lesthaeghe and Johan Surkyn (1988) outline the process as innovation occurring among more privileged groups and subsequent diffusion of novel attitudes and norms to other social groups. Educational and financial privilege affords the innovators or forerunners the opportunity to express and put into practice novel norms and attitudes, and rigid social stratification can inhibit the diffusion aspect of this process (as an example, contraceptive pill use in Britain was initially taken up by middle class women because it was initially only available through private suppliers and only spread more widely once made available on the NHS; Murphy, 1993).

The underlying theory of change in much of the research relating to change over time in the organisation of paid and unpaid work in families, which is rarely formally set out in detail (with the exception of the lagged generational change model; Sullivan et al., 2018), seems to be as follows. As women's employment become more widespread and both more accepted and increasingly expected; as higher levels of education have been linked with more egalitarian attitudes and as women's educational disadvantage relative to men has disappeared over time, thus increasing women's relative bargaining power in the home; as many couples require two incomes to support a family, and as women increasingly recognise the long-term financial costs and risks they incur through gaps in their employment records and spells of part-time work, then recent, increasingly more highly educated cohorts of women following more male-typical labour market trajectories will not face the motherhood-related disadvantages experienced by previous cohorts. In other words, such models of change seem to imply that the substantial gender-based inequalities in the labour market and in pensions are a transition phase as Britain (and other countries) transform from a male breadwinner model regime to an adult-earner model. These inequalities are thus positioned as a legacy issue particular to these transition cohorts, an issue in the process of resolving itself of its own accord. Social movements, feminist organising and public opinion may put pressure on policy to catch up and keep pace with the change, but much like the rising labour market participation of

women in the decades following the Second World War occurred despite the unsupportive policy context, in this model of social change they are not explicitly positioned as necessary for this process of change to continue and for the inequalities between women and men to reduce and eventually disappear over time.

Whether explicitly articulated or implicitly structuring the interpretation, one assumption or anticipation of such a conceptualisation of social change when applied to women's employment or gender differences in unpaid time use in the family is that increasing equality will thus emerge through the processes of educational expansion and cohort replacement. For example, Tom Sefton and colleagues, with regard to gendered pension inequalities and citing a government report on pension reform, point to a general circulation of this idea of inequalities reducing through cohort replacement: "[i]t has been argued that the dramatic increase in women's employment since the 1950s will mean that future cohorts will retire with higher state and private pensions… and that current inequalities in the pension incomes of men and women will narrow as their employment rates converge" (Sefton et al., 2011). However, the authors go on to note that the motherhood penalty in pension income may yet increase for younger cohorts with recent reforms focused on private pensions which are less advantageous for individuals with intermittent employment records. Tracy Warren and colleagues also conclude that gender inequalities in old age, linked to life course differences in paid work and pension accumulation, will likely persist (Warren et al., 2001).

The framework of Ready-Willing-Able (RWA), suggested as the three prerequisites for social groups or societies to transition to new forms of behaviour, can help reconcile some of the contradictions and disagreements of the different theorisations of social change under a single analytic frame. To explain the different pace and circumstances of the decline in fertility across countries, Ansley Coale argued that there were three prerequisites for largescale adoption of fertility control (Coale, 1974). The three preconditions, that all need to be met according to the framework in order for social change to occur, relate to a cost-benefit calculation by the individual actor(s) suggesting that adopting the new behaviour is advantageous to them (Readiness); the individual has to perceive it as socially and morally acceptable to them to deviate from the traditional norm in order to adopt the new behaviour (Willingness); and, the individual has to be Able to adopt the new behaviour, such that it has to be reliably accessible and affordable to them (Lesthaeghe & Vanderhoeft, 2001). In the context of the original articulation of the framework, fertility control, Ability is generally articulated in relation to contraceptive technology and knowledge. However, it can equally be applied to legislative or institutional structures that constrain or enable the take-up of new behaviour. The earlier mention of the diffusion of contraceptive pill take-up to working-class women being conditional on availability through the NHS is one such example. Thus, as an analytical framework,

RWA has wider applications to different demographic phenomena (see e.g. Simonsson & Sandström, 2011, for an application to the rise of divorce in Sweden). As Ron Lesthaeghe and Camille Vanderhoeft (2001), suggest regarding the framework's wide applicability, all topics or issues that have both an economic and a moral dimension to them will need to satisfy both the Ready and Willing conditions in order for behaviour to change. Economic, moral or normative, as well as structural considerations are clearly relevant in the context of the organisation of paid work and family care. Next I set out my reading of RWA as it applies to paid work and family in the UK.

In order for both paid work and unpaid care and housework to be shared equally between women and men, within and across households, individuals and couples must be Ready. That is, they must find a cost-benefit calculation to be financially advantageous to them. The earnings received from paid work would need to be weighed up against the time-squeeze of doing both paid and unpaid work, and commuting if relevant, rather than specialising (in the case of a couple) or focusing on care (in the case of a lone parent). The advantage would likely need to be apparent in the short-term as well as the long-term, i.e. the detrimental effect on some distant future pension pot under the hypothetical scenario of future relationship breakdown may not be factored into many people's cost-benefit calculations. The couple and/or individual(s) must also be Willing to 'do gender' differently (West & Zimmerman, 1987). They must find it acceptable and legitimate for mothers to undertake paid work, or to do so full-time, and for fathers to adjust their paid work and take up an equal share of routine housework and childrearing in turn. The final precondition relates to the individual or couple's Ability to take up both paid and unpaid work (and share it equally with a potential partner or other parent) over the life course, in that the legal and policy context must enable them to do so. Examples include taxation and benefit rules that do not act as barriers to paid work or dual-earning in couples, legislated rights to short and flexible full-time working hours to facilitate the combination of paid and unpaid work. As this thesis will show, in the context of gender equality in paid and unpaid work, these three preconditions are intertwined in complex ways.

A central feature of the RWA framework is that all three pre-conditions must be met in order for individuals to adopt new behaviour and, in aggregate, thus for social change to occur. It is not enough for a behaviour to be economically rational, it needs also to be normatively acceptable and institutionally accessible. For couples, to the extent that some behaviours can at least partly be adopted independently of each other, the RWA conditions would need to be met for both partners in heterosexual couples or the change will be asymmetric and stall as described by Hochschild. It then also becomes clear that unless both men and women are Ready, Willing and Able to do both paid and unpaid work, the gender revolution does stall or the second stage, as conceptualised by Goldscheider and colleagues, will not gain momentum. Finally, the RWA framework helps in thinking

through how the process of change can differ across social groups. Differently situated women and men can differ in their Readiness, Willingness and/or Ability to adopt more gender egalitarian behaviour, impeding the diffusion of new attitudes or behaviours.

Clearly, as the overview of changes over time discussed in previous sections of this chapter indicates, cohort replacement is an important process of change especially since the structures of constraint encountered at earlier life stages and resulting cumulation of decisions carry so much weight. Older women made decisions regarding education and employment in a context of more restrictive constraints, both formally (e.g. 'marriage bars') and informally (e.g. strong general disapproval of maternal employment). The argument here is not that cohort replacement is unimportant to how macro-level patterns of women and men's work-family life courses unfold over time. Instead this thesis questions whether these processes are altering gender relations to become more equitable; changing the gender order that structures the meaning of 'men' and 'women' at the work-family nexus. As Heather Joshi and colleagues (2007) argued with regard to the gender pay gap, an expectation of inequality reducing merely through cohort replacement as younger cohorts of women are more highly educated and are more likely to have continuous labour market attachment than previous cohorts, reveals a rather narrow view of gender inequality. A broader understanding of gender, reflecting on the meanings that attach to paid and unpaid work, care and parenthood, is thus required in order to reconcile the patterns of change, with the persistence of entrenched gendered inequalities and complicate the interpretation of change over time.

1.3. Stability or change in the gender order

Various scholars have used different terminology to refer to gender in a broader structural sense, as a multilevel process and an organising principle. Highlighting that while gendered arrangements and relations are often taken for granted as inevitable and stemming from essential or natural differences between women and men, scholars have shown how the social meanings associated with femininity and masculinity, norms, roles and responsibilities that women and men are held accountable to, have been institutionalised and written into the prescriptions of a wide range of social institutions and that these meanings and prescriptions are both reinforced and challenged over time (Adams & Coltrane, 2005; Beckwith, 2005; Burns, 2005; Risman, 2004; Young, 2002). For example, Barbara Risman's (1998, 2004), use of 'gender as structure' outlines how through a combination of individual, interactional and institutional-level cultural processes, people are shaped by the social structure of gender, but in aggregate they also simultaneously shape it across these various levels. As others have noted however, with regards to institutional life course regimes, for a

given individual or couple, the structure can be out of step with their own values and preferences. "Norms from yesterday, have become structures of today , i.e. they have become built into the social order and are being reproduced as part and parcel of it, independently of or even against the changed normative preferences of actually cohabiting men and women" (Krüger & Levy, 2001). Thus, for example, while the availability of part-time employment in newly emerging post-war service sectors enabled mothers to combine paid work with their care responsibilities, the continued expectation that childrearing and care be primarily women's responsibilities and the limited childcare provision or other state support for working parents means the comparatively high rates of part-time employment among UK mothers in more recent cohorts is now attributable to structural constraints on the combination of full-time paid work and motherhood.

I want to be explicit about how gender is understood in this thesis, a point I return to in a number of chapters. I draw on the definition of gender order provided by Diane Elson and Tonia Warnecke as "the system of social power that sustains particular patterns of gender relations" (Elson & Warnecke, 2011), capturing norms, values and attitudes both generally and as inscribed in legislation and policy rules. While my use of the term is similar to others who prefer to conceptualise gender as an institution or system, I prefer 'order' to capture this structural element. To my mind, order better captures both the hierarchical (ordinal) structuring and recurrent multilevel process aspects of gender, which easily slip out of view with terms such as gender system or institution. This hierarchical character of gender can be evidenced for example through the occupational segregation in the labour market, with male dominated employment generally valued more highly in terms of prestige and salary levels (Connell, 2005; England, 2010), in pension policies that take the typical male life course as normative and effectively penalise individuals who do not conform to this pattern, but also in research which takes the male experience as the norm and interprets evidence of women's experiences becoming more like that of men uncritically as 'progress'.

In this thesis I do not centre attitudes in the analysis, either at the individual or social level, and instead focus on policy as having a structuring influence by gendering lives. This interest in the role of the state through social policy is in part a recognition that policy can facilitate or obstruct women's access to income and financial security, through labour market regulations and benefit rules (see e.g. Lister, 1990), as well as through its normative messaging. However, this is not to say the gendering structure of policy is monolithic, stable or that it is unidirectional and goes uncontested in individual lives or on aggregate over time. Rather, I see it as part of the multiple ongoing and recurrent processes that create difference and hierarchy between the sexes, and compatible with the interactional and institutional process understanding of 'doing gender' (West & Zimmerman, 1987, 2009).

A core element of the UK gender order is the strongly gendered parenthood roles, which differentiates motherhood and fatherhood not just in terms of the interactions with children but also in how the transition to parenthood affects paid work. As Carol Smart (1996) has argued, motherhood is a social institution, despite maternal care being presented in discourse and cultural representations as a natural result of biological difference in sexual reproduction. Granted, expectations of women's investment in motherhood have changed, to accommodate at least part-time employment (Irwin, 2000), but after four decades some of Nancy Russo's argument still ring true that the pervading cultural insistence that women ought to be(come) mothers amounts to a motherhood mandate and that "society's definition of the good mother [is] one who has at least two children and stays at home to raise them" (Russo, 1976, p. 148). 'Good' or responsible motherhood is still often tied up in notions of time-intensive presence and emotional as well as physical care and nurturing.

Conversely, 'good' fathers are first and foremost (financial) providers, breadwinners. 'Involved fatherhood', while seen as important by fathers and society more generally, seems a secondary priority. Further, and without trivialising the contribution that father involvement makes to the lives of their children and partner or co-parent, paternal involvement in different-sex couple families tends not to come with the same expectations of time intensity and participation in routine physical care tasks, or responsibility for the development and medical needs of the child, as mothers are held accountable to. Again, these differences in the actual parenting interactions are not necessarily or unavoidably gendered, but even when there is a desire and intention to do parenting differently, many find their efforts or aspirations constrained by structural circumstances (Lamb, 2000; Lyonette & Crompton, 2015; Lyonette et al., 2011; Miller, 2007; Tina Miller, 2011; Williams, 2008). Long hours of paid work is incompatible with intensive involvement in the routine care of childrearing for both women and men.

Structural constraints notwithstanding, an important counter-argument to the suggestion that while the increase in men's unpaid work over time has been slow and remains low compared to women it is nonetheless a 'revolutionary' change (Goldscheider et al., 2015), an alternative interpretation is that the slow change is evidence of men's resistance (Adams & Coltrane, 2005). In a cultural context where the home and family are largely seen as a feminine sphere, and masculinity as avoidance (or rejection) of the feminine, resistance to doing unpaid work not only avoids the drudgery of routine unpaid work but perpetuates the gender order that privileges men and the masculine.

While much research points to the constraints of lack of affordable (i.e. highly subsidised) childcare on especially lower educated and lower earning women's paid work (e.g. Lyonette, 2015), it is also

worth noting that the meaning of what is appropriate for a woman or a man and the behaviours they are held accountable for, differs for example by class, 'race'/ethnicity and sexuality. For example, Bev Skeggs (1997) discusses how rules of appropriate dress and 'respectable' behaviour are perceived to differ for working-class and middle-class women. Compare also the importance attached by white mothers across the class spectrum to 'being there' for their kids (Brannen et al., 2004) with the emphasis on paid work as a key aspect of 'good' mothering expressed by Black mothers (Reynolds, 2001, 2005).

While many scholars articulate the ongoing shaping and re-shaping of the gender structure over time, as institutional prescriptions and proscriptions enable some behaviour and constrain other depending on individual social location, and in turn the micro-level interactional and individual decisions and negotiations can subvert and challenge these institutional rules, many also highlight the stability and reproduction of the status quo of the gender order (Lyonette & Crompton, 2015; Risman, 2004; Tichenor, 2005). Noting that cultural and structural pressures for more gender egalitarian values will increase the involvement of some men in the home, Michele Adams and Scott Coltrane question whether such forces can effect large-scale change. They argue that despite the extensive changes to the demographic, economic and social and cultural context, "idealized perceptions of masculinity and femininity have remained remarkably consistent" since the Victorian era (Adams & Coltrane, 2005). Nevertheless, Barbara Risman (2009) encourages feminist researchers to not only document the perpetuation of difference and inequality between men and women but to also be attentive to instances where feminist progress altering the gender structure has occurred. With this in mind, the thesis aims to describe both change and persistence over time, as outlined below.

1.4. Aims and structure of the thesis

This thesis describes change and persistence in women and men's paid work and family patterns in the UK since the 1950s, both as observed in survey data and in policy conceptualisations of employment and parenthood. The overall aim is to relate this description of change and persistence in gendered and classed work-family patterns to whether and how the gender order is substantively transforming, as might be expected in a gender revolution, or merely changing form without destabilising the hierarchy.

Chapter 2 presents an analysis of the changing policy context and whether and how the gender order as articulated in, and thus reinforced by, policy assumptions has changed or persisted. Policy is often thought of as having differing effects on differently situated groups of people, such as men or

women or families above or below a certain income threshold. In this sense policy relates to the Able pre-condition for social change, discussed previously; it encourages or constrains certain behaviours. In this chapter, however, I draw on the conceptualisation of policy as *gendering* practices showing that policy, as well as reflecting social norms also uphold and construct them, and thus also relate to the Willing condition. To contextualise the interpretation of the patterns observed in the empirical analysis, the chapter reviews existing research and feminist critique of the relevant policies through this lens to both map out how the policy context and structures of constraint have changed over time and to make visible the gender order presumed and reinforced by the policies. Through the policy as gendering practices approach, the chapter shows how the structures of policy and legislation not only shape the Ability of individuals and couples to organise their lives along gendered or egalitarian lines, but they also shape Willingness for gender equality by endorsing a particular gender order.

Having set out the context in this way, Chapter 3 introduces my approach to feminist-informed quantitative analysis. I also describe the datasets and the data management and harmonisation I did in preparation of the analyses presented in Chapters 4 and 6. In Chapter 4, I draw on economic activity history data from four surveys to compare cohorts to investigate the change over time in differences between men and women's labour market outcomes differentiated by education group. The chapter illustrates that taking the classed postponement of childbearing into account when interpreting change over time in the labour market outcomes of women and men reveals the persistence of gender gaps, and the role of class privilege in reductions in gaps over time. This chapter thus challenges quantitative social science to both account for the changing shape of the gendered life course in cross-cohort analysis and to critically interrogate the substantive interpretation of reduction in differences between women and men. The patterns observed are consistent with theories of gendered social change that emphasise the slow pace of change and gendered asymmetry. They do not suggest the beginnings of a 'second stage' of men in increasing numbers adjusting their paid work to accommodate fatherhood. However, it is possible that increased paternal involvement is not noticeable in the crude economic activity statuses used in the analysis of trajectories in this chapter. For this reason, the next chapter explores intra-household paid and unpaid work arrangements among different-sex couple families with a young child.

As such, the next empirical chapter (Chapter 5) presents a feminist empiricist critique of economic bargaining models of the family. It focuses on work-family arrangements among different 'atypical' family types, for some of whom the relative characteristics of the parents might be expected to suggest they would be more Ready for more gender egalitarian arrangements. In agreement with existing feminist economic literature critiquing the uncritical use of economic models of the family,

this chapter highlights the important influence of gender in shaping how parents divide paid and unpaid work, even among couples where the woman ought to be in a strong(er) bargaining position. Although not explicitly focused on patterns of change over time, the work-family arrangements observed across family types are in many ways consistent with the gender asymmetric change of the (first stage) of the gender revolution theories, and viewed through the RWA framework show the insufficiency of focusing merely on the Ready condition for change.

Staying with the theme of division of labour, the third and final empirical chapter (Chapter 6), frames the distribution of childbearing as the division of reproductive labour at the population level. The chapter problematises the particularity of inequality among women in the patterns of change over time in completed family size by level of education. In the context of the preceding chapters, this analysis suggests a feature of the incompleteness of the gender revolution in the UK context is its spill-over on class inequalities. Chapter 7 concludes the thesis with a summary of the key findings, a discussion of policy options that might contribute to the transformation of the gender order and some reflections on research and knowledge production relating to gender, family and paid work arising from the thesis.

2. The persistence in gendering: work-family policy in Britain since Beveridge

2.1. Introduction

This chapter builds on the previous chapter's review of research and evidence of social and demographic change in the UK by mapping out some of the relevant policy context and analytical background for the empirical chapters to come. It is these changes in the policy that are the focus of this chapter because in the context of work-family life courses, policy forms the contours, or the framework, within which differently placed individuals come to see what is possible for them in navigating paid work, family formation, childrearing and care and negotiate the division of labour. In short, policy shapes what differently situated individuals and groups in society are Able to do. The chapter discusses the move from the explicit arrangement of the initial post-war welfare state when "the *primary* responsibility of men was to earn and of women was to care" (Lewis, 2002a, p. 332) to the current time of 'formally gender-neutral states' (Orloff, 2017). It takes as its starting point that the normative assumptions and prescriptions policies contain about behaviours in the labour market and in the family have changed since the establishment of the post-war welfare state, but that this change has been both uneven and contradictory. As well as describing some of the key labour market and family policy milestones over the time period under consideration in this thesis (broadly since the Second World War to early 2010s), the discussion aims to discern how these policies shape gendered life courses, for example by reinforcing or challenging heteronormative gender roles.

The aim of this chapter is to trace how policies have articulated and positioned gendered lives over time to make visible some of the ways that progress towards gender equality is held back despite the formal gender neutrality of much social policy and more than four decades of anti-sex-discrimination legislation. The analysis draws out some of the complexities and inconsistencies that have shaped, and continue to shape, gendered and classed work-family life courses by attending to the 'historical pathways' of some of the relevant policy arenas. Bringing together existing research and policy critique with a theoretical framework of policy as 'gendering practices' (Bacchi, 2016), the analysis asks whether and how the gendering of 'the worker' and 'the parent' has changed in the last post-war period. Has 'the worker' of labour market policy become less stereotypically male over time? Has the 'parent' of family policy become less stereotypically female (and thus less synonymous with mother)? In doing so I argue that the gendered division of labour persists and contributes to economic inequalities between women and men because the legacy of separate

spheres is maintained through policy's commitment to a heteronormative 'ideal' family comprising a main earner and a main carer which is hindering progress over time towards greater gender equality in the family as well as in the labour market over the life course.

The remainder of the chapter is organised in four main parts. The next section develops on the theoretical understanding of gender introduced in Chapter 1, sets out the role of policy in (re)producing gender that informs the discussion in this chapter and outlines the approach to policy analysis. The following two sections present the broad 'historical pathways' of policies, drawing out their gendering effects, grouped around the broad themes of 'the worker' and 'the parent'. The final section takes stock of the continued shaping of work-family life course of these policy pathways and relates the contextual relevance of these patterns to the interpretation of the empirical chapters to come.

2.2. Theoretical framework and analytical strategy

Before setting out the approach to analysing policy taken in this chapter, I return to the point in the first chapter to unpack further how the term gender is understood in this chapter and thesis more generally. Gender is not simply an individual identity or characteristic, a synonym for or social expression of sex, but seen more broadly as a structuring principle of social life through the social conventions and institutional rules that allocate, take for granted or regulate different roles, responsibilities and 'appropriate behaviours' for men and women (Risman, 2004; West & Zimmerman, 1987, 2009; Young, 2002). Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon have summed up gender as "a collection of institutions: a set of rules, norms, and practices, widely held and somewhat predictable – though not uncontested – about what it means to be and act as a woman and a man. Gender is the mechanism through which 'woman' and 'man' and 'masculine' and 'feminine' come to be known as legitimate conceptual categories" (Htun & Weldon, 2017, p. 159). A dominant aspect of the structuring mechanism of gender is the view of women and men as complementary and the ideological significance attached to intimate relationships between them. This presumption of heterosexuality, the view of men and women as couples and the (heterosexual) nuclear family as the family norm, is in turn closely linked with the sexual division of labour stemming from the doctrine of separate spheres (Budig, 2004; Crompton, 2006b; Ingraham, 1994; Pfau-Effinger, 2004; Rich, 1980; Young, 2002). However, it is important to note that gender constructs men and women not just as different, but as unequal, through the privileging of men and the masculine as the norm (Connell, 2005; England, 2010; Htun & Weldon, 2017).

Focusing on gender as 'what it means to be and act as' a woman or man, and how these meanings are presumed to relate to each other, is also helpful for thinking through how gender intersects with for example class, 'race'/ethnicity and sexuality, as well as age or life course stage and generation. For example, the expectations and experiences of what it means to be and act as a middle-class woman can be different for white, Black, or Asian women. Equally, the meaning of gender changes over the life course as socially assigned roles and behaviours expected of women and men differ at different life stages, including but not limited to responsibilities to one's children, parents and community. Further, gendered life courses have changed over time, and thus the meaning of gender at particular life stages will also differ for people born at different times (McDaniel, 2001).

The notion of gender permeating and structuring social life might be thought of as gender being produced, reproduced and contested at different levels in society; from the daily mundane interactions between individuals to the institutional level in the form of state regulations, laws, policies, organizational practices and distribution of resources (Risman, 2004; West & Zimmerman, 1987). A note on terminology is required here. Firstly, I follow a number of feminist scholars who see the state not as a monolithic structure but a multifaceted arena of contestation and bargaining (e.g. Agarwal, 1997). Secondly, different scholars have used a variety of related terminology in analysing gender and the state, as an example, Birgit Pfau-Effinger (2004) uses gender arrangement, order and cultures to signify different levels of gender-related social institutions and activity. I use gender order to capture the institutional norms and prescriptions, primarily as constructed in policy, and gender relations as the more interactional, behavioural or 'lived experience' of gender in society. This is obviously a somewhat arbitrary distinction because the dynamic nature of gender means that the two are mutually constitutive.

Formal policies, laws and regulations are underpinned by, and reflect, the broader gender order within social institutions, which might be thought of as historically produced and collectively held understandings of the rules, norms and practices for appropriate gender relations (Connell, 1990; Htun & Weldon, 2017; Pfau-Effinger, 2004; Young, 2002). However, policies also contribute to these through the normative messages they convey. In other words, state legislation, institutions and social welfare logic, all contribute to the maintenance of structures of gender, although they do so in ways that can be contradictory (Htun & Weldon, 2017). In short, policies not only reflect gender norms but have a role in upholding and constructing gender and shaping gender norms; they can be thought of as *gendering* practices (Bacchi, 2016). They are one of the mechanisms through which the state can shape and regulate gender relations in society.

A feminist theory of the state suggested by Raewyn Connell that can be helpful here for thinking through the roles of state policies in shaping gender and gender relations sets out three main structures of the gender order. These are: 1) the gendered structure or hierarchy of power, for example state policy can influence or limit private patriarchy by promoting women's access to personal income in different ways; 2) the gender division of labour, influenced for example through a policy of non-intervention; and 3) the patterning of emotional attachments – or normative heterosexuality – which includes both direct regulation of sexuality (e.g. marriage equality, adoption rules) as well as normative messages regarding appropriate family forms for example through the privileging of the married couple family in benefit rules (Connell, 1990; Young, 2002). This is not to say that the shaping is intentional, or even coherent. Rather, different policies and state institutions are organised around different gendered logics of patriarchy, gender neutrality or gender equality, or a mixture of these (Orloff, 2017). Because of this complexity and multiplicity of logics across different policy arenas, change in the gender order over time can be slow and uneven despite some policy efforts to reduce gender inequalities. Understanding the historical policy pathways that have maintained the gender order and norms is arguably of key importance for any attempts to bring about social change through state institutions and policy (Htun & Weldon, 2017). As a starting point, tracing the recent historical pathways of the gendering practices of UK policies relating to employment and parental rights and responsibilities can at least reveal the deep conceptualisations that have maintained inequalities and bring to light that these conceptualisations (while often naturalised) are not inevitable, presenting opportunities for challenge.

Analytical strategy

The analysis presented in this chapter focuses on the role of policy in constructing and upholding gender, drawing on the feminist conceptualisation of policies as gendering practices. Carol Bacchi (2016) argues that analysing policy as gendering practices, that is, as an ongoing process of constituting and maintaining the categories of women and men, and the meanings attached to these categories, draws attention to how inequality is produced. This involves a shift from analysis of policy as having differential impacts on men and women to analysis of policies as one of the influencing forces in how men and women are positioned in a hierarchy of power.

To approach policy as gendering practices is not to say that this is a unidirectional process or that policy is the sole cause of gender inequalities but rather that policy forms part of the complex ongoing social construction and negotiation of gender. Nor does it deny that policies have direct material effects that can be quite different for women and men as well as vary by class. In previous work, Bacchi (1999, 2009, 2010) has discussed how problems are represented and how these

representations, through the proposed or enacted policy solutions, create three interconnected effects: “discursive effects (what is discussed and not discussed); subjectification effects (how people are thought about and how they think about themselves); and lived effects (the impact on life and death)” (Bacchi, 2010, p. 4). Analysing policy as a gendering process draws attention in particular to the potential subjectification effects. Clearly, it is not possible to establish how individuals think about themselves based on analysis of policy rules, but rather the focus is more on how the policies, as framed and/ or implemented, constitute subject positions in particular gendered ways, what Bacchi has referred to in other work as “the creation of people categories” (Bacchi, 2009).

Because gendering does not happen separately from other processes of inequality, the discussion aims to highlight how these processes are also simultaneously classing and racialising, although since the empirical chapters focus on gender and class differences the main focus here will also be on the classed gendering effects of the means tested benefit system. Equally, as Bacchi’s insistence that the three policy effects are interconnected indicates, the analysis will at times draw out the material harm or risk (’lived effects’) that affect particular groups who do not fit the assumptions about the type of person the policy is for, and how individuals in such positions ought to behave. At other times highlighting gaps or silences in policy will point to the ‘discursive’ effects. Nevertheless, the focus specifically on *gendering* helps direct attention both to the endurance of gender as a structuring mechanism, to how the meanings change through historical time and differ for differently situated people at a given time.

Because of the apparent neutrality (or gender blindness), in much recent policy, analysing policy for its association with gender relations is challenging. It involves identifying patriarchal assumptions and highlighting the androcentric, or gynocentric, models underlying supposedly universal and neutral representations (Bakker, 1994).[3] Reading policy in this way thus involves reflecting on the social and economic inequalities of the contemporary context, including the composition of the target group of any policy, and identifying the silences and unspoken assumptions in the policy (Elson & Warnecke, 2011). As Chrys Ingraham (1994) points out, reading the silences as well as what is said reveals what is taken for granted, which may present opportunities for challenging it.

[3] Isabella Bakker (1994), focusing on gender and economic policy in her book *The strategic silence*, highlights how supposedly genderless agents such as the worker are often inherently gendered through the representation of male-typical behaviour or experiences as universal. However, it is equally important in other contexts to reveal where gender-blind terminology is used for traditionally feminine or female-coded roles such as childrearing or care, obscuring the reinforcement of patriarchal division of labour.

The analysis is organised in two parts. The first part traces the changing gendering of 'the worker' through taxation, in-work and out of work benefits, pension and more recent 'work-family reconciliation' policies. Taking as its starting point that under the gender order of the initial post-war welfare state, the policy assumption was that 'the worker' was primarily a male breadwinner, this section seeks to answer whether the model policy worker has become less stereotypically male over time. Again, starting with the post-war policy model of the female carer/ homemaker as counterpart to the male breadwinner, the second section seeks to trace whether the normative policy parent has become less stereotypically female over time. Beginning with a broad overview of 'the parent', or assumed 'main' carer, underpinning much policy relating to parents and children, the section then picks up on two alternative parent representations that have received particular policy attention over the years: the lone parent and the father.

The analysis presented in this chapter is not intended as a comprehensive or systematic policy review but a broad overview of the historical pathways to the constellation of policies that reflect and shape the current gender order. To focus the discussion mainly on the subjectification effects of policies, the analysis focuses on what assumptions relating to the sexual division of labour, normative heterosexuality and gendered hierarchies of power are implied by the policies (and their silences). The discussion draws mainly on feminist critique and literature tracing policy changes, but also some of the key policy Acts themselves, since the early 1960s relating to the labour market and families with children.

2.3. Labour Market policy: 'The worker'

The welfare state arrangement set up in Britain following the Second World War, with social security entitlement linked to contributions made through employment assumed full (male) employment and a male pattern over the life course of continuous full-time employment (Lewis, 2001; Lister, 1990), as well as stable heterosexual marital unions. Through derived benefits for wives and widows, it firmly positioned the worker as a male breadwinner, responsible for providing economically for his family and by default positioned women as economic dependants on men (Lewis, 2001).[4] This section traces whether, through changes to taxation and pension regulations, unemployment

[4] While Beveridge may have seen this arrangement as one of interdependence, positioning spouses as equals with different but complementary roles and responsibilities (Blackburn, 1995; Lewis, 1992), feminist critique has pointed out that the economic dependency of wives on their husbands de facto puts women in a weaker position that makes it difficult for them to establish autonomous households, including in cases of domestic violence (Orloff, 2017; Pascall, 1997).

benefit rules and work-family reconciliation policies, the worker constituted by policy has become less stereotypically male over time as the female employment rate has increased. The argument of this section is that while a great deal of changes have been made to employee rights and to benefit-, taxation- and pension policy, ultimately the underlying assumption of the shape of the worker's life course has remained unchanged, resting on an assumption that the worker has no unpaid care responsibilities.

The institutionalisation of the male breadwinner model was reflected in many state policies in the early decades of the modern welfare state, from immigration rules to the 'married women's option' for social security contributions and joint taxation with a 'married man's allowance'. The economic dependence of women on their husbands was reinforced by 'marriage bars' in many sectors and labour market policy through the 'married women's option' which meant that married women undertaking paid work could pay lower social security contributions, foregoing contributory benefit and state pension entitlements in their own right. This remained the case until 1975 when equalities legislation came into force. The 1970s saw the enactment of a range of anti-discrimination legislation aimed at labour market sex-equality. The Equal Pay Act, coming into force from 1975, which initially required equal payment for women and men doing the same job, was amended in 1983 to cover equal pay for work of equal value following a judgement by the European Court of Justice. Formal marriage bars, discouraging married women from undertaking paid work and allowing employers to automatically dismiss a woman on marriage, had been abandoned across much of the public sector in the 1940s and were finally also outlawed across the private sector through the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. Nevertheless, the assumption remained that paid work would not be a (married) woman's primary activity or responsibility and that her wages would be of secondary value in the household finances (Lewis, 1992). This was, for example, reinforced by the joint taxation of spouses, until the 1988 Financial Act which introduced individual taxation from 1990. Prior to 1990, a married man received a higher tax allowance than a single person, in effect boosting his take-home wages in a state-subsidised 'family wage' system that privileged heterosexual marriage over cohabitation or other relationships and living arrangements through the additional allowance for wives' earnings (Pope & Waters, 2016; Seely, 1995).[5]

[5] The introduction of individual taxation meant the removal of the married man's allowance but to compensate single-earner couple households for this change, while continuing to support marriage, the act introduced a married couple's allowance to raise the tax-free component of the man's earnings. This was abolished a decade later by New Labour but in 2015 the Conservative Government introduced the ability for the lower earning spouse or civil partner to transfer a portion of their unused tax allowance to their spouse or partner (Rake, 2001; Seely, 1995, 2017). Civil partnerships for same-sex couples to formally register their unions became available in late 2005, with marriage equality established in 2014.

While the male breadwinner model for the tax system was thus at least partially reformed by the early 1990s, a 'curiously' strong bias towards it remained in the benefits system (Esping-Andersen, 1999). During the 1980s the link between recent employment and eligibility for unemployment benefits was strengthened, creating a barrier for women's labour market re-entry following time at home caring or raising children and thus indicating a retrenchment of gendering the worker as the male breadwinner (Lewis, 1992). Unemployed benefit assessments, equally, treated couples as a joint unit, amounting to 'legislated sexual discrimination' (Mama, 1984) as jobseeker status was assigned to one partner (paid the benefit) in couples where neither partner was in employment. From the late 1990s onwards, in-work benefits were reformed but the strong commitment to means-testing of joint household income discouraging dual earning, and the preoccupation with 'workless' or 'work-poor' households diverted attention from 'second earners'. The New Deal programmes, introduced towards the end of the 1990s as part of New Labour's employment activation strategy, included a programme for partners of jobseekers allowance claimants which highlights the inherent contradiction between joint assessment and the increasing individualisation of other aspects of labour market policy. It provided individualised support for partners (mainly women) to encourage and assist them in entering paid work, but eligibility was not based on their own status as unemployed or inactive but derived from being a financial dependant on a recipient of jobseekers allowance (JSA; Rake, 2001). This is not to say that an activation requirement of 'economically inactive' partners of employed individuals, without regard for their unpaid work and care responsibilities, would not also have been harmful. Rather, the attention here on 'partners of the unemployed' is intended to highlight the normative state endorsement of women's financial dependence on their (male) partners and the lack of support in the form of a new deal for any partners of employed people who might like to enter employment, many of whom may never register as unemployed because they neither qualify for contribution-based JSA due to a gap in their employment history nor income-based JSA due to their partner's work and income.

Alongside the labour market activation policies came the introduction of tax credits intended to 'make work pay'. However, because of joint assessment, the working families tax credit (WFTC) for low income households effectively discouraged partners from both entering (low) paid work, especially if they had children and would therefore incur childcare costs. Feminist policy scholars have pointed out that despite policy rhetoric encouraging individual self-provisioning through labour market activity, the system continues to assume, and reinforce the message, that women can depend on their (assumed male) partners for income during their working age years (Lewis, 2002a). "WFTC is supportive of a traditional division of labour for couple households where one adult (who, given persistent gender pay gaps, is most likely to be male) is encouraged to adopt a breadwinner

role while the other detaches herself from the labour market in order to provide caring labour" (Rake, 2001, p. 219). This assumed family model, however, rests on the availability of dependable jobs for the man, not in reality guaranteed for working-class men in many areas, especially for many racialised working-class men (Brah, 1996; Carby, 1982; Reynolds, 2009). As Hazel Carby (1982) points out, the concept of financial dependency is problematic in relation to Black women's lives. They have long been to a greater extent heads of households or the main or equal earners, because the economic structures resulting in disproportionately high Black male unemployment and relatively lower as well as less continuous and dependable Black male wage rates. Similarly Avtar Brah (1996) also outlines how in the early decades of post-war migration to Britain, Asian men tending to be concentrated in low paid and unskilled occupations meant their wives largely entered full-time paid work when they joined their husbands in Britain.

As touched upon in Chapter 1, these gendered roles that the state endorses have cumulative implications for lifetime income and security in old age, as the UK pension system has become increasingly individualised and complex since the late 1940s. The National Insurance scheme as envisioned by Beveridge was intended to provide a subsistence income in retirement, with widows covered through derived benefits. Thus, women's incomes in later life were to be protected through marriage to compensate for their role as wives and carers; married women were eligible for a reduced state basic pension based on her husband's contributions and widows were entitled to their late husband's state pension in its entirety (Ginn, 2003). As enacted, however, the state retirement income was generally insufficient, even under the early post-war welfare state, with many eligible for means-tested benefits to top-up the state pension unless they were part of a privileged minority with access to an occupational pension scheme at that time. Occupational pension scheme availability expanded greatly during the 1950s and 60s. While these generally confer derived benefits for surviving spouses, the design of these schemes on the basis of a (white) middle-class male employment pattern of continuous full-time employment, along with the increasing availability and take-up of such schemes undermining political and public commitment to a universal and redistributive state pension, introduced a widening gender gap in later life personal income (Ginn & Arber, 1999). In this way they also perpetuate class and racial inequalities in labour market trajectories into old age. Thus, from early on, the redistributive potential of the state pension system was beginning to be undermined and the accrual of gender and class privilege was reinforced through the two-tiered mixed economy of pensions, shaping the 'proper' life course of the worker constructed as male and middle class.

During the 1970s some changes were made that appeared to acknowledge that some workers have interrupted labour market trajectories due to caring for others. In 1978, Home Responsibility

Protection credits were introduced to protect an individual's National Insurance contribution record in years when they were not earning (and therefore not paying National Insurance) due to caring responsibilities, including childrearing. As life courses have shifted away from the male breadwinner/ female homemaker model underpinning the Beveridge social security system, and policy has shifted increasingly towards an assumption of individual employment and self-provisioning, this was an important step in protecting the pension income of those with interrupted employment histories due to caring. However, the successful valuing and compensation in old age for prior caring work relies on the state pension system being generous enough to cover living cost in old age, as private and occupational schemes do not provide cover for years spent caring. The 1975 Social Security and Pension Act introduced the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme (SERPS; rolled out from 1978) for employees not covered by an occupational scheme, providing a defined benefit of a quarter of (capped) average earnings over the best 20 years of working life, again with full derived rights for surviving spouses (Waine, 2006). The combination of credits for caring and SERPS being based on the best 20 earnings years had a redistributive effect to those with lower incomes, and from those who had not provided care to those who had, thus providing some recognition for unpaid care. However, the potential for mothers and carers to accrue an adequate income for later life through the state pension system, and thus for diversification of 'the worker' as constructed by pension policy, was short-lived and largely undone by reforms by the Conservatives in the 1980s and the continued shift towards private pension provision under New Labour (Ginn, 2003).

Citing concerns about the costs of the state pension system due to demographic changes and the ideological rationale for private-sector provision and promotion of individual self-reliance, the Conservative government in the 1980s made changes to the indexing and entitlement rules for both the basic and the additional state pensions. Halving the survivor entitlement and reducing the value of the pension payments relative to earnings, they also encouraged uptake of personal pensions as alternatives to the SERPS and occupational schemes (Ginn, 2003; Petersen, 1991; Waine, 2006). These changes contained pension spending relative to national income, despite increasing numbers of pension recipients, "at the cost of those with low lifetime earnings" and future retirees (Hills, 2004, p. 358). As well as the cohort and generational implication, this was clearly a gendered manoeuvre as women's lifetime earnings continue to be lower on average. Later reforms have continued the shift towards private sector provision, with New Labour replacing the SERPS with the state second pension, aimed at lower earners and stakeholder pensions aimed at middle income earners (effectively similar to personal pensions but with some additional regulation), while also removing the caring credit accrual for those looking after children aged over five (Ginn & Arber, 1999; Rake, Falkingham, & Evans, 2000; Waine, 2006). The most recent changes include the abolition

of the state second pension and the introduction of auto-enrolment of employees into workplace pensions, provided they earn over a lower earnings limit which means many part-time workers on a low income could be excluded (Ginn & MacIntyre, 2013).

Such 'defined contribution' pensions transfer the costs and risks of guaranteeing adequate income in old age from the state or employer to the individual and limit the possibilities for redistribution. Further, because of women's longer life expectancy the annuity they were able to buy on retirement was lower than for men at the same price (Ginn & Arber, 1999).[6] Projections from the time when stakeholder pensions were being introduced by New Labour, suggested that an individual would need male average earnings or higher, for their entire working life in order to accrue a pension income above the means-tested benefit threshold (Rake et al., 2000). As summed up by Jay Ginn and Sara Arber (1991), gender, caring history and class are crucial factors associated with income inequality in later life and non-state pension is a key mechanism perpetuating these inequalities over the life course. In short, through the mixed pensions market with its increasing reliance on private provision which penalises part-time work and spells out of the labour market, UK pensions policy assumes an employment history over the life course generally characteristic of middle-class white men. The assumption of a professional or skilled career as a model means many working-class women's reality of often working short hours on low pay has effectively been written out of 'the worker' as framed by pension policy.

So if tax and pension (and arguably aspects of benefit) policies have taken some steps in the direction of assuming a self-provisioning worker, ostensibly gender-neutral yet modelled on an androcentric ideal life course, what remains to consider under the heading of 'the worker' is the extent to which policies have supported the combination of paid work with caring and childrearing responsibilities which might enable workers with such responsibilities to adopt this life course.

The Social Security Act (1973) introduced 18 weeks of maternity allowance and two years later the Employment Protection Act (1975) introduced 29 weeks of statutory job-protected maternity leave and protection against unfair dismissal during pregnancy or on the grounds of maternity. However, it should be noted that eligibility criteria requiring two years of service with the same employer (five for those working short part-time hours; Sigle-Rushton, 2009b) excluded many women, and the low level of maternity pay relative to earnings shows the assumption that the woman's income is secondary and that she will have a (male) breadwinner to support her financially during maternity leave. Further, after the 1970s, there was little advancement of the rights or protections of

[6] This remained the case until 2012 when the EU Gender Directive required unisex annuity rates.

employees with family and care responsibilities. In fact, "Britain is the only European Community member state in which maternity rights diminished during the 1980s" (Lewis, 1992, p. 164), and it was not until the late 1990s and early 2000s that major changes were introduced. A broad suite of work/family 'reconciliation' policies were initiated from the end of the 1990s: including the 1998 Working Time regulations, which introduced limits on the working week to 48 hours (although with possibility to opt out); the Employment Relations Act (1999), which amongst other things guaranteed part-time employees the same employment rights as full-time employees; and the launch of the first National Childcare Strategy, also in 1999.

While limited public provision for childcare had been available prior to this, it had been primarily targeted at children 'in need' (Lewis, Knijn, Martin, & Ostner, 2008; Pascall, 1997), and importantly parental employment did not constitute a 'need'. For most families, childcare arrangements and costs had been firmly positioned as the responsibility of individual parents, which particularly impeded lone parents' prospects of entering or sustaining paid work (Lister, 1999), and had gendering effects for couples that were classed and racialised. In the post-war rebuilding period, state departments encouraged labour migration from the newly independent former colonies and 'new' commonwealth countries and large numbers of both men and women workers came from the Caribbean during the 1950s (Bryan, Dadzie, & Scafe, 1985; Klug, 1989). The assumption of the policy was that migrant workers would be male, like the domestic national workers of the time (Mirza, 1997). In contrast, whether married or single, with or without children, most Caribbean women who arrived in the 1950s came as workers in their own right, with many being recruited directly into the newly established NHS as unskilled labour (Carby, 1982; Mama, 1984). "In the early 1960s, the State was still busy trying to encourage (white) women to stay home and embrace domestication and consumerism. It wasn't prepared to offer any childcare support to Black women who had to work" (Bryan et al., 1985, p. 29). Thus because of the intersection of class, 'race' and gender, many Caribbean women, on arrival in Britain in the 1960s found that the lack of council childcare – especially if they were married – forced them into home-work, characterised by particularly poor pay and lack of employment rights and protection, or working anti-social hours such as night work.

Part of the childcare strategy introduced in the late 1990s included an entitlement of early years education to children in the year or two prior to school entry (initially 4-year olds, extended to include 3-year olds from 2002). The stated policy goals were two-fold: to promote maternal employment, and the entitlement was often referred to as 'free part-time childcare', as well as children's early learning (Daly, 2011; Lewis et al., 2008). However, as the entitlement added up to less than the 16 hours recognised by the tax credit/benefit system as part-time employment, and only covered term-time (Rake, 2001), it seems less convincing that a genuine aim of this policy was

to assist parents (mothers) to enter and sustain employment. Finally, there was the introduction of a 'right to request' flexible or alternative working patterns for employed parents of young children, as well as other carers, but its scope is rather limited as it did not include any statutory rights to changes, only a duty for employers to consider, and provide a business reason for not granting, any requests.

As Diane Elson (1999) has argued, labour markets are fundamentally gendered institutions because they are located at the nexus of how individuals provide and care for their families and rest on the assumption that the unpaid care work is to be done by someone other than the worker. In practice, little has changed in the 25 years since Jane Lewis concluded: "[i]f women enter the public sphere as workers, they must do so on terms very similar to men" (Lewis, 1992, p. 164). While a great deal of changes to labour market and benefit policies have been made, including introduction of some work-family reconciliation measures in the last couple of decades, these changes do not coherently allow for a range of circumstances by protecting against the care-related accumulation of risk and labour market disadvantage over the life course. Ultimately the changes have not altered the assumed underlying shape of the worker's life course, which remains not only androcentric but also classed as professional/ middle class. Meanwhile, the continuous full-time employment assumed by the model has become increasingly less achievable for many working-class men, as well as remaining so for women.

2.4. Family policy: The parent

The Beveridge report, which set out some of the main principles and recommendations for the post-war welfare state, emphasised women's roles as wives and mothers and described marriage as a partnership of equals with firmly different roles and responsibilities (Lewis, 1992).[7] Although not directly paid for their role as homemaker and carer, the role conferred derived rights through the marriage contract as discussed in the previous section. The focus of this section is to trace whether and how 'the parent' figure assumed by family policies, as articulated in benefit rules, parental responsibility, leave regulations and child support legislation, has changed from that female homemaker counterpart to the male breadwinner, as over time women's participation in the labour

[7] These duties extended beyond childrearing and the assumptions of the duties and responsibilities of wives persisted even as women in increasing numbers remained in the labour market after marriage and childbearing. For example, when invalid care allowance was introduced in the mid-1970s providing social security payment for individuals caring for sick or disabled family members, married women were ineligible for this benefit because such care was viewed as part of a wife's 'normal' responsibilities or duties (Lewis, 1992).

market has increased, marriages have become less universal and stable and family forms have diversified. The section is divided into three parts to draw out how policy constructs particular parental subjectivities: the 'main carer'; the 'lone parent' and 'the father'. The overall argument of the section is that despite the apparent range of 'people categories' available under the heading of parent, which at first glance might suggest recognition of diverse family forms, this masks a persistence in the commitment to the heteronormative family ideal with separate and traditionally gendered roles and responsibilities for the parents.

The 'main carer'

The Family Allowances Act 1945 introduced Children's Allowances, which in the late 1970s were replaced with Child Benefit.[8] The original rationale for the allowances was not only to help boost the income of families but also to help increase the birth rate, and as such were paid to families with two or more children. The allowance, like child benefit later on, was paid directly to mothers, something feminists had long campaigned in favour of, although advocating for a more substantial amount to be paid universally to all mothers in recognition of their caring role (Brown, 1984; Klug, 1989; Lewis, 1978). The allowances remained, despite the post-war baby boom reversing the political concern about the birth rate. Instead, immigration control and limits on family reunification were used from the early 1960s onwards in attempts to contain the growing population as well as manage its composition (having a decade previously encouraged labour migration, as already discussed). Requiring evidence that new arrivals would not rely on benefits, the immigration rules effectively placed barriers on migrant women's ability to bring over their children or husband, despite the majority of Caribbean women having arrived independently as workers (Bryan et al., 1985; Carby, 1982; Mama, 1984). Thus, as discussed in the previous section, constructing women as dependants, as wives and/or mothers was particularly problematic in relation to Black women and other women of colour. Black women were 'working mothers' rather than 'secondary earners', to a greater extent than white women at that time.[9] Yet rather than support these families "black women were seen to fail as mothers precisely because of their position as workers" (Carby, 1982, p. 49). As one example, the combination of low income, lack of childcare and poor housing, along with Eurocentric cultural assumptions of 'normal' mothering and family arrangements, led to a disproportionate number of Black children being taken into foster care (Mama, 1984). There were

[8] Family Allowances, a taxable benefit paid to the mother, operated alongside the Child Tax Allowance which boosted working fathers' take-home pay by raising his tax threshold. Child Tax Allowance was phased out in the late 1970s as Child Benefit replaced both Family- and Child Tax Allowances (Brown, 1984).

[9] Jane Lewis notes that "the phrase 'working mother' entered the language during and after World War II, but wage earning was always deemed a secondary activity for women" (1992, pp. 161-162).

also examples of Asian women in Britain being at risk of deportation on divorce or widowhood because of being constructed as the financial dependents of their husbands (Brah, 1996). Thus, the gendering effect of the male breadwinner/ female homemaker policy model also could have particularly devastating 'lived effects' for those whose reality did not fit the underlying construction.

Over the decades, while more and more mothers re-entered or remained in the labour market following childbirth, childrearing and care remained firmly the mother's responsibility, and her primary responsibility. Noting that almost all of the expansion in women's labour market participation following the war had been in part-time employment, Jane Lewis has argued that "the inheritance of the male-breadwinner model is reflected in the nature rather than the level of women's labour market participation" (Lewis, 1992, p. 164). In fact, women's increased paid work specifically in part-time employment has been attributed to (especially Conservative) governments' resistance to policies supporting maternal paid work (Warren, Pascall, & Fox, 2010). As Amina Mama (1984) put it, in the early post-war decades (white) women's engagement in the labour market was socially sanctioned on the condition that it not adversely impact on family (child) wellbeing. Policy efforts to encourage fathers to share childrearing have been largely absent, as discussed further below, with UK policy makers' stated reluctance to interfere with private matters of how families organise their paid work and care thus reinforcing the gendered status quo of division of labour.

A 'maternalist logic' can thus be seen to lie behind policies that, despite their gender-neutral terminology, provide low or no salary replacement or benefit levels for parental leaves and no incentives for men to make adjustments to their work. This means that such policies in effect end up providing some routes for mothers to reconcile or balance paid work and care, reinforcing the mother as the main carer and childcare as primarily a female responsibility (Orloff, 2017). Having previously vetoed the EEC Draft Directive on Parental Leave and Leave for Family Reasons (Lister, 1990), the UK refrained from introducing payment for parental leave when it was eventually enacted, despite the public criticism.[10] Further, UK maternity leave policy might be taken as a prime example of maternalist policy logic. First introduced in the 1970s, these statutory provisions have over time been extended in coverage, the length of the leave period and the proportion of leave that is paid, but have remained firmly attached to the mother (or in the case of adoption, a nominated main carer), setting the UK distinctly apart from other EU countries (Lewis et al., 2008). It was not until 2003 when the Employment Act (2002) came into force that fathers and other second parents

[10] As Ruth Lister notes, "[it] was written with one eye on what business will accept, making clear, in particular, the Government's reluctance to introduce payment for parental leave. Moreover, the listed reform objectives did not even include gender equity" (Lister, 2002, p. 523).

gained two weeks of statutory 'paternity' leave at the birth or adoption of their child, and not until 2011 that it became possible for parents to share 'maternity' leave. Notably, the terminology has remained heteronormative even after adoption rights were extended to same-sex couples and single adults in 2002.

Other family policies introduced since the late 1990s included encouraging parental involvement in schooling and responsibility for preventing truancy, encouraging paternal involvement in children's interactions with educational, health and wellbeing services and provision of parenting advice and parenting skills sessions. These individual-level solutions obscure the structural issues of poverty and inequality underlying the issues of low educational achievement and poor life chances that the policies aimed to address (Rake, 2001), and reveal a particular white middle-class model of parenting in the policy (Gillies, 2009). They also contradict for example the emphasis on lone mothers' entry into paid work (Standing, 1999) and the emphasis on parental interaction with institutions may not only seem irrelevant to or incongruent with working-class and/or Black and Asian fathers' self-perception of good fathering (Chowbey, Salway, & Clarke, 2013; Reynolds, 2009) but also undervalues paternal every day or routine care (Gillies, 2009). The remainder of this section focuses on policy treatment firstly of the lone parent and secondly the father.

The lone parent / the single mother

Before discussing the policy construction of the lone parent, some notes on terminology are necessary. In nine out of ten households consisting of a sole adult and resident children, the parent is the mother. Reading between the lines of feminist critiques of lone parent policy, which tends to focus specifically on lone mothers, lone fathers have historically been less of a policy and activist concern. In part the silence on lone fatherhood in policy as much as in scholarly critique and research is because they make up such a small part of the population and in part because they are generally deemed politically less 'problematic' than lone mother households (i.e. less likely to claim social security benefits). Lone fathers tend to be older and have older children, are more likely to be in work and have higher earnings (Ermisch & Wright, 1995). As lone fatherhood tends to be both rare and not as strongly associated with economic disadvantage, resident lone fathers are often either intentionally or unintentionally excluded from analysis and discourse.[11] Lone parent is thus

[11] Another silence in both research and policy discourse on lone motherhood is 'race'. Miri Song and Rosalind Edwards point out that while debates around Black single motherhood circulate in the media, the comparatively limited amount of rigorous research on their experiences amounts to erasure (Song & Edwards, 1997, p. 243).

treated in much discourse as synonymous with 'single mother',[12] and the female-headed household becomes the lone parent family. By extension, 'family' in this context has become equated with common residence, as evidenced in phrases such as one-parent family, fatherless family as well as rhetoric on broken homes vs. intact or stable families. The father then, whether he plays an active role or not, is conceptualised as not part of the family; he is 'absent' from the family as from the household (although not excused from a duty to provide financially, as discussed in more detail below).

Social policy and politics have long wavered between treating lone mothers as workers or as carers (Lewis, 1989, 1998). In the wake of attachment theory's rising popularity, and research suggesting detrimental effects for child development and wellbeing from maternal separation, the post-war social security system treated lone mothers primarily as carers eligible for benefits without any official job seeking requirements. Lone fathers on benefits, on the other hand, were until 1975 required to look for work (Song, 1996). Gendered moral conceptualisations and evaluations of lone parents are thus central to policy formulations, and these have shifted over time. Different policy developments took contradictory positions, in part because of the multiple and disparate policy aims. These included ensuring a minimum standard of living for lone parent families while ensuring that the benefit levels did not undermine 'the family' by incentivising separation or providing a barrier to re-partnering (Bradshaw & Millar, 1990).

Prior to the 1960s, lone parent households were rare and the main route into lone motherhood was through becoming widowed, with relatively few unmarried or separated mothers. As recommended by the Beveridge report, widows were covered by national insurance system through rights derived from their late husbands and received a widows allowance that was neither means-tested nor involved any work requirement, while separated and single mothers were reliant on income support (Gray, 2001; Lewis, 1998; Meulders-Klein, 1996; Song, 1996). In practice, unmarried (single) parenthood was especially difficult; Gillian Pascall notes that under the early post-war state "[l]one parenthood was in effect outlawed with moral and economic pressure leading to high rates of adoption" (Pascall, 1997, p. 234). Following increasing concerns during the 1960s about child wellbeing and poverty, there was some move towards highlighting the common difficulties faced by different types of lone parent families and the 1970s saw the introduction of a number of benefits aimed at families, especially low-income families and with special treatment of lone parent families.

[12] 'Single' mother thus also conflating solo parenting with unmarried motherhood, evoking ideas of young women who have never been married or in a stable union with the child's father, desite the most common route into lone motherhood being through separation, not childbirth.

Family Income Support, a benefit aimed at full-time working low-income families, with a lower qualifying threshold for 'full-time' work for lone parents, was introduced in 1971 and following the introduction of universal Child Benefit in 1976 most lone parents were eligible for an additional 'One Parent Benefit' from 1977 (Song, 1996). The 1974 Finer report to the government on 'one parent families' had also included recommendation for recognition of the unpaid care work undertaken by lone parents, through a state guaranteed benefit for all lone parents, irrespective of sex or marital status, arising by virtue of care for a child. An element of maintenance for the main carer/ resident parent was also initially included in the Child Support Act two decades later. However, the Finer recommendations were not adopted, due to a combination of concerns about costs to the public and about the benefit system treating lone-parent families more favourably than poor couple families, and maintenance for a former spouse attracted such opposition in the 1990s that the child support formula was amended (Lewis, 1998; Millar, 1994, 1996; Song, 1996), in a clear example of the undervaluation of care.

Until the early 1990s, however, the benefit system took a neutral position on lone mothers' employment, they were positioned as free to undertake paid work if they chose to (albeit in the absence of sufficient and affordable childcare and care leave provisions) but also free to choose to focus on raising their children without undertaking paid work (Lewis, 1998). In practice however, the low earnings disregard and pound-for-pound benefit withdrawal rate meant that between limited childcare availability (at high costs) and travel-to-work costs, the low earnings most lone mothers could expect to command, as well as the increased uncertainty of moving from Income Support to a combination of earnings and in-work benefits did provide a disincentive to enter paid work (Bradshaw & Millar, 1990). The official line of neutrality towards paid work was important under the Conservatives to maintain the idea of maternal employment decisions being a private matter and therefore avoid having to address the childcare needs of all working parents (including partnered mothers whose labour market participation had increased substantially over the previous decades; Millar, 1994). However, the knowledge that most lone parent household are female headed, has surely shaped policy as much as policy shapes/ genders the conceptualisation of the lone parent. Had half of the expanding number of lone parent families been headed by a (resident) lone father, policy may well have developed differently – for example in the direction of guaranteed childcare, to support breadwinning by lone parents. Instead, the male breadwinner family ideal remained a strong policy ideology and so a 'cohabitation rule' meant that the mother's benefits were withdrawn if she cohabited with a man (Lewis, 1998).

The 1984 Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act included an assumption of self-sufficiency with regard to divorce, effectively positioning women and men as equally able to support themselves in

the labour market or on state benefits following divorce and so undermining the case for ex-husbands to pay maintenance to provide for their children and former wife. However, with growing political concern during the 1980s about 'welfare dependency' and the cost to the state of supporting lone mothers (who did not re-partner as quickly as anticipated; Sigle-Rushton, 2009a), the political discourse about young single (that is never married) mothers in particular became increasingly negative. In addition to the policy shift to transfer the costs of supporting lone mother families from the state and on to fathers, discussed in more detail in the next section, the Child Support Act 1991 included some work incentive provisions, in particular encouraging part-time working. Despite rarely providing financial security in the short- or long-term, encouraging part-time work absolves the state of valuing the care provided by lone mothers through adequate levels of social security and pension protection, while simultaneously compatible with maintaining the role of mother/ carer first and foremost.

The incentives were developed over the course of the decade and by the end of the 1990s a distinct shift towards labour market 'activation' for lone parents was apparent (Lewis, 1998; Millar, 1994). While financial reasons may have instigated the policy change, the direction of change was ideologically determined,[13] including the Conservative governments' ongoing drive for increased personal responsibility and political anxiety about 'fatherless' families being a threat to society, linked to ideas of a feckless 'underclass' (Millar, 1994). While the majority of lone parents were, by this time, divorced or separated mothers, both political and media discourse in the 1990s focused primarily on young single mothers as the problematic and fastest growing group of lone parents and their motherhood not as a source of additional need, as in the 1970s, but as a deliberate and calculated choice for example to manipulate social housing eligibility rules (Song, 1996).

In assessing the potential options for policy in the early 1990s, one report's suggestion of withdrawing income support for lone parents with children aged 11 years or over to encourage employment was followed by the notion that for the sake of equity, it might be necessary to require the partners of unemployed men to also look for work (Bradshaw & Millar, 1990). Although the authors noted elsewhere the need for a coherent strategy to enable lone parents to work, involving training, childcare and flexibility in combining earnings and income from benefits, they did not recommend a strategy that would work better for all parents to combine paid work with caring for their children, including both partnered and lone mothers as well as fathers. Instead their comment

[13] Financial reasons are of course also ideological, reflecting what is valued, as feminist critiques of contemporary austerity politics have shown (Perrons, 2017).

foreshadowed the work-focused interviews required of both lone parents and partners of unemployed people as part of the New Deals introduced a decade later.

The New Labour government continued the labour market activation agenda for lone parents through the New Deal, which provided job search support, entry-level training and benefit claims advice to encourage job readiness, and Tax Credits designed to boost earnings of low income households, covering some childcare costs in order to 'make work pay'. While originally job-related activity under this New Deal was voluntary for lone parents, from 2008 increasing conditionality has been introduced as lone parents of school-aged children have been moved from Income Support to JSA at progressively lower ages of the youngest child. With JSA requiring regular job search activities and subject to benefit sanctions for non-compliance (Rafferty & Wiggan, 2011), the move results in material 'lived' effects for those lone parents who do not fit the worker expectation. This marks a clear conceptual shift in viewing lone parents as (potential) workers rather than as mothers (Lewis, 1989, 1992, 1998), or perhaps more accurately to viewing their families as 'workless households' (Knijn, Martin, & Millar, 2007). Needless to say, these requirements only apply to poor lone parents who are on benefits, effectively positioning (full-time) childrearing and care as a privilege, a choice reserved for those with a (likely male and co-resident) breadwinner.

Jane Lewis (1989) has also argued that the differential treatment of coupled and single mothers betrays the (classing) underlying idea that the 'normal' family "consists of two parents and is reliant primarily on the earnings of the man, [making] women with children and without men become a problem category. The separate treatment of lone mother families thus follows inescapably from the assumption that adult women's maintenance is partner-dependent" (Lewis, 1989, p. 595). Further, as the Tax Credit awards were based on household-level income assessments (as are Universal Credit, currently in the process of replacing a number of benefits), the system has created a new 'cohabitation rule' that assumes that couples share their income to an extent that may not be the case in newly formed relationships where children from previous relationships are involved (Millar, 2008). Again, this reinforces the idea that mothers will first and foremost be provided for by a man's income and only in the absence of a man (or his earnings) will the state provide benefit income and support for employment.

The subjectification effects of these policies for lone mothers, but particularly poorer, more likely to be working class and/or young, and in receipt of benefits, are clear. While they are responsible for the care and wellbeing of their children, instead of being seen as having additional needs to support themselves and their children, or in combining paid work and childrearing, over the past four

decades they have been increasingly positioned as 'problematic' due to their deviance from the 'norm' of being attached to a male breadwinner.

The father

With its legacy of the male breadwinner family model, Britain's policy concern with fathers has been strongly focused on ensuring paternal financial provision for children, especially in the context of rising numbers of lone parent families from the 1980s onwards, with caring being of secondary interest. Although the Finer Report in 1974 Expressed concern that, "the lone father should have the same choice as the lone mother between going to work and staying at home to look after the children" (Song, 1996, p. 387), policy has mostly positioned fathers as financial providers, not carers. As this section argues this has remained persistently the case over time.

Prior to 1973 married fathers had sole legal guardianship of their children. Meanwhile, unmarried fathers had few automatic legal rights to or responsibilities for their children (and conversely the children had no automatic legal right to their fathers; Lewis, 2002b; Meulders-Klein, 1996) until the early 2000s when being named on the birth certificate became sufficient for conferring parental responsibility to unmarried fathers.[14] Much of the policy debate and development since the 1980s regarding fathers has been closely linked with policy concern about rising numbers of lone parent families and ensuring that the father, rather than the State, provide financially for children outside of, and after, marriage. Jane Lewis (2002b) has also identified the negative tone of UK policy discourse relating to fathers, in comparison with other European countries, and linked this with the similarly negative discourse around lone mothers. Since the 1989 Children Act, parents have retained their parental responsibility for their child(ren) following divorce or separation and parents have been able to decide the residency and visitation arrangements between themselves, suggesting theoretical equality between separated parents.

In practice however, the fact that children reside with the mother in the majority of cases following separation or divorce, means mothers over the past 50 years or so have had more authority and responsibility for the child (Meulders-Klein, 1996). While the 1984 Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act had been interpreted in courts as suggesting an argument against maintenance as their former wife would be eligible for state benefits, the Child Support Act 1991 firmly posited that all biological fathers would be required to support their children financially, irrespective of past or

[14] Both parents automatically obtained parental responsibility for their child in the case of births registered jointly by two unmarried opposite-sex parents from April 2002 in Northern Ireland, December 2003 in England and Wales and May 2006 in Scotland. In the case of same sex couples who are not married or in a civil partnership, the second parent is still required to apply to the courts for parental responsibility.

present living arrangements or marital status. And, as noted above, through 'cohabitation rule' of joint assessment for (subsequently re-partnered) lone mothers' benefit eligibility, the social security system also expected a man to provide for the current family he was living with, whether or not he had biological children in that household. Thus, both biological and social fathers are positioned as financial providers.

This can "be interpreted as an effort to bolster the male breadwinner model family in the absence of stable marriage" (Lewis, 2002b, p. 139), and it also relies on the existence of a male 'family wage' (Millar, 1996). Thus the policy reproduces traditional gender roles of the father as provider and the mother as carer, even when living in two separate households (Millar, 1994). However, for fathers on a low income, the capacity to pay was limited especially if they also had a second family. For mothers on income support there was also little or no incentive to pursue a claim (especially against a father also on a low income or on benefits) since any child support award would be offset by a reduction in her benefit income,[15] yet putting her in a situation of economic dependency on a former partner whose payments may not be reliable (in the absence of government-guaranteed payments), potentially re-introducing risk of violence or control for those who had escaped domestic abuse, while possibly limiting his ability to maintain contact with the child(ren) through the often substantial reduction in his net income (Lewis, 1998, 2002b; Millar, 1994, 1996). The ministerial response to the critique in the early 1990s that the child maintenance payment formula did not take into consideration the travel and other costs of maintaining father-child contact clearly prioritised financial maintenance over contact (Lewis, 2002b), further emphasising lack of policy commitment to encouraging fathers to care.

The child-support arrangements set out in the 1991 Act conceptualised families with separated parents in a particular way, importantly assuming that following the separation the child(ren) would live with one parent only. For low-income families, the benefit system reinforces this. Child Benefit and Child Tax Credits can only be paid to the primary parent who the child resides with. Social housing allocation operates on a local level so there may be differences in how non-resident parents have been treated. Some authorities may have treated the non-resident parent as a single adult according to the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act which specified priority need stipulations for those with resident children, while others might have treated fathers and their children as a family unit – perhaps especially if a residence order specifying shared care (i.e. regular overnight stays by

[15] More recently the withdrawal of benefits has been discontinued so that following the Child Maintenance and Other Payments Act 2008, child maintenance payments have not affected the benefit income received by the parent with care from 2010 onwards.

the child(ren)) was in place (Harding & Newnham, 2015). For the purposes of housing benefit, non-resident parents have long been treated as single individuals rather than parents with dependent children.[16] This reinforces the conceptualisation of the two-parent co-resident family as the norm or ideal as well as the separation of gendered parenting roles into primary carer and financial provider both within and beyond the nuclear family.

The policy ambivalence on fathers as carers is also evident in the lack of policy on father-involvement in childrearing aimed at fathers co-resident with their children, despite successive governments expressing concern about strengthening families (Lewis, 2002) and evidence showing father involvement in housework and childcare is associated with reduced risk of separation (Sigle-Rushton, 2010). In the context of work-family reconciliation policy aimed at fathers, the policy framework has been characterised as "partial and inconsistent" (Gregory & Milner, 2008, p. 70) and as hindering relational, or active and caring, fathering (Browne, 2013). Two weeks of statutory paternity leave was introduced for fathers (and second parents in the case of same sex couples and adoption cases) in 2003, paid at a low flat rate. Additional paternity leave, introduced in 2011, enabled mothers to transfer up to half of the maternity leave entitlement to the father, or second parent, conditional on her return to paid work before the end of the leave.[17] Additional paternity leave has been criticised for not providing an incentive for fathers to take it up, as the policy is not an entitlement of fathers (but relies on the mother to transfer part of 'her' leave) and is paid at a low flat rate or unpaid (Browne, 2013). The government impact assessment report on additional paternity leave gives the impression that this was a symbolic gesture rather than a genuine attempt to encourage fathers to take a more active caring role. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills estimated that between 4% and 8% of eligible fathers would take up the leave for up to 13 of the potential maximum of 26 weeks, noting that the "time taken is unlikely to be greater than 13 weeks but could be considerably less" (BIS, 2010, p. 4). These assumptions were justified on the basis that statistics from other countries also show low take up in the absence of quotas reserved for fathers only. It is also notable that additional paternity leave, now shared parental leave, is only

[16] The Housing Benefit (General) Regulations 1987, PART IV, Regulation 14 state: *"For the purposes of these Regulations a child or young person shall be the responsibility of only one person in any benefit week and any person other than the one treated as responsible for the child or young person under this regulation shall be treated as not so responsible."* Recent benefit changes such as the shared accommodation allowance for adults under the age of 35 without (co-resident) dependants, which impact not just on the affordability of regular contact but the practicality and safety of shared parenting that includes overnight stays. The welfare reforms and the removal of the spare room subsidy (commonly referred to as the bedroom tax), effective from 2013, also affects those non-resident parents who live in social housing and have a 'spare' bedroom for their child(ren) to use during over-night stays.

[17] This was replaced in 2015 with Shared Parental Leave.

available to couple fathers, another institutionalised limitation of non-resident fathers' ability to share care of their children. Policy and politicians have long considered family leave and pay policies barriers to economic competitiveness of businesses that employ (potential) parents (Browne, 2013), rather than valuing and rewarding the care and time parents devote to reproductive labour.

Through its heteronormative patriarchal ideal of the nuclear family, family policies continue to construct different gendered roles and responsibilities for parents. Parents are not positioned as interchangeable in their provider and carer roles, or indeed as both having dual roles. Instead, policies reinforce the traditional division of labour dictating that there be a main or primary carer, usually the mother, while the father figure (whether or not present in the household) is still primarily a financial provider first and foremost who might play a 'supporting' role in childrearing. Not only do these construct gendered subjectivities and life courses but because the model relies on a level of breadwinner income and security able to support a family, also results in lived effects for those whose realities cannot fit the model, often along classed and racialised lines.

2.5. Discussion: Tracing gendering practices over time

The thematic tracing of change over time in British labour market and family policy shows that while there have been numerous changes since the 1960s, in terms of their gendering practices there is much persistence. While it is the case that the male breadwinner model no longer universally underpins labour market policy, it is however not the case that this model has been unequivocally replaced with a model that acknowledges that 'the worker' no longer has a homemaker counterpart who takes care of the family. Neither in couple families, nor separated/single-parent families are both (or all) parents positioned as equally important or equally required as carers. Whether living in the same household or in separate households, the assumption of there being a 'main carer' and a 'main earner' genders parents in much the same way as the traditional male breadwinner/ female carer model did, despite a discursive shift towards more gender-neutral language (excepting terminology for leave for new parents).

The effect of gender-neutral language, without attention and effort to increasing gender equality overall, is not one of enabling and encouraging fathers to undertake an equal share of the unpaid care work of childrearing. Instead the language obscures the ongoing gender division of unpaid work in the family (Rake, 2001) and implicit familisation[18] (Daly, 2011), thus also masking the role of

[18] Familisation, or familialism, 'the Achilles heel' of the welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1999), is the assumed availability of housewives and stay-at-home mothers to undertake unpaid care, childrearing and housework.

normative heterosexuality in maintaining gender inequality (Dunne, 2000). The underlying commitment to a main earner/main carer arrangement is also evident in the maternalist logic of recent work-family reconciliation policies and lack of effort to engage fathers in care. This commitment also betrays the (white) middle-class bias of the one-and-a-half earner model which contributes to the deficit view of ethnic minority (Erel & Reynolds, 2017) and working-class or low-income families (Gillies, 2009).

The aim of this chapter was to draw out the gendering effects of social policies over the post-war period to set the scene for the three empirical chapters to come. With that in mind, there are three broad themes that emerge from the discussion in this chapter that I will put forward here not so much by way of conclusion, but as primers for the interpretation of the empirical analyses. The first relates to the increasing undervaluation of childrearing over time in policy, the second to what reading policy as gendering practices reveals about the strength of structural constraints on individuals' ability to challenge gendered roles, and the third thinks through what tracing gendering practices over time suggests about gender equality and feminist efforts to effect change to the gender order through policy.

Devaluation of care

Under the early post-war welfare state, care was explicitly gendered as women's (wives') responsibility. This institutionalisation of the gender order put individual women in a position of economic dependency on individual men, limited their options and exposed them to risk of abuse of the unequal power afforded individual men. Dismantling this formal and explicit gendering has clearly been a progressive achievement. However, the value placed on the reproductive care work under the Beveridge model (through derived rights for wives and widows when performed within the narrow definition of the heterosexual married couple family), has been increasingly undermined with the moves towards individualisation. Examples of this devaluation of reproductive and care work can be found in the restriction of carers credits accrual for the state pension, successive pension reforms shifting the balance from state to private provision, the change in benefit entitlement of lone parents to require job-seeking activity and the minimal (including late introduction and largely unpaid) provision for parental leave and father involvement.

These changes thus have gendering implications that are clearly classed. The contradiction for women's lives came about in part because of the limited policy attention to the gendered nature of unpaid work and in part because of a policy focus on 'workless' households meaning differently situated women were constructed differently in relation to labour market and childrearing by policy, as exemplified in the New Deals for Lone Parent and for Partners of the Unemployed. Another

recent example is the introduction of a two-child limit on certain child-related benefit elements. It is in this context that Chapter 6 investigates the educational distribution of family size over time in Britain framed as the population-level distribution of reproductive labour.

Structures of constraint and double binds

Policy in the UK has long been characterised as unwilling to interfere in the private matters of how families organise unpaid work (Lewis, 2002b), including childrearing and social care, thus drawing a clear line between the public and the private spheres and which is open to policy intervention (Yuval-Davis & Anthias, 1989). Where such policy-silence results in unequal outcomes, as has been evidenced repeatedly, the absence of policy can be characterised as a policy of reinforcing the status quo in gender relations (Connell, 1990). Further, despite the strong rhetoric of non-interference in private matters and families' right to choose how to organise unpaid work, through its commitment to means testing and family assessment, in practice UK policy intervenes and regulates (low income) family life quite willingly, and to a greater extent than many other countries (Lehtonen, 2018; Millar, 1996).

These structures not only privilege men in the labour market at the expense of women's progression and life time earnings but, as qualitative research with parents has shown (e.g. Tina Miller, 2011), also form a double-bind that individuals and couples find themselves in even when they expressly want to challenge or subvert gender norms in their paid work and family arrangements. I investigate paid and unpaid work arrangements among different-sex couples with young children further in Chapter 5.

Thinking of policy as structures of constraint relates most directly to the Able precondition for social change. This is also how others have discussed legislation and policy rules in the RWA framework (Simonsson & Sandström, 2011), as enabling individuals and groups to adopt new behaviour, or restricting them from doing so. However, through the approach to analysing policy that I have taken in this chapter, it becomes clear that by endorsing a particular gender order, the gendering effects of policies also shape the Willingness criterion for change. I return to this point in the final chapter (Chapter 7).

The stability of the gender order: implications for gender equality

A central finding of this chapter, along with the increasing devaluation of care in policy, is that the gender order upheld by British social policy has remained effectively unchanged. The 'recasting' of the work/welfare model, begun under New Labour and continued under the coalition and Conservative governments, through increasing emphasis on individual responsibility and

contractualisation in labour market activation policies, and its extension to women has *both* surged ahead of social reality *and* not been consistently committed to a different gender regime. Despite decades of feminist critique and campaigning, policy still needs to break with the tradition of 'separate spheres' and to find ways to value unpaid caring and childrearing as an important component of most people's lives as well as a contribution to society (a point I return to in more detail in Chapter 6), as well as to rebalance the distribution of this work between women and men and between individuals and the state (Budig, 2004; England & Folbre, 1999; Fraser, 2016; Rake, 2001).

The extent to which gender inequality is problematised and centred as a policy aim, is thus of key importance as steps towards individualisation in relation to paid work without addressing the division of unpaid work will always have gendering and gendered effects (Daly, 2011). A related critique could be made of the need to critically engage with gender inequality in social research regarding paid work. The first empirical chapter (Chapter 4) aims to illustrate how attending to the life course *timing* of the emergence of substantive inequalities between men and women alters the interpretation of change across cohorts. I thus begin the chapter with a discussion problematising how the operationalisation of gender inequality as a gap between women and men's outcomes can shape uncritical interpretations of reductions in such gaps as increases in gender equality. However, before moving on to the empirical analyses and findings, I set out my methodological approach in the next chapter.

3. A feminist-informed quantitative methodology

3.1. Introduction

While many feminist scholars consider quantitative methods irreconcilable with feminist research commitments, I am persuaded by the many others who see formal quantitative techniques as compatible with a broad range of approaches, including feminist and other constructivist and critical theoretical and methodological perspectives (Jackson, 2017; Oakley, 2000; Risman, 1993; Sigle, 2016). In this chapter I aim to provide a behind the scenes account of the research process of the project, beginning with setting out my understanding of some of the mechanisms and processes that affect research and knowledge production and the principles that set out my research as feminist. I do this by locating myself in the topic and context, reflecting on my understanding of feminist-informed analysis in quantitative methods. I then account for my data management and preparation stages, consider the decisions prior to analysis before concluding with a brief discussion of my approach to analysis of quantitative data to investigate gender differences in paid work and childrearing. I follow scholars who distinguish between methods, referring to techniques or tools of data collection and analysis, and methodology, referring to the broader theorising of, or approach to, research practice (Devault, 1996; Harding, 1988; Jackson, 2017). This chapter then focuses on data and methodology while the specific methods of analysis are described in the methods sections of the empirical chapters that follow.

Feminist research is political and aims for transformation by highlighting and problematising gender inequalities, drawing attention to their ideological underpinnings. As such, it comes with a responsibility to recognise, scrutinise and document the researcher's role as an active knowledge producer and narrator, with attention to their influence on the research process and the limits of the resulting claims (Bhavnani, 1993; Devault, 1996; Haraway, 1988; McCorkel & Myers, 2003; Reinharz, 1984).

These points of methodological commitments and need for reflexivity are usually discussed in relation to qualitative methods and specifically the interactions between researcher and participants (e.g. Attia & Edge, 2017). However, I take a broader view of their relevance, spanning the design, analysis and communication of research irrespective of method. Whether or not scholars researching employment and families reflect on their own positionality, their implicit problem construction, research question(s) posed, and interpretations of the data will to a large degree reflect their assumptions about social (including gender) roles and relations (Sigle, 2016; Watkins,

1993). As such, I begin this chapter with a short account with the aim of locating myself in relation to the research topic.

My long-standing interest in researching parenthood and employment undoubtedly stems from, or is intertwined with, personal experience of being a parent in the UK. I became a parent before I embarked on my career as a social researcher.

I have lived my whole adult life in the UK, in London specifically, and so have negotiated maternity leave, return to work and childcare costs and logistics in this context. Having said that, being a (highly educated white EU) migrant from one of the Nordic countries also shaped how I negotiated motherhood in the UK, working or studying full-time throughout. My own work-family life course then has been both highly normative in some respects (raising two children in a stable partnership), while less normative in other regards, especially in terms of timing. My 'early' transition to parenthood, relative to other degree-educated women in the UK, has been followed by full-time employment interspersed with episodes of full-time study, a large age gap between births (in part to manage childcare costs) and, in the absence of an extended local kin network, primarily full-time formal childcare during my children's pre-school years.

Throughout the project I have grappled with how my own experiences of negotiating parenting, childcare, working hours and commuting time, job progression and higher education, as well as observations of the range of perceived possibilities or impossibilities among differently situated parents around me have influenced the focus, scope and interpretations of my analysis. I have attempted to consistently, constantly, set up the analysis to allow for a variety of different experiences to be compared without pulling out certain patterns as 'better choices'. I have tried to question my assumptions and to present my work in progress to a range of audiences in order to have the assumptions I was not even aware of myself challenged. Confronting the white solipsism, heteronormativity and seeming privileging of full-time paid work as a self-evident solution in my early articulation of the research 'problem' that came up in these conversations, led me to broaden the literature I was engaging with and to dwell on the language I used to describe my research.

Being invested in this project being a broad descriptive overview of patterns of change and persistence in the gendered and classed configuration of paid work and childrearing I retained the approach of secondary analysis of survey data. But I also committed to trying to make the partial and particular view that these data can show explicit wherever possible, and draw on other research to highlight the ways in which patterns and experiences may be quite different for some subgroups. As the project progressed, the direction of the research also changed, moving away from the original

strong focus on (women's) labour market trajectories, firstly to include intra-couple division of labour (Chapter 5) and then also to look at childbearing (Chapter 6).

It is impossible to describe how, or quantify how much, my positionality has shaped the project presented in this thesis – other than to simply state the obvious that me being the researcher has shaped the research. Thus, I recount this brief personal context not to give the impression that through my awareness of my own embeddedness in the topic of my study I have somehow managed to account for it, set it aside and approach the quantitative data objectively. My intention is instead for this prelude to the discussion of the data to serve as a reminder, that all research and knowledge production is necessarily partial because the decisions taken by the researcher shape what is included or excluded. Through explicit decision and implicit assumptions, some experiences and narratives are fore-grounded while others become silenced or 'drowned out'.

In the next section I describe data management decisions I took to set up the data for the analysis presented in the empirical chapters to come, in more detail, with the aim not only of enabling replicability but also accountability by laying out the implications of the decisions taken. Because the focus of the empirical analysis for Chapter 4 involved comparison of economic activity or family histories across different surveys, requiring extensive harmonisation and data management work, the bulk of this chapter (Sections 3.3 to 3.5) relates primarily to preparation for the analysis presented in that chapter. The next section begins with an introduction of all the surveys used for this thesis.

3.2. Introducing the surveys and analytical focus

The empirical analysis presented in this thesis is based on data from five large scale surveys.[19] All of the data management described in this chapter, and the analysis presented in subsequent chapters, was done in Stata. This section firstly provides a general introduction of each of the surveys in turn and a short overview of how the gender variable is captured in the surveys, followed by the similarities and differences in the life history data across the surveys in the next section.

ELSA

The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) surveys a representative sample of adults aged 50 and over resident in England (and their cohabiting partners). ELSA is a multidisciplinary study

[19] All of the data were retrieved from the UK Data Service, see list of references for full citations of the survey data.

covering a range of topics including health, employment, and household economic circumstances. The sample was drawn from the Health Survey for England respondents, beginning in 2002, with a total sample size of nearly 11,400 respondents who have been followed up for face-to-face interviews every other year. The ELSA sample has been 'refreshed' with new respondents including at the time of the main Wave 3 data collection (2006/07) to ensure the sample remains representative of adults aged 50 and over as the sample ages with time, and to correct for attrition (Scholes, Medina, Cheshire, Cox, Hacker, & Lessof, 2009; Taylor, Conway, Calderwood, Lessof, Cheshire, Cox, & Scholes, 2007; Ward, Medina, Mo, & Cox, 2009).

The third wave of ELSA data collection included a life history module follow-up conducted in 2007, the content of which is discussed in more detail in Section 3.3. Some 85% of the 8,273 eligible wave 3 ELSA main respondents participated in the life history module in 2007. The analysis for Chapter 4 focuses on a subsample of the respondents who took part in the life history module; the 1,468 main respondents who were born between the years 1944 and 1948, inclusive, while Chapter 6 focuses on the subsample of 4,567 respondents born between 1935 and 1954. This survey thus provides earlier cohorts whose experiences can be compared to the cohorts from the other surveys, born in 1958, 1970 and the early 1980s respectively.

NCDS

The National Child Development Study (NCDS) is a birth cohort study following the lives of originally approximately 17,000 infants born in a particular week in March 1958 in Great Britain. The sample has been followed up with face-to-face, telephone and paper self-completion questionnaires multiple times throughout their childhood and adulthood with regular sweeps of data collection occurring a few years apart. The topics asked about in the study have changed as the sample has matured through childhood and adulthood, but of interest to this thesis is that the study has collected economic activity, partnership and parenthood histories from age 16, initially at the age of 23 and updated at ages 33, 42, 46, 50 and 55 (Hancock, 2016). In total, following the latest sweep of data collection (available at the time of analysis) in 2013, of the 14,740 respondents with at least one economic activity record ever reported since leaving education, 8,842 NCDS respondents provided an update at age 55.

BCS70

The 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) is similar to the NCDS in its design and sampling. It is also a birth cohort study following the lives of originally approximately 17,000 infants born in a particular week in April 1970 in Great Britain, with regular data collection follow-ups a few years apart

throughout childhood and adulthood, including economic activity history data collected at ages 30, 34, 38 and 42. Some 12,218 BCS70 respondents have at least one economic activity history record, with 9,717 cohort members taking part in the latest sweep of data collection in 2012.

UKHLS

Understanding Society, or formally the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS), is a large household panel study interviewing all adult members of participating households annually. UKHLS started in 2008/09 with an achieved sample of just over 30,000 households and nearly 48,000 individuals in wave 1. It replaced and from 2009/10 incorporated the existing British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), bringing the sample to just over 50,000 individual adult respondents. UKHLS is representative of the UK, unlike the birth cohort studies which are representative of GB and ELSA which covers England only. Like the other studies, UKHLS is multidisciplinary and covers a range of topics, including health and wellbeing, economic activity, civic participation, income, and relationships. The first wave of data collection included an economic activity history module asked of a small sub-sample of respondents (respondents interviewed during the first 6 months of 2009 fieldwork). The remainder of the sample was asked this module in the fifth (2012/13) wave. The analysis presented in Chapter 4 focuses on a subsample of the respondents, the 2,561 respondents who were born between the years 1980 and 1984, and for whom the economic activity history is available. This provides a cohort of people born in the early 1980s whose experiences can be compared to the earlier cohorts from the other surveys.

Thus the analysis presented in Chapter 4 is based on four of the surveys (ELSA, NCDS, BCS70 and UKHLS), while the analysis presented in Chapter 6 is based on data from the first three surveys (ELSA, NCDS, BCS70). Chapter 5 is based on analysis of Millennium Cohort Study data.

MCS

The Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) is also a birth cohort study, following a sample of almost 19,000 individuals born in the UK in 2000/01, although for the purposes of this thesis the longitudinal nature of the study is not used. The analysis presented in Chapter 5 focuses on the first wave of data and specifically on the division of paid and unpaid work of the parents in 13,132 couple families where both parents took part in the interview.

Analysing the gender variable

Most social surveys record the gender identity or presentation of respondents as perceived by the interviewer under a variable named ‘sex’, coded Male/ Female, or alternatively ask the respondent “Are you Male or Female?”. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has developed guidelines

for asking about gender identity both for equality monitoring purposes for service providers and for Censuses and social research. These guidelines suggest asking separately about sex assigned at birth ("At birth, were you described as…. Please tick one option:", answer categories: Male/ Female/ Intersex/ Prefer not to say) and personally held gender identity with an open category allowing respondents to describe their own non-binary identity ("Which of the following describes how you think of yourself? Please tick one option:", answer categories: Male/ Female/ In another way) (Balarajan, Gray, & Mitchell, 2011; EHRC, 2012). In combination, information from these questions would allow for a more flexible treatment of gender identity in analysis. However, the surveys used in this project all record gender in a single binary variable that effectively reflects the perceived sex or gender presentation rather than the respondent's identity.

As mentioned, the ELSA sample is drawn from another survey, the Health Survey for England (HSE), where gender identity has already been recorded based on the interviewer's perception of the respondent. This information is fed-forward to the ELSA interview programme, where the interviewer is prompted to verify it by either coding their own perception as matching or not matching the HSE information, or double-checking with the respondent by asking "Can I just check, are you [male or female – as coded in HSE]?". The NCDS and BCS70 equally check the respondent's gender at the start of a new sweep of data collection, prompting the interviewer to code the respondent as male or female (based on their own perception of the respondent's gender) or to ask the respondent to do so themselves. The programming includes a hard check that does not allow for don't know or refusal answers (although nonetheless there were a handful of respondents in BCS70 who had missing values on this variable – these are excluded from the analysis). Where a respondent's reported or coded gender does not match the previously recorded information, BCS70 further includes a question on whether the respondent has undergone gender reassignment. The very few respondents who answered yes to this follow-up question are included in the analysis with the gender category reported most recently. UKHLS asks each respondent to confirm: "Are you male or female?". Like the other birth cohort studies, the MCS included instructions for the interviewer to code the (parent) respondents as male or female based on their own perception.

Level of education as a proxy for social class

Level of education is used in all three empirical chapters as a crude indicator of individual social class position. As discussed in more detail in the data sections of each chapter, the exact derivation of level of education is different for each analysis. In Chapter 4, a cohort-specific relative grouping of low, medium and high education is used to avoid the complication of educational expansion over the time period changing the relative size of groups with specific qualifications, and thus their associated

social meaning and value, across the cohorts. In Chapter 5, it was the relative level of education of the partners in each couple that was of interest and so families were grouped by whether neither, the father, the mother or both parents were degree-level educated. Finally, in Chapter 6, the changing educational composition across cohorts was of central interest and so the actual qualification levels, ranging from none to degree or higher, were used.

Clearly, social class is a multifaceted and contested social construct and individual level of education is as crude a proxy for class as the sex question is for gender. Much British survey research on class or social stratification uses occupation as the preferred measure for class, perhaps better capturing a combination of income and cultural value or status (albeit also with gendered complexities; Morgan, 2005). I considered using occupation group but came up against complications in each chapter: in Chapter 4, the appropriate age to measure occupation at, to achieve comparability across the surveys; in Chapter 5, one of the key measures of interest (potential earnings trajectory) already being linked to occupation; and much (albeit not all) of the literature that Chapter 6 being situated in relation to, differentiating childbearing by level of education rather than occupation.

Thus, while education is used as a key measure in all three analyses, as with gender, the measure is treated as an indicator of a broader social and hierarchical process of differentiation and associated (dis)advantages.

Majority not universality

With secondary analysis, both what gets included and what gets excluded from analyses is largely dependent on the data available. This is often acknowledged in some form by analysts (often in the limitations section), but it is more rarely extensively problematised in terms of whose experiences are represented in the patterns. The empirical analysis presented in this thesis necessarily presents a partial and incomplete view of work-family change over time in the UK.

Of particular relevance here, considering the focus in the thesis on macro-social change and diversification of family forms, is the lack of differentiation in the analysis by 'race'/ethnicity or sexuality. Same-sex partnerships are very rare in all five studies and so it is not possible to identify these separately in the analyses in any of the chapters. Equally, there are also very few Black, Asian and other ethnic minority respondents in ELSA and the NCDS which means it is not possible to meaningfully comment on change over time by gender and ethnic group in Chapters 4 and 6.

This is important to note explicitly, as critiques by Black feminist scholars challenging the use of gender as a racially 'colour-blind' analytic category for conveying women's experience in its

complexity and diversity, have highlighted the underlying presumption of universality of the majority (white) experience (Carby, 1982; Crenshaw, 1989, 2011). Further, the increasing ethnic diversity of British society since the Second World War, and differentiation in employment outcomes by ethnicity (Dale, Lindley, & Dex, 2006; Sigle-Rushton & Perrons, 2006), also point to the importance of not extrapolating the white majority experience. Cross-sectional statistics cited by Tracey Reynolds (2001) show that Black women's full-time employment rate has remained stable at a high level since the 1970s, while others suggest substantial change and generational difference among British Asian women from Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities (Dale, Fieldhouse, Shaheen, & Kalra, 2002) and diversification by class among British Caribbean men's labour market outcomes over time (Li & Heath, 2008).

The combination of a large analytical sample and the inclusion of a booster sample of ethnic minority families in the MCS mean that I was able to include the ethnicity of the main respondent (the mother of the MCS child) as a variable in the analysis for Chapter 5, which showed, as the discussion above indicates might be expected, that what is often thought of as a 'traditional' parental work model (in that it is statistically normative or common) is less typical of UK families where the mother is Black.

The broad patterns shown will thus necessarily reflect the life courses of the white heterosexual majority and it should be borne in mind that these may not be an accurate reflection of the experiences of other groups. To foreground this reminder that it may not be appropriate to extrapolate the findings I present to ethnic or sexual minority groups, and to give an indication of the ways patterns or experiences may differ, I have sought to also refer to relevant research that has focused on such groups, either using cross-sectional surveys, qualitative methods or larger samples from other countries.

3.3. Introducing the life history data

Because a key focus of the analysis Chapter 4 is on labour market outcomes over time and parenthood has been shown by past research to affect women and men's paid work differently, the analysis presented in that chapter is interested in both economic activity history data and family history data. By economic activity history, I mean the individual's sequence of spells of paid work in employment or self-employment and other spells such as unemployment, education or training, looking after the home and family, sickness or disability, volunteering or retirement. The family history consists of a record of the timing of births or adoptions of the respondent's children. The

family history data were drawn on in Chapters 4 and 6, the timing of births being a key measure in Chapter 4 and the sum of children had by age 42 being the main measure of interest in Chapter 6.

Both sets of biographical 'histories' are discussed in turn below, drawing out the similarities and differences in each of these histories across the four relevant surveys (ELSA, NCDS, BCS70 and UKHLS). The analysis methods used in each of the empirical chapters are introduced in the relevant chapters.

Economic activity histories

The economic activity histories in each of the four surveys collected information on periods of paid work and other types of activities from the age of 16 or since leaving full-time education until the latest wave of data collection. They varied in the level of detail of what constituted a reportable activity 'spell' and in the detail of different activity types collected.

ELSA asked for the most detailed disaggregation of activity spells but least detailed date information. The respondent was asked to recall every job lasting 6 months or more, and for each job spell whether this was full-time or part-time employment or self-employment. Further, they were asked if there had been a switch from full-time to part-time work (or vice versa) within the same job, and when that switch occurred. In addition, the respondent was asked to report what other activities they engaged in before, between and after their job spells.

By contrast, the NCDS, BCS70 and UKHLS asked respondents to report all separate periods of main activity in or out of employment lasting one month or more, but to treat consecutive spells of the same type (e.g. several consecutive full-time jobs without gaps in between) as a single activity spell. Like ELSA, these studies also asked respondents to differentiate between full-time and part-time employment but self-employment was treated as a single category, regardless of weekly hours.

While the NCDS and BCS70 specified in the wording of the answer categories that full-time employment related to 30 hours or more per week and part-time to less than 30 hours, ELSA and UKHLS did not, and thus left it up to the respondent to judge what constituted a full-time or part-time job to them (see Table 3.1 below of activity answer category detail). ELSA also did not include 'maternity leave' as an explicit answer category, which the other surveys did. While some respondents spontaneously reported some spells as 'Other – maternity leave', it is not possible to tell from the data whether those who did not report any maternity leave, did not take any such leave or whether they reported that period of time either as employment or perhaps as 'looking after the home or family'.

Table 3.1 Activity answer category details

ELSA	NCDS 1958	BCS 1970	USOC
FT employee | PT employee| FT self-employed | PT self-employed | Unemployed | Looking after home or family | Education / Training | Sick or disabled | Retired | Voluntary work | Other	FT paid employee 30+ hrs | PT paid employee <30 hrs | FT/PT self-employed | Unemployed seeking work | Maternity leave | | Looking after home/family Education/training | Sick/ disabled | Wholly retired | Voluntary work | Travelling/ extended holiday | Other	FT paid employee 30+ hrs | PT paid employee <30 hrs | FT/PT self-employed | Unemployed seeking work | Maternity leave | | Looking after home/family Education/training | Sick/ disabled | Wholly retired | Voluntary work | Travelling/ extended holiday | Other	Full-time employed | Part-time employed | Self-employed | Unemployed | Maternity leave | Looking after family or home | Full-time student/ training scheme | Long-term sick or disabled | National Service/War Service | Retired | Something else

The main implication of the differences in the level of detail recorded is that it is not possible to investigate whether the ability to switch between full-time and part-time status while maintaining continuous employment with the same employer, and or in the same job, might have become increasingly prevalent over time and if this is associated with increased continuity in women's paid work trajectories. Only ELSA disaggregated the economic activity history by job rather than activity type. It is also not possible to track occupational mobility across the economic activity history as occupation of each job held is not recorded.

Other than the differences discussed above, activity categories of interest were similar enough across the four surveys and I reduced them to the following harmonised set of activity status categories:

- Full-time employment;
- Part-time employment;
- Maternity leave[20];
- Self-employment;
- Education or training;
- Looking after home and family;
- Any other activity.

The four studies also differed in the detail of the dates collected for the activity histories. Here ELSA asked respondents for the start and end years of each job spell, and thus the start and end years of non-work spells between job spells can be inferred. The other surveys asked respondents to record both the year and month for spells. NCDS and BCS70 recorded both start and end dates of spells,

[20] For the purpose of the analyses in Chapter 4, the maternity leave spells were recoded to match the activity in the previous year so a discontinuity in labour market trajectory is only identified if the respondent exited the labour market after maternity leave (i.e. did not return to work at the end of the leave period).

while UKHLS just asked for the start date of each spell, the end date being inferred from the start of the next spell.

Family histories: Partners and children

All of the surveys contain sufficient detail about the respondent's children to construct a parenthood history, including date of birth or adoption and relationship to the respondent. ELSA collected only the year of birth/adoption of children, and also did not include a question on when children left the household (only whether the child had lived with the respondent for most of their childhood). However, the other three surveys include both year and month of birth or adoption and also the year when currently non-resident children left the respondent's household (or year and month of death, where relevant).

Each study asked for dates for each cohabiting union the respondent had experienced (year in ELSA and year and month in the other studies): when the couple first moved in together, whether they married, and if so the date of marriage or civil partnership, and the date the relationship ended, if relevant. It is not possible to construct partners' employment histories. The birth cohorts do not collect this information of partners, and while ELSA and UKHLS include employment histories of current partners (if they responded to the survey/ module), for respondents with previous partnerships there would be no data on the economic activity of previous partners while co-resident with the respondent. It is therefore not possible to analyse employment trajectories though a linked lives life course perspective.

Thus, after some consideration, I did not draw on the partnership histories nor the child co-residence dates in the analysis for this thesis, focusing instead on the birth/adoption dates in the analysis for Chapter 4 and the cumulative number of births reported by age 42 for Chapter 6.

The accuracy and reliability of life history data

Retrospective longitudinal data such as this provides a rich source of data over a longer period, and in more granular detail in time, than most prospective longitudinal surveys that only asks about current circumstances at each interview. Studies use interview materials that can aid recall to help respondents answer questions as accurately as possible, such as the use of a timeline with key landmark events, and the collection of potentially more memorable events first (e.g. the births of children), which are then displayed on this respondent's individual life course timeline during the life history interview (Pascale & McGee, 2008; Ward et al., 2009).

The UK does not have a population database, like the ones in Nordic countries which can also sometimes be used for academic research. Even if it were possible to link the survey respondents to

administrative records covering their labour market careers (e.g. HMRC database showing dates for employment and self-employment through PAYE and self-assessment records), this would not include information on the respondent's main activity during periods of labour market inactivity despite providing potentially more accurate records of periods of paid work. It would thus not be possible to undertake this analysis on UK data without the use of retrospective economic activity history data and these sorts of data are relatively widely used in life course research and demography, for example.

However, retrospective data should not be relied upon uncritically and there are documented concerns about the accuracy and reliability of retrospective data, primarily (but not entirely) attributed to the risk of recall error. Recall and accuracy has been found to vary by the salience of the event, the length of the recall period and some characteristics of the respondent (Dex & McCulloch, 1998).

Focusing on women and men's recall of unemployment spells in comparing two sources of retrospective data, Shirley Dex and Andrew McCulloch concluded the collection and analysis of such data are substantively useful, but advised caution due to the likely under-recording of short periods of unemployment, especially the greater the time period between their occurrence and the data collection time. The authors also found that men's recall of unemployment spells was more accurate, but that the gender differences were smaller when the timing was analysed in years rather than month and year. They concluded that this may be linked to women finding it more difficult to distinguish periods that meet a definition of unemployment (Dex & McCulloch, 1998). This could well be because more women have caring responsibilities in addition to looking for work during such spells, or perhaps because of being less likely to qualify for or claim jobseekers allowance if they lack recent employment experience or have a working partner. On the other hand, a recent comparative study of German prospective and retrospective data found only minor differences in terms of absolute numbers of labour market transitions and that the general pattern of results and substantive conclusions were similar for both data sources (Manzoni, 2012).

Despite survey design and data collection reports generally noting births of children as relatively easy information to recall because of the salience of the event, analysis suggests that this does not necessarily ensure accuracy. Comparisons of prospective and retrospective UK data on reported child births by women born in the 1940s have shown a gap that appears to be unexplained by sample composition differences and suggestive of deliberate under-reporting of past births in retrospective data collection by older women (Murphy, 2009). However, later work largely attributed this finding to the use of computer-assisted self-completion, and concluded it could be

largely corrected for using information from household grids on resident children (Ní Bhrolcháin, Beaujouan, & Murphy, 2011).

The issues relevant to the analysis for this thesis are that the accuracy and reliability of the data may differ systematically between the studies because the recall periods covered by the surveys differ. ELSA asked respondents in 2007, when the analysis sample members were aged about 60, to recall their entire economic activity history since leaving school. The two birth cohorts' histories have been collated from multiple (retrospective) data collection sweeps, initially covering back to age 16 and then at 4-10-year intervals, each time covering the period back to the last time that respondent was interviewed. Most of the UKHLS economic activity history data were collected at an initial time point (Wave 1 or Wave 5), covering the period since the respondent was aged 16 or left full-time education (up to a maximum of 20 years for the analysis sample members included in Chapter 4). The longer recall time and the older age at data collection suggests that the ELSA data may be a less accurate source for both economic activity and children's births than the other surveys. Reflecting on this, after comparing the completed family size and proportions without children of three 10-year cohorts drawn from ELSA, I decided to exclude the oldest of the ELSA cohorts initially considered (born 1925-34) from the analysis reported in Chapter 6.

3.4. Harmonisation of activity histories

This section describes the data management I carried out in order to ensure that category coding and measure details were as similar as possible for the analysis presented in Chapter 4 which investigates economic activity trajectories of men and women across four cohorts born 1944-48 (using ELSA data), 1958, 1970 and 1980-84 (using UKHLS).

As mentioned in the previous section, the type of economic activity undertaken during a given spell were similar enough to be able to relatively straightforwardly derive a single status variable with the same category codes across all four surveys. This section focuses on the data management required to set each dataset up in a person-year format that covered the period of time from when the respondent was aged 16 onwards to the age at the most recent time of data collection and recording for each year of age the economic activity was undertaken.

ELSA

The ELSA economic activity history was collected as a separate 'life history' module part of the Wave 3 (2007) data collection and the data from all of these histories is available to download in a single data file from the UKDS. The file however required quite a lot of cleaning and reformatting to

construct an economic activity history in the person-spell format because it is a flat (person-level, wide format) file where each questionnaire loop consists of between one and three spells, stored under different variable name-stubs and with inconsistent variable naming conventions across loops. The number of spells per loop varied because for each job spell of paid work mentioned, the respondent was asked whether this was followed by a spell of unemployment or labour market inactivity before starting the next job. Any such non-employment activity was then recorded in the dataset as a subset of the same spell. ELSA also asked specifically about each job (as opposed to spells of particular activity types), and whether and when the respondent had changed from full-time to part-time within the same job. Since the other studies treated full-time and part-time work as separate spells (even if for the same employer and in the same job) these needed to be split into separate spells.

For any spells that did not include paid work, the respondent was able to give multiple responses to record what their activities were during the spell. Since respondents in the other surveys were confined to a single answer category for each spell, the multiple response variables for statuses other than paid work were combined into a single variable for each loop. To do this, I had to take a decision on the priority order for which of a respondent's multiple answers to 'count' for that spell of the single-coded variables. The answer unemployed (and looking for work) was prioritised in the first instance, followed by a mention of education or training, then 'looking after home, family caring'. Only if none of these three categories were mentioned was the spell assigned to the code 'other activity'. My prioritisation of unemployment and education activities over mentions of home and family care is not a value judgement on the activities but an attempt to approximate the forced choice of a single 'main' activity which respondents in the other surveys had to take. My logic was that potentially claiming benefits as unemployed or being enrolled as a student may to the respondent prioritise these activities over unpaid care work at home (although I recognise that this is not unproblematic, especially for women; Dex & McCulloch, 1998). To validate this decision, I checked the ELSA wave 3 main interview data, which for the current activity asked the respondent to both report all their paid work and other activities in the past month, and then to choose the one that "best" describes the current situation. Only a small number of respondents (45) reported being unemployed as one of their activities, but of those who did, 64% chose this as their main activity. This compares with 15% of those (4,079) who mentioned caring or looking after the home and family as one of multiple activities and then choosing caring also as what best described their current status.

Finally, as mentioned in the previous section, post-fieldwork back-coding of the open answers to these questions also revealed that some respondents had reported 'maternity leave' as their activity

and I included this as a category if unemployment, education or care had not already been reported for the spell. As this answer was unprompted (and since maternity leave was not widely available when many of the ELSA respondents had their children) few ELSA respondents are recorded as having spells of maternity leave.

Once I had derived a single-coded status for each spell consisting of activities other than paid work, separated the multiple spells within a single questionnaire loop, reorganised the file into a person-spell file and checked for and resolved any overlaps, gaps and duplicate spells, I ordered and numbered the spells by start year. Thanks in part to the detailed structure of the questionnaire routing, and in part to collecting the history dates in years there were relatively few issues with overlapping spells, gaps that were unaccounted for, or missing dates – other than by design of the questionnaire. (Some spells did not have end dates associated with them, because through the wording of the question, the spell was implied to end when the next spell started.) There is also no attrition issue related to the analysis of the life history module, despite ELSA being a longitudinal study, since the entire module was collected at a single time-point.

NCDS and BCS70

The NCDS and BCS70 economic activity history data are available from the UK Data Service to download in person-episode format data files so these required comparatively less data management.

The NCDS economic activity history file available to download from the UKDS has been updated by the data depositor, the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS), to include respondents' responses to the most recent wave of data collection (Sweep 9/ 2013). However, according to the data documentation the activity history starts from when the respondent left education, rather than at a given chronological age for all respondents. Of the 12,453 respondents with employment history recorded, for 4,970 (40%) the start of the employment history was after the age of 16. In order to analyse the data from the same starting age across all datasets, it was necessary to derive the episodes covering the time between the respondent being 16 years old and the end of leaving education when the activity history began. Rather than assume continuous full-time education between age 16 and the start of the activity history, I used information collected in Sweep 4, in 1981 when the respondents were aged 23, on the education and training courses they had undertaken since leaving school in order to derive the age when they first left continuous education to compare this age with the start of the employment history. Of these, 3,518 (70% of those whose employment history started later than age 16) were in continuous education until the start of the employment history. This left 1,452 respondents (12% of the total sample) with some time unaccounted for

between the age of 16 and the start of the employment history. The gap of unaccounted time was generally short. Approximately half of the respondents with a remaining gap unaccounted for between the age of 16, or end of education (whichever was later), and the start of economic activity history had a gap of 3 years or less. For these respondents the gap was retained as a spell in the history with the status recorded as "Don't know", since it was not possible to deduce with certainty whether a too early age at leaving education had been recorded, or too late an age at the start of the employment history. This missing status accounted for at most 7% of NCDS respondents at a given age (ages 17-20 inclusive) and dropped to below 5% by age 22. The discrepancy between the start of the employment history and the end of education in the data may have resulted in some under-recording of participation in education in the late teens in this cohort. For the Chapter 4 analysis this category was combined with the 'Other not in paid work' category.

The BCS70 economic activity history started at age 16 (with less than 0.5% of respondents with economic activity histories having a later start) and thus did not need gaps filling in. However, the economic activity history file available on the UKDS had, at the time of data preparation and analysis, not been updated by the data depositor to include economic activity changes reported in the latest sweep (Sweep 9, 2012/13) so I had to do this myself. I compared the last spell in the economic activity history with the updated Sweep 9 history and updated the numbering of the new spells to continue consecutively from the existing spell numbering, renaming relevant variables to match and appended the new observations to economic activity history file, finally updating the end date of any completed spells that had at the previous interview been ongoing with the end date as recorded in Sweep 9.

UKHLS

As described in the previous section, in UKHLS the collection of economic activity history data was divided between the first and the fifth wave. For the purposes of the analysis I updated the Wave 1 economic activity history data with more recent data from later sweeps, using the 'annual event history' modules included in subsequent waves that the respondent participated in, to combine the two sets of economic activity histories.

About 35% of the total UKHLS analysis sample (for Chapter 4) consists of respondents whose economic activity history was collected at Wave 1. For almost half of the history data could be updated with more recent information from Wave 5 (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 UKHLS: Source wave of economic activity history data and most recent wave of participation used to update Wave 1 history

	Source of economic activity history		
	Wave 1		Wave 5
Latest available wave of data	n	Column %	
Wave 1: 2009/2010	236	27	
Wave 2: 2010/2011	84	11	
Wave 3: 2011/2012	70	8	
Wave 4: 2012/2013	59	7	
Wave 5: 2013/2014	410	47	1,591
Total analysis sample distribution (Row %)	35		65
Unweighted respondents	*869*		*1,591*

One issue that arose with the updating of the Wave 1 economic activity histories using the annual history modules and current activity reported in subsequent waves related to missing start dates for activities reported as 'current' in a given wave. This issue is due to questionnaire routing. From Wave 2 onwards, the questionnaire included the respondent's most recently reported activity fed forward from the previous time the respondent took part and asked the respondent to confirm whether they were still doing this activity. If the respondent answered no they were routed to the annual event history set of questions which asked when the previously reported activity ended and what activities the respondent had engaged in since, with associated start dates. However, all respondents were also asked elsewhere in the questionnaire what their current activity was. In some cases respondents who had not reported a change in activity circumstances (and thus not been asked the annual event questions) nonetheless reported currently doing an activity which did not match the most recent activity previously reported. Unfortunately, only new entrants to the study were asked when their current activity had started. This meant that I faced a choice between ignoring updated data that appeared to suggest a change in circumstances or incorporating the updated activity information without the associated start date.

In addition, there was a fair amount of missing dates for the annual history updates also. I decided to treat any current activity that did not match the previously reported most recent activity as a change in circumstance and impute a random start date that fell between the two interview dates (i.e. between the date of the interview when the most recent previous activity was reported as ongoing and the date of the interview when the different current activity or annual history activity was reported). In order to ensure the generation of the random date could be replicated when re-running the code, I set the starting seed for Stata and recorded this in my do file. Without imputations just 35% of the updated activity spells had full start dates. Following the imputation,

71% of the updated activity spells had a full start date (month and year), and 99% had at least a start year.

After updating the Wave 1 economic activity history I combined these observations with the observations for the individuals whose economic activity history was collected in Wave 5 in a single file. I also checked for any potential duplication where the respondent may accidentally have been routed to the economic activity history in both waves and there were very few such cases, for most of whom the Wave 5 version provided the more complete history.

Another issue with the UKHLS data related to the wording of the introductory question of the economic activity history which specified that the respondent should report their first economic activity after leaving continuous education or training. When checking the start date of the economic activity history against information on the respondent's reported time of leaving education or training, for approximately 14% of individuals in the analysis sample (354 respondents) a gap that was unaccounted for between the age of 16, or the end of education or training, and the start of the economic activity history was identified. As with the NCDS, where such gaps were also identified for some respondents, the gap was retained as a spell in the history with the status recorded as "Don't know", which for the Chapter 4 analysis, was combined with the 'Other not in paid work' category.

Person-year files

The final step of data management of each of the economic activity history files was to turn the file from a person-spell file to a person-year file, so that each respondent would have one observation for each year of their economic activity history (from age 16 up to the age at which they were last interviewed). Only after reformatting the files to person-year files, and ensuring consistent variable naming and coding across the different datasets, was it possible to combine the economic activity histories with the individual's parenthood histories (described in Section 3.5 below) and to run the analysis.

3.5. Harmonisation of parenthood histories

For the parenthood histories I have focused on children born to, or adopted by, the respondent. Although there is some information also about current (and in some cases past) co-resident stepchildren included in the surveys, I have not included them in the parenthood histories which fed into the analysis. The analysis for Chapter 4 includes the timing of all births in the model but focuses primarily on the time of the first transition to parenthood (birth or adoption). Chapter 6 counted

only births of biological children by age 42 for a measure of (near) completed family size. The reason for excluding (foster- and) stepchildren from the parenthood history is primarily because the data on these children's co-residence histories are less complete and I consider co-residence to be a defining feature of social parent-child relations.

Unfortunately, it is not entirely straight-forward to differentiate between adoption of a stepchild and other adoptions in all of the datasets so some of the adopted children may well be children of the respondent's partner who have been adopted by the respondent. ELSA includes a question for each adopted child whether that child is the biological/birth child of the respondent's current or former partner (i.e. an adopted stepchild). However, such information is not available for the other surveys, meaning that it is difficult to identify adopted stepchildren if the child was not resident in the household at the time of the data collection and/or the date of adoption pre-dates the start of the relationship with the current partner (as the child could be the biological/birth child of a former partner). At any rate, adoptions account for a small proportion of the children so in Chapter 4 the results will predominantly reflect associations between births and labour market outcomes anyway.

3.6. Survey design, analysis weights and attrition

The surveys differ in their sampling survey designs, this section briefly outlines how these sample design differences raised different considerations for the project, and where possible were adjusted for in the analysis. ELSA, UKHLS and MCS have complex survey designs with clustered and/or stratified samples that need to be adjusted for, and all these data sets are available from the UKDS with analysis weighting variables to adjust for unequal sampling probabilities and non-response. These adjustments have been made using the Stata svy command for all relevant analyses. The NCDS and BCS70 samples are not stratified or clustered, and there were no unequal sampling probabilities to adjust for. One might think of these birth cohort studies as censuses of all infants born in Great Britain in the given week.

ELSA respondents who participated in full in the main survey interview in wave 3 (2006-07) were eligible to take part in the life history module. However, response rates were lower for the life history module than overall for the main interview. Respondents who were eligible but did not participate in the life history module were, amongst other characteristics, more likely to report poorer health, lower education, living in more deprived areas and belonging to an ethnic minority group. In order to adjust for these known systematic differences in the probability of participation, the ELSA dataset available from the UKDS includes a non-response weight for analysis of the life history data (Ward et al., 2009).

The UKHLS study also includes various analysis weights that are available with the datasets from the UKDS, in order for analysts to adjust for both the unequal sampling probabilities inherent in the sample design, and for wave non-response and attrition from the study. The study over-samples households from more deprived areas and areas that have a higher density of ethnic minority residents in order to achieve sufficient numbers of ethnic minority respondents to enable statistically robust sub-group analysis by ethnicity (Buck & McFall, 2011). The analysis weights are thus important for adjusting the achieved sample composition to resemble the composition of the general population in the UK on known individual and household characteristics. In UKHLS the employment, relationships and parenthood histories were not included as a separate life history module but were incorporated in the main adult respondent interviews and the household grid set-up. There is therefore no separate analysis weight for the life history data, but the wave-specific analysis weights should be used for analysis of these data. However, one complication is that the employment history data were collected at two time points in UKHLS. This makes the choice of weights to use somewhat challenging. The cross-sectional Wave 5 weight is the most appropriate to use for those respondents who completed their employment history in Wave 5. Although the longitudinal 1-5 wave weight would be most appropriate for the subgroup of respondents whose Wave 1 employment history information was successfully updated to Wave 5, the difference between the longitudinal and cross-sectional weights are minimal so I used the cross-sectional weight variable to retain all of the respondents who completed their employment history in Wave 5 (many of whom did not participate in all of the previous waves). Approximately 450 respondents who answered the employment history questions in Wave 1 but did not participate in the survey in Wave 5, are therefore not included in the analysis because of the lack of Wave 5 weight for these respondents.

The MCS analysis for Chapter 5 is relatively straight-forward by comparison in that it is cross-sectional analysis of the first wave of data collection and just required declaration of the stratification and the relevant analysis weight using the svy command in Stata.

As noted above, the NCDS and BCS70 studies do not have complex sample designs. As with all long-running longitudinal studies however, wave non-response and attrition (dropping out of the study) are issues to consider. Both attrition and wave non-response are problematic because they reduce the size of the sample available for analysis and to some degree biases the remaining sample, unless the non-response occurs completely random. As an example, Mostafa and Wiggins (2014) demonstrate that if the BCS70 dataset is restricted to only include those cohort members who participated in all nine data collection sweeps (up to age 42), only about a fifth of the original sample size would remain. Response modelling with these datasets have shown that while attrition is not

random (men, in particular those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with poor educational records or with unstable work histories, are more likely to not respond in a sweep or drop out of the study), universal non-response weights do not improve estimates (Hawkes & Plewis, 2006; Mostafa & Wiggins, 2014). Some prior research analysing the birth cohort economic activity history data used multiple imputation to adjust for these issues (e.g. McMunn et al., 2015) but I have run the analysis using these two studies unweighted/unadjusted.

3.7. Discussion: Feminist-informed quantitative analysis

I began this chapter describing my methodology as feminist-informed, and having discussed the setting up of the data, I conclude with a brief discussion of my approach to analysis of quantitative data to investigate gender differences at the work-family nexus.

One challenge in analysing gender using individual-level survey data is that the data forms a framing mechanism that shapes what can be tested and therefore what can be problematised, channelling interpretations towards individual-level explanations. Another challenge is how to resist the way the methods used to describe data tend to frame interpretation in a way that can easily homogenise categories (Sigle-Rushton, 2014). The data and methods can focus the analyst's attention on the variables available to them, the characteristics and circumstances of the individuals in the dataset, obscuring the social variability, the structural aspects and the hierarchies of power inherent in any differentiations observed. Gender, analysed solely based on individual-level data thus easily becomes interpretable as a fixed or static property of individuals, limiting the potential to demonstrate the scope and form of influence of gender as an organising principle of individual behaviour (Riley, 1999). As measures of the institutions and structures that shape gendered outcomes for individuals are often excluded from the formal models, due to conceptual complexity and lack of data (Agarwal, 1997), this poses a challenge to articulating the role and importance of these factors.

As theories of gender came to approach the concept as multilevel, so analyses increasingly took a multi-level, often cross-national, approach (Sullivan et al., 2018). At an early stage in the research, I considered whether I could operationalise the broader gender context beyond the individual changing over time, through some aggregate measures of attitudes or participation rates but soon abandoned this as both too specific and incomplete to capture gender as structure. As Nancy Riley has argued "[d]ealing with gender as an organizing principle in societies goes beyond aggregating even a number of individual experiences" (Riley, 1999, p. 377). Instead, to incorporate a broader understanding of gender in my project, I have drawn on feminist scholars to conceptualise and

articulate its context specificity, across cohorts and historical time, across the life course and across social locations. In the previous chapter, I did this by focusing on gender as 'what it means to be and act as a woman or a man'. This is a thread that I have tried to pull through in the empirical chapters to come, both in terms of articulation of concepts and measures and interpretation of findings, while adhering to the conventions of the analysis methods. Drawing on this contextual policy analysis and gender theory is my approach to doing 'ethnography in the library' (Watkins, 1993) and 'analytical description' (Agarwal, 1997).

The next three chapters that follow present the findings from my empirical analyses. Chapter 4 begins, providing a broad overview of variations in paid work trajectories across cohorts, which the following two chapters build on with their focus on the division of labour at the intra-household and macro-level, respectively.

4. Work-family change over time: On measuring gaps and inferring gender equality

4.1. Introduction

The changes to women's employment over the life course and their position in the labour market since WW2 in Britain, as in many other countries, have been so substantial that, as discussed in the first chapter, these changes have been called a gender revolution. Gender gaps in employment rates and earnings have reduced greatly over the time period. However, despite sweeping changes, inequalities between women and men persist which point to the endurance of underlying gender inequality. Thus, gender inequality in the labour market remains an ongoing issue of political importance, and a number of scholars have questioned the claim that it is in the process of disappearing (Evans, 2016; Joshi et al., 2007; McDaniel, 2001; Perrons, 2005; Sefton et al., 2011).

This chapter, the first of three chapters discussing the findings from my empirical analyses, provides a broad overview of patterns of change in economic activity trajectories across cohorts with attention to the timing of family formation. It provides a description of the progress of the gendered social change in the post-war period, as it has manifested in women and men's paid work in the UK to date. Building on the discussion of feminist-informed quantitative analysis in the previous chapter, I am interested in thinking through what the convergence of women and men's labour market participation means for interpretations of gender equality changing over time, bearing in mind how the shape of the life course has also changed over the time period. Can we infer that the gender order is transforming; that gender relations are becoming more egalitarian? I argue that two omissions help create the impression of gender inequality being a problem of the past. Firstly, a narrow understanding of gender, which does not attend to the structural underpinnings of gender inequality and thus allows for reductions in gaps between men and women's labour market outcomes to be uncritically inferred as evidence of increasing gender equality. Secondly, and related to the first point, lack of attention to other processes of social change over time mask explanations or reasons for reductions in gaps between women and men's labour market outcomes, other than increasing gender equality. The discussion does not dispute evidence that suggests that on some measures the difference between men and women's experiences in the labour market have reduced over time, but rather questions whether narrowing differences are necessarily indicative of increasing gender equality and contends that quantitative social science that discusses such differences needs to engage with the social meaning of gender.

4.2. Background: gendered life courses changing over (historical) time

As already discussed in Chapter 1, the literature on women's employment over the past few decades is fraught with contradiction; on the one hand showing sweeping change while on the other indicating the endurance and stability of gender difference. The employment rate gap between men and women decreased from 40% to 10% between the early 1970s and 2013, through a large increase in women's employment rate as well as a small decrease in that of men (Razzu, 2014). In particular, labour market participation following childbirth has increased among women of more recent cohorts in Britain (Fouarge et al., 2010; McRae, 1993), with the reduction in the time spent out of the labour market following childbirth identified as a key component of the increase in female labour market participation (Joshi & Hinde, 1993). Although notable differences exist among mothers, by class and ethnic group in terms of continuity of employment and the likelihood of working full-time while children are young (Fagan & Norman, 2012; Kanji, 2011), the increasing availability of part-time work from the 1950s onwards has been a decisive factor in the rising employment rates among mothers in particular (Joshi & Hinde, 1993). The initial increase in women's employment was largely in part-time work, and women's part-time employment rate has remained stable at about two-fifths of working women since the early 1980s, while the increase in men's part-time participation has been limited (Lewis, 2002a; McCulloch & Dex, 2001; ONS, 2013).

Part-time work is a salient feature of mothers' employment and the gendered effect of parenthood on paid work is a key contributor to the difference between women and men in the labour market. Thus the birth of the first child remains a pivotal life course event in the UK, with a 'traditionalising' effect on the division of paid work and work in the home among many different-sex couples, with part-time work common among mothers (Mills, 2010; Schober, 2013), while evidence suggests that for most men, paid work remains generally unaffected by parenthood (Dermott, 2006; also Kuehhirt, 2012, in the German context). The transition to part-time work has also been linked with downward occupational mobility and lower pay, thus contributing to both the gender pay gap and more specifically the motherhood penalty (Abendroth et al., 2014; Cooke, 2014; Dex & Bukodi, 2012; Sigle-Rushton & Waldfogel, 2007), with cumulative and potentially long-lasting effects over the life course and into old age (Bardasi & Jenkins, 2002, 2010; Dex & Bukodi, 2012; Rake et al., 2000). Research on differences between men and women's paid work thus needs to attend to the number of hours worked and parenthood status.

Research comparing men and women's careers and work-family trajectories for different UK cohorts born in 1946, 1958 and 1970, suggests that there has been a convergence in men and women's life courses over time, but that the change has been asymmetric. One study found little difference

between cohorts in men's early career trajectories but substantial early career progression for later-born women, with the effect of reducing the gap between men and women (Bukodi et al., 2012). Another study found reducing differences between men and women across cohorts, as continuous full-time paid work, and the combination of family and paid work, became more common life course trajectories among women (McMunn et al., 2015). As Anne McMunn and colleagues note, however, "this convergence is almost entirely the result of a greater proportion of women adopting traditionally 'male' employment patterns (i.e., continuous full-time employment), rather than of any discernible trend towards men reducing hours or taking time off work to accommodate parenthood" (McMunn et al., 2015, p. 68).

Measuring gender (in)equality over time

The annual measurement and publication by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) of the gender wage gap statistics provide a recurring reminder both of the continuing inequalities in the labour market and of presumed progress towards gender equality. The average (mean) pay gap among full-time workers has reduced from 37% in 1971 to 14% in 2013 (ONS, 2017c).[21] Gender pay gap statistics show wider gaps among older age groups, with a substantial increase in the gap from certain age categories to the next, and the age at which this increase is observed has been delayed over time (ONS, 2017a).

This might be interpreted as a process of cohort replacement. Younger cohorts, who were socialised, entered adulthood and formed families in a context of equal educational opportunity, anti-sex discrimination legislation and labour market maternity protections, replace older cohorts who planned and took major decisions regarding education, employment and family in an earlier context of stricter social and institutional expectations. Older women's employment trajectories are patterned by the legacy of the more gender-specialised arrangements earlier in their life course (Elder, 1998; McDaniel, 2001; Walby, 1997, 1999), reflected in their current labour market position, which thus "bring to the present traces of different pasts" (Walby, 1997, p. 12).

Proponents of the second demographic transition explanation might argue that this process would have been reinforced or enabled by recursive ideational re-orientations towards greater focus on relationship quality, gender egalitarian attitudes and self-fulfilment (Lesthaeghe, 1995, 2014). But does this mean that gender inequalities in the labour market are in the process of disappearing? The same pattern may instead result from a delay in childbearing, itself linked with educational

[21] The time series for the more commonly reported gap in median hourly pay, excluding overtime, is only available from 1997 when it was 28%; in 2017 it was 18%.

expansion (Ní Bhrolcháin & Beaujouan, 2012), and thus cohort replacement, but with very different implications for inferring gender equality from the observed gap reduction, highlighting the need to attend to the complexity of multiple processes of social change. For example, Heather Joshi and colleagues have argued that the reduction in the aggregate gender pay gap has been due to improvements in women's educational outcomes and labour market experiences, rather than to more equal treatment in the labour market (Joshi et al., 2007). This points at the need to also carefully consider the meaning of gender and education when analysing change over time.

To start to unpack the question of cohort replacement reducing gender equality requires firstly consideration of what is meant here by gender inequality. Much quantitative social science research that investigates gender differences does not define or discuss how gender is understood in the research. As discussed in greater detail in earlier chapters, the approach taken in this project is that gender is a structuring principle of social life that can be thought of as the social meaning of 'being and acting' as a woman or a man, and positions men and women not just as different, but as unequal, through the privileging of men and the masculine as the norm. Thus gender equality increasing might be conceptualised as these relations becoming more equitable.

Such an understanding of gender is however challenging to translate to research using individual-level quantitative data. Scholars across a range of social science disciplines have grappled with understandings of gender in research, policy and practice (e.g. Beckwith, 2005; Burns, 2005; Eveline & Todd, 2010; Ferree, 1990; Htun, 2005; Riley, 1999; Williams, 2010). Some research does not use the language of gender equality (or equity)[22] when studying gender gaps, perhaps to avoid the uncertainties and difficulties in making visible and theorising gender as a structure or process. However, I would argue that even without using the term, a gap between men and women's outcomes, especially in the context of the labour market which so readily translates to financial (dis)advantage, is interpreted by readers as an indicator of gender *inequality*. Why else would researchers, funders and government departments be interested in a gap between women and men's outcomes, if not because it is perceived to be an unjust inequality to be eliminated? By extension, a reduction in the gap is easily inferred as progress towards gender equality even if the research did not state it as such.

However, while a gap between men and women on a given measure can relatively straightforwardly be argued to be an indicator of gender inequality, it remains merely an indicator of a complex and

[22] Nancy Fraser deliberately used the term equity over equality to avoid the implications of sameness and to emphasise the need for fairness (Fraser, 1997). However, the term gender equality is preferred here because of its wider general use.

multifaceted social phenomenon. The gap is not the underlying inequality itself. Here I draw on John Caldwell's evaluation that demographers' careful devotion to accuracy in measures is often not matched by a critical consideration and debate of the complexity of the concepts the measures attempt to capture: "they equate these statistical categories, defined in the first place in order to make measurement possible, with the underlying social reality" (Caldwell, 1996, p. 312). Because gender relations are inherently unequal, a reduction over time in the gap between men and women may not straightforwardly mean that gender equality is increasing. It may be instead that the way gender inequality manifests has changed. In the context of paid work over the life course, investigating gender gaps requires attention to how and when (in the life course) the gaps tend to emerge, and therefore focusing on whether gaps have reduced in that relevant life phase (i.e. during early parenthood) over historical time. With the shape of the life course changing, the timing of the life course phase of increasing inequality may have simply shifted or diversified between cohorts. If the timing of significant life course events such as the transition to parenthood are being delayed to a later chronological age, or stretched over a longer age span across subgroups within cohorts, because of educational expansion (Mortimer, Oesterle, & Krüger, 2005; Ní Bhrolcháin & Beaujouan, 2012),[23] then this needs to be taken into account in any analysis of changing gender differences in labour market outcomes over time, and care taken to make explicit what has changed and what that might suggest about gender relations.

Evidence of the transition to parenthood as a pivotal event that precipitates the emergence of gender inequalities in (heterosexual) life courses suggests that research on change over time in gendered labour market outcomes must attend to changes in family patterns over the same period. Over the period considered, the timing of childbirth and number of children have become more socially polarised by education. While most women become mothers, and two children is the most common family size regardless of maternal level of education, not having children has become more common among higher-educated women. Over a fifth (22%) of degree-educated women born in the 1960s never had children, compared with 10% among women without qualifications (Berrington et al., 2015). Higher-educated women who become mothers, tend to have their first child at a later age than lower-educated mothers and are less likely to have three or more children. As investigated further in Chapter 6, according to the literature, differences by education have increased over time (Berrington et al., 2015; Ní Bhrolcháin & Beaujouan, 2012; Rendall & Smallwood, 2003; Sigle-

[23] The social age, which relates more to the relative timing or sequence of life course roles or activity spells may have changed less, such that parenthood still on average follows completion of education, further highlighting the importance of being attentive to the theoretical or social meaning of variables in the analysis (in this context age, Neugarten, 1976; Settersten & Mayer, 1997).

Rushton, 2008). However, while studies investigating how gendered career trajectories have changed over time have often observed this in their findings (e.g. McMunn et al., 2015), they have not explicitly investigated whether, or to what extent, this delay is driving the convergence observed. In short, the observed gender convergence in career trajectories might be primarily a product of an extension of the pre-parenthood phase of the life course among an increasing proportion of the population that is higher educated; a phase generally characterised by education and full-time employment among both women and men.

Taking a narrow understanding of gender, women's life courses becoming more like men's, through the delay in parenthood, might be thought of as 'progress'. Afterall, the cumulative financial penalties incurred through adjustments to paid work over the life course might be reduced. However, while the responsibility for childrearing remains disproportionately assigned to women, or to some women in particular, with adverse implications for their paid work, financial independence and pension income, if or when the transition to parenthood does occur, then it is difficult to argue that delaying or foregoing parenthood has changed gender relations to become more equitable. For research in this context, what occurs prior to, or in the absence of family formation, is then of less relevance to analysing change over time with a view to understanding change in gender equality. Asymmetric change over time, as (some) women adopt more stereotypically 'male' paid work life courses, without a reciprocal change among men, leaves the allocation of unpaid care and reproductive labour unaddressed in a context where the direct and indirect costs of childrearing is largely borne by individual parents.

Asymmetric change of this kind leads to other inequalities, such as a 'second shift' of unpaid care work for mothers working in the labour market, and/or a transfer of childcare disproportionately towards women with lower education and income. Such transfers of care can come about directly, through formal childcare which tends to be low-paid, low-status employment sector with minimal prospects for career progression and earnings growth, but also thorough an increased polarisation of childbearing. If a growing proportion of highly educated women in professional and managerial occupations do not end up having children and lower educated women tend to have larger families, the work and associated costs of reproducing society can shift towards a section of society least able to afford it. This latter point is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. For the purposes of this chapter, it is adequate to say that asymmetric changes to labour market trajectories is interpreted as insufficient evidence of increasing gender equality.

Relatedly, it is difficult to argue that progress towards gender equality is taking place without attention to other social hierarchies such as social class, since the very social meaning of gender, as

well as the structures of constraint, are bound up in intersecting axes of inequality (Cooke, 2011; Duncan & Edwards, 1997; Skeggs, 2011, 2014). The obligation to care, of 'being there', as well as the appeal of caring, and/or the obligation to provide financially are felt differently among women and men, as well as between them.

Trying to interpret changing gender differences without attention to both the social meaning of gender and how it differs for differently situated people, and to how the shape of the life course itself has changed or diversified over (historical) time, thus may risk over-optimistic inferences of progress towards gender equality through cohort replacement. To take a more critical approach, this analysis investigates changing gender differences in labour market participation over time, looking not merely at whether there is evidence of gap reduction but additionally asking:

- Is the change over time symmetric between women and men?
- Does evidence of gaps between women and men reducing over cohorts (also) emerge after the transition to parenthood?
- Is the evidence of change over time relatively evenly distributed by level of education?

The aim of the analysis presented in this chapter is to describe labour market trajectories of women and men of different cohorts, illustrating both how differences have changed and persisted in order to think through what the patterns might suggest in terms of substantive gender (in)equality over time in the UK.

4.3. Data and Methods

Data

The analysis for this chapter is based on the life history modules included in four of the large-scale surveys introduced in the previous chapter: ELSA; the NCDS and BCS70 birth cohorts and the UKHLS. The analysis focuses on a subsample of 1,394 ELSA main respondents who took part in the life history module and who were born between the years 1944 and 1948, inclusive, covering a life history period for this analysis from 1960-1964 to 1999-2003, when respondents were aged 16 to 55. Following the latest sweep of data collection for the two birth cohorts (available at the time of analysis), 14,112 NCDS and 12,029 BCS70 respondents are included in the analysis, covering ages 16 to 55 for NCDS (1974-2013) and 16-42 for BCS70 (1986-2012). The UKHLS focuses on the 2,553 respondents who were born in the years 1980 to 1984 and responded to the economic activity history module. Combined with information on their resident and non-resident children (where relevant), this covers their work-family life courses from age 16 to 30-34 (1996-2000 to 2013/14).

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, the economic activity histories differentiate between discreet spells of different activities. For this analysis I differentiate between five categories of economic activity status: combining full-time employment and self-employment; part-time employment; looking after the home and family; full-time education; and a combined category of other non-employment which includes unemployment, sickness, volunteering and retirement. For brevity I refer to the combined self-employment and full-time employment category as full-time paid work, although some self-employment spells could involve short or variable hours. Maternity leave, where reported, is treated as a continuation of the preceding paid employment status for the purposes of this analysis.

For the parenthood histories I have focused on children born to, or adopted by, the respondent. Stepchildren have been excluded from the parenthood histories in this analysis because the data on stepchildren's co-residence histories are less complete and stepchildren resident elsewhere are assumed to not affect the respondent's labour market trajectory. It is possible that even co-resident stepchildren may affect labour market trajectories less than a birth or adoption, but it is not possible to test this with these data. Nevertheless, the exclusion of stepchildren is also consistent with how UK policy differentiates between different parent-child relationships; maternity leave and adoption leave are not available when a stepchild enters a household, including in instances of adoption of a stepchild.

Methods

In order to describe the paid work trajectories of men and women across the four cohorts and investigate how these relate to family life course events and in ways that are not just gendered but may also differ by education, this chapter presents stylised example trajectories based on predicted probabilities from multinomial logistic regressions. Multinomial regression is appropriate for categorical outcomes with more than two alternatives that are not ordered, as is the case for economic activity status. By including respondent age in the model, and clustering by a respondent identifier, it is possible to show how the probability of doing each economic activity status differs by age. Because the aim is to describe work-family life courses and the analysis does not look to estimate a causal effect, for example, of the transition to parenthood or of an increase in level of qualification on employment outcomes, it is appropriate to fit the regression adjusting for the clustering at the individual level rather than fitting a fixed effects model.

The two key variables of interest, by which comparisons are made are the respondent's gender and their highest level of education attained.

Because of educational expansion over the period of time studied in this chapter, later cohorts are staying in education longer, obtaining qualifications in higher proportions and at higher qualification levels on average than earlier-born cohorts. This makes it difficult to meaningfully compare labour market trajectories by qualification across the cohorts. As more young people stay on in education, and labour market composition and conditions have changed, the relative value or disadvantage of having particular qualifications, or none at all, has changed. For the purposes of this analysis, I have therefore divided each analysis cohort into three groups corresponding to low, middle and high education level.

Due to a combination of the discrete nature of level of qualification and some missing data on the variables for highest level of qualification or the age of leaving full-time education, the derivation of even thirds was not entirely successful in the two later cohorts, where those with low education appear to be somewhat under-represented in the final grouping (see Table 4.1 below). Nevertheless, this approach allows for comparison of three relatively even-sized groups for each cohort that correspond to low- middle-, and highly qualified individuals relative to others in the same cohort.

Table 4.1 Level of education in cohort-specific tertiles

	% Low education	% Middle education	% High education	Total unweighted base
ELSA 1944-48	33	33	33	1,394
NCDS 1958	33	33	34	14,112
BCS 1970	31	35	34	12,029
UKHLS 1980-84	31	35	34	2,553

Base: Individuals with economic activity history; Notes: Percentages are weighted for ELSA using the employment history weight and for UKHLS using the cross-sectional Wave 5 weight.

The level of education information was asked or updated at the same time as the economic activity history, i.e. the latest sweep of data collection. For the NCDS and BCS70 it would be possible to use information at an earlier age but not for ELSA, and for UKHLS using educational information collected at an earlier sweep of data collection would only make a difference of a few years. However, as the aim of the analysis is not to estimate a causal relationship between education and labour market outcomes, but rather to describe the work-family life courses of differently situated individuals, the timing in the life course of the attainment of the highest level of educational qualification is less critical.

In addition to gender and education group, the model included variables capturing aspects of the family life course: the number of children born/adopted by a given age (entered as dummies for 1, 2, 3 and 4 or more) and the age of the youngest child as well as the squared term of the age of the

youngest child, to allow for the effect of the age of the youngest child on the parent's status to be curvilinear.[24]

Finally, the model included a number of interactions to allow for effects of the other variables to differ for men and women, and by education group. The interaction terms included in the model were between respondent age and gender, education group and gender, a three-way interaction of gender, age and education, and finally, an interaction between age of the youngest child and gender.

The model was run with the same specification separately for each cohort. Based on the regression model results, I calculated predicted probabilities to construct economic activity trajectories for stylised 'median family life course' scenarios such as *Woman born 1944-48, low education, with two children born when she was aged 24 and 26*. The number of children and timing of births was fixed at the cohort and education group-specific medians, as summarised in the table below (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Characteristics of stylised family life course scenarios

		1944-48		1958		1970		1980-84	
	Education	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Median number of children	Low	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	1
	Middle	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1
	High	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	0
Median age at first birth	Low	24	26	25	27	27	29	22	24
	Middle	25	28	27	29	30	32	25	27
	High	23	27	25	27	27	29	29	
Median age at second birth	Low	26	29	27		30		25	
	Middle	28	30	29		32			
	High	26	29	27		30			
Unwt n (all)		*777*	*617*	*6,996*	*7,116*	*6,114*	*5,915*	1,524	*1,029*

4.4. Results

Descriptive cohort profiles

This section presents some descriptive analysis to map out how the work-family life courses differ over the cohorts (see Table 4.3.A in Chapter Appendix for summary statistics), briefly contextualising

[24] Strictly speaking, the age of the youngest child variable captures the years since becoming the parent of a(nother) child, i.e. since birth or adoption. In cases of adoption of a child after infancy this does not correspond with the age of the child. However, as adoption is rare, in the vast majority of instances this coincides with the age of the youngest child so for brevity I refer to the variable as such in the interpretation.

the differences with an overview of the different social and economic conditions faced by the cohorts.

If completion of education and labour market entry is taken as a marker of the transition to adulthood, then entry into adulthood can be said to have been postponed over the cohorts. While the typical person born in 1944-48 left school at about 16 years of age (mean 16.5, median 16), and three-quarters of both men and women in this cohort entered their first paid employment at (or by) age 17, the average age of leaving education was almost 20 years among those born in the early 1980s.

This increase was not due to a uniform shift of the whole distribution, but rather the range has widened. The lower quartile of the age of entry into the labour market increased by only one year from 15 to 16 from the earliest to the latest cohort, reflecting the increase in school leaving age to 16 in 1972.[25] The quarter of young people in the latest cohort who remained in education the longest, left education in their early 20s or later (upper quartile of leaving age was 22 years), compared with late teens in the earlier cohorts (age 17, 18 and 19 among those born 1944-48, 1958 and 1970, respectively). This widening of the age range of leaving education is as might be expected as a result of the expansion of higher education.

As they left education, the majority in each of the cohorts entered full-time work, although that majority reduced from 97% among those born 1944-48 to 82% of those born 1980-84. Meanwhile, labour market entry into part-time employment increased from 2% of both men and women born 1944-48 to 14% of those born 1980-84. This reflects the different economic conditions that the women and men entered the labour market under. Most of the 1944-48 cohort entered the labour market between 1959 and 1969, towards the end of the post-war economic growth period. As has been discussed by other scholars of the birth cohort studies (e.g. Bukodi & Dex, 2010), the 1958 birth cohort entered the labour market under less favourable economic conditions, mostly between 1974 and 1977, broadly coinciding with economic recession years in Britain 1973-1976, compared to the 1970 cohort who mainly entered the labour market during the economic boom of the late 1980s. Most of those born between 1980 and 1984 entered the labour market at the end of the 1990s and during the early 2000s, and thus prior to the 2008 recession. It was a time of low unemployment rates but nonetheless a more competitive and flexible labour market, requiring a fit of formal qualifications, skills and experience for the job and with less emphasis and opportunity for training

[25] The compulsory education or training age was further raised to 18 in 2015 but that change did not affect these cohorts.

and apprenticeships on the job than in previous generations (Brannen et al., 2004; Mayhew, 2015; Taylor, 2000).

Tracing individuals beyond the initial entry into the labour market and into their 20s and 30s shows that the gender gap in paid work participation rates emerge with age. These gaps have, however, reduced over cohorts, echoing the findings from other studies of converging trajectories. There has also been a delay in terms of the timing of the appearance of the gap in the life course, over the cohorts (Figure 4.1). While the size of the gender gap in labour market participation surpassed 15 percentage points around the age of 21 for the 1944-48 cohort and 23 for the 1958, among the 1970 and 1980-84 cohorts this occurred at the ages of 27 and 31 respectively.

Figure 4.1 Gender gap in participation rate: Any paid work

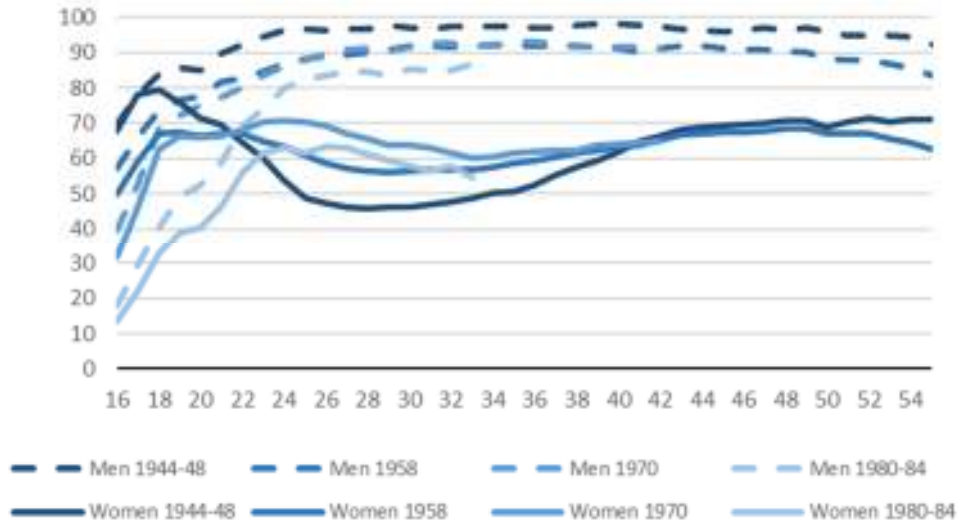
This pattern of delay is paralleled by changes over time in the timing of parenthood. While the average age at first partnership (married or cohabiting union) has remained relatively stable at around 23 years, the proportion who became parents by the end of their 20s declined substantially between cohorts. At age 30, 87% of the 1944-48 cohort, 78% of the 1958 cohort, 65% of the 1970 cohort and 60% of the 1980-84 cohort had had one or more children. The average (mean) number of children also declined from 2 children at the age of 30 among those born in 1944-48 to 1.1 children on average at the age of 30 among those born in 1980-84. As the literature suggests parenthood has a 'traditionalising effect' on couples' division of paid and unpaid work, the delay in the gender gap in looking after the home and family and conversely in paid work is thus likely a reflection of this delay on average in age at the transition to parenthood.

Because for women, at least during early to middle adulthood, the exit from employment and switch (or re-entry) to part-time hours are both strongly linked to parenthood and associated caring

responsibilities, it is useful to look at the cohort patterns by age that include full-time and part-time work. The figure below (Figure 4.2) shows a crude index of paid work 'intensity' separately for men and women. This intensity index was derived by assigning the value 1 to full-time employment and self-employment, 0 to no paid work and 0.5 to part-time employment. Thus, a score of 100 would correspond to all individuals in the cohort at that age being in full-time work. As the dashed lines show, the widespread entry into full-time employment among men has been delayed.

Among women the paid work intensity index is lower than among men at every age in every cohort. The delay in labour market entry is also visible among women, as is a reduction of the subsequent 'dip' in paid work intensity. The flattening of these intensity curves for later cohorts can have come about through different mechanisms, or a combination of them. Likely explanations include the increased continuity of employment through participation in part-time work as well as full-time work following childbearing, as employment exit on childbearing has become less universal and normative over time. Greater diversity among women in terms of motherhood transition, including an increasing proportion of women not having children and a greater proportion of women delaying motherhood to later ages would also contribute to this cohort pattern.

Figure 4.2 Paid work intensity by age



In the next section, one of these potential mechanisms, the delay in childbearing, is centred as the analysis compares predicted probabilities for stylised profiles based on the cohort- and education group specific median family life course.

Paid work trajectories for stylised median family life course profiles

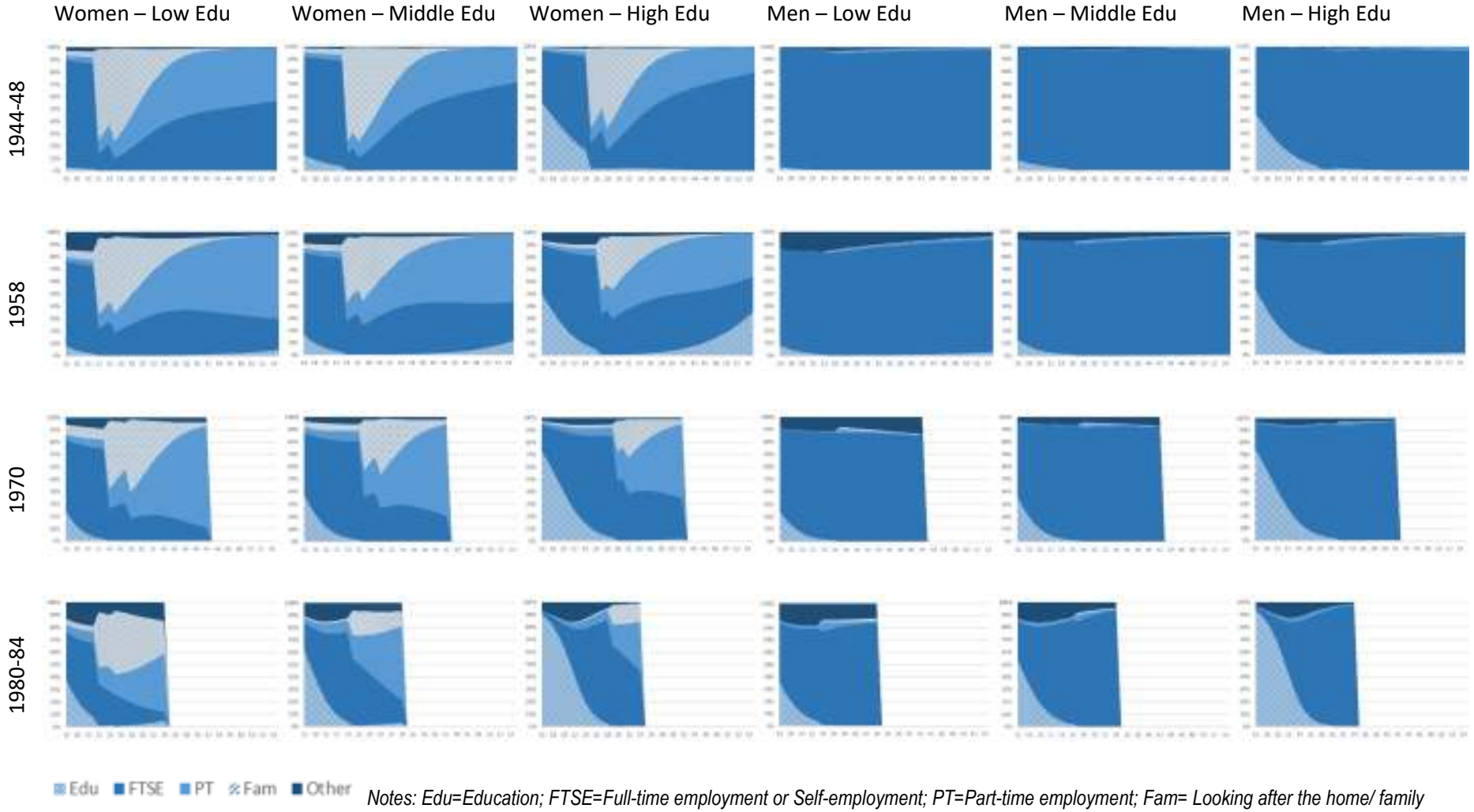
Figure 4.3 provides an overview of how the predicted probabilities of different economic activity statuses vary by age for the stylised profiles to give a snapshot impression of gender and class differences and the change that has occurred over time (see Table 4.4.A and Table 4.5.A, for full model results from which these predicted probabilities were calculated). The horizontal axis for each individual panel of the graph is age, from 16 to 55, although for the two later cohorts predicted probabilities are only shown up to the last age the individuals of that cohort are observed in the data (42 for the 1970 cohort and 34 for those born 1980-84). The vertical axes, on a percentage scale, show the probabilities of each activity category at the given year of age, for each stylised profile. A number of observations can be made based on this broad overview.

Firstly, it is clear to see that there is much more variation in women's paid work life courses than men, for whom full-time paid work predominates from the early to mid-20s onwards in all education categories in each of the cohorts. Among women, education (dotted) and full-time paid work (solid mid-blue) also predominate in the early adulthood years but fall sharply at the time of the first birth, after which the probability of part-time work (solid light blue) and of unpaid care work (striped) increase.

Secondly, educational expansion over the cohorts is evident among both men and women, as can be seen from the larger dotted area in the bottom left corners of the panels for the later cohorts. Thirdly, there has also been an evident increase the prevalence of the other 'not in paid work' category, seen in the darkest solid blue shade at the top of panels. The predicted probabilities for this economic activity status, characterised by not engaging in education, paid work or unpaid care, is non-trivial among both men and women and in all education groups, indicating increasing precarity in early adulthood for the youngest cohort (although a reminder that for this and the 1958 cohorts in the teenage years and early twenties, this may in part also reflect some mis-coding and thus under-recording of participation in education).

Finally, among women in the 1958 cohort there is an increase in the take-up of education towards the end of the observation period (approximately late 30s onwards for the highly educated group and early 40s for the middle group). This may perhaps reflect some of these women re-training in order to resume or take up a life course plan previously closed off by motherhood. This pattern is not observed in the earlier cohort of women, or among men in either cohort.

Figure 4.3 Stacked predicted probabilities: Economic activity by age



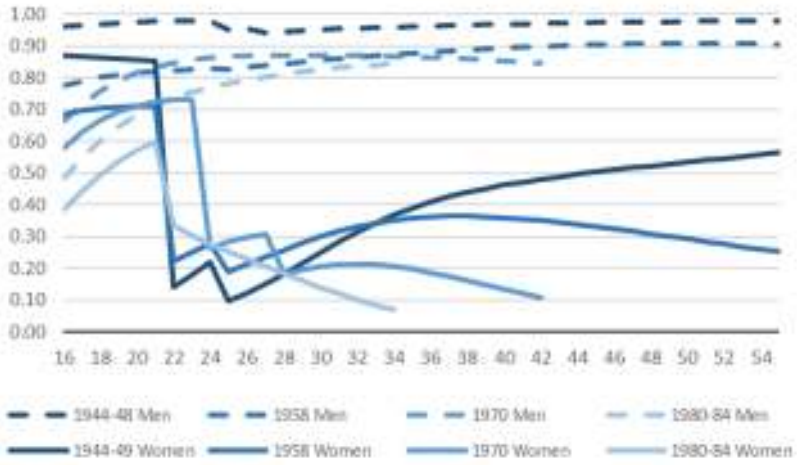
Notes: Edu=Education; FTSE=Full-time employment or Self-employment; PT=Part-time employment; Fam= Looking after the home/ family

Focusing specifically on the predicted probabilities of full-time paid work, for women and men with a median parenthood profile, allows for more direct comparisons by gender and cohort for each education group. In Figure 4.4 below, the solid lines are for women and the dashed lines for men, with the shade indicating the cohort. The figure shows that among all education groups and cohorts, for men once entered, the probability of full-time paid work is high and remains high with age. Among the lowest educated group however, there is some variation by cohort, with lower probability of full-time paid work in more recent cohorts. Conversely, while the entry into full-time paid work occurs at increasingly later ages in later cohorts, by the late twenties there is minimal difference by cohort in the probability of full-time paid work among the most highly educated third of men.

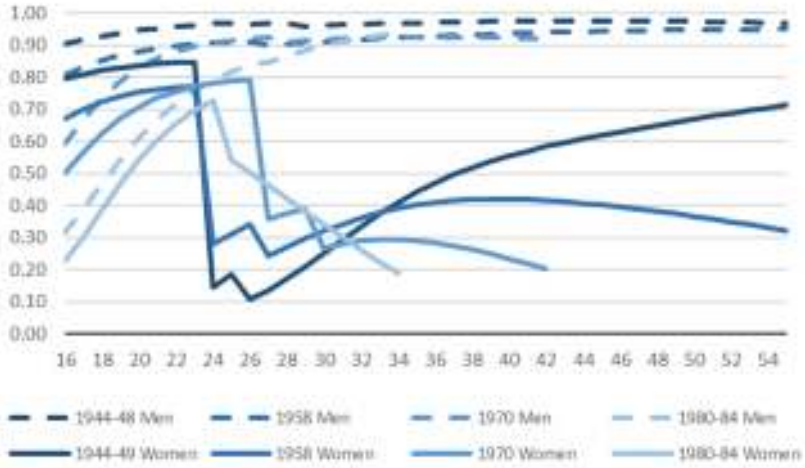
Among women, the pattern is markedly different. The predicted probabilities of full-time paid work are relatively high and quite similar to those of the men in the same cohort and education group until their early- to mid-20s, when the probabilities drop sharply at the age of the first birth. Among the earlier cohorts, there is then a slight increase in the predicted probability of full-time paid work, followed by another drop at the birth of the second child. Among women born in 1944-48 and 1958 the predicted probabilities of full-time paid work increase somewhat with time after the second birth but among the latter two cohorts, predicted probabilities are lower for some time after the transition to parenthood, than among women in the same education group in the earlier cohorts. Note that while the youngest cohort does not follow the 'W' pattern observed among the other cohorts of women, even among the lowest educated group whose median parenthood profile did include two births, this could well be related to the relatively early right-censoring of data for this cohort. Too much weight should thus not be attached to this change in the shape of women's paid work trajectories, unless corroborated by further research with a longer observation period for the youngest cohort. Nevertheless, the lack of post-birth increase in the probability of full-time paid work among women in both the 1970 and 1980-84 cohorts, compared with the 1944-48 and 1958 cohorts is notable and, based on the existing literature, likely related to increased take up of part-time employment. The changing probability of part-time work among women across cohorts is investigated further below.

While among men the cohort differences were most evident for the lowest educated third, among women the cohort differences are smallest for this group. The cohort-on-cohort postponement of the transition to parenthood observed among the middle- and especially the highly educated groups means for these groups there has been an extension of the pre-parenthood phase of the life course, the phase when the predicted probabilities of women are more similar to those of the men in the same cohort and education category.

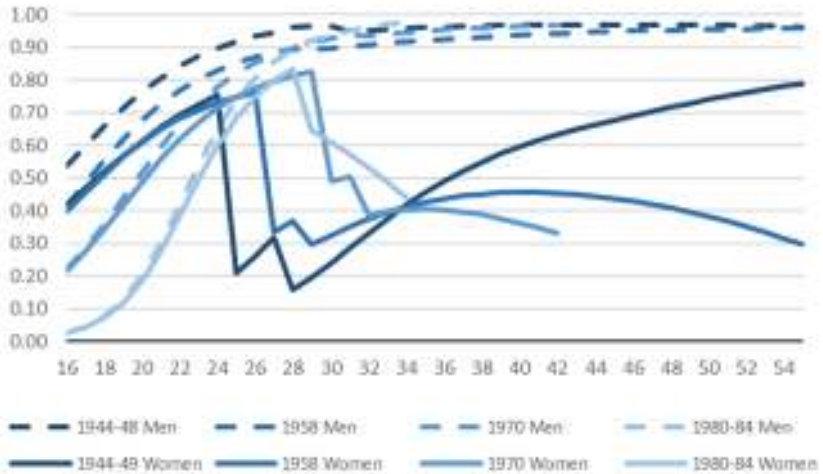
Figure 4.4 Predicted probabilities of full-time paid work by age
Low education



Middle education



High education



To investigate change over time in women and men's trajectories further, without the concurrently changing timing of the transition to parenthood confounding the interpretation, the figure below presents the same predicted probabilities of full-time paid employment centred on the age at the transition to parenthood. The X-axis for each panel in Figure 4.5 below then shows the years to or since the transition to parenthood.[26] The panels on the left side show the predicted probabilities for men and women separately, while the panels on the right side show the gender gap in these predicted probabilities.

This presentation of the data highlights not only that the pre-parenthood phase has been extended over the cohorts, and especially so among the highest educated, but also both the gendered asymmetry in the change, and that the change over time in the difference between men and women differs by education. Firstly, while the gap between men and women's predicted probabilities of full-time paid work has reduced over the cohorts also after the transition to parenthood, it remains substantial. As the left side of the figure shows, the change is asymmetric, almost entirely due to changes to *women's* post-birth labour market behaviour. Men's probability of full-time paid work is unaffected by their transition to parenthood. Secondly, among women, the change across cohorts differs by education. The probability of full-time paid work in the first five years after the transition to parenthood has increased much less over the cohorts among the lowest educated third of women in each cohort than among the middle and higher educated groups.

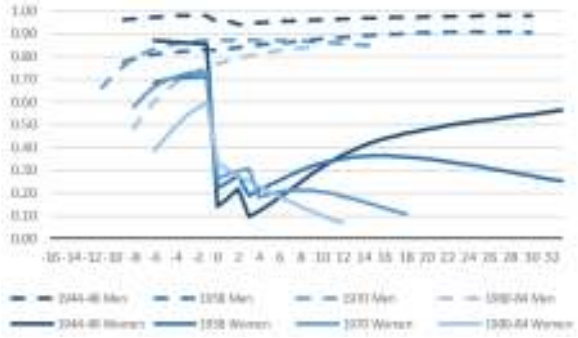
Thus, the figure clearly shows that while the gender gap in full-time employment has reduced over cohorts, both before and after the transition to parenthood, it was and remains much smaller during the early adulthood pre-parenthood phase. Men's paid work remains unaffected by parenthood while women continue to make substantial adjustments to their paid work on becoming mothers and consequently gender differences following the birth of the first child remain substantial. Three years after the transition to parenthood the gap between the predicted probabilities of full-time paid work for men and women stood at 0.55, 0.48 and 0.42 for low, middle and highly educated members of the most recent cohort (compared with 0.85, 0.82 and 0.79 for the three education groups in the earliest cohort).

[26] For highly educated men born 1980-84 the median number of children by the end of the observation period (age 30-34) was zero. For the purposes of this figure I centred the X-axis at age 29, the median age at the birth of the first child among those highly educated men in the cohort who had become fathers by the time of the data collection.

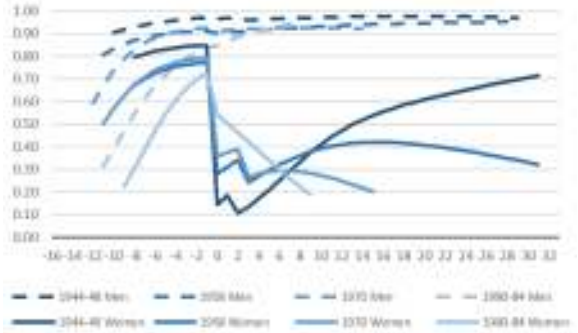
Figure 4.5 Predicted probabilities of full-time paid work and gender gap in predicted probabilities, by time centred on transition to parenthood

Predicted probabilities – Women and Men

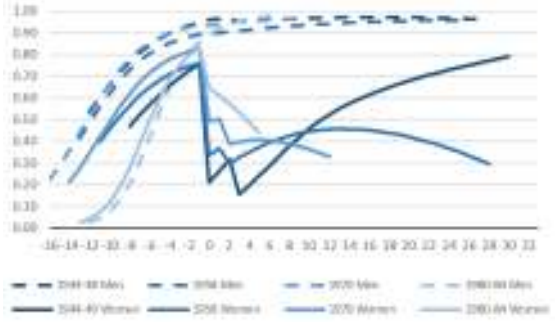
Low education



Middle education

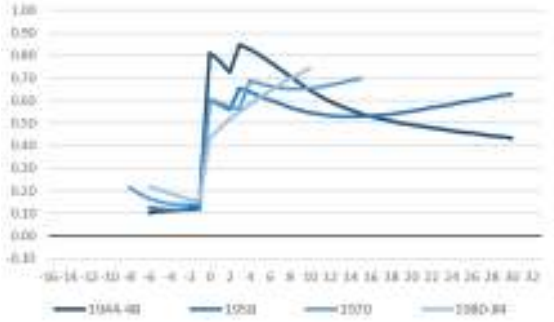


High education

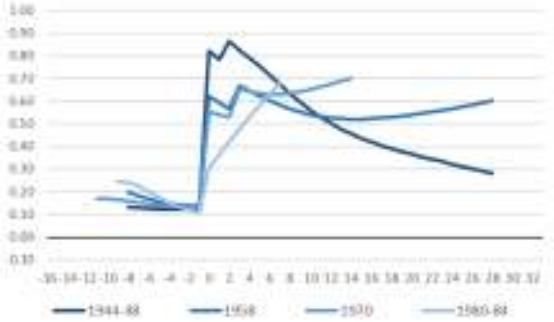


Gender gap in predicted probabilities

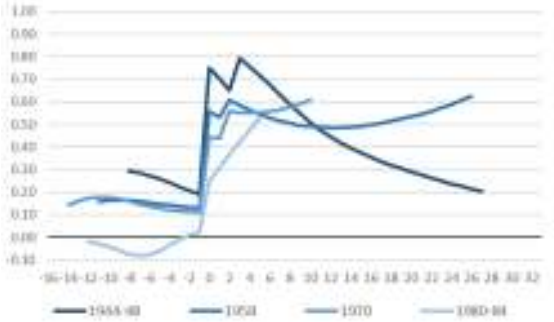
Low education



Middle education



High education



As prior research on women's employment has identified increasing take-up of part-time work as central to how women's paid work over the life course has changed over time, the next figure complements the focus on predicted probabilities of full-time paid work, with predicted probabilities of unpaid family care work ('looking after the home and family') and predicted probabilities of part-time employment (Figure 4.6). The horizontal axis is again centred on the age at first birth for these median stylised profiles. The predicted probabilities for both of these outcomes among men are

uniformly low and unrelated to the transition to parenthood across cohorts and education groups and therefore not shown (generally between 0 and 0.03, with a high of 0.07 for part-time employment around the mid-20s among lower educated men born 1980-84).

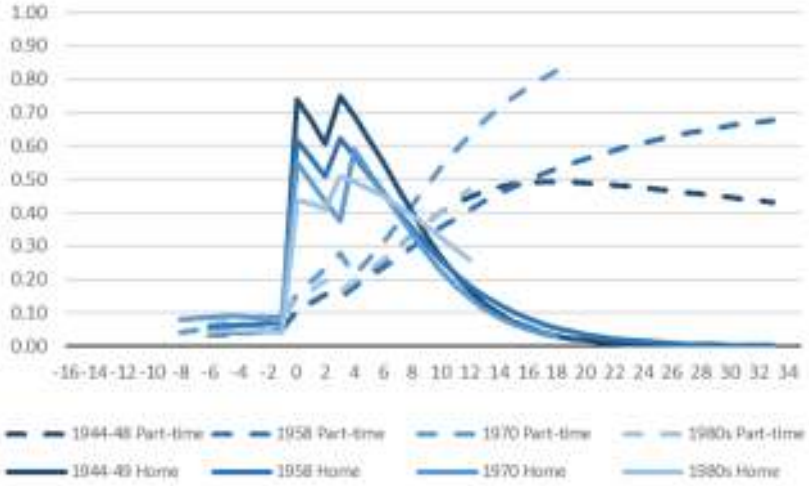
For women, the figure shows that the 'M' shape of the predicted probabilities for looking after the home and family mirrors the 'W' shape for the predicted probabilities for full-time work. Exiting the labour market on the birth of the first and/or subsequent child, while reducing somewhat over cohorts, remains common especially among the lowest educated group. The predicted probabilities of part-time employment, meanwhile, have increased across cohorts and tend to increase with time since the transition to parenthood.

Combining the predicted probabilities of full-time and part-time paid work suggests that the probabilities for looking after the home and family among the lowest educated group were higher than the probability of any paid work for some years after the transition to motherhood across the cohorts (7, 6, 2 and 5 years respectively). Among the middle educated group, the point at which the predicted probability of undertaking paid work exceeded the probability of looking after the home and family occurred earlier for each cohort, at 6 and 4 years after the transition to motherhood for the 1944-48 and 1958 cohorts respectively, and from the initial year of the transition to motherhood for the 1970 and 1980-84 cohorts respectively. Among the highly educated group of women, the predicted probability of any paid work exceeded the probability of being at home at 6 years following the birth of the first child in the earliest cohort and among all subsequent cohorts the predicted probability of paid work exceeded the probability of unpaid care as the main activity from the year of the transition onward.

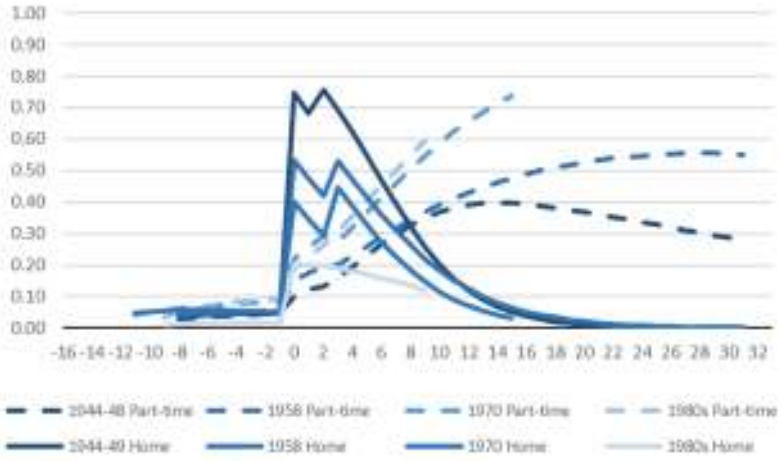
However, among the middle and highly educated groups in the 1970 and 1980-84 cohorts, initially relatively high predicted probabilities of full-time paid work (compared with previous cohorts or lower educated groups of the same cohorts) subsequently dropped with time since the transition to parenthood, while the predicted probabilities of part-time employment increased. Among the low educated group in each of these latter cohorts, full-time paid work both was lower initially and remained low, while the predicted probabilities of part-time employment increased with time. These patterns of paid work for the more recent cohorts are unlike in the earlier two cohorts where the general pattern was high probability of looking after the home and family in the early years of motherhood but rising probabilities of both full-time and part-time paid work with time.

Figure 4.6 Predicted probabilities of looking after the home; part-time employment, by time centred on transition to parenthood

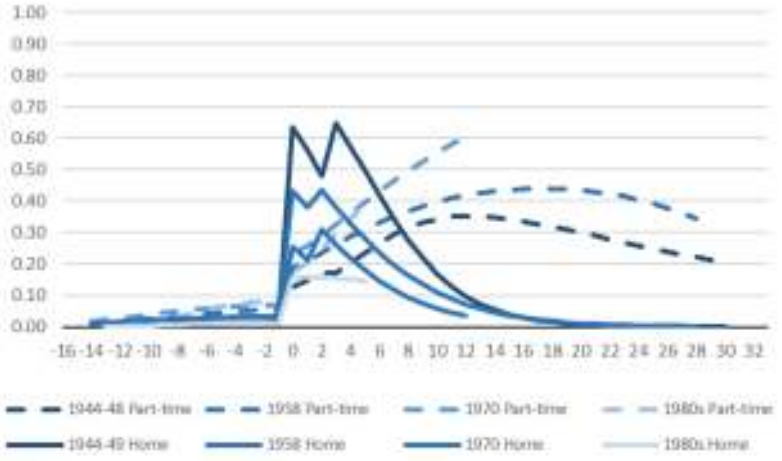
Low education



Middle education



High education



This suggests that across the cohorts, part-time paid work has indeed become an increasingly important feature of many mothers' paid work trajectories over time. For middle and highly educated mothers this may be a way to maintain continuous labour market attachment through the care-intensive early parenthood years. It seems the least educationally privileged women are either unable or unwilling to access part-time paid work in this way in large numbers when becoming mothers as looking after the family is prevalent in the early motherhood years for this group across the cohorts, with take-up of part-time work increasing substantially only some years after the transition to motherhood.

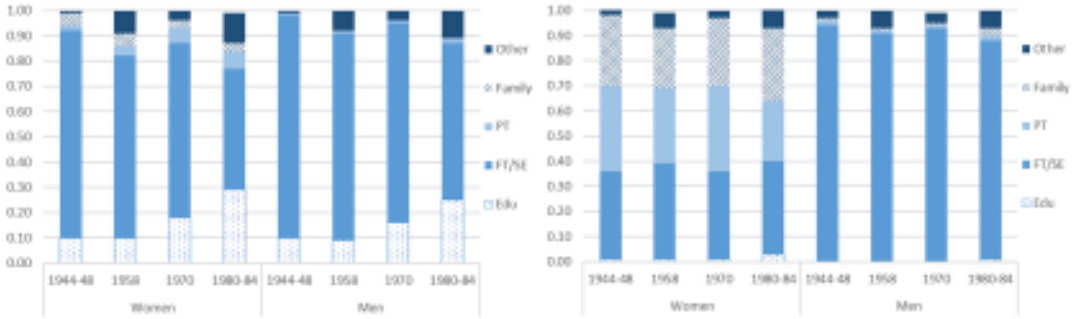
It is possible that part-time paid work may also have become a more stable activity status over mothers' life courses. However, this interpretation would need to be verified by further research when a longer follow-up period for more recent cohorts is available. It may simply be that the combination of postponement of childbearing and the earlier censoring of the data for the later cohorts means subsequent switch back to full-time paid work among mothers is not (yet) observed in the data in sufficient numbers to be reflected in the predicted probabilities.

In sum, the results in this section show that there has been change over time in women's labour market participation, both prior to and following childbearing, and these changes to women's work life courses have reduced the gap between men and women somewhat. However, the transition to parenthood is clearly a pivotal life course moment with gendered outcomes. And as noted in the beginning of this chapter the different paths taken have cumulative effects over the life course.

As the exact paid hours typically worked in each year is not recorded in the life histories in these surveys, it is not possible to use this method of predicted probabilities for example to estimate the gender gap in cumulative paid hours over the life course of these stylised trajectories. Instead, Figure 4.7 below shows the sum of years spent in each economic activity type, as a proportion of the total number of years observed in the datasets prior to (left panel) or after (right panel) the transition to parenthood. Apart from the educational expansion over the cohorts, viewed in this way the (gendered) stability over cohorts is notable. Prior to, or in the absence of parenthood, both women and men in all cohorts spend most of their time in education or full-time employment, ranging among the cohorts from 77% to 92% among women and 87% to 98% among men. Following the transition to birth, while women spend between 61% and 69% of their years in paid work, less than two-fifths of those years are spent working full-time (35% to 39%), compared to between 89% to 96% of the years after becoming fathers that men across the cohorts spend in full-time paid work.

Figure 4.7 Mean time spent in each activity as a proportion of the total time

Before (or in the absence of) parenthood After the transition to parenthood



Notes: Edu=Education; FTSE=Full-time employment or Self-employment; PT=Part-time employment; Fam= Looking after the home/ family

4.5. Concluding discussion

This chapter has investigated cohort differences in men and women's paid work, with the explicit aim of centring the transition to parenthood in the analysis to question what evidence of gap reduction over cohorts means in terms of gender equality when the shape of the gendered life course has itself changed.

Overall, the findings from both the descriptive analysis of the participation gap and work-intensity rates by age, and the stylised trajectories based on predicted probabilities suggest that the gap in men and women's paid work has reduced over time, including after the transition to parenthood. However, the change is asymmetric. Women's probability of full-time paid work after the transition to parenthood has increased across cohorts while men's has not reduced. A reduction in men's probability of full-time paid and perhaps corresponding increase in part-time work, over the cohorts, at the transition to parenthood, might have indicated a greater involvement in care among more recent cohorts of fathers.

Meanwhile, when focusing on the early parenthood phase, the cohort-on-cohort increasing predicted probability of part-time work in the early years after the birth of the first child among middle and highly educated groups suggests that the availability of part-time work might help some mothers remain in continuous paid work, as also discussed in other research (e.g. Joshi & Hinde, 1993). However, the findings also suggest that this is less the case among mothers with the lowest levels of education, for whom time out of the labour market for childrearing and care remains relatively common, including in the most recent cohort. Therefore, the change over time in women's paid work is classed.

The analysis also found that educational differences among women have become increasingly important over time. Differentiating the (gendered) change over time by level of education thus further complicates the interpretation of convergence as increasing gender equality. Firstly, lower educated women's paid work showed much less change over cohorts, suggesting that whatever 'progress' middle and more highly educated women in more recent cohorts have been able to make relative to earlier cohorts has not extended to lower educated women. The role of part-time work as potentially 'enabling' labour market continuity for mothers is not as salient among lower educated women. While qualitative research showing that many (white) working-class mothers see paid work and formal childcare as incompatible with 'good' mothering (Duncan, 1999; Skeggs, 1997) might be taken as an explanation for this, it is difficult to disentangle such attitudes from the constraints of the quality and pay of employment opportunities and the costs and (in)flexibility of available childcare (Crompton, 2006a; Schober & Scott, 2012).

The analysis presented here is not intended to convey that all should aspire to full-time continuous employment regardless of their family and care situation. Caring can often be intrinsically highly rewarding and many mothers place high value on devoting some years to the full-time care of their children, and the emphasis on 'being there' for the children can be seen as a thread of continuity over generations, and to some extent across class, in the UK (Brannen et al., 2004). The point however is that this is gendered, as the responsibility to care and to 'be there' is socially assigned to women and thus felt more strongly by women. More men might do the same, if care were valued in society and policy as making a productive contribution (McKie, Bowlby, & Gregory, 2001; Perrons, 2005) and in the absence of restrictive gender norms and the gender pay gap which make a traditional division of labour both socially and financially a sensible arrangement. Instead I would argue that in light of widening social inequalities, an overall pattern of gender convergence cannot be interpreted as increasing equality if it only applies to those who are already otherwise more privileged.

As previously discussed, the analysis necessarily presents a partial and incomplete view of change over time in gendered work-family life courses. This analysis has not been able to investigate how change in gendered life courses over time might differ by ethnic group and thus necessarily reflects patterns experienced by the UK white majority. This is a limitation common to much survey analysis, but I raise the point again as a reminder that it may not be appropriate to extrapolate the patterns described here to some minority ethnic groups. Research suggests that the pattern of change over time could look quite different for different ethnic groups. As noted previously, although substantial change over time has been documented in the paid work of British Asian women from Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities (Dale et al., 2002), cross-sectional statistics have shown little change in

Black women's full-time employment rates from the already high levels in the 1970s (Reynolds, 2001).

It is important to note that these results present stylised trajectories based on predicted probabilities, rather than tracing individuals over time as they transition into and out of different employment statuses. This approach shows how the probability of doing a given activity differs for women and men and by education, given their age and the set family characteristics, and thus appropriate for the aims of this analysis. However, it can also mask some churn within the group from one year to the next, giving the impression individual paid work life courses progressing more smoothly through different activities than might be the case for individuals. As other research has shown, many mothers' labour market experiences continue to be unstable extending for years following their last birth (Stewart, 2014).

Nevertheless, I argue that the approach taken here of comparing change over time in stylised trajectories by chronological age as well as centred on the transition to parenthood gets at the core of the social meaning of gender at the work-family nexus in the UK context. The social expectation that women take on the main carer role and associated unpaid work and responsibility when becoming parents, suggests that if researchers are interested in whether labour market outcomes have become more equal for men and women over time they should attend to whether the effect of parenthood on labour market outcomes has become less gendered.

This attention to outcomes after the transition to parenthood is especially pertinent for research on change over time in gendered outcomes in a period when the age of childbearing has been rising. This is not to say that inequality in the labour market, or otherwise, only affects women if or when they become mothers. Nor is the call to attend to outcomes following the transition to parenthood intended to convey that the mathematical reduction in the gap between men and women is unimportant or may not bring with it improved material outcomes for many women. An often-suggested rationale for postponing parenthood is to minimise the motherhood penalty (Gustafsson, 2001; Mills, Rindfuss, McDonald, te Velde, Reproduction, & Force, 2011). To the extent that they spend a greater proportion of their life courses in full-time employment and thus better 'fit' the androcentric model life course, it ought to also accrue them the associated rewards of greater career progression, lifetime earnings and pension savings. However, simply postponing the parenthood-related gendered inequalities to a later chronological age suggests that the underlying reasons for the substantive gender inequality remain unresolved. Instead, my aim is to highlight that because a majority of men and women become parents and the impact of parenthood on their labour market

experience is so gendered, measuring gender equality over time must also attend specifically to whether the effect of parenthood is becoming less unequal.

The explicit focus on the early parenthood phase also highlighted the extent of the remaining gap between mothers and fathers in participation in full-time and part-time paid work, as fathers continue to maintain full-time employment. This suggests that while women's labour market trajectories have changed over cohorts, in terms of gender transformation or progress towards a more egalitarian gender order, there is limited evidence of any change at all. The substantive gender inequality that assigns the responsibility for childrearing and care primarily to women, and financial provision and breadwinning primarily to men, remains unchanged. The results thus add to other studies that have suggested that labour market and pension inequality between men and women is unlikely to be resolved simply through the passage of time and cohort replacement (e.g. Joshi et al., 2007; Sefton et al., 2011). These results are compatible with the gendered social change theories that stress the asymmetry of change, but so far in terms of paid work there is little evidence of the commencement of a second stage of a gender revolution in Britain. The next chapter investigates the intra-couple household division of labour and includes more direct measures of father-involvement not captured here in the exclusive focus on economic activity.

4.6. Chapter 4 Appendix: Results Tables

Table 4.3.A Descriptive analysis

	ELSA 1944-48			NCDS 1958			BCS70 1970			UKHLS 1980-84		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Age left education												
Mean	16.6	16.4	16.5	16.9	16.8	16.9	18.0	18.2	18.1	19.5	19.7	19.6
Median	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	17	19	19	19
LQ	15	15	15	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	17	17
UQ	17	17	17	18	18	18	19	19	19	22	22	22
Unwt N	*617*	*777*	*1,394*	*7,116*	*6,996*	*14,112*	*5,828*	*6,047*	*11,875*	*703*	*1,065*	*1,768*
Age started paid work												
Mean	16.6	16.4	16.5	16.9	16.8	16.9	18.0	18.2	18.1	19.7	20.1	20.0
Median	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	17	19	19	19
LQ	15	15	15	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	18	17
UQ	17	17	17	18	18	18	19	19	19	22	22	22
Unwt N	617	777	1,394	7,116	6,996	14,112	5,915	6,114	12,029	689	1,046	1,735
First paid work type												
Full-time	97	97	97	95	92	94	91	87	89	84	80	82
Part-time	2	2	2	2	7	4	4	11	7	11	16	14
Self-emp	1	0	1	3	1	2	5	2	3	5	2	4
Unwt N	616	773	1,389	7,050	6,907	13,957	5,911	6,058	11,969	822	1,189	2,011
Age when entered first partnership												
Mean	24.8	22.2	23.5	24.7	22.4	23.6	24.8	23.0	23.9	23.3	22.1	22.6
Median	24	21	22	23	21	22	24	22	23	23	22	23
LQ	22	20	21	21	19	20	21	20	21	21	20	20
UQ	27	23	25	27	24	26	27	25	26	25	24	25
Unwt N	585	747	1,332	5,891	6,079	11,970	5,338	5,739	11,077	492	849	1,341
Parenthood at age 30: Number of children, % parents												
Mean	1.9	2.1	2.0	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.0	1.3	1.1
Median	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1
LQ	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
HQ	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
% parent	84	90	87	74	81	78	60	70	65	51	68	60
Unwt n	*611*	*734*	*1,345*	*6,346*	*6,371*	*12,717*	*5,813*	*6,037*	*11,850*	*644*	*978*	*1,622*

Table 4.4.A Multinomial Regression: Economic activity status - 1944-48; 1958 cohorts (Base category: Full-time paid work)

	1944-48				1958			
	PT	Home	Edu.	Other	PT	Home	Edu.	Other
Age	0.0888	0.136*	-0.234***	0.0519***	0.0739***	0.152***	-0.273***	0.00689**
	(0.0591)	(0.0704)	(0.0510)	(0.0130)	(0.0127)	(0.0162)	(0.0179)	(0.00341)
Gender								
Man	-9.011***	-14.43***	0.260	-5.414***	-7.829***	-12.24***	2.138***	-1.810***
	(2.615)	(2.438)	(1.155)	(0.488)	(0.469)	(0.624)	(0.343)	(0.0930)
Woman	-4.475***	-3.743***	-1.353*	-3.980***	-3.983***	-2.802***	3.084***	-1.742***
	(0.305)	(0.324)	(0.747)	(0.461)	(0.114)	(0.117)	(0.345)	(0.104)
Education (Ref: Low)								
Middle	-4.779	-0.897	0.297	-0.320	0.615	-0.736	0.584	-0.835***
	(3.125)	(2.640)	(1.378)	(0.703)	(0.690)	(0.897)	(0.422)	(0.137)
High	-3.269	1.290	3.739***	-1.079	1.648***	-1.825**	3.130***	-0.0106
	(3.122)	(2.213)	(1.143)	(0.791)	(0.612)	(0.916)	(0.345)	(0.149)
Children to date (Ref: 0)								
1	2.430***	4.512***	-0.806**	0.744**	1.970***	3.334***	-1.505***	-0.0550
	(0.223)	(0.179)	(0.358)	(0.294)	(0.0534)	(0.0529)	(0.131)	(0.0511)
2	2.884***	4.789***	0.188	0.562**	2.247***	3.446***	-0.857***	-0.191***
	(0.209)	(0.191)	(0.427)	(0.273)	(0.0538)	(0.0568)	(0.138)	(0.0577)
3	2.671***	4.724***	-0.398	0.470	2.199***	3.666***	0.0162	0.0795
	(0.236)	(0.238)	(0.673)	(0.300)	(0.0692)	(0.0763)	(0.169)	(0.0832)
4+	2.366***	4.690***	1.068	1.230***	2.212***	4.269***	0.348	0.359***
	(0.286)	(0.327)	(0.854)	(0.372)	(0.0937)	(0.102)	(0.224)	(0.106)
Age of youngest child	-0.103***	-0.296***	0.144**	-0.135***	-0.0553***	-0.255***	0.377***	-0.0601***
	(0.0283)	(0.0762)	(0.0563)	(0.0231)	(0.0127)	(0.0166)	(0.0308)	(0.00736)
Age of youngest child	0.00102***	0.00629***	0.000311	0.00351***	-0.0017***	0.00469***	-0.0099***	0.00226***
squared	(0.00039)	(0.00046)	(0.00166)	(0.00053)	(0.00020)	(0.00023)	(0.00128)	(0.00022)
Interaction: Woman*Age	-0.00924	-0.0960	0.104	-0.0162	-0.0128	-0.130***	-0.0539**	0.00448
	(0.0586)	(0.0712)	(0.0640)	(0.0168)	(0.0132)	(0.0168)	(0.0255)	(0.00516)
Interaction: Woman*	4.965	1.250	2.015	-0.724	-0.334	0.639	-0.156	0.494**
Middle edu	(3.138)	(2.663)	(1.581)	(0.975)	(0.703)	(0.908)	(0.553)	(0.196)
Interaction: Woman*High	3.598	-1.217	1.445	0.408	-1.193*	1.393	-1.306***	0.328
edu	(3.150)	(2.258)	(1.286)	(1.147)	(0.627)	(0.929)	(0.467)	(0.206)
Interaction: Middle	0.0906	0.0160	0.0537	0.000219	-0.0234	0.00915	-0.0122	0.000598
edu*age	(0.0634)	(0.0572)	(0.0616)	(0.0145)	(0.0176)	(0.0195)	(0.0218)	(0.00408)
Interaction: High edu*age	0.0651	-0.0328	-0.0254	0.00734	-0.0475***	0.0247	-0.0402**	-0.0295***
	(0.0644)	(0.0485)	(0.0483)	(0.0164)	(0.0156)	(0.0198)	(0.0174)	(0.00470)
Interaction: Woman*	-0.108*	-0.0343	-0.100	0.0162	0.00937	-0.0225	0.0334	-0.0118**
Middle edu*Age	(0.0638)	(0.0582)	(0.0713)	(0.0190)	(0.0179)	(0.0200)	(0.0285)	(0.00582)
Interaction: Woman*High	-0.0964	0.00338	-0.0672	-0.00762	0.0225	-0.0410**	0.0744***	-0.00638
edu*Age	(0.0651)	(0.0501)	(0.0546)	(0.0222)	(0.0161)	(0.0203)	(0.0237)	(0.00648)
Interaction: Woman*Age	0.000199	-0.0651	-0.0536	0.0121	0.0359***	0.0225	0.103***	0.0196***
of youngest child	(0.0270)	(0.0749)	(0.0598)	(0.0141)	(0.0131)	(0.0161)	(0.0281)	(0.00644)
Observations	57,912	57,912	57,912	57,912	475,891	475,891	475,891	475,891

*Notes: Coefficients; Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

Table 4.5.A Multinomial Regression: Economic activity status – 1970, 1980-84 cohorts (Base category: Full-time paid work)

	1970				1980-84			
	PT	Home	Edu.	Other	PT	Home	Edu.	Other
Age	-0.0163	-0.00628	-0.367***	-0.00221	-0.0294	0.0136	-0.379***	-0.0267
	(0.0150)	(0.0233)	(0.0275)	(0.00539)	(0.0333)	(0.133)	(0.137)	(0.0226)
Gender								
Man	-4.591***	-6.709***	4.854***	-1.970***	-2.690***	-7.178*	5.757**	-0.811
	(0.435)	(0.775)	(0.494)	(0.135)	(0.715)	(3.723)	(2.359)	(0.500)
Woman	-3.453***	-1.582***	5.850***	-2.879***	-1.580**	-0.858	6.466***	-0.772
	(0.138)	(0.127)	(0.385)	(0.164)	(0.642)	(0.662)	(1.033)	(0.508)
Education (Ref: Low)								
Middle	1.242**	0.183	0.970	-0.589***	1.939*	3.828	1.477	1.607**
	(0.596)	(1.107)	(0.611)	(0.188)	(1.126)	(5.612)	(2.632)	(0.802)
High	3.060***	-2.851	1.977***	1.047***	4.067***	-5.052	7.345***	5.301***
	(0.598)	(1.861)	(0.521)	(0.232)	(1.342)	(6.511)	(2.463)	(1.437)
Children to date (Ref: 0)								
1	1.703***	2.913***	-1.290***	-0.333***	1.037***	3.027***	-1.229***	-0.285
	(0.0518)	(0.0636)	(0.126)	(0.0756)	(0.166)	(0.272)	(0.315)	(0.192)
2	2.150***	3.443***	-0.571***	-0.514***	1.496***	3.713***	-0.109	-0.0926
	(0.0582)	(0.0741)	(0.147)	(0.0988)	(0.202)	(0.316)	(0.331)	(0.279)
3	2.229***	4.156***	0.375*	-0.220	1.768***	4.901***	1.766***	0.659*
	(0.0823)	(0.0984)	(0.214)	(0.135)	(0.338)	(0.414)	(0.465)	(0.345)
4+	2.098***	4.566***	1.176***	0.306*	2.523***	5.286***	2.173**	1.495***
	(0.126)	(0.131)	(0.342)	(0.171)	(0.493)	(0.551)	(0.986)	(0.491)
Age of youngest child	-0.0690**	-0.0772**	0.387***	0.0404***	-0.150	0.0232	0.162	0.0168
	(0.0351)	(0.0319)	(0.0420)	(0.0144)	(0.130)	(0.106)	(0.208)	(0.0910)
Age of youngest child	-0.0090***	0.00251***	-0.0171***	-0.00111	-0.0218***	-0.0199***	-0.0412***	-0.0100
squared	(0.00073)	(0.00081)	(0.00293)	(0.00091)	(0.00616)	(0.00676)	(0.0109)	(0.00750)
Interaction: Woman*Age	0.0682***	-0.0184	-0.0523	0.0358***	0.0158	-0.0998	-0.0262	0.00850
	(0.0156)	(0.0236)	(0.0349)	(0.00808)	(0.0398)	(0.136)	(0.145)	(0.0302)
Interaction: Woman*	-0.614	-0.267	-1.058	0.649**	-1.770	-4.624	0.873	0.388
Middle edu	(0.623)	(1.121)	(0.769)	(0.293)	(1.340)	(5.649)	(2.824)	(1.071)
Interaction: Woman*High	-2.294***	2.183	-0.947	0.645*	-4.080**	4.214	-0.768	1.572
edu	(0.627)	(1.872)	(0.649)	(0.346)	(1.675)	(6.726)	(2.672)	(1.729)
Interaction: Middle	-0.0459**	-0.0198	-0.0285	-0.00296	-0.0845*	-0.148	-0.0406	-0.0792**
edu*age	(0.0204)	(0.0309)	(0.0338)	(0.00662)	(0.0501)	(0.191)	(0.150)	(0.0349)
Interaction: High edu*age	-0.0940***	0.0387	0.0150	-0.0690***	-0.149***	0.144	-0.216	-0.232***
	(0.0207)	(0.0493)	(0.0284)	(0.00872)	(0.0552)	(0.215)	(0.140)	(0.0582)
Interaction: Woman*	0.0173	0.00246	0.0695	-0.0226**	0.0710	0.140	-0.0422	-0.0274
Middle edu*Age	(0.0212)	(0.0314)	(0.0425)	(0.0104)	(0.0560)	(0.192)	(0.160)	(0.0462)
Interaction: Woman*High	0.0498**	-0.0582	0.0505	-0.0193	0.136**	-0.152	0.0306	-0.0667
edu*Age	(0.0215)	(0.0497)	(0.0356)	(0.0130)	(0.0656)	(0.223)	(0.150)	(0.0714)
Interaction: Woman*Age	0.160***	-0.0788**	0.186***	0.0270*	0.443***	0.150	0.673***	0.241**
of youngest child	(0.0374)	(0.0314)	(0.0389)	(0.0154)	(0.139)	(0.110)	(0.235)	(0.119)
Observations	301,301	301,301	301,301	301,301	32,259	32,259	32,259	32,259

*Notes: Coefficients; Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

5. Paid and unpaid work arrangements in 'atypical' different-sex families

5.1. Introduction

Given the findings in the previous chapter of the timing in the life course of the emergence of substantive gender inequalities being early parenthood, this chapter is an interlude in the investigation of change over time to take a focused (cross-sectional) look at intra-household division of paid and unpaid work in couple families who have recently had a baby. The traditional gendered division of labour in the home is intimately linked with inequalities in the labour market in the UK. Fathers' increased involvement in childcare tasks and other routine unpaid work in the home is therefore often considered a necessary element for progressing gender equality in the public sphere. Yet inequalities in the labour market also contribute to how couples decide who does what, when care responsibilities conflict with the time requirements of employment and career building, an issue that is explicitly recognised in economic bargaining models of the family. Classic economic bargaining models, however, while providing a useful way of conceptualising the process underpinning observed arrangements of paid and unpaid work, have been critiqued by feminist economists for disregarding the influence of gendered social norms on individuals' bargaining position. In addition, the tendency in research to use current labour market earnings to determine the bargaining power of partners disregards the bargaining power that individuals may derive from considering their future position as well, such as their perceived potential for career and earnings progression.

With recent social and demographic changes there has been an increased diversification of family forms, including families who might be considered forerunners of the sort of change needed in the private sphere in order to achieve increased equality in the labour market. This chapter investigates the paid and unpaid work arrangements of parents with young children with a focus on a number of 'atypical' couple types, such as age-heterogamous couples and couples where the woman is more highly educated or has a steeper potential earnings trajectory. In many of these 'atypical' couples the woman ought to have greater bargaining power, based on standard determinants, thus they challenge bargaining models if such family types are not associated with more egalitarian arrangements.

5.2. Background

Gender and bargaining models of the family

Standard economic (cooperative) bargaining models of the family assume partners have different and possibly conflicting preferences and interests, that household arrangements are contingent on partners' relative bargaining power and that the outcome is pareto optimal in that neither partner would be better off not cooperating (Agarwal, 1997; Katz, 1997; Lundberg & Pollak, 1996).[27] Bargaining power is usually conceptualised in research as dependent on the individual's resources or options outside the household, that is their fallback position or divorce threat point,[28] often operationalised as current labour market earnings.

In these models, gender differences in time allocation are thus seen as a reflection of earnings. In contexts with a gender pay gap, men can be expected to do less housework because they tend to earn more and thus have more bargaining power in the household to avoid doing housework. While a useful approach to analysing gender relations as they relate to paid work and family, feminist economists such as Bina Agarwal (1997) and Elizabeth Katz (1997) have critiqued the narrow conceptualisation of bargaining power as determined specifically by income, and assumptions of symmetry in a given fallback position translating into bargaining power in the household, which ignores the influence of social norms. Used uncritically economic models of the family, whether using a bargaining- or specialisation and trade framework, typically justify rather than explain gender inequality in household division of labour, as feminist economists have long argued (e.g. Agarwal, 1997; Bergmann, 1996; Katz, 1997; Sigle-Rushton, 2010; Woolley, 1996).

Feminist critiques of rational choice economic models of the family that emphasise specialisation have been multiple. Highlighting how these models naturalise the gender order, they have disputed the treatment of the family as a utility-maximising unit when family members often have different preferences and conflicting interests but differ in the power they have to bargain for their interests. They have challenged the rationale and emphasis put on specialisation, by pointing out the risks to the financial security of the family unit, and especially to women, involved in specialisation and the gains to marital stability from men's involvement in unpaid work in the home. Further, they have called attention to the relevance of social and institutional context (Agarwal, 1997; Oppenheimer,

[27] See also Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, and Matheson (2003) for an overview and comparison with the sociological literature on exchange models.

[28] But see also Lundberg and Pollak (1993) for a discussion of internal or 'separate spheres' threat-points and non-cooperative bargaining models.

1994; Pyke, 1996; Sigle-Rushton, 2010). The responsiveness of the division of labour to the relative positions of household members in the labour market is affected by gender norms that systematically undervalue the unpaid work traditionally undertaken by women in the home and privilege the market work and 'provider' role traditionally undertaken by men (Agarwal, 1997; Tichenor, 1999, 2005). This is not merely a gender-neutral economically rational assignment of greater value to income generating activity, but a rationalisation of gender inequality in the household.

As already noted at various points in this thesis, parenthood is particularly strongly gendered, with relatively distinct social norms of 'appropriate' roles and responsibilities for mothers and fathers. Motherhood is a social institution that social norms and discourse tend to naturalise, positioning the middle-class focus on intense engagement and the mother's presence, time, care and expertise (medical, developmental) as inherent to being a 'good mother' (Braun, Vincent, & Ball, 2008; Miller, 2007; Russo, 1976; Smart, 1996). On the other hand, despite the recent ideological emphasis on 'involved fatherhood', hegemonic understandings of fatherhood are strongly anchored in providing economically. Routine care and household tasks continue to be done primarily by women, while aggregate trends over time show much of the increase in time spent on unpaid work in the home by men has been on non-routine tasks such as household repairs (Kan et al., 2011). Change over recent decades in the time spent on housework and childcare has also been shown to be classed as well as gendered (Sullivan, 2013).

At the individual level, over life course transitions, when moving in together to form different-sex households, men tend to reduce the time they spend on routine housework while women increase theirs (Gupta, 1999) and a 'traditionalising' turn in the division of paid and unpaid work has also been documented among different-sex couples when they become parents (Lyonette & Crompton, 2015; Schober, 2013). Traditional gender roles are reflected and reinforced through for example parental leave, so that even when individual fathers, or couples, aim to 'do gender' differently to previous generations, in practice the realisation of their aspirations is often constrained by structural circumstances (Braun, Vincent, & Ball, 2011; Tina Miller, 2011). Yet for others, usually lower skilled working-class fathers, hands-on fathering can come about through structural circumstances of under- or unemployment and a need or desire to shift-parent to avoid (the costs of) using formal childcare (Brannen & Nilsen, 2006; Gillies, 2009).

'Atypical' family forms

The rationalisations of observed patterns by neoclassical economic models of the family may have fit the social conditions of previous decades,[29] or even now in 'traditional' or 'typical' different-sex couple families.[30] By 'typical' I here refer to the statistically prevalent form of couple family where the man is a few years older, and he is more highly educated and has higher earnings or an otherwise more favourable labour market position than his female partner or spouse. However, the broad social changes that have taken place since the mid-1960s with the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) and educational expansion, have resulted in a diversification of family forms with an increase in prevalence of different-sex couples that are not 'typical' in the sense described above.

The increased prevalence of separation and divorce, and subsequent re-partnering, central features of the SDT (e.g. Lesthaeghe, 1995; Lesthaeghe, 2014; van de Kaa, 1999), suggests an increase in prevalence of 'atypical' families where the mother is more highly educated and/or otherwise in a more favourable labour market position than her male partner, and in age-heterogamous couples and 'higher-order families' for either parent.[31]

Some of these 'atypical' family forms provide scenarios useful for testing standard bargaining models of the family, because the woman ought to be in a stronger bargaining position if she is the more highly educated partner and/or has better career prospects. Such families may thus be thought of as 'forerunners' of the sort of change in the private sphere that would be necessary in order to progress towards greater gender equality in the public sphere. However, among other 'atypical' family forms, such as families with a large parental age gap, we might expect the reverse to be the case, with a more traditionally gendered division of labour. Importantly, because of likely overlaps between these 'atypical' family forms, for example as both 'higher-order' families and educational heterogamy are likely more common among age-heterogamous couples and complex relationships between such couple characteristics and division of labour, they should not be studied in isolation of each other.

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[29] Although see Wendy Sigle-Rushton's (2010) article for an example of the logic of specialisation and trade models not holding even when using data from the time period when the New Home Economics theories were developed.

[30] Samples sizes prevent differentiation between different- and same-sex couples in the analysis presented in this chapter. However, research suggests that while the division of housework and childcare is often more egalitarian among same-sex couples, including those with children, although some evidence exists of parenthood being associated with a more unequal division of housework and caring among lesbian couples (Bauer, 2016; Goldberg, 2013; Tornello, Kruczkowski, & Patterson, 2015).

[31] Higher order families meaning here that one or both parents have also had children with a previous partner.

Educational expansion since the 1960s in the UK has been greater among women, who previously had lower levels of qualification relative to men, so that there has been a gender convergence in qualification levels (Lindley & Machin, 2012). Previously the unequal educational distributions of men and women meant that where partners in different-sex couples had different levels of education it was more common for the man to be the more highly educated partner. Although educational homogamy was and remains common, the reduction in educational inequality and increased proportion of highly educated women means that over time the subgroup of partnerships where the woman is more highly educated than her male partner has become more prevalent (De Hauw, Grow, & Van Bavel, 2017).

Within such couples where the woman is more highly educated, the odds of her also earning more than half of the total income are higher, with implications for the division of labour (Klesment & Van Bavel, 2017). For example, focusing on paid work, Shireen Kanji (2011, 2013) found that in couples where the mother is more highly educated than the father, and where she is the main earner, the mother is more likely to work full-time continuously for the first five years following the birth of the first child, while fathers tend to work fewer hours if the mother is the main or (to a lesser extent) equal earner, with some evidence of reverse-specialisation in mother-main-earner families. Because of the recency of the educational expansion, such partnerships may also be more common in man-older couples as the younger partner is more likely to have been affected by the more recent policy efforts to increase higher education participation.

Large age differences between partners have been depicted as an expression of male power and privilege with implications for the division of paid and unpaid work in the household (Presser, 1975). In such couples, where the man is substantially older than the woman, some authors have suggested that the gender division of labour would reflect the more conservative gender roles and traditional task division normative at the earlier time period of the man's early value formation and socialisation (see Pyke & Adams, 2010, for an overview).[32] If this is the case, age-heterogamy may thus be a source of persistence in traditional divisions of labour, since larger age gaps tend to be more common in second or subsequent relationships (Berardo, Appel, & Berardo, 1993; Ní Bhrolcháin, 1992).

On the other hand, other features of the SDT, such as increasing cohabitation, also more common following separation, and ideational shift towards more focus on individual autonomy, gender equality, relationship quality and self-fulfilment, challenge the assumption of stability of gendered

[32] Large age gaps between partners have also been linked to both power differentials in male same-sex couples but also with the older partner doing more housework (Sutphin, 2010).

attitudes and behaviour across the life course. While qualitative research with couples with large age differences has indeed found more traditional arrangements to be the case in some couples, the picture is more complex. In some relationships that have followed previous divorce or separation partners reported more egalitarian practice and/or ideals than previously, which the authors attributed at least in part to the older man having passed the most intense career-building phase when earnings trajectories are the steepest (Pyke & Adams, 2010). Other studies also suggest an element of some individuals seeking, negotiating or accepting a different, either more traditional or more egalitarian arrangements when re-partnering (Pyke, 1994; Pyke & Coltrane, 1996).

With increased re-partnering (as well as among couples with large age differences), it is also more likely that one or both parents has children from a previous relationship. However, when it comes to fathers' involvement in housework or childcare across partnerships the evidence is scant. Much research has focused on paternal contact with (and financial support for) non-resident children post-separation (Roy, 2014), including findings that fathers are less likely to have contact with non-resident children if they also have children with a new partner (Poole, Speight, O'Brien, Connolly, & Aldrich, 2016), yet there is a lack of evidence on whether the division of labour differs depending on whether the currently co-residing family is the first or a higher order family for either or both parents.

On the one hand, findings of men's involvement in unpaid work in the home having a stabilising effect on relationships (Sigle-Rushton, 2010) might suggest that the experience of prior relationship dissolution would be linked to more egalitarian arrangements in a subsequent relationship. On the other hand, social expectations prioritising financial provision over involvement in care (Lamb, 2000; Lewis, 2002b) may mean that fathers with children from a previous relationship may feel under particular pressure to focus on paid work in order to provide financially for their current family and pay child maintenance for non-resident children. Meanwhile, the bargaining position of mothers with children from a previous relationship may be weaker if their labour market history has been interrupted by focusing on childrearing either in the previous relationship or during a spell of lone parenthood.

Bargaining in a life course perspective

A number of studies have shown that the observed household division of labour in female main-earner couples poses a critical challenge to standard economic models of the family, demonstrating the powerful influence of gender (in addition to individual extra-household resources) on partners' relative bargaining positions (e.g. Bittman et al., 2003; Kanji, 2013; Tichenor, 1999). However,

research has mostly focused on the absolute or relative current earnings of partners, taking a static approach to bargaining position.

A life course perspective not only means attending to the life stage studied (e.g. parenthood) but can also introduce a longer-term horizon and a recognition that individuals may take their future labour market position into account when bargaining. As Valerie Kincade Oppenheimer (1994, 1997) argued, the gendered specialisation that these models justify is a risky strategy for nuclear families, in case of the loss of the breadwinner's job, and especially for women in contexts of high divorce rates. With shrinking family sizes there is also less need for one partner to specialise exclusively on care for an extended period, making the cost associated with even temporary labour market withdrawal less worthwhile (see also Langner, 2015, showing that long-term specialisation over the life course is relatively rare, at least in the German context). Thus, forward-looking individuals may take into account not only their current relative labour market positions but also their potential future position when deciding on the division of paid and unpaid work. On the other hand, as with current earnings, the extent to which a foreseen labour market trajectory translates into bargaining power may be gendered, and also classed.

In summary, the increase over time of different-sex couples where the woman is more highly educated, or is the main earner in the couple, has been suggested as a potential mechanism for increased gender equality in the division of paid and unpaid work. However, as feminist critiques of economic models of the family suggest, disregarding the influence of gendered social norms can overstate the role of relative labour market position on bargaining power. This is particularly the case in the early parenthood phase when gendered roles tend to be particularly salient. Further, these family types overlap with other 'atypical' family forms, such as families with large parental age-gaps. Other research suggests partnership or parenthood history may also affect the division of labour but with less clear predictions of the expected direction of this effect. I therefore combine different indicators of 'atypical' family types in the same study to address the question of whether 'atypical' families have more egalitarian paid and unpaid work arrangements.

The analysis thus tests standard bargaining models, but drawing on feminist critiques, the chapter pays particular attention to the role of gender as an organising principle in determining paid and unpaid work arrangements, comparing different types of families all at the same early parenthood phase. Further, the analysis incorporates a life course perspective, both in reflecting history of prior parenthood experience and in incorporating a forward-looking element of potential earnings trajectory extending and contributing to the literature on hitherto mainly static bargaining models. It

builds on the previous chapter by providing an intra-household context for the early parenthood stage to complement the labour market focus of Chapter 4.

5.3. Data & Methods

Data and analysis sample

The analysis is based on data from the first sweep of the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS). All respondents in this study had a child born in 2000/2001 and were interviewed for the first time (Sweep 1) when their baby was 9 months old. The analysis focuses on different-sex couple families where both parents are the biological parents of the baby and all children in the household are the biological child of at least one of the parents,[33] and where both parents participated in the full interview. These restrictions resulted in an analysis sample of 13,132 families. In particular, this excludes a relatively substantial minority of couple families (n=2,099, or 14%) where one of the parents, usually the father, was interviewed by proxy. This exclusion is necessary because two of the four key predictor variables, namely level of education and career stage, could not be derived for these families with the more limited information collected via the proxy interview.

Although somewhat dated, relating to the policy and labour market context in 2001-2002, the parent respondents correspond relatively well to the 1970 cohort analysed in the other chapters with most being born in the late 1960s or early 1970s (mean year of birth for fathers is 1969 and for mothers 1971). Some of the fathers in the 'older father' group correspond more closely to the 1958 cohort, with mean year of birth for fathers in this family type being 1962. Further, this dataset is well-suited for addressing the research question because it provides a sufficiently large sample of families to differentiate the analysis by relative parental characteristics, includes detailed information about the paid work of both parents and includes questions on the division of household tasks. Importantly, as parents of similarly aged young babies the whole sample faced the same type of intense everyday childcare and housework load.

Key outcome measures: Household division of labour and parental economic activity

Both partners were asked questions about their employment during the pregnancy, the type of leave taken following the birth, their earnings and reasons for doing or not doing paid work. The mother was further asked about the division of housework and childcare tasks and the father

[33] A small number of families (17) with resident foster children, adopted children or stepchildren from a previous relationship were excluded.

specifically about how often he did specific childcare tasks with their 9-month old infant (the study child). The division of labour questions did not ask for estimates, or time diary recordings, of the actual time spent on tasks but simply who mostly did each of the tasks listed below.

- ...preparing/cooking main meal
- ...the cleaning
- ...laundry & ironing
- ...looking after household money, bills etc
- ...household repairs, DIY, decorating

The possible response categories were the main respondent (mother); her partner; shared more or less evenly, or done by someone else.

To focus the analysis on routine housework (Kan et al., 2011), I exclude the less frequently performed tasks of household repairs, DIY and decorating and I constructed an index of mean share of the routine housework load done by the mother. For the mother's share index I assigned the value 0 for the father or someone else, 50 for shared and 100 for the mother, and took the mean of the tasks.

Consistent with evidence from British time use data (Sullivan & Gershuny, 2013, who found 5% of British couples purchased cleaning assistance), very few families in the MCS outsourced any of the tasks mainly to somebody else. The most commonly outsourced routine housework tasks were cleaning (5.7% of families), and laundry and ironing (3.4% of families).[34] I included any tasks that were outsourced in the denominator when calculating the mean share, reflecting the reduction in the mother's share for those families. This means that in the minority of families where some outsourcing took place, the father's share cannot be directly inferred from the mother's.

The index ranges from 0 to 100, 100 corresponding to all tasks being done mostly by the mother. Accordingly, the score on the mother's share index can be thought of as a percentage of the total housework load that is done by the mother, although care should be taken to bear in mind that this load refers to an average of task-sharing and task-specialisation, not the total time. Clearly some tasks are more time-consuming than others and this method gives the tasks equal weighting in terms of contribution towards the total load. [35]

[34] A very small number of families reported one or more tasks as 'not applicable' to their family (10-19 families depending on the task). These have been included as 'outsourcing' the task, on the assumption that all of these tasks are necessary for household functioning.

[35] While more accurate estimates of the division of labour would likely have been obtained based on time-diary methods (Kan, 2008), the sample sizes of the UK Time Use Surveys would not have allowed for analysis of

Overall, the mother's share of routine housework was quite high, at approximately 74% of the total load. These questions are asked of the mother (the 'main respondent' in the survey). Respondents may over-estimate their own contribution to unpaid work so it is possible that the percentages for each answer option might have been somewhat different had the questions (also) been posed to the father. However, analysis of a similar set of questions included in the NCDS and BCS70 indicates that the overall shape of the distribution (i.e. the skew towards the woman mostly undertaking most of the tasks) is similar for both male and female respondents in different-sex couples.[36]

The father was asked how often he did the following with his 9-month old child, with answer options ranging from never to more than once daily:

- …looking after baby on his own
- …changing baby's nappy
- …feeding baby
- …getting up at night for baby

Frequent father involvement was most commonly reported for nappy changes and feeding, with over half of fathers reporting doing these two tasks at least once daily (57% and 53% respectively), the least frequently reported task was getting up in the night which only 15% of fathers reported doing at least daily and 38% reported never doing (including 14% who reported that their child never woke up at night). Assigning increasing values in order of frequency (from 0 for never, up to 5 for once or more daily) and taking the sum of the four tasks I derived an index of paternal involvement ranging from 0 to 20. On this index 0 signifies that the father never did any of the infant care tasks listed and 20 that he did each of them at least once a day. The mean index score reported by fathers was 11.5, with half of all fathers scoring between 9 and 14 on the 20-point index.

These questions were not asked of mothers so it is not possible to construct the same index for comparison. However, since these tasks necessarily have to be done by someone (with the exception of getting up in the night in the minority of families where the infant slept through the night regularly),[37] and since the mother in response to sharing of childcare questions reported doing

couples who are all parents of a similarly aged (youngest) child, a key strength of using the MCS for this analysis.

[36] Among people born in 1970, interviewed in 2012 at age 42, men in different-sex couples (with and without children) reported that their partner did 68% of the total share of routine housework (using the same four items of cooking, cleaning, laundry and household finances), while women aged 42 in different-sex couples reported that they themselves did 75% of the total share. Among people born in 1958, the same figures were 74% reported by men and 78% reported by women (also asked when aged 42, i.e. in the year 2000).

[37] About 14% of fathers reported that their child never woke at night, double the proportion of mothers who reported that getting up in the night for the baby was not applicable in their family (7%).

a share of 82% of the total childcare tasks, we can assume that among mothers the average score would have been close to 20.

As a measure of the division of paid work, I combined the paid working hours of each partner and categorised families into couple 'work models'. The most common group (69% of families) combines male breadwinner (MBW) families and those where the man worked full-time and the woman part-time (the 1.5 earner model) into a single group of 'traditional' gender specialised work model. I distinguish between two dual earner arrangements. The first, a 'dual short hours' arrangement includes couples where both worked at least long part-time hours (defined here as 21 hours per week) and neither worked long full-time hours (maximum 40 hours). In families with the dual long hours arrangement both parents worked at least 30 hours per week and at least one parent worked 41 hours or more per week. The remaining tenth of families were those with either a reverse-specialised arrangement, where the mother was in paid work and the father worked either short part-time hours or was not in paid work, or families where neither parent was in paid work. The table below summarises the distribution of families across the groups as well as the mean hours worked by each parent and the total paid hours worked by the couples across the groups (see Table 5.1). Note how while the total hours worked by the dual 'short hours' families was only about 3 hours longer than the total hours worked by dual-earner 'traditional' families (i.e. 1.5-earner couples), these hours were more evenly divided between the parents in the former. As the category label suggests, dual 'long hours' families worked the longest paid hours, at nearly 90 hours a week between the two parents.

Table 5.1 Summary of couple work models: distribution and mean hours worked

	%	Mother hours*	Father hours	Both parents combined	Unwt n
'Traditional' (MBW/ 1.5)	69	7.77 (16.45)	47.6	55.37 (64.9)	8,461
Dual 'short hours' (both 21-40)	10	30.5	37.5	68.0	1,264
Dual 'long hours' (30+/41+)	12	38.7	51.1	89.8	1,601
Reverse-specialised	3	29.5	3.3	32.8	449
Neither in paid work	7	0	0	0.0	1,210
Total	100	13.81 (24.2)	42.6	56.32 (68.92)	12,985

**Note: Mothers' mean paid working hours in parentheses excludes mothers not in paid work.*

For context, at the time of the survey, job-protected statutory maternity leave was 29 weeks, provided the mother had approximately two years of continuous employment with her employer, of which the first 18 weeks were paid. Thus, the vast majority of the mothers in the survey, if employed during the pregnancy and eligible for maternity leave, had either returned to paid work or left

employment at the time of the interview. Fathers did not have any statutory right to post-birth paternity leave (two weeks of paid paternity leave was introduced in 2003), but employed fathers with two years continuous service could take unpaid parental leave which had been introduced in 1999 and some might have been eligible for occupational paternity leave if provided by their employer.

Key predictors: Parental education, potential earnings trajectory, age gap and family history

The survey includes both partners' ages (reported in complete years), their highest level of vocational or academic qualification achieved to date, the occupation of their current or most recent paid job and their working hours and earnings, if currently employed.

Level of education or training is recorded in MCS as the highest National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level obtained from academic or vocational qualifications for each parent. Rather than use a more detailed breakdown, I focus on whether or not the parents have degree-level qualifications, both as a crude proxy for social class, but also as an indicator of individual investment in human capital. For the analysis I combined the mother's and father's information into a couple-level variable identifying whether neither parent has a degree-level qualification or equivalent (both below NVQ level 4; 48%), the father has a degree but the mother does not (14%), the mother is degree-level educated but the father is not (15%), and both are educated to degree level (24%).

For a measure of potential earnings trajectory, I draw on data from the 2002 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) for the occupation-specific relative change between age groups as a measure of an individual's 'potential' given their occupation and age group. ASHE is an annual survey of the pay and working time of a simple random sample of 1% of all employees in the UK (approximately 180,000), run by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) with information collected from employers.

Arguably, what matters most in the context of bargaining power for forward-looking couples is the individual's perception of either having reached a plateau in career and earnings progression or of achieving a certain level of job and earnings security, but the MCS did not include any subjective assessment of career stage, success or short- to medium-term plans or aspirations for further progression. The survey did record occupation, supervisory or managerial responsibilities and earnings. These factors might feasibly be combined to derive an indicator of career stage but as career progression will likely be quite different for different occupations, and possibly regionally for the same occupation, the scale of this derivation task is beyond the scope of the chapter. Instead, as a measure of 'potential' earnings trajectory I applied to the MCS data based on the respondent's gender, age group and occupation, the proportionate change in gross hourly earnings between one

age group and the next for the same occupation (SOC2000 2-digit sub-major occupational groupings) for men and women separately as reported in ASHE 2002 (ONS, 2002).[38]

I acknowledge that this is a crude measure, because of the relatively broad occupational and age groups available in ASHE. Ideally, I would have used the more detailed 3 or 4-digit occupational categories[39] and the 'potential' change in earnings would have related to a fixed number of years from the current exact year of age. On the other hand, many individuals lack perfect information about the earnings of others in their occupation so, although crude, this provides some indication of what the respondent might reasonably have expected their earnings trajectory to be over the coming years, or might be if they were to (re-)enter the labour market, given their gender, age and occupation.

In addition to the forward-looking nature of this indicator, another advantage is that unlike a measure of current earnings it is not dependent on the respondent being in paid work at the time of the interview but captures a fallback position even in hypothetical re-entry scenarios, which may be relevant in bargaining, especially for mothers with young children.

After considering the distribution of relative change I set a threshold at 9% increase to designate a 'steep' trajectory, grouping decreases and lower increases as a 'flat' trajectory.

In nearly half of all families (46%) both parents had 'flat' trajectories while the father alone had a steep potential trajectory in 30% of the families, the mother in 9% and both parents in 14%. The table below (Table 5.2) shows the mean 'potential' earnings trajectory for mothers and fathers by age group.

[38] Hourly earnings relate to employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence. I used the gender-age-occupation specific rates (all hours worked) wherever available. For some age bands the gender-disaggregated 2-digit occupation rates were not available in ASHE, in these instances I used the rates for all employees (men and women combined) rates, and if these were not available either I used the gender and age specific rates for the relevant 1-digit occupation code.

[39] For example, 3-digit categories would have disaggregated the very general category 2-digit 'Business and public service professionals' into 'Legal professionals'; 'Business and statistical professionals'; 'Architects, town planners, surveyors'; 'Public service professionals', and 'Librarians and related professionals'. Solicitors and architects may have very different age-related earnings trajectories than librarians or social workers and probation officers (included under public service professionals).

Table 5.2 Percent of parents with 'steep' trajectories and mean expected percentage change in earnings, by age group

	Mother			Father		
Age group	% Steep	Mean (%) change	Unweighted n	% Steep	Mean (%) change	Unweighted n
<22	98.6	22	1,071	100.0	26	429
22-29	28.8	9	4,686	91.7	19	3,856
30-39	10.8	-1	5,985	26.9	4	7,235
40+	0.0	-6	288	3.2	-4	1,275
Total	23.9	4	12,030	44.2	8	12,795

The overall average age difference between the parents is just under three years, similar to that found for married couples in England & Wales (Ní Bhrolcháin, 1992). There is no consensus in the literature on what constitutes age heterogamy, with various definitions used. For example, one study used a four-category grouping of age gaps (wife 4 or more years older, homogamy +/-3 years, husband 4-10 years older and husband 11 years or more older; Vera, Berardo, & Berardo, 1985), while another, with a very large data set defined homogamy as no difference and used 8 age gap categories from wife 10 or more years older to husband 10 or more years older (Dribe & Nystedt, 2017). After considering the distribution of the age gap between the parents in the MCS, I derived a four-category variable to use in the analysis, grouping together all families where the mother is 2 or more years older than the father; similarly aged parents ranging from the mother being a year older to the father being up to three years older; families where the father is 4-6 years older, and finally those with a large age gap of the father being 7 or more years older. Table 5.3 shows the distribution of the age differences across the families and the average age of the parents in each of the age categories.

Table 5.3 Summary of parental age gap: Distribution and mean ages of mother and father

Parental age difference	%	Mother age	Father age	Unweighted n
Mother 2+ older	13.6	33.3	29.1	1,726
Similar age	51.5	29.9	31.0	6,678
Father 4-6 older	18.4	28.4	33.2	2,471
Father 7+ older	16.6	27.8	38.4	2,241
Total	100	29.7	32.3	13,116

For over a third (37%) of the families the 9-month old is the first child (or children, in the case of twins or triplets)[40] for both parents, while a further 46% have older resident children together and neither parent has children from previous relationships. In a minority of families, the mother (6%), father (9%) or both parents (3%) have children from a previous relationship either co-resident or living elsewhere. The residence of the children from previous relationships differs considerably by whether the study child and their half-sibling have the same mother or the same father. In 90% of families where the father reports having one or more children from a previous relationship, all of those children live primarily elsewhere. Conversely, in the majority of cases (82%) where the mother has one or more children from a previous relationship, these children reside in the household.

Control variables

In addition to the key predictors, I controlled for the following variables:

- Marital status of the parents (Married/cohabiting);
- Mother's ethnic group (White, Indian, Pakistani/Bangladeshi, Black, Mixed or other, including Chinese);
- Number of resident children in the household.

Each of these variables had a significant bivariate relationship with each of the key predictor variables and each of the response variables, and more importantly the nature of these associations suggested that not controlling for these variables could result in misleading interpretations of the effect of any of the key predictor variables. I included parental marital status as a control as unmarried cohabiting partners tended to have a more egalitarian division of household labour, and cohabiting relationships tended to be more common among age-heterogamous couples (in either direction), couples where neither partner was degree-educated, and either parent had children from a past relationship.

Age gaps, level of education and earnings trajectory also differed by ethnicity of the parents, as did the division of labour. As an example, families where the father was 7 years or more older than the mother were more common among families where the mother was Pakistani or Bangladeshi (25%), Black (20%) or mixed or other ethnicity (30%), compared with if she was white (16%), and both the mother's share of total housework and her paid work, also differed on average by ethnicity. Families where the mother was either Indian or Black were also more likely than families with a white mother to have both parents be degree-educated and to work dual earner patterns, although both parents

[40] In 194, or 1.5%, of families the 9 month old cohort study children are twins or triplets.

having steep potential earnings trajectories was less common among families where the mother was Black. I did not include the father's ethnicity in the analysis because this tended not to be statistically significant once the mother's ethnicity had been accounted for.

The number of children in the household was related to the parental age gap and parental level of education and potential pay progression, and to the division of labour, with slightly larger family sizes, on average, among age-heterogamous families and additional children being associated with a higher maternal share of both housework, lower paternal involvement in childcare and higher prevalence of the traditional paid work model, on average.

Finally, although occupation was related to household division of labour, I did not control for this as it is an integral component of one of the key predictor variables (potential earnings trajectory).

Analytic strategy

As noted above, the analysis investigates the paid and unpaid work arrangements in different-sex couple families with attention to the role of gender in the organisation of these arrangements by comparing different types of couple families.

To do this, I fitted a series of regressions using Stata, running the models in stages. I used linear regression to model the mother's share of housework and father's involvement in childrearing, and multinomial logistic regression for the combined parental paid work model. In the first stage I ran separate models for each key predictor variable and the controls. The same control variables, listed above, were included in each regression. Because the key predictors are likely also associated with each other, for example a greater parental age gap is likely related both to family history and relative potential earnings trajectory, in the second stage all key predictor variables were included in the same model with controls. The focus here is on whether the effect size or statistical significance of any predictor variable was attenuated at the second stage. The third and final stage explored interactions between the key predictor variables.

The results discussed here are significant at the 5% level, unless otherwise specified, and for interpretation of substantive differences, as well as statistical significance, predicted means and probabilities (using Stata margins command to obtain the model group averages) are discussed in the text. The full regression results tables are included in the Chapter Appendix.

5.4. Results

While a number of statistically significant differences are observed and discussed in detail in this section, the headline finding from the regression models is that substantively the variation across the family types of interest is rather small. This section firstly outlines the direction of the significant results focussing on associations with the more egalitarian outcomes (lower maternal share of housework, higher father involvement and dual-earning, particularly the dual short hours arrangement) before returning to the implications of the small effect sizes in relation to theory in the discussion in the next section.

Parental level of education

Fathers were slightly more involved in childcare tasks in families where the mother but not the father had a degree, or where both parents did, compared with families where neither parent was degree-educated.

Compared with families where neither parent had a degree, the mother's share of the total housework tasks was lower on average in families where one or both parents was degree educated.

Compared with families where neither parent was degree educated, families where the mother only had a degree, and families where both parents did, had significantly higher odds of working a dual short-hours, or dual long-hours arrangement, and lower odds of having neither parent in paid work, rather than a 'traditional' male breadwinner or 1.5 earner arrangement.

Parental earnings trajectories

Compared with families where both parents' potential earnings trajectories were flat, fathers did slightly more childcare tasks in families where the mother (only) had a steep potential earnings trajectory. When accounting for parental age gap, education and prior parenthood history, paternal involvement in childcare tasks was significantly lower, on average, in families where the father had a steep potential earnings trajectory, compared with families where neither parent did.

The mother did a smaller share of the total housework tasks, on average, in families where her potential earnings trajectory was steep but the father's was not, or where both parents had steep potential trajectories. The effect was somewhat attenuated when accounting for parental age gap and, in particular, education.

Compared with families where both parents' potential earnings trajectories were flat, families where the mother (but not the father) had a steep potential earnings trajectory had higher odds of a long-hours dual-earner arrangement, but also higher odds of neither parent being in paid work, rather

than the 'traditional' model. In families where the father alone had a steep potential earnings trajectory, the odds of either short or long-hours dual earner model were lower, along with lower odds of a reverse-specialised arrangement, rather than the 'traditional' model.

Age gap

Compared with families with similarly aged parents, the mother's share of the total housework tasks was lower, on average, in families where the father was 7 or more years older than the mother. This remained the case and the effect size increased slightly when including the family history of either parent having children from a prior relationship, the parents' relative education and earnings trajectories.

Compared with families with similarly aged parents, families with older fathers had significantly lower odds of working a dual short-hours arrangement, and significantly higher odds of either having a reverse-specialised arrangement or neither parent in paid work, rather than the 'traditional' male breadwinner or 1.5 earner arrangement. Compared with families with similarly aged parents, families with older mothers had significantly higher odds of working a long dual-hours or a reverse-specialised arrangement, rather than the 'traditional' model.

Parenthood history

Paternal involvement in childcare tasks was higher, on average, if the mother had children from a previous relationship, with the size of the coefficient increasing slightly when also accounting for parental age gap, education and potential earnings trajectory.

Compared with families where the joint child(ren) were both parents' first child(ren), families where the mother had children from a previous relationship had higher odds of working dual short-hours and higher odds of having a reverse-specialised arrangement, rather than a 'traditional' male breadwinner or 1.5 earner arrangement. The father having children from a previous relationship was associated with increased odds of the parents having a long-hours dual earner arrangement, higher odds of the female main-earner arrangement and higher odds of neither parent working, rather than the traditional arrangement. Both parents having children from previous relationships was also associated with higher odds of the female main-earner arrangement and higher odds of neither parent working, rather than the traditional arrangement.

Controls

While included as a control variable rather than a key predictor, it is worth noting that maternal ethnicity provides a reminder that parental paid and unpaid work arrangements often considered

'typical' in the UK, while typical of the white majority, ought not to be universalised. In particular, the results suggest more egalitarian arrangements in families with a Black mother. In these families, the mother's share of housework was substantially lower and the odds of any other paid work model higher, especially either of the dual-earner models, rather than the male breadwinner or 1.5 earner model, compared with families with a white mother. Predicted probabilities showed families with a Black mother had the lowest probability of a male breadwinner/1.5 earner model, at 0.38, and were the only group of families where the combined predicted probabilities of either short- or long-hours dual earner models, at 0.21 and 0.26 respectively, accounted for more than the probability of the 'traditional' model. Father involvement did not differ significantly by maternal ethnicity.

A greater number of children in the family was associated with reduced odds of either dual earner model or the reverse specialised paid work model, and with increased odds of neither parent being in paid work, rather than the traditional model. A greater number of children in the family was also associated with a greater share of the total housework being done by the mother, on average, and with lower father involvement, on average, controlling for the other variables.

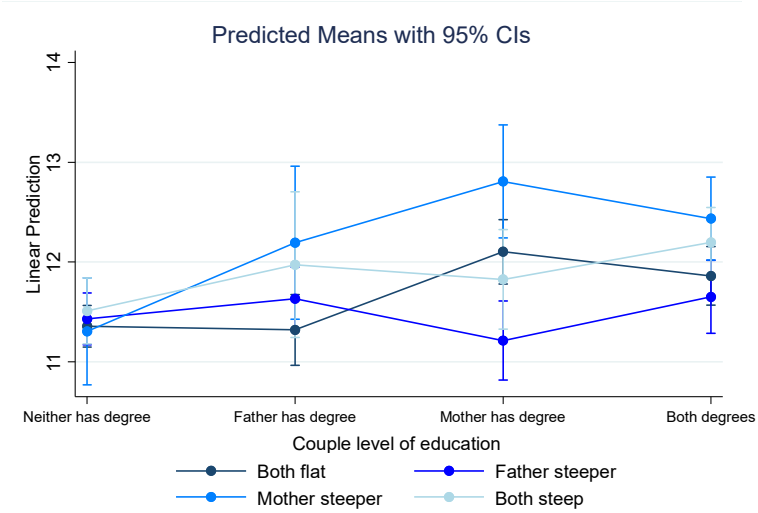
When accounting for the other variables, parental marital status was not significantly related to mother's share of housework or father's involvement in childcare but it was retained as a control variable because it was significantly related to the paid work outcome. Compared with married parents, cohabiting parents had increased probability of the reverse-specialised arrangement and of neither parent being in paid work, rather than the 'traditional' model.

Interactions

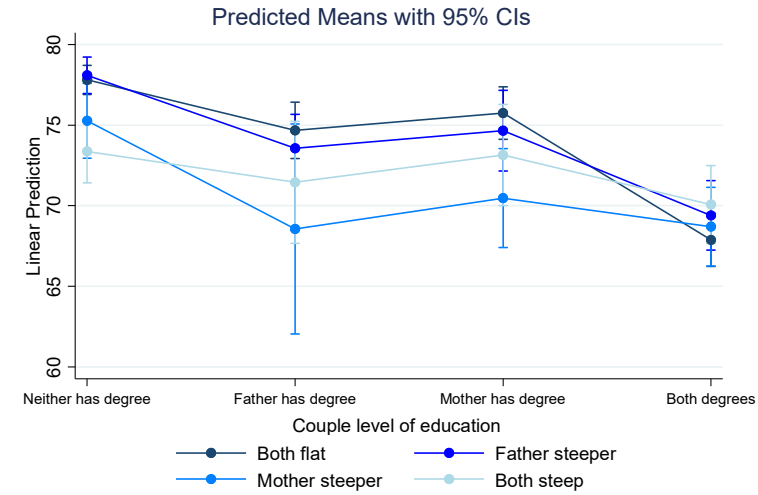
Level of education and potential earnings trajectory interacted significantly for all three outcomes. The father's involvement in childcare was relatively low and with small differences by parental earnings trajectory if neither parent was degree educated. In families where at least one parent had a degree, paternal involvement was highest if the mother had a steep potential earnings trajectory. The greatest variation by parental potential earnings trajectory was among families where the mother alone had a degree. In these families father involvement was highest if the mother's potential earnings trajectory was steep, followed by if both parent's had flat potential earnings trajectories, and lowest if the father alone had a steep potential earnings trajectory (see top panel of Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Father involvement & mother housework - predicted means

Outcome: Father involvement



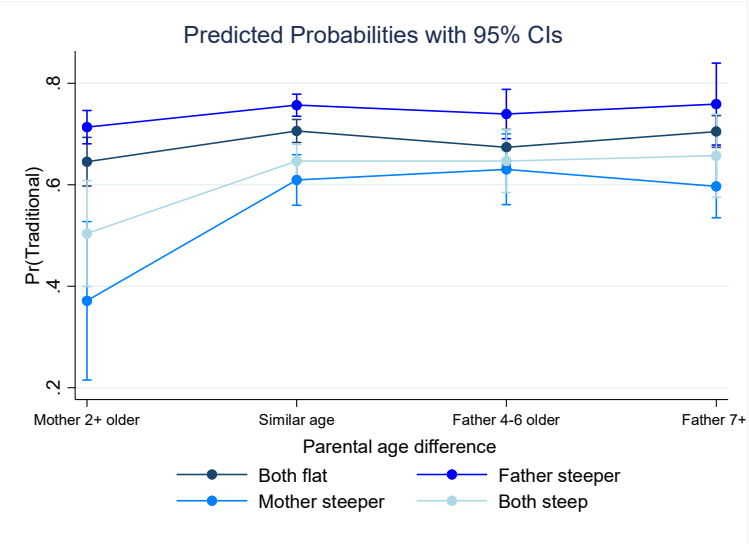
Outcome: Housework



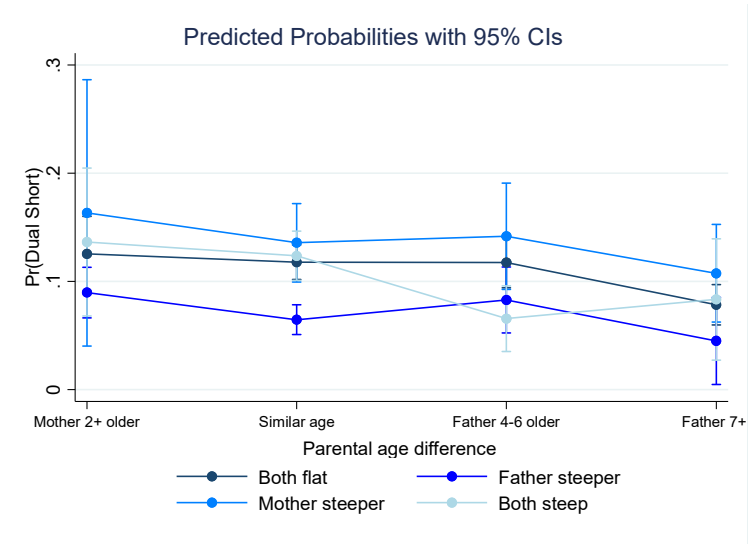
The mother's share of housework (bottom panel of Figure 5.1) was generally lower on average if the mother had a steep potential earnings trajectory and at least one parent was degree educated. The differences by parental potential earnings trajectory were smallest among families where both parents had degrees and greatest among families where only the father had a degree. In these families the maternal share of total housework was highest if both parents had flat trajectories, followed by if both had steep trajectories and the share was lowest if the mother alone had a steep potential earnings trajectory.

Figure 5.2 Parental paid work model - predicted probabilities

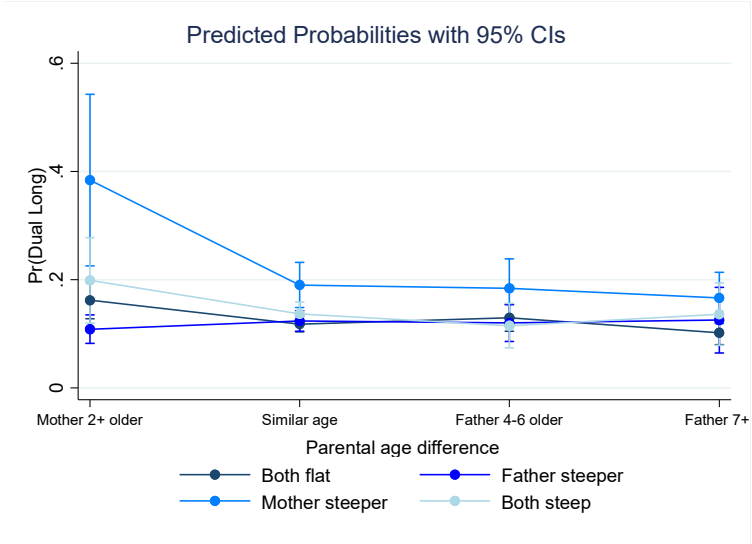
Outcome: Traditional (MBW/ 1.5 earner)



Outcome: Short dual earner (Both 21-40 hours)



Outcome: Long dual earner (30+/41+)



Note: Vertical axis ranges differ

The combination of the mother being highly educated and either the mother or both parents having a steep earnings trajectory stood out with higher probabilities of either the short- or long-hours dual-earner arrangements. Among families where both parents have degrees, the probability of the short dual earner model was highest if both parents had flat earnings trajectory or if the mother alone had a steep earnings trajectory, and the probability of the long dual earner model was highest among these families if the mother alone had a steep earnings trajectory.

In addition, there was a borderline significant (p=0.08) interaction in the father involvement model between parental age-gap and family history. Among families with similarly aged parents, father involvement was highest in families where the mother but not the father had children from a previous relationship and lowest in families where both did. In families where the mother was older either the mother or both parents having children from a previous relationship was associated with higher paternal involvement. In families where the father was 7+ years older father involvement was highest among families where both parents had children from a previous relationship. This finding should, however, be interpreted with some caution. Not only is the interaction effect significant only at the 10% level but also for some of the combinations of parental age gap and family history being relatively uncommon meaning the estimates of paternal involvement are based on a small number of respondents for these combinations.

Finally, as noted at the beginning of this section and is worth reiterating, while the differences discussed in this section are statistically significant, substantively they are rather small.

5.5. Discussion

The results of this analysis suggest that 'atypical' families, that is those with age gaps, with highly educated mothers, mothers with steeper potential earnings trajectories and re-partnered mothers, do indeed have slightly more egalitarian paid and/or unpaid work arrangements. These findings provide an intra-household perspective and context to the previous chapter's finding of the early parenthood years remaining a pivotal life course moment when comparing paid work trajectories across cohorts.

Like the conclusion in that chapter of limited progress having been made over time in transforming the gender order, the findings here suggest that care should be taken to avoid overstating the potential for these emerging 'atypical' families to be forerunners of the sort of change needed in the private sphere to achieve the broader social change needed to progress gender equality in the public sphere. The range in the predicted mean on the father involvement index is narrow, between a low of 11.2 in families where the mother is degree-educated but the father has steep potential earnings and a high of 12.4 in families where both have degrees and the mother has steep potential earnings, on a scale of 0-20. The range in the predicted means in mother's share of the total housework is between a low of 67.9 in families where both parents have degrees but flat potential earnings trajectories and a high of 78 where neither is highly educated and the father has steep potential earnings, on an index where 50 indicates equal load-sharing. The predicted probabilities for the 'short hours' dual-earner arrangement ranged from 0.05 in families where the father alone was both degree educated and had steep potential earnings to 0.17 in families where the mother alone was degree-educated and both parents had steep earnings trajectories. By comparison predicted probabilities in the same model for the 'traditional' paid work arrangement ranged from 0.52 to 0.83. Thus, substantively the differences observed were small, supporting feminist economists' argument that bargaining power is not merely a straight-forward reflection of labour market position or potential and the role of gender should not be disregarded.

Thus as others have also argued and demonstrated empirically (e.g. Agarwal, 1997; Bittman et al., 2003; Katz, 1997), while these results are consistent with the bargaining perspective of family arrangements, gender affects arrangements more broadly than merely through differentials in labour market position. Gender influences and structures lives at multiple levels, from the individual and interpersonal to the institutional and cultural. For example, a cross-national comparative study has suggested a link between societal level emphasis on paid work and status and related centrality of breadwinning to notions of hegemonic masculinity and 'good fatherhood', in turn restricting men's engagement in unpaid work in the home (Thébaud, 2010). Along similar lines, a longitudinal

study of university graduates in the UK also found that the self-evident privileging of the male partner's career on the grounds of the importance of his income was not unequivocally reversed in relationships where the woman earned substantially more, and both women and men were more likely to expect that the female partner in their relationship would accommodate her employment to raise their children (Purcell et al., 2006; Wilton & Purcell, 2010).

The implications of these findings for analysis of gender differences at the paid work and family nexus is the need to engage with feminist and gender theory in interpreting differences between men and women to try to avoid the risks of individualising and naturalising patterns that could be more productively problematised and challenged. In this way, the findings also have cross-disciplinary relevance, beyond economics, in particular for population studies where economic models of the family are often used to explain or contextualise observed patterns in family demography in ways that disregard the institutional and social normative aspects of gender inequality (see also Riley, 1999; Sigle, 2016; and Watkins, 1993, for discussion of the contributions and potential of feminist research and gender theory for demography). As I discussed in Chapter 3, while the nuances of gender as a multifaceted, multi-level organising principle can be difficult to draw out in quantitative analysis based on individual-level survey data, these aspects should be borne in mind and can be reflected upon in accompanying interpretation and 'analytical description' (Agarwal, 1997).

It is noteworthy that while the differences were small, most of the statistically significant results in the direction of more egalitarian division of labour were related to the mother's characteristics (apart from a lower maternal share of total housework among families with older fathers). Families where the mother had a child from a previous relationship, and families where the mother alone was degree-educated, had higher father involvement in childcare, on average, and higher odds of having a 'short-hours' dual-earner arrangement. In families where the mother alone had steep potential earnings, the father was more involved in childcare, the mother did a smaller share of the total housework and the couple had higher odds of a 'long-hours' dual earner paid working arrangement.

Such patterns indicate the usefulness of bargaining models for understanding gender relations in the arrangement of paid and unpaid work in different-sex couples. More egalitarian arrangements do not seem to come about in some families as a result of certain groups of fathers, whether older, more or less educated, more established in the labour market, or embarking on fatherhood for the second time, as a group tending to take on more hands-on childcare or unpaid housework or reducing their own hours of paid work. Instead what evidence of slightly more egalitarian

arrangements is observed appear to be because particular groups of mothers reduce their share of the unpaid housework load, and/or simply match their partner's long hours in paid work. Similarly, Helen Norman and colleagues also found, using MCS data, that paternal involvement in childcare was influenced more by the mother's paid working hours than his own (Norman, Elliot, & Fagan, 2013).

The limited share of childcare and routine housework that is done by fathers suggests a need for increased regard for fathers' routine hands-on care of children in policy. As Val Gillies (2009) has pointed out, despite the general emphasis on 'involved fatherhood', even in policy specifically concerned with father involvement, the discourse does not place high value on his involvement in the routine care and childrearing. Instead, as discussed in Chapter 2, much policy attention on fathers focuses on their fulfilment of a financial provider role (Lewis, 2002b).

The relatively limited responsiveness of arrangements to parental potential earnings trajectory among families where neither parent has a degree may be interpreted in different ways. For example, both average father involvement and take-up of the short-hours dual earner model of paid work was relatively low and in particular very similar regardless of which parent, if any, had a steep potential earnings trajectory. Gender is classed, in that what is expected of, or deemed appropriate for, men and women and what they are held accountable for, to themselves or by others, differs by social class position (e.g. Duncan & Edwards, 1997; Lyonette & Crompton, 2015; Skeggs, 1997; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Thus this result might suggest that notions of motherhood, fatherhood, care and breadwinning are more traditionally gendered among working-class people. However, looking at attitudinal questions about paid work and family included in the survey, by parental level of education, suggests that this is unlikely the main explanation.

While parents in families where neither parent had a degree-level qualification, did hold somewhat more traditional attitudes than families where the mother or both parents were highly educated, generally speaking not more so than families where the father alone held a degree. For example, 27% of mothers and 38% of fathers in families where neither parent was degree-educated strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that 'A child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works before he/she starts school'. This was higher than in families where the mother alone had a degree (19% of mothers and 29% of fathers) but similar to or lower than among families where the father alone had a degree (27% of mothers and 42% of fathers). We might thus consider other, more structural or institutional explanations for the limited variability by parental potential earnings trajectory among families where neither parent has a degree, such as the classed gendering effects of policy discussed

in Chapter 2, including the high cost of formal childcare being a disincentive to 'second earners' (usually women) in the UK context.

In interpreting these findings, the limitations of the data used must be kept in mind, the primary limitations being the lack of information on actual time spent on unpaid work and childcare in the home and the data now being rather dated, having been collected in 2002. Diary data from the more recent UK Time Use Survey (2014-15) would provide more accurate and more up-to-date estimates of the actual division of time spent on unpaid housework and childrearing. On the other hand, accepting the less precise approach to division of labour enabled the use of a large dataset of parents, all with similarly aged (youngest) children, which allowed for more detailed investigation of the complexities of the association between family type and arrangements.

While it is the case that the data analysed in this study are now relatively dated, relating to UK context in 2000/01, the low take-up of shared parental leave by fathers since its introduction as additional paternity leave in 2011, and the stability of the main carer/ main earner conceptualisation of parental roles in the current context suggest the broad patterns of the findings regarding division of labour are still instructive.

I found that a forward-looking indicator of labour market position plays a role, in the expected direction, in couples' arrangements suggesting individuals may consider their earnings trajectory or career potential, at least in the short-term, in a bargaining framework. The chapter thus contributes to the existing literature on economic bargaining models of the family by incorporating a forward-looking perspective with the measure of 'potential' earnings trajectory. Limitations on the income data for women meant I was not able to test how much additional explanatory information beyond the current absolute or relative earnings of the partners the inclusion of potential earnings trajectory brings. Further study might usefully build on this to investigate the role of individuals' own estimated future earnings progression or career aspirations and the relative weight assigned to (or associated with) current earnings and labour market position as opposed to future potential or plans when couples negotiate their arrangements.

Given the gendered nature of the association of labour market position and bargaining power, and the indicative finding that the concept of traditional paid work family arrangements not reflecting the experience of Black women's families, further research could also usefully take an intersectional approach to investigate whether bargaining models are useful models for conceptualising paid and unpaid work arrangements among families of colour in the UK. Valerie Kincade Oppenheimer's (1994, 1997) critique of economic models of the family not only suggested that the static approach disregarded the risks of specialisation to individuals and couples but also argued they espouse a

family arrangement that is not a viable option for many families in a historical perspective. This may be, or have become, more clearly the case for many working-class and/or families of colour more recently with the current context of low paid and precarious employment conditions where some level of 'redundancy' in terms of both parents sharing both paid and unpaid work may provide necessary insurance against risk.

Despite its limitations, and cross-sectional approach, the analysis contributes to the study of gendered social change in the UK by focusing on the division of paid and unpaid work specifically among families with young children. Parenting of young children is a life course stage that not only places high and competing demands on the partners' time but also one when gendered norms and expectations are particularly salient as the analysis of gendered paid work over the individual life course in the previous chapter suggested. By incorporating interactions in the modelling strategy, I allowed the association to be differentiated by combinations of parental level of education and potential earnings trajectory. In sum, the results indicate that while 'atypical' families, such as where the mother is more highly educated or where she has a steeper potential earnings trajectory, and thus families that might be thought of as (more) Ready to adopt egalitarian behaviour, do indeed have slightly more egalitarian paid and unpaid work arrangements but that the differences between family types are substantively small. This supports feminist critiques of standard bargaining models that bargaining power is not simply a reflection of partners' relative position in the labour market, and thus shows the insufficiency of focusing merely on the Ready condition in thinking about social change. The highly gendered division of paid work and routine housework and childrearing tasks even among these 'atypical' families also does not convincingly indicate that the second stage of the gender revolution might be underway in the UK.

5.6. Chapter 5 Appendix: Results Tables

Table 5.4.A Linear Regression Models 1 & 2: Mother's share of housework

	Model 1a: Education	Model 1b: Pay	Model 1c: Age	Model 1d: Family	Model 2: Full model
Couple level of education (ref: Neither)					
Father has degree	-3.115***				-3.349***
	(0.672)				(0.687)
Mother has degree	-1.981***				-2.209***
	(0.655)				(0.663)
Both have degrees	-7.438***				-7.768***
	(0.735)				(0.752)
Partners expected pay progression (ref: both flat)					
Father steeper		0.203			-0.0752
		(0.525)			(0.559)
Mother steeper		-3.062***			-1.579*
		(0.817)			(0.850)
Both steep		-1.797***			-1.462**
		(0.679)			(0.698)
Parental age difference (ref: Similar)					
Mother 2+ older			0.738		0.499
			(0.644)		(0.703)
Father 4-6 older			-0.494		-0.864
			(0.514)		(0.534)
Father 7+ older			-1.555**		-2.044***
			(0.680)		(0.723)
Second family (ref: Neither)					
Mother's 2nd family				-0.204	-1.632*
				(0.928)	(0.956)
Father's 2nd family				-0.126	-0.370
				(0.827)	(0.842)
Both parents' 2nd family				0.716	0.498
				(1.465)	(1.507)
Parental marital status					
Cohabiting	-0.452	1.443**	1.306**	1.203**	0.0368
	(0.530)	(0.590)	(0.571)	(0.576)	(0.592)
Mother's ethnic group (ref: white)					
Indian	-3.554***	-3.308**	-3.787***	-3.885***	-2.846*
	(1.314)	(1.452)	(1.307)	(1.276)	(1.530)
Pakistani & Bangladeshi	-6.019***	-2.720*	-4.143***	-4.408***	-3.883***
	(1.156)	(1.573)	(1.205)	(1.218)	(1.489)
Black	-7.880***	-9.567***	-8.655***	-8.701***	-8.305***
	(1.455)	(1.738)	(1.606)	(1.614)	(1.567)
Other, incl. mixed	-6.211***	-6.656***	-6.379***	-6.688***	-5.439***
	(1.687)	(2.156)	(1.685)	(1.708)	(2.080)
Number of resident children	1.826***	2.082***	2.217***	2.210***	1.795***
	(0.238)	(0.272)	(0.246)	(0.256)	(0.269)
Constant	73.70***	70.65***	70.14***	69.96***	74.75***
	(0.658)	(0.817)	(0.814)	(0.760)	(0.842)
Observations	17,885	16,875	17,885	17,885	16,875
R-square	0.038	0.020	0.019	0.018	0.042

*Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

Table 5.5.A Linear Regression Models 3: Mother's share of housework

	Model 3: Parental education # Expected pay progression
Couple level of education (ref: Neither)	
Father has degree	-2.811***
	(0.894)
Mother has degree	-1.632*
	(0.918)
Both have degrees	-9.379***
	(0.932)
Partners expected pay progression (ref: both flat)	
Father steeper	0.0220
	(0.680)
Mother steeper	-1.159
	(1.214)
Both steep	-3.458***
	(1.076)
Parental age difference (ref: Similar)	
Mother 2+ older	0.451
	(0.712)
Father 4-6 older	-0.804
	(0.532)
Father 7+ older	-2.043***
	(0.729)
Second family (ref: Neither)	
Mother's 2nd family	-1.675*
	(0.948)
Father's 2nd family	-0.499
	(0.851)
Both parents' 2nd family	0.350
	(1.504)
Parental marital status	
Cohabiting	0.280
	(0.581)
Mother's ethnic group (ref: white)	
Indian	-2.867*
	(1.529)
Pakistani & Bangladeshi	-3.806**
	(1.516)
Black	-8.081***
	(1.552)
Other, incl. mixed	-5.313**
	(2.073)
Number of resident children	1.751***
	(0.269)
Parental education # Expected pay progression	
Father has degree # Father steeper	-1.390

	Model 3: Parental education # Expected pay progression
	(1.577)
Father has degree # Mother steeper	-4.112
	(3.645)
Father has degree # Both steep	1.259
	(2.353)
Mother has degree # Father steeper	-1.124
	(1.684)
Mother has degree # Mother steeper	-3.417*
	(2.059)
Mother has degree # Both steep	1.174
	(2.126)
Both have degrees # Father steeper	1.283
	(1.284)
Both have degrees # Mother steeper	2.252
	(1.764)
Both have degrees # Both steep	5.727***
	(1.718)
Constant	74.99***
	(0.858)
Observations	16,875
R-square	0.045

*Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

Table 5.6.A Linear Regression Models 1 & 2: Father involvement in childcare

	Model 1a: Education	Model 1b: Pay	Model 1c: Age	Model 1d: Family	Model 2: Full model
Couple level of education (ref: Neither)					
Father has degree	0.142				0.145
	(0.129)				(0.136)
Mother has degree	0.481***				0.430***
	(0.131)				(0.132)
Both have degrees	0.444***				0.392***
	(0.128)				(0.131)
Partners expected pay progression (ref: both flat)					
Father steeper		-0.125			-0.190*
		(0.108)			(0.108)
Mother steeper		0.493***			0.453***
		(0.160)			(0.158)
Both steep		0.149			0.0867
		(0.129)			(0.132)
Parental age difference (ref: Similar)					
Mother 2+ older			-0.0651		-0.132
			(0.135)		(0.147)
Father 4-6 older			-0.203*		-0.193
			(0.115)		(0.122)
Father 7+ older			-0.143		-0.233*
			(0.129)		(0.133)
Second family (ref: Neither)					
Mother's 2nd family				0.845***	0.990***
				(0.176)	(0.188)
Father's 2nd family				-0.227	-0.163
				(0.159)	(0.162)
Both parents' 2nd family				0.179	0.294
				(0.269)	(0.283)
Parental marital status					
Cohabiting	-0.0764	-0.201*	-0.171*	-0.245**	-0.162
	(0.102)	(0.105)	(0.102)	(0.105)	(0.105)
Mother's ethnic group (ref: white)					
Indian	-1.322***	-1.235***	-1.308***	-1.316***	-1.239***
	(0.285)	(0.311)	(0.290)	(0.291)	(0.307)
Pakistani & Bangladeshi	-3.632***	-3.331***	-3.736***	-3.714***	-3.171***
	(0.262)	(0.383)	(0.261)	(0.262)	(0.387)
Black	0.490*	0.603*	0.539*	0.551*	0.552
	(0.290)	(0.355)	(0.284)	(0.282)	(0.360)
Other, incl. mixed	-0.977***	-0.601*	-0.957***	-0.965***	-0.588*
	(0.283)	(0.336)	(0.284)	(0.283)	(0.335)
Number of resident children	-0.192***	-0.208***	-0.222***	-0.278***	-0.253***
	(0.0495)	(0.0537)	(0.0496)	(0.0515)	(0.0546)
Constant	11.90***	12.13***	12.25***	12.27***	12.09***
	(0.121)	(0.135)	(0.116)	(0.112)	(0.154)
Observations	18,457	17,186	18,457	18,457	17,186
R-square	0.040	0.020	0.038	0.040	0.026

*Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

Table 5.7.A Linear Regression Models 3: Father involvement in childcare

	Model 3: Age difference # Second family	Model 3: Parental education # Expected pay progression
Couple level of education (ref: Neither)		
Father has degree	0.138	-0.0498
	(0.136)	(0.195)
Mother has degree	0.426***	0.685***
	(0.133)	(0.181)
Both have degrees	0.391***	0.377**
	(0.130)	(0.165)
Partners expected pay progression (ref: both flat)		
Father steeper	-0.184*	-0.0447
	(0.109)	(0.145)
Mother steeper	0.458***	-0.0115
	(0.158)	(0.283)
Both steep	0.0880	0.0483
	(0.132)	(0.188)
Parental age difference (ref: Similar)		
Mother 2+ older	-0.0782	-0.128
	(0.156)	(0.146)
Father 4-6 older	-0.194	-0.202*
	(0.126)	(0.123)
Father 7+ older	-0.154	-0.211
	(0.148)	(0.133)
Second family (ref: Neither)		
Mother's 2nd family	1.282***	0.963***
	(0.304)	(0.189)
Father's 2nd family	0.105	-0.152
	(0.300)	(0.162)
Both parents' 2nd family	-0.244	0.277
	(0.537)	(0.281)
Parental marital status		
Cohabiting	-0.165	-0.151
	(0.105)	(0.106)
Mother's ethnic group (ref: white)		
Indian	-1.248***	-1.234***
	(0.306)	(0.306)
Pakistani & Bangladeshi	-3.180***	-3.154***
	(0.385)	(0.387)
Black	0.562	0.592*
	(0.363)	(0.357)
Other, incl. mixed	-0.590*	-0.571*
	(0.334)	(0.336)
Number of resident children	-0.251***	-0.255***
	(0.0542)	(0.0547)
Age difference # Second family		
Mother older # Mother's 2nd family	-0.465	
	(0.401)	
Mother older # Father's 2nd family	-1.111	
	(0.786)	
Mother older # Both parents' 2nd family	1.135	

	Model 3: Age difference # Second family	Model 3: Parental education # Expected pay progression
	(0.841)	
Father 4-6 older # Mother's 2nd family	-0.221	
	(0.558)	
Father 4-6 older # Father's 2nd family	0.191	
	(0.389)	
Father 4-6 older # Both parents' 2nd family	-0.402	
	(0.809)	
Father 7+ older # Mother's 2nd family	-0.914	
	(0.657)	
Father 7+ older # Father's 2nd family	-0.531	
	(0.375)	
Father 7+ older # Both parents' 2nd family	1.266*	
	(0.734)	
Parental education # Expected pay progression		
Father has degree # Father steeper		0.224
		(0.269)
Father has degree # Mother steeper		0.901*
		(0.506)
Father has degree # Both steep		0.502
		(0.444)
Mother has degree # Father steeper		-0.950***
		(0.289)
Mother has degree # Mother steeper		0.612
		(0.437)
Mother has degree # Both steep		-0.463
		(0.295)
Both have degrees # Father steeper		-0.208
		(0.244)
Both have degrees # Mother steeper		0.574
		(0.384)
Both have degrees # Both steep		0.187
		(0.266)
Constant	12.07***	12.08***
	(0.154)	(0.153)
Observations	17,186	17,186
R-square	0.028	0.028

*Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

Table 5.8.A Multinomial Regression: Parental paid work arrangement (Base category: Traditional MBW/1.5 earner)

	Model 1a: Education				Model 1b: Pay				Model 1c: Age gap				Model 1d Family			
	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither
Couple level of education (ref: Neither)																
Father has degree	-0.00307	-0.114	-0.376*	-1.008***												
	(0.121)	(0.115)	(0.218)	(0.137)												
Mother has degree	0.663***	0.808***	0.692***	-1.346***												
	(0.107)	(0.0870)	(0.157)	(0.198)												
Both have degrees	0.547***	0.684***	0.00521	-2.352***												
	(0.102)	(0.0872)	(0.158)	(0.251)												
Partners expected pay progression (ref: both flat)																
Father steeper					-0.561***	-0.152*	-0.484***	0.0429								
					(0.0967)	(0.0803)	(0.142)	(0.126)								
Mother steeper					0.169	0.453***	0.102	0.598***								
					(0.127)	(0.104)	(0.218)	(0.163)								
Both steep					-0.146	0.00704	0.0183	1.052***								
					(0.110)	(0.0944)	(0.183)	(0.137)								
Parental age difference (ref: Similar)																
Mother 2+ older									0.149	0.215**	0.310**	0.119				
									(0.112)	(0.0972)	(0.150)	(0.130)				
Father 4-6 older									0.0523	0.0610	0.0125	0.355***				
									(0.0937)	(0.0800)	(0.149)	(0.101)				
Father 7+ older									-0.219**	-0.0551	0.362**	0.537***				
									(0.110)	(0.0956)	(0.154)	(0.110)				

	Model 1a: Education				Model 1b: Pay				Model 1c: Age gap				Model 1d Family			
	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither
Second family (ref: Neither)																
Mother's 2nd family													0.313*	0.249	0.910***	0.167
													(0.177)	(0.166)	(0.222)	(0.151)
Father's 2nd family													0.0100	0.323***	0.871***	0.636***
													(0.132)	(0.0980)	(0.167)	(0.120)
Both parents' 2nd family													-0.231	0.258	1.041***	0.624***
													(0.290)	(0.240)	(0.304)	(0.186)
Parental marital status																
Cohabiting	0.00520	-0.0715	0.448***	1.149***	-0.0678	-0.181**	0.439***	1.372***	-0.118	-0.238***	0.404***	1.392***	-0.145	-0.286***	0.236*	1.328***
	(0.0907)	(0.0892)	(0.126)	(0.0868)	(0.0917)	(0.0864)	(0.127)	(0.102)	(0.0899)	(0.0842)	(0.123)	(0.0889)	(0.0901)	(0.0823)	(0.127)	(0.0930)
Mother's ethnic group (ref: white)																
Indian	0.0832	0.306	0.589*	0.601**	0.290	0.510**	0.767***	0.0599	0.0902	0.305	0.561*	0.528*	0.0850	0.321	0.666**	0.636**
	(0.224)	(0.230)	(0.301)	(0.269)	(0.220)	(0.235)	(0.295)	(0.408)	(0.227)	(0.230)	(0.306)	(0.270)	(0.227)	(0.231)	(0.298)	(0.268)
Pakistani & Bangladeshi	-0.744***	-1.297***	-0.0293	0.991***	-0.194	-0.823**	0.607*	1.219***	-0.894***	-1.505***	-0.113	1.235***	-0.904***	-1.480***	0.0713	1.405***
	(0.272)	(0.298)	(0.334)	(0.186)	(0.270)	(0.328)	(0.343)	(0.247)	(0.276)	(0.306)	(0.332)	(0.199)	(0.275)	(0.308)	(0.329)	(0.196)
Black	1.347***	1.327***	1.755***	1.488***	1.475***	1.491***	1.676***	0.782**	1.395***	1.373***	1.706***	1.276***	1.402***	1.377***	1.724***	1.297***
	(0.288)	(0.249)	(0.384)	(0.339)	(0.304)	(0.264)	(0.440)	(0.375)	(0.306)	(0.255)	(0.383)	(0.337)	(0.306)	(0.257)	(0.382)	(0.339)
Other, incl. mixed	-0.114	-0.0719	-0.491	1.186***	0.110	0.164	-0.298	0.389	-0.0911	-0.0753	-0.562	0.951***	-0.116	-0.0798	-0.485	1.042***
	(0.220)	(0.223)	(0.477)	(0.189)	(0.221)	(0.226)	(0.483)	(0.307)	(0.221)	(0.229)	(0.488)	(0.191)	(0.222)	(0.227)	(0.481)	(0.196)
Number of resident children	-0.422***	-0.420***	-0.0901	0.371***	-0.466***	-0.461***	-0.0780	0.573***	-0.463***	-0.470***	-0.114*	0.423***	-0.474***	-0.487***	-0.212***	0.392***
	(0.0475)	(0.0484)	(0.0610)	(0.0335)	(0.0484)	(0.0511)	(0.0633)	(0.0422)	(0.0467)	(0.0485)	(0.0611)	(0.0335)	(0.0492)	(0.0504)	(0.0677)	(0.0345)
Constant	-1.506***	-1.297***	-3.203***	-3.265***	-0.975***	-0.865***	-3.021***	-4.759***	-1.139***	-0.871***	-3.175***	-4.141***	-1.126***	-0.847***	-3.050***	-3.982***
	(0.131)	(0.112)	(0.160)	(0.105)	(0.117)	(0.111)	(0.163)	(0.156)	(0.110)	(0.0967)	(0.143)	(0.104)	(0.103)	(0.0976)	(0.141)	(0.101)
Observations	18,335	18,335	18,335	18,335	17,090	17,090	17,090	17,090	18,335	18,335	18,335	18,335	18,335	18,335	18,335	18,335

*Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

Table 5.9.A Multinomial Regression Model 2: Parental paid work arrangement (Base category: Traditional MBW/1.5 earner)

	Model 2 Full			
	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither
Couple level of education (ref: Neither)				
Father has degree	0.00982	-0.123	-0.286	-0.763***
	(0.122)	(0.113)	(0.220)	(0.166)
Mother has degree	0.565***	0.740***	0.675***	-1.177***
	(0.108)	(0.0887)	(0.163)	(0.224)
Both have degrees	0.478***	0.639***	0.0954	-2.240***
	(0.101)	(0.0849)	(0.155)	(0.306)
Partners expected pay progression (ref: both flat)				
Father steeper	-0.643***	-0.168**	-0.411***	0.181
	(0.101)	(0.0827)	(0.141)	(0.134)
Mother steeper	0.101	0.331***	0.0653	0.771***
	(0.129)	(0.106)	(0.220)	(0.169)
Both steep	-0.219*	-0.0297	0.187	1.277***
	(0.112)	(0.0951)	(0.192)	(0.137)
Parental age difference (ref: Similar)				
Mother 2+ older	0.257**	0.268***	0.334**	0.236
	(0.115)	(0.102)	(0.162)	(0.170)
Father 4-6 older	0.0253	0.0676	-0.0275	0.277**
	(0.0995)	(0.0839)	(0.157)	(0.124)
Father 7+ older	-0.364***	-0.200**	0.0921	0.272*
	(0.122)	(0.101)	(0.174)	(0.142)
Second family (ref: Neither)				
Mother's 2nd family	0.353**	0.281	0.942***	0.254
	(0.179)	(0.173)	(0.233)	(0.180)
Father's 2nd family	0.0852	0.424***	0.844***	0.671***
	(0.137)	(0.0991)	(0.190)	(0.150)
Both parents' 2nd family	-0.139	0.402	1.077***	0.706***
	(0.291)	(0.248)	(0.322)	(0.208)
Parental marital status				
Cohabiting	0.0387	-0.0910	0.227*	0.891***
	(0.0931)	(0.0922)	(0.131)	(0.103)
Mother's ethnic group (ref: white)				
Indian	0.311	0.555**	0.917***	0.182
	(0.213)	(0.231)	(0.290)	(0.431)
Pakistani & Bangladeshi	-0.0218	-0.612*	0.810**	0.998***
	(0.268)	(0.320)	(0.353)	(0.250)
Black	1.400***	1.382***	1.653***	0.951**
	(0.288)	(0.252)	(0.451)	(0.370)
Other, incl. mixed	0.139	0.173	-0.264	0.486
	(0.220)	(0.229)	(0.480)	(0.338)
Number of resident children	-0.471***	-0.455***	-0.162**	0.492***
	(0.0510)	(0.0529)	(0.0694)	(0.0441)
Constant	-1.200***	-1.265***	-3.244***	-4.324***
	(0.146)	(0.131)	(0.196)	(0.155)
Observations	17,090	17,090	17,090	17,090

*Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

Table 5.10.A Multinomial Regression Model 3: Parental paid work arrangement (Base category: Traditional MBW/1.5 earner) with interactions

	Model 3a: Age gap # Expected pay progression				Model 3b: Education # Expected pay progression				Model 3c: Education #Second family			
	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither
Couple level of education (ref: Neither)												
Father has degree	0.0116	-0.124	-0.288	-0.741***	0.145	-0.215	-0.107	-0.517**	-0.0463	-0.257**	-0.00741	-0.802***
	(0.121)	(0.113)	(0.220)	(0.166)	(0.165)	(0.171)	(0.267)	(0.251)	(0.122)	(0.125)	(0.250)	(0.205)
Mother has degree	0.559***	0.743***	0.650***	-1.170***	0.603***	0.717***	0.923***	-0.923**	0.463***	0.698***	0.603***	-1.324***
	(0.109)	(0.0899)	(0.161)	(0.226)	(0.156)	(0.127)	(0.226)	(0.373)	(0.115)	(0.0967)	(0.193)	(0.290)
Both have degrees	0.472***	0.631***	0.0748	-2.225***	0.641***	0.557***	0.106	-1.925***	0.410***	0.599***	0.283	-2.219***
	(0.101)	(0.0851)	(0.158)	(0.305)	(0.137)	(0.117)	(0.245)	(0.426)	(0.105)	(0.0858)	(0.175)	(0.294)
Partners expected pay progression (ref: both flat)												
Father steeper	-0.736***	-0.0577	-0.651***	0.422**	-0.308**	-0.180	-0.223	0.307**	-0.639***	-0.165**	-0.425***	0.182
	(0.136)	(0.115)	(0.211)	(0.183)	(0.136)	(0.126)	(0.212)	(0.138)	(0.101)	(0.0833)	(0.141)	(0.133)
Mother steeper	0.0328	0.319**	0.189	0.989***	0.150	0.402**	0.216	0.830***	0.114	0.333***	0.0757	0.774***
	(0.189)	(0.158)	(0.333)	(0.328)	(0.239)	(0.203)	(0.327)	(0.203)	(0.129)	(0.106)	(0.220)	(0.169)
Both steep	-0.138	-0.0125	-0.0695	1.391***	-0.331*	-0.396**	0.354	1.344***	-0.216*	-0.0307	0.180	1.274***
	(0.130)	(0.110)	(0.246)	(0.216)	(0.176)	(0.194)	(0.259)	(0.148)	(0.111)	(0.0952)	(0.192)	(0.136)
Parental age difference (ref: Similar)												
Mother 2+ older	0.153	0.430***	-0.159	0.231	0.246**	0.263**	0.339**	0.238	0.261**	0.269***	0.346**	0.241
	(0.172)	(0.148)	(0.272)	(0.325)	(0.115)	(0.103)	(0.161)	(0.169)	(0.116)	(0.102)	(0.167)	(0.169)
Father 4-6 older	0.0804	0.168	-0.185	0.504***	0.0358	0.0683	-0.0262	0.276**	0.0260	0.0649	-0.00983	0.274**
	(0.144)	(0.130)	(0.246)	(0.186)	(0.101)	(0.0849)	(0.156)	(0.124)	(0.100)	(0.0839)	(0.157)	(0.124)
Father 7+ older	-0.415***	-0.235	0.0340	0.483**	-0.352***	-0.206**	0.108	0.271*	-0.373***	-0.202**	0.0989	0.276*
	(0.142)	(0.143)	(0.218)	(0.194)	(0.123)	(0.0986)	(0.175)	(0.144)	(0.123)	(0.101)	(0.173)	(0.142)
Second family (ref: Neither)												
Mother's 2nd family	0.352**	0.309*	0.976***	0.248	0.351**	0.273	0.947***	0.257	0.0926	0.113	1.251***	0.204
	(0.177)	(0.173)	(0.233)	(0.183)	(0.177)	(0.174)	(0.234)	(0.180)	(0.261)	(0.229)	(0.270)	(0.185)
Father's 2nd family	0.0836	0.427***	0.840***	0.673***	0.0891	0.408***	0.842***	0.671***	-0.138	0.265*	0.804***	0.602***
	(0.136)	(0.0988)	(0.190)	(0.152)	(0.135)	(0.0982)	(0.188)	(0.151)	(0.206)	(0.154)	(0.271)	(0.164)
Both parents' 2nd family	-0.136	0.406	1.087***	0.696***	-0.145	0.385	1.076***	0.715***	-0.402	0.318	1.321***	0.685***
	(0.290)	(0.249)	(0.322)	(0.209)	(0.290)	(0.248)	(0.319)	(0.208)	(0.404)	(0.360)	(0.348)	(0.226)
Parental marital status												

	Model 3a: Age gap # Expected pay progression				Model 3b: Education # Expected pay progression				Model 3c: Education #Second family			
	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither
Cohabiting	0.0420	-0.0873	0.233*	0.889***	0.0370	-0.0723	0.219*	0.875***	0.0331	-0.0942	0.250*	0.892***
	(0.0924)	(0.0917)	(0.129)	(0.102)	(0.0910)	(0.0939)	(0.130)	(0.103)	(0.0924)	(0.0917)	(0.132)	(0.104)
Mother's ethnic group (ref: white)												
Indian	0.302	0.564**	0.925***	0.213	0.287	0.529**	0.922***	0.164	0.322	0.561**	0.904***	0.188
	(0.214)	(0.231)	(0.285)	(0.429)	(0.215)	(0.229)	(0.291)	(0.436)	(0.213)	(0.231)	(0.289)	(0.431)
Pakistani & Bangladeshi	-0.0322	-0.613*	0.832**	1.011***	-0.00733	-0.597*	0.795**	0.991***	-0.0320	-0.618*	0.839**	0.996***
	(0.271)	(0.318)	(0.348)	(0.245)	(0.269)	(0.319)	(0.351)	(0.250)	(0.269)	(0.320)	(0.352)	(0.251)
Black	1.408***	1.365***	1.656***	0.953**	1.391***	1.386***	1.681***	0.946**	1.406***	1.382***	1.674***	0.972***
	(0.290)	(0.251)	(0.449)	(0.373)	(0.285)	(0.255)	(0.455)	(0.367)	(0.281)	(0.253)	(0.453)	(0.366)
Other, incl. mixed	0.118	0.169	-0.275	0.492	0.139	0.190	-0.267	0.473	0.154	0.174	-0.235	0.506
	(0.221)	(0.230)	(0.485)	(0.338)	(0.224)	(0.229)	(0.479)	(0.339)	(0.220)	(0.227)	(0.488)	(0.340)
Number of resident children	-0.473***	-0.459***	-0.168**	0.491***	-0.472***	-0.458***	-0.163**	0.490***	-0.469***	-0.456***	-0.162**	0.490***
	(0.0511)	(0.0535)	(0.0692)	(0.0442)	(0.0509)	(0.0529)	(0.0693)	(0.0440)	(0.0510)	(0.0526)	(0.0691)	(0.0439)
Age difference # Expected pay progression												
Mother older # Father steeper	0.250	-0.465**	0.697*	-0.102								
	(0.257)	(0.212)	(0.382)	(0.396)								
Mother older # Mother steeper	0.518	0.759*	1.331	-0.280								
	(0.586)	(0.427)	(0.811)	(0.911)								
Mother older # Both steep	0.136	0.0871	1.322**	0.422								
	(0.345)	(0.304)	(0.547)	(0.571)								
Father 4-6 older # Father steeper	0.239	-0.119	0.432	-0.653**								
	(0.260)	(0.232)	(0.411)	(0.326)								
Father 4-6 older # Mother steeper	-0.0616	-0.202	-0.587	-0.824								
	(0.331)	(0.288)	(0.584)	(0.580)								
Father 4-6 older # Both steep	-0.652**	-0.233	0.611	-0.112								
	(0.320)	(0.262)	(0.458)	(0.292)								
Father 7+ older # Father steeper	-0.0364	0.0865	0.537	-0.865								
	(0.513)	(0.341)	(0.530)	(0.592)								
Father 7+ older # Mother steeper	0.220	0.112	-0.268	-0.187								
	(0.323)	(0.278)	(0.525)	(0.386)								
Father 7+ older # Both steep	0.0578	0.281	-0.237	-0.573								

	Model 3a: Age gap # Expected pay progression				Model 3b: Education # Expected pay progression				Model 3c: Education #Second family			
	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither
	(0.428)	(0.312)	(0.583)	(0.363)								
Parental education # Expected pay progression												
Father has degree # Father steeper					-0.608**	-0.0604	-0.213	-0.679*				
					(0.286)	(0.258)	(0.431)	(0.403)				
Father has degree # Mother steeper					-0.0690	0.456	-13.09***	0.173				
					(0.501)	(0.438)	(0.470)	(0.544)				
Father has degree # Both steep					0.348	0.779*	-0.447	-0.247				
					(0.381)	(0.409)	(0.839)	(0.464)				
Mother has degree # Father steeper					-0.426	-0.109	-0.836*	-0.131				
					(0.262)	(0.242)	(0.439)	(0.501)				
Mother has degree # Mother steeper					-0.0498	-0.255	-0.629	-0.841				
					(0.360)	(0.309)	(0.500)	(0.641)				
Mother has degree # Both steep					0.464	0.629**	-0.116	-0.484				
					(0.327)	(0.302)	(0.472)	(0.568)				
Both have degrees # Father steeper					-0.622***	0.104	0.0135	-0.630				
					(0.224)	(0.181)	(0.400)	(0.873)				
Both have degrees # Mother steeper					-0.134	-0.0544	0.236	-0.0826				
					(0.298)	(0.241)	(0.480)	(0.535)				
Both have degrees # Both steep					-0.0158	0.438*	-0.367	-0.735				
					(0.251)	(0.249)	(0.480)	(0.779)				
Parental education # Second family												
Father has degree # Mother's 2nd family									-0.0473	0.590	-0.896	0.0906
									(0.523)	(0.461)	(0.769)	(0.464)
Father has degree # Father's 2nd family									0.450	0.715**	-1.058	0.342
									(0.426)	(0.344)	(0.747)	(0.503)
Father has degree # Both parents' 2nd family									0.661	0.378	-1.298	-0.138
									(0.880)	(0.710)	(1.129)	(0.619)
Mother has degree # Mother's 2nd family									0.493	0.329	-0.782	0.676
									(0.430)	(0.445)	(0.681)	(0.748)
Mother has degree # Father's 2nd family									0.527	0.217	0.701*	0.137
									(0.347)	(0.255)	(0.403)	(0.628)

	Model 3a: Age gap # Expected pay progression				Model 3b: Education # Expected pay progression				Model 3c: Education #Second family			
	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither	Dual short	Dual long	Reverse	Neither
Mother has degree # Both parents' 2nd family									0.883	-0.349	0.203	0.938
									(0.922)	(0.834)	(0.836)	(0.679)
Both have degrees # Mother's 2nd family									0.968**	0.0748	-0.917	-11.97***
									(0.489)	(0.530)	(1.030)	(0.383)
Both have degrees # Father's 2nd family									0.272	0.192	-1.056**	0.307
									(0.379)	(0.296)	(0.525)	(0.762)
Both have degrees # Both parents' 2nd family									-0.133	0.368	-14.96***	-12.66***
									(0.821)	(0.652)	(0.467)	(0.506)
Constant	-1.184***	-1.294***	-3.130***	-4.448***	-1.272***	-1.218***	-3.331***	-4.370***	-1.155***	-1.229***	-3.323***	-4.306***
	(0.150)	(0.140)	(0.202)	(0.194)	(0.152)	(0.141)	(0.219)	(0.156)	(0.150)	(0.131)	(0.205)	(0.152)
Observations	17,090	17,090	17,090	17,090	17,090	17,090	17,090	17,090	17,090	17,090	17,090	17,090

*Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

6. The distribution of reproduction among women and men over time in the UK

6.1. Introduction

Having discussed gender and educational differences in paid work trajectories across cohorts in Chapter 4 and the intra-household division of paid and unpaid work across different couple family types in Chapter 5, this final analytical chapter is interested in how the limited compatibility of career progression with the unpaid work of involved parenting in the context of the asymmetric and stalled (or first stage) of gendered social change in the UK, manifests in an uneven distribution of births within cohorts. The analysis in Chapter 2, identified the devaluation of care in policy as a central trend over time, and the social value of children and childrearing is a core theme of this chapter. Building on the previous two empirical chapters, this one shifts the attention somewhat to look at the gendered and classed distribution of reproductive labour at a macro level. A note on terminology at the outset, in this chapter, I use 'reproduction' to encompass the wider social reproductive labour involved in childrearing, while 'fertility' is used in the sense usually employed in demography to denote the enumeration of births.

Over the period of time considered in this thesis, while fertility levels in many European countries have declined, UK fertility rates have remained moderately high overall (Rindfuss, Choe, & Brauner-Otto, 2016; Sigle-Rushton, 2009b), but also to a greater extent differentiated, or polarised, by social class relative to many other European countries (Ekert-Jaffé, Joshi, Lynch, Mougin, Rendall, & Shapiro, 2002; Rendall, Aracil, Bagavos, Couet, Derose, Digiulio, Lappegard, Robert-Bobée, Rønsen, Smallwood, & Verropoulou, 2010; Rendall, Ekert-Jaffé, Joshi, Lynch, & Mougin, 2009). In the UK, the proportion of adults who do not have children is largest among the most highly educated, and those who do are less likely to have large families (Berrington et al., 2015; Kneale & Joshi, 2008; Rendall & Smallwood, 2003; Sigle-Rushton, 2008). Attending to the distribution of fertility, as well as the level of fertility, is of demographic concern more generally, and of relevance to this thesis specifically, because it highlights how the costs associated with reproducing society are (unevenly) distributed across the population. If childbearing is disproportionately concentrated among a potentially less resourced group of parents with lower levels of education, this raises questions both regarding the equity of the distribution of the costs involved in reproducing the next generation, in the present

policy context, but also the impact it might have on children's life chances and poverty. Social inequality is high in the UK and child poverty is an ongoing policy concern in Britain, which successive UK governments have expressed interest in addressing. As evidence suggests these inequalities have been increasing over time in the UK (Berrington et al., 2015; Sigle-Rushton, 2008), a question arises then of whether people with lower levels of qualification have made up for the shortfall amongst the most highly educated.

Complicating the interpretation of this existing evidence is that while evidence suggesting that social differentiation of fertility among women has increased in the UK over time is based primarily on micro-analyses, one of the few studies to investigate inequality in the distribution of fertility at the macro level (Shkolnikov, Andreev, Houle, & Vaupel, 2007) showed limited increase in the concentration of fertility in the UK over cohorts entering reproductive age after the end of the Second World War. Instead, based on their evidence, the period may be characterised by its relative stability compared with the more substantial change over previous cohorts. Conceptually, both the concentration and the social polarisation of fertility are related through the disproportionate number of highly educated people who do not become parents, the relative stability in concentration is therefore difficult to reconcile with the increase in the social polarisation of fertility over time. Thus, to better understand the processes of fertility change in a period of educational change it is necessary to show whether the educational differences observed in individual-level associations are reflected in the macro-level concentration of fertility.

Following from the policy analysis in Chapter 2, I see the role of social policy in directly structuring these patterns of differentiation by education as central to the importance of attending to the distribution of fertility. Policy determines how the costs associated with childrearing are balanced between individual parents and society as a whole, through support and services for families. Further, the patterns of social polarisation of fertility have been linked in the literature to structural constraints on the combination of motherhood and labour market progression and success (Fagnani, 2007), and consequent relatively high proportion of women in the UK not having children, especially among the highly educated (Ekert-Jaffé et al., 2002; see also Sigle-Rushton, 2009b, for an overview). Although most fertility research focuses on data exclusively on women, these interpretations suggest the importance of looking at how these fertility patterns, by education and over time, are gendered.

The inclusion of data on men as well as women is important for a couple of reasons. Firstly, fathers tend to be the main providers in families with children meaning that evidence of polarisation of fertility among men would further reinforce concerns regarding the possible link between an uneven distribution of fertility and children's life chances. Secondly, while gendered structural constraints

have been assumed in explaining these unequal distributions in women's fertility, analyses of the distribution of fertility among men are very limited for the UK context, obscuring to what extent the inequalities observed are gendered as well as classed. When interpreted as the division of labour involved in reproduction (i.e. how the time, effort and costs of childbearing and -rearing are shared between individuals at the population level) and informed by an understanding of gender as the socially constructed meanings and roles associated with women and men, evidence of differences in fertility may provide valuable insights for efforts to reduce the gender inequalities that underlie the structural constraints identified in the literature as explaining the polarised nature of women's fertility.

The aim of the analysis in this chapter is thus to reconcile the apparent contradictions between patterns of change over time in the concentration and polarisation of fertility, taking as its starting point that childrearing is of value to society. The chapter further aims to highlight through a division of labour frame the importance of differentiating analysis by education and gender to make visible the ways in which the structural context might shape and constrain fertility outcomes.

6.2. Background: Inequalities in the distribution of fertility in the UK context

The concentration of fertility as the division of reproductive labour

The future benefit or importance of having children is implicit in much demographic research on fertility rates and trends in developed countries, which has tended to position low fertility as a social problem. Scholars concerned with low fertility link it to the contraction of the supply of labour and the size of the future tax base along with the sustainability of welfare state provisions, such as pensions, health and social care services, as potential societal consequences due to the rising old-age-dependency ratio resulting from the combination of low fertility and increased longevity (Caldwell, Caldwell, & McDonald, 2002; Kravdal, 2010; Stark & Kohler, 2002). Relatedly, but more explicitly, feminist scholars have long argued for recognition of the value of childrearing and care. Conceptualising children as a 'public good', Paula England, Nancy Folbre and others argue that the time, care and expenditure that parents devote to raising children benefit not just the children themselves but current, and in particular future, society as a whole as children grow up to be "the workers, caregivers and taxpayers on whom our economy depends" (Folbre, 2008, p. 2). They also draw attention to the imbalance between the social benefits of reproduction and the private costs incurred (England & Folbre, 1999; see also Ross & Solinger, 2017, for a similar argument from the reproductive justice perspective).

As discussed, in the UK policy context, with high childcare costs[41] and variable quality and coverage of formal childcare provision, many women's employment trajectories, lifetime earnings and pension incomes are adversely affected by the normative assignment of primary care responsibilities to mothers (and primary financial provision responsibilities to fathers). Thus the indirect costs in particular are borne disproportionately by mothers, and especially so among mothers with higher educational qualifications in professional and managerial occupations with higher (potential) earnings and therefore higher opportunity costs (with implications for polarisation, as discussed below; Davies et al., 2000; Folbre, 2008; Joshi, 2002; Sigle-Rushton & Waldfogel, 2007).

Among women of a given cohort, an uneven distribution of births then is an indication of inequalities in how the time and costs of childrearing are divided between individuals. The extent of the unevenness of the distribution can be estimated with measures traditionally used to analyse economic inequality. Vladimir Shkolnikov and colleagues used the concentration ratio (Gini) and the proportions of women who have a given proportion of the total children born to the cohort to investigate inequality in the distribution of fertility, finding a high concentration of fertility in England and Wales relative to many other countries (Shkolnikov et al., 2007). For England and Wales, their results also show that while the concentration of fertility dropped substantially for consecutive cohorts born prior to or during the Second World War, this was followed by a period of comparatively stable, if slowly increasing, concentration for the first cohorts to reach childbearing age after the beginning of the educational expansion from the 1960s (those born in the early to mid-1950s). Their data did not cover more recent cohorts.

Applying an established measure of (income) inequality in this way thus highlights that the distribution of fertility can be conceptualised as the division of reproductive labour between adults in a given cohort, while viewing children as a public good foregrounds the social injustice of an unequal distribution of fertility in contexts where the costs of reproduction are both largely privatised and strongly gendered.

The social polarisation of fertility

Not only is the overall distribution of fertility in Britain uneven, childbearing is also characterised by marked social differences - often described as the 'social polarisation' of fertility. Women who have lower educational qualifications are more likely to have children, tend to start childbearing at an

[41] In the UK, the estimated net cost of centre-based formal childcare to parents (after any childcare-related benefit elements and subsidies) accounted in 2004 for approximately 55% of average earnings for a full-time dual earner family with two pre-school aged children, and 18% of average earnings in the case of a lone parent family with two pre-school aged children (OECD, 2007).

earlier age, and have, on average, larger families. Conversely, a larger proportion of degree-educated women do not have children, and those who do tend to postpone childbearing to a later age. Having started a family, highly educated women tend to have a shorter interval to the second child but are less likely to have larger families (Berrington, 2004; Berrington et al., 2015; Ekert-Jaffé et al., 2002; Jenkins, 2011; Kneale & Joshi, 2008; Rendall & Smallwood, 2003; Sigle-Rushton, 2008).

The mechanisms underlying the association between education and fertility are complex, and each process affects the other. While educational enrolment tends to inhibit or delay fertility, the reverse is also the case, with early childbearing constraining further educational attainment (Cohen, Kravdal, & Keilman, 2011; Neels, Murphy, Ní Bhrolcháin, & Beaujouan, 2017). For some, the educational path taken is informed by a perceived compatibility of childrearing and paid work in the eventual occupation, for others, the investment in education and career progression is part of a life course plan that is intentionally child-free. Yet the relationship between education and fertility differs cross-nationally (Wood, Neels, & Kil, 2014) and in the UK fertility intentions tend to be much less differentiated by education than are eventual fertility outcomes, suggesting structural constraints to the realisation of fertility intentions and the combination of paid work and motherhood (Berrington et al., 2015). Arguably, the strong expectation that motherhood features in the normative life course trajectory, may also be a contributing factor to the very low proportion of women declaring in surveys a firm intention never to have children (the 'motherhood mandate'; Russo, 1976). However, alongside cross-national evidence showing greater social polarisation in childbearing outcomes in the UK, it suggests people's options may be limited and constrained by the wider social structures and 'reproductive regime'[42] (Burns, 2005; Irwin, 2000; Riley, 1999; Young, 2002), within which formal social policies also play a role, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Finding the timing of childbearing and completed family size more distinctly polarised by education and occupation in Britain than in contexts of more universal provision for childcare and family support, such as in France and Nordic countries, studies have attributed the unequal distribution of births to the policy context. The means-tested targeting of family support and childcare subsidies in the UK do little to mitigate the opportunity cost of motherhood for highly educated women in high earning professions which demand male-typical working patterns at a stage in life when the transition to parenthood would generally occur (Ekert-Jaffé et al., 2002; Rendall et al., 2010; Rendall et al., 2009). Thus, while the targeting of support towards lower income families is redistributive, the

[42] Sarah Irwin (2000) has argued that changing fertility patterns are linked to changes in how social reproduction is organised, changes in the relative positions of men and women, and different generations, and in their claims to education and income and obligations to care.

threshold of the means test, the low benefit levels and limited support for (both) parents to maintain continuous (full-time) employment contributes both to child poverty levels that are high compared with other European countries (Bradshaw & Finch, 2002) and to the unequal distribution of births.

Educational differentiation and fertility trends in a context of educational expansion

Despite extensive research on fertility levels, including the association between education and the timing of births and family size, in the UK context there is limited information available on how educational expansion relates to fertility levels and the distribution of fertility at the aggregate level.

As outlined in Chapter 1, educational enrolment past compulsory schooling and attainment of higher education qualifications has expanded greatly in the post-war period, and especially since the beginning of the 1960s. The composition of groups with different levels of qualifications has thus changed across cohorts. Although educational expansion has maintained rather than reduced class inequality as the increase in university participation has been greatest among those from privileged backgrounds with high-earning parents (Blanden & Machin, 2013; Boliver, 2011), educational expansion has also increased the 'positional value' of education (Bol, 2015), which suggests that as the highly educated group has expanded it may have become less homogenous and select in regard to motivations for undertaking degree-level education.

To the extent that the historically lower fertility among highly educated women was due to women who did not want children self-selecting into higher education and more demanding careers, possibly as a strategy to avoid motherhood,[43] or having invested in higher education felt compelled to maintain their career,[44] the changing composition of this group would be expected to be associated with a change in fertility for the group, on average. On the other hand, to the extent that lower fertility among highly educated women was, and remains, primarily due to structural constraints on maintaining a career in combination with childrearing, the changing composition of the group might not be expected to be associated with a change in the group's average family size over cohorts. At the other end of the educational spectrum, while having no qualifications was

[43] While not showing motivations for undertaking higher education, a small 1977 survey of 'voluntarily childless' married women (n= 255; the majority born between 1940 and 1952) found that the group had higher than typical levels of qualification, nearly half had made the decision at the time of marriage, the majority (75%) gave preservation of freedom as their reason for not wanting children and over half (53%) cited their desire to start or continue a career (Baum & Cope, 2008).

[44] Laura James' qualitative work with women of different generations suggests that older women who had undertaken higher education to a greater extent than younger women felt an 'obligation' to succeed in their careers as a result of this prior investment (James, 2009).

neither particularly rare nor necessarily a barrier to maintaining employment and some income security over one's working life in earlier cohorts, among more recent cohorts the group without qualifications is now a small and more distinct minority, and the lack of formal qualifications more likely to carry a negative signal associated with greater disadvantage in the labour market, lower earnings and more precarity than previously (Gesthuizen, Solga, & Künster, 2010). Research concluding that the opportunity cost effect is stronger than the income effect for fertility (Wood et al., 2014) suggests the contraction of the lowest educated group over time would not be expected to be associated with a change in fertility behaviour, on average.

If childbearing has become increasingly disproportionately concentrated among a shrinking and increasingly select group of potentially less resourced parents, this raises questions regarding a potential link between the distribution of fertility and increasing child poverty. Over the same period, both income inequality and child poverty rates have also increased. Between the early 1960s and the late 1970s, income inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, fluctuated between approximately 0.27 and 0.24, then rising to a new plateau to fluctuate between 0.33 and nearly 0.36 since the late 1980s on (Cribb, Norris Keiller, & Waters, 2018). Meanwhile, child poverty rates rose after a relatively low and stable level around or below 15% during the 1960s and 1970s to a peak of 29% in 1992, followed by a gradual reduction to a plateau around 20% from the early 2000s on (HBAI, 2018; Joyce, 2014).

While analysis from other European countries shows the negative educational gradient in women's fertility has weakened over time with educational expansion (Beaujouan, Brzozowska, & Zeman, 2016; Kravdal & Rindfuss, 2008; Van Bavel, 2014), research on the UK context has suggested widening educational differentials in fertility outcomes (Berrington et al., 2015; Ekert-Jaffé et al., 2002; Wood et al., 2014). The Berrington et al. (2015) study responded to the scarcity of evidence documenting how the relationship between education and fertility has changed over time, suggesting that the relative stability in overall fertility rates in the UK might in part have been maintained by the larger family sizes among lower-educated women compensating for the higher rates of childlessness and smaller family sizes among degree-educated women. While that study focused on the relationship between education and fertility at the individual level comparing cohorts, this finding has implications for the distribution of the costs of childbearing over time and by extension income and living standards among large families, if also reflected at the aggregate level.

At the aggregate level then, it is the combination of high (or increasing) concentration and increasing polarisation over time that would be of particular concern, indicating that births are disproportionately and increasingly concentrated among a subsection of the population less well-

resourced to bear the associated costs, and may suggest a potential link between increasing educational differences in fertility and rising child poverty.

However, one of the few studies to investigate inequality in the distribution of fertility at the macro level (Shkolnikov et al., 2007), as noted above, showed relative stability in the concentration of cohort fertility in the UK over cohorts entering childbearing age after the end of the Second World War. Meanwhile research focusing specifically on educational differences indicates the social polarisation of fertility among women has increased in the UK. Since logically it seems the patterns of change over time in terms of social polarisation ought to be reflected in the concentration ratio if the negative educational gradient of fertility has increased alongside the relative growth of the highly educated group, this pattern of change on the one measure is difficult to reconcile with the relative stability on the other. Thus, while both the educational composition of the population and social class inequality have increased in the UK over the past several decades the implications of these social changes for aggregate-level fertility patterns are unclear. This raises the question of whether the educational inequality evident in micro-level analyses does not translate to aggregate-level measures of inequality in completed cohort fertility, or possibly the apparent contradiction arises due to somewhat different (although overlapping) time periods covered in the existing literature.

Inequalities in male fertility

As is evident from the discussion above, demographic research on fertility has primarily focused on data on women, albeit with some notable exceptions (e.g. Aassve, Burgess, Propper, & Dickson, 2006; Bledsoe, Lerner, & Guyer, 2000; Kneale & Joshi, 2008; Kravdal & Rindfuss, 2008; Winkler-Dworak & Toulemon, 2007). The main justifications for focusing on women include the more clearly defined (biologically restricted) age span for women, women being more accessible and responsive to survey interviewing as well as purportedly providing more accurate information about their children. However, a number of demographers have called this tradition into question highlighting the increased need to incorporate data on men's fertility as childbearing outside stable unions and across multiple cohabiting unions across the life course have increased, as well as for any research interested in understanding fertility patterns beyond enumerating births (Goldscheider & Kaufman, 1996; Greene & Biddlecom, 2000; Ní Bhrolcháin, 1992).

When considered by policy and demographic research, fathers have tended to be positioned primarily as financial providers for their children (Lewis, 2002b; Meulders-Klein, 1996; Watkins, 1993), and qualitative research with fathers has confirmed the salience of financial provision to many fathers' conception of ('good') fatherhood, alongside often also valuing the emotional bonding

and involved caregiving aspects of parenting (Braun et al., 2011; Tina Miller, 2011). The importance of this financial provider role can also be inferred from quantitative evidence of men being less likely, but women being more likely, to have a first child while not in paid work after studying. Thus for men this suggests that (entering) employment is imperative for starting a family (Aassve et al., 2006; Winkler-Dworak & Toulemon, 2007, using French data).

To the extent that level of education is associated with earnings and ability to provide financially for a family, polarisation of fertility among men, especially if increasing over time, may be linked to the rising levels of child poverty. Analysis of UK data has indicated that while the relationship between education and fertility is weaker for men than women, the highest educated men have significantly lower rates of entry into parenthood (Aassve et al., 2006; Kneale & Joshi, 2008). However, these analyses did not investigate the completed (or near completed) average family size of men, or how this might vary by social class or education. Since fathers tend to be the main income earners in many families with children, evidence of polarisation of fertility among men would further reinforce concerns regarding the possible link between an uneven distribution of fertility and children's life chances.

In addition to the substantive importance of investigating inequality in the distribution of children among men, the inclusion of men also has theoretical implications for how reproduction is conceptualised and problematised in analysis, interpretation and policy constructions. As the indirect cost of foregone earnings tends to be borne by mothers, the near exclusive focus in the literature on women's fertility patterns by level of education and employment status may seem justified. However, it risks reifying gender inequalities perpetuating the idea of children as women's responsibility with potential policy solutions proposed centring on reconciling paid work and motherhood rather than a re-distribution of the efforts and costs involved in childrearing both between men and women and between individuals and the state (see e.g. Elliott, 2002; and Joshi, 1998, for discussion of the limitations of the framing of low fertility in terms of a revolt by women). As Barbara Risman (2004) has argued, while it is easy to show the tension between paid work and fertility outcomes among women, research must still investigate its absence among men to make it visible and to problematise it. Comparisons of fertility patterns for women and men over this period of time characterised by educational expansion can help centre the question of how these structures shape and constrain fertility intentions as well as their outcomes in ways that are gendered as well as classed.

Chapter aims and Research Question

The objective of the chapter is to better understand the processes of fertility change in a period of educational change, with possible implications for policy efforts to reduce child poverty and mitigate the uneven distribution of the costs involved in reproducing the next generation. The analysis thus aims to show whether the educational differences for women, documented in other studies, are reflected in the macro-level fertility inequalities, and whether and how these patterns by education, and over time, are gendered.

The chapter asks how the distribution of reproduction across educational groups has changed among women and men during the period considered in this thesis; a period of educational expansion. It adds to the previous focus on paid work over the life course and the division of paid and unpaid work among couples, by adding the perspective of how the unpaid work of childrearing is distributed within each cohort. This is important as it highlights the social justice issue inherent in the division of labour involved in reproducing the next generation of society, and the implications for child poverty of an unequal distribution reproducing social inequality. The analysis and results are organised around a series of analytical questions to explore both the polarisation and the concentration of fertility:

- Has the overall concentration of fertility changed over cohorts?
- Are lower-educated women and men bearing a disproportionate share of reproduction?
- Has the relative share of the total number of children born to each education group changed across successive cohorts?

Given the existing literature, the expectation is for measures of inequality to have increased over time among women. If women with lower levels of qualifications are making up the 'shortfall' of reduced fertility among the highest educated then as the relative sizes of these categories have changed with educational expansion, fertility in the UK might be expected to have become both more concentrated and more polarised for recent cohorts. For men the expectations are less clear. Because men's careers are generally unaffected by fatherhood, male fertility might be less polarised and more stable over time. On the other hand, evidence of educational homogamy within couples and of higher levels of fertility postponement and childlessness among degree-educated men (Aassve et al., 2006; Kneale & Joshi, 2008; Nitsche, Matysiak, Van Bavel, & Vignoli, 2018), might instead suggest similar patterns for men as for women.

6.3. Data & Methods

Data

The analysis draws on retrospective fertility histories from ELSA, NCDS and BCS70 to investigate the (nearly) completed family size of cohorts of women and men born between 1935 and 1970. Due to the smaller sample size of ELSA, I use 10-year bands to construct cohorts based on birth years, with sample sizes ranging from 949 men and 1,143 women in the 1935-44 cohort to 5,372 men and 5,546 women in the 1958 cohort data.

The earliest cohort completed compulsory education prior to the beginning of the major expansion of post-secondary and higher education from the 1960s on, while the latest cohort reached the end of secondary school in a period of renewed political emphasis and commitment to tertiary education expansion in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Boliver, 2011). The rate of staying in education beyond the end of compulsory education (age 15 for the first two cohorts in the analysis) was about one-fifth in 1960, but rose steadily to close to two-fifths by the time the 1958 cohort reached school leaving age and approaching half of all young people by the time the 1970 cohort reached school leaving age, in 1986 (Blanden & Machin, 2013). The broad timespan covered by these datasets thus allows the analysis to trace cohort fertility levels by highest level of qualification as the educational composition of cohorts has changed substantially from cohort to cohort.

When researching the relationship between education and fertility, the important question of the timing of the measurement of education arises because the two processes interact, and each affects the other over the life course. While ongoing enrolment or recent completion of (higher) education is associated with a delay in childbearing, early childbearing prior to the (planned) completion of education can lead, for both men and women, to withdrawal from education (Cohen et al., 2011; Neels et al., 2017; Ní Bhrolcháin & Beaujouan, 2012). As the aim of this analysis is not to establish causality (in either direction), in common with some other studies (e.g. Jalovaara, Neyer, Andersson, Dahlberg, Dommermuth, Fallesen, & Lappegård, 2018; Wood et al., 2014) the highest level of qualification is measured at the same time as the most recent fertility history information, age 42 for the BCS70, age 42-55 for the NCDS and 53- 72 for the ELSA respondents.[45] Level of education is in

[45] In part this decision is necessitated by ELSA being a survey of older adults and thus not including measures of education collected earlier in the life course. As a robustness check I compared the fertility outcomes by level of education recorded by the age of 26 for NCDS and BCS70, drawing on the harmonised educational history dataset (Bukodi, 2017). While the educational distribution differed depending on timing of measurement, there were minimal differences in the educational fertility patterns based on whether highest level of qualification was measured at age 26 or at 42 or older.

this analysis then used as a proxy for social class and related labour market position and level of income, and the exact order in which births and qualifications or exits from education occurred is less critical.

The retrospective fertility history data in ELSA were collected as part of the life-history module administered by face-to-face interviews in 2007 when the respondents included in this analysis were aged between 53 and 72 years old. The NCDS and BCS70 surveys updated at each sweep information about the individuals in the respondents' household and asked men and women about any children born to them not living in the same household (since the last sweep they participated in). As already discussed in Chapter 3, past analysis comparing findings based on retrospective and prospective fertility histories has raised concerns regarding some under-reporting of births by older women in retrospective fertility histories (Murphy, 2009) but these issues were later attributed to specific survey methodology (Ní Bhrolcháin et al., 2011). There is also concern about lower reported fertility by men in survey data, discussed further below.

While acknowledging these concerns and bearing the limitations in mind when interpreting the results, it should also be noted that survey data are the only source of UK data available for this type of analysis. Survey data are required in order to analyse the polarisation of fertility by education, and for any analysis of trends in cohort fertility among men, because parental level of education and the number of prior children fathered are not collected at the registration of births. For women's fertility measures, the checks that were possible against birth registration data also indicated the survey estimates matched official statistics reasonably well. Estimates of the proportion of women who have had at least one birth by age 42 from these datasets are very similar to official statistics based on birth registration data for women's cumulative fertility at age 42, reported by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), although the average number of births had by women by age 42 is somewhat underestimated in the survey data.[46]

Based on population and birth register data in other countries, men's fertility has been found to be somewhat lower than for women, attributed to the somewhat larger numbers of men in the relevant cohorts studied, as well as a small proportion of births being single-registered by the mother (Jalovaara et al., 2018; Kravdal & Rindfuss, 2008). Single birth registration, and related

[46] See Table 6.3.A in Chapter Appendix for comparisons. As these comparisons show, the ELSA survey estimates for a cohort born 1925-34 differ somewhat from the others in that they over- rather than under-estimate completed family size relative to the ONS birth registration statistics. Early analysis including this cohort also raised further concern that differential mortality may bias the results for this cohort (the life history data having been collected when the oldest participants in this cohort were aged 82). For this reason, this cohort is not included in further analysis reported in this thesis.

possible lack of awareness of having fathered a child can also account for a small part of the lower fertility reported by men than women in survey data (Toulemon & Lapierre-Adancyk, 2000), however the greater concern for data quality relates to underrepresentation and underreporting.

Comparisons between retrospective and prospective survey data on men's fertility suggest both that men with unstable partnership histories are underrepresented in retrospective data and that children fathered in previous relationships are underreported by men who are represented in the study. Even after adjusting for underrepresentation, an estimated quarter of all non-marital births are not reported by men in the British Household Panel Survey (Rendall, Clarke, Peters, Ranjit, & Verropoulou, 1999). However, ONS data on birth registration suggests that for the oldest two cohorts in this analysis (using the ELSA data) non-marital births accounted for less than a tenth of the births.[47] Further, other research concludes that "[c]hildrearing in a two-parent family throughout the children's dependent years (to age 18 here) is still the majority life-course pattern of parenting" for families begun in the 1960s and 1970s (Rendall, Joshi, Oh, & Verropoulou, 2001, pp. 382-383). The authors estimated that 8% and 12% of men who became fathers in the 1960s and 1970s respectively, were at some point during their parenting years not co-resident with children. While the prevalence of non-co-residence is likely to have increased for fathers who began their families in later decades, the birth histories in the cohort studies having been collated and updated over multiple sweeps through adulthood should help mitigate against underreporting (although not differential attrition resulting in under-representation). While these caveats to the quality of the fertility data for men especially, since the estimates cannot be compared to ONS sources, must be borne in mind when interpreting the results, excluding fertility data provided by men due to these concerns would be a disproportionate response to the issue, especially as men and women's family life courses may reasonably be expected to have become less symmetric over time (Greene & Biddlecom, 2000; Ní Bhrolcháin, 1992). Further, attrition is also a concern for the women in the birth cohort studies, and the survey estimates for these cohorts did not differ considerably more from the ONS estimates than did the estimates from ELSA, which were weighted for non-response.

In summary, comparisons of the overall survey estimates for women with official data (Chapter Appendix Table 6.3.A) suggest some under-estimation of completed family size. While the level of underreporting differs somewhat across cohorts there is no systematic pattern, for example of under-reporting increasing substantially for more recent cohorts. For fertility estimates for men,

[47] For example, in 1971, when the 1935-44 birth cohort was aged 27-36, just 5.2% of births registered to parents aged 25-39 were born to unmarried parents, while in 1982 when the 1935-44 cohort was aged 38-47 and the 1945-54 cohort was aged 28-37, just 9.9% of births registered to parents aged 35 and over and 7.5% of births registered to parents aged 25-34 were born to unmarried parents.

which cannot be validated against official statistics, the main concerns are under-reporting by and underrepresentation of respondents with unstable partnership histories. For ELSA, these issues might be less of a concern because of the lower rates of marriage dissolution, and higher rates of births occurring within marriage for these cohorts and because the survey weights available for the life history data should help correct for under-representation. For the two birth cohorts, the method of collecting the birth histories should mitigate against under-reporting so the main concern is under-representation due to attrition from the sample prior to age 42. Thus, a sharp and substantial discontinuity between the estimates from ELSA and those from the two birth cohorts, consistently observable across the different estimates would raise concerns about the reliability of these data for making interpretations of trends over time.

The summary statistics in Table 6.4.A in the chapter appendix provide some reassurance for using these datasets for making cross-cohort comparisons. There is no indication of sharp discontinuity in the trend in the average number of children per adult by age 42 occurring in the estimates from ELSA vs the birth cohorts, for either women or men. There is a notable shift in the educational distribution, as would be expected in line with the timing of educational expansion. There is also a large increase in the proportion without children between the ELSA 1945-54 cohort and the 1958 cohort. However, this increase is of a fairly similar magnitude for both men and women, and as already discussed these survey estimates for women align well with the ONS statistics so again do not suggest cause for concern about the suitability of these data for analysis of patterns of change over time.

Analysis methods and measures of inequality

To investigate inequalities in fertility at the macro-level and how they have changed over time, I follow others who have used the concentration ratio (Gini coefficient) and 'Have proportions' to quantify and describe inequality in the distribution of fertility (Shkolnikov et al., 2007; Vaupel & Goodwin, 1987). The concentration ratio (CR) provides a summary indicator of the unevenness of a distribution. It captures the deviation of the concentration curve, that is the cumulative proportion of births relative to the cumulative proportion of adults (ranked by family size), from the line of equality. The CR ranges from a value of 0, in the case of complete equality where every individual has the same number of children, to 1, in the theoretical case of complete inequality where all the cohort's children were born to one individual.

It is not straight-forward to substantively interpret the size of the CR, or differences between CRs over time or between countries, as there are no conventional benchmarks. However, cross-national research has recorded a range between a low of 0.24 in Bulgaria and a high of 0.43 in West Germany

for cohorts of women born in the early 1960s (Shkolnikov et al., 2007). Further, the related Have-statistics can aid interpretation, along with consideration of the proportion of children that would need to be 'redistributed' to achieve an even distribution.[48] These 'Have proportions' relate to different points on the concentration curve, such as the proportion of adults in a cohort who are parents to half the children born to that cohort (the 'Have-half') and the proportion of children in a cohort born to half of the adults in that cohort (the 'Half-have'). A high concentration of fertility, high Half-have and low Have-half proportions, suggest that the children born to a cohort are unevenly distributed across the adults of that cohort, as some have many children and others have few or none at all. While the concentration measures indicate the unevenness of the distribution, these measures do not give any direct indication about the characteristics of those adults who have many or few children.

Conversely, the second and third analytical questions outlined earlier relate to the polarisation of fertility. Here the main concern is whether the distribution of births intersects with social inequality so that large families are disproportionately found amongst those with lower levels of education, who are thus more likely to be in lower paid or more precarious work. To investigate whether lower educated women and men bear a disproportionate share of reproduction in this way, and how their share has changed over cohorts, I operationalised the polarisation of fertility at the aggregate level using the relative contribution of each educational category to the total children born to a cohort. To make comparisons over time, allowing for the changing relative size of those educational categories, I divided the proportion of children contributed by each educational group by the proportion of adults in the cohort that belongs to the given education category. If each category contributed the proportion of children equal to the size of the category (i.e. replaced itself) each ratio would be equal to 1.

I used Stata command inecdec0 to calculate the Gini coefficient as it allows for the large number of zero values (childlessness) to be included in the calculations and glcurve to estimate the Lorenz curves, the ordinates from which the Have-half and Half-have proportions were derived. The next section presents a range of descriptive analyses which illustrate how the distribution of reproduction

[48] This interpretation is equivalent to the Hoover (or Robin Hood or Schutz) Index in studies of income inequality (Koolman & Van Doorslaer, 2004; Rogerson, 2013), where the concept of redistribution has a direct practical application through taxation and benefits. In the context of births and family size, such a direct application would of course not be relevant and it may be preferable to consider it the redistribution of the (private) costs associated with a particular proportion of births. However, here I am using it simply as a conceptual tool for comparing the relative distance of the different cohorts from an equal distribution.

has changed over cohorts at the aggregate level, both overall and across educational groups among women and men.

6.4. Results

Concentration of fertility

In line with other research documenting trends in cohort fertility rates (e.g. Berrington et al., 2015; Wood et al., 2014), I find evidence of average family size reducing and the proportions of adults without children increasing over time in Britain (see Chapter Appendix Table 6.4.A for summary statistics). This overall decrease in the average number of children per adult has occurred among both women and men, from 2.2 children per woman born in 1935-44 to 1.79 per woman born in 1970 and from 1.95 children per man born in 1935-44 to 1.59 per man born in 1970. The percentage of women who reported that they have not had a birth by age 42 increased from 11.5% among women born 1935-44 to 18.9% among women born in 1970. Over time, the overall percentage of men who reported they have not fathered any children also increased, from 17.1% among men born 1935-44 to 25.7% among men born in 1970.

To investigate how the concentration of fertility has changed over time among women and men, the table below shows the concentration ratio (CR) and the proportion of adults who are parents to half the children (Have-half) and the proportion of children had by half the adults (Half-have) in each cohort, along with the percentage of fertility that would need to be 'redistributed' to achieve an even distribution (Table 6.1). The concentration of fertility is, according to these data higher among men than among women, although as the concentration ratio is sensitive to the proportion without children and bearing in mind the possible underreporting and underrepresentation among men, I focus on the trend over time among men and women rather than the absolute difference in concentration between them.[49]

[49] The CR could be influenced by underreporting to the extent that this is not a random occurrence but for example inflates the proportion reporting having had no children. However, while the propensity to under-report childbearing might have increased due to relationship stability having increased across the cohorts, the more frequent updating of fertility data in the birth cohort studies should mitigate against underreporting in the two later cohorts.

Table 6.1 Measures of concentration of births

	Women				Men			
	CR	Have-half	Half-have	Redistri-bution %	CR	Have-half	Half-have	Redistri-bution %
1935-44	0.32	0.35	0.71	21.1	0.35	0.35	0.72	22.2
1945-54	0.30	0.36	0.69	19.1	0.37	0.35	0.75	24.7
1958	0.36	0.34	0.74	23.8	0.43	0.35	0.82	31.7
1970	0.37	0.34	0.75	24.9	0.43	0.34	0.81	31.0

The general trend is of increasing inequality in the distribution of fertility over cohorts. Among women the concentration ratio reduced from 0.32 for women born 1935-44 to 0.30 for women born 1945-54 followed by an upturn to 0.36 and 0.37 for the 1958 and 1970 cohorts respectively, while among men the concentration ratio increased over cohorts, from 0.35 in the cohort 1935-44 to 0.43 in the 1958 and 1970 cohorts. In the context of the range recorded cross-nationally in the Shkolnikov et al. (2007) study (0.24-0.43) the concentration of fertility is thus relatively high in the UK. Using data for England and Wales, that study found for cohorts of women born between 1921-22 to 1955-56 a reduction in the CR between 1921-22 and 1941-42 (from 0.43 to 0.32, comparable to 58% of the cross-national range recorded in the same study), followed by a considerably smaller increase to 0.34 and 0.36 for 1951-52 and 1955-56 cohorts respectively (the change comparable to about a fifth, 21%, of the cross national range). Using the same cross-national range as a benchmark to assess the magnitude of the change across the cohorts considered in this analysis, shows that the increase in concentration between 1935-44 and 1970 cohorts is equivalent to just over a quarter (26%) of the range for women but over two-fifths (42%) of the range for men.

The proportion of adults who are parents to half of the children born to the cohort (Have-half) declined only slightly among both women and men with the increasing concentration. Among those born 1935-44, 35% of women and men were parents to half of the children born to the cohort, declining slightly to 34% of women and men born in 1970. The general trend of the unevenness in the distribution increasing over the cohorts considered, is more evident in the proportion of children born to half of the adults in the cohort (Half-have), albeit with some fluctuation. Compared with the 1935-44 cohort, with 71% and 72% of the children born to half of the women and half of the men respectively, greater proportions of children were born to half of the 1970 cohort's women (75%) and men (81%) respectively.

The Half-have also reveals the proportion of the total number of births that would need to be 'redistributed' in order to have an even distribution with half of the births occurring to half of the adults. With Half-have proportions of 0.71 among women and 0.72 among men born in 1935-44 the

percentage of births (or associated costs) that would need to be redistributed from the half of the population with the largest families to the half with the smallest families to even out the distribution, are 21% and 22% respectively. The proportions that would need to be redistributed increased for both men and women born in 1958, compared with previous cohorts, followed by much smaller differences between the 1958 and 1970 cohorts. Among the 1970 cohort, the percentage of births that would need to be redistributed in order for half the adults to have half the children was a quarter (25%) for women, and almost a third (31%) for men.

Together, these results indicate that the overall unevenness of the distribution of fertility has increased for both women and men between 1935-1944 and 1958, and then remained relatively stable between 1958 and 1970. This is as expected in the context of other evidence of the proportion of adults who do not have children having increased over time, and the use of the Gini measure in this analysis is a reminder that this often-used measure in demography (the proportion without children) is linked to inequality in the distribution of reproduction. The next section turns to look at change over time in how the uneven distribution of childbearing intersects with social inequality in the UK.

Polarisation of fertility

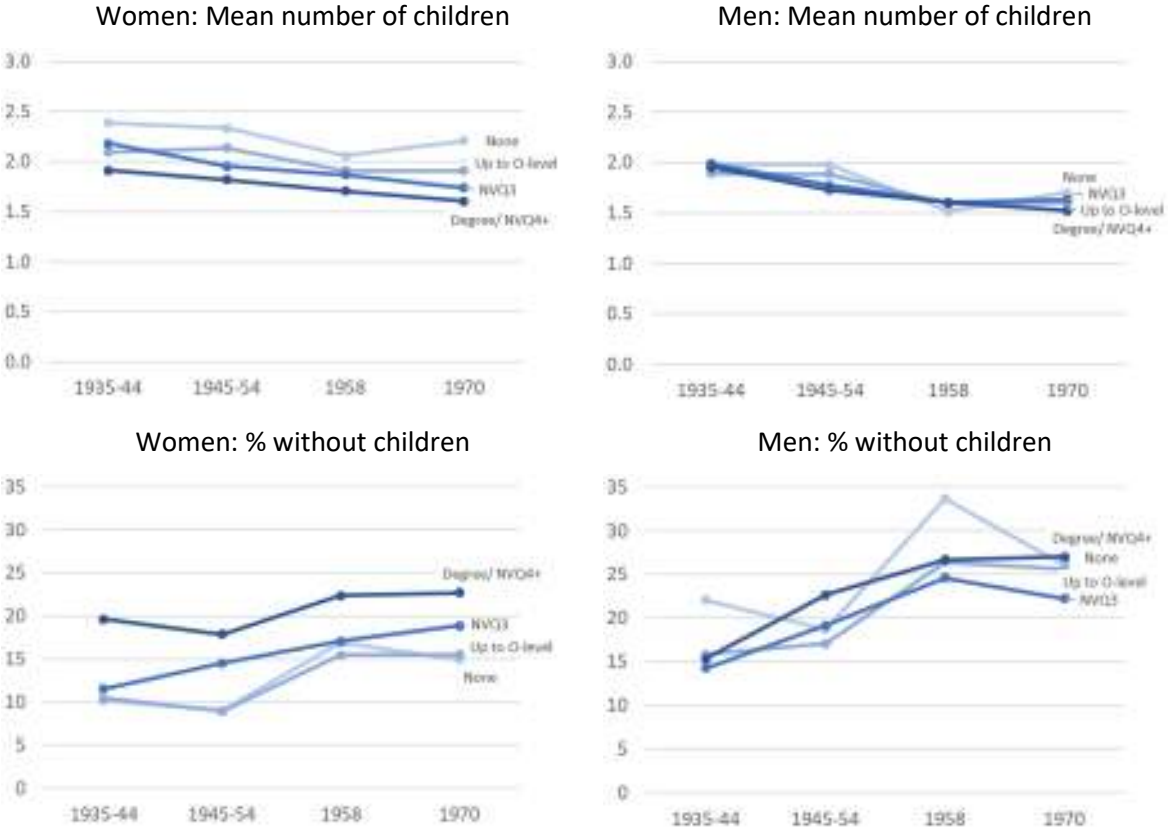
This section presents trends over time in the polarisation of fertility at the aggregate level, beginning with some general trends for context before focusing on the relative share of total births contributed by each educational group as a measure of polarisation.

Figure 6.1 shows the (nearly) completed average number of children per adult (cohort fertility rate) and the proportion without children at age 42, by level of education and across cohorts, separately for women and men. Among women in each cohort, family size and the proportion without children varied by level of education. The average number of children was highest among those without educational qualifications and lowest among those educated to degree-level or above. While the reduction in average family size over cohorts was observed within each educational category, it was somewhat smaller among lower-educated women than among more highly educated women. Among men, however, the reduction in family size is very similar across education groups.

Among women, although in all cohorts the percentage without children is lowest among those without qualifications or with up to O-levels and highest among those educated to degree level or above, in contrast with past research (Berrington et al., 2015), I do not find that the educational differentials have increased over time, but have rather remained relatively stable. This difference in findings is likely a combination of the birth years of the cohorts, while overlapping, being somewhat different and the lowest qualification grouping being no qualifications in this study but including

some lower qualifications (below O-level) in their study. Among men, there is no evidence of an educational gradient in the percentage who reported not having fathered a child by age 42. This finding echoes other research on men's fertility in the UK (Aassve et al., 2006; Kneale & Joshi, 2008).

Figure 6.1 Average family size and % without children at age 42, by cohort and level of education



Bearing in mind that the educational distribution has changed considerably over the time period considered, the persistence in the educational gradient in (nearly) completed fertility among women raises questions for the interpretation of the trend over time in educational differentials in relation to the polarisation thesis. On the one hand, it is clear that educational inequalities in the number of children born exist and persist over time, as better educated women are to a greater extent not having children or having fewer children while those with lower educational qualifications continue to have larger families on average, and with likely less financial stability and fewer resources at their disposal to do so. On the other hand, the proportion without qualifications shrank from over a third of women (36%) and over a quarter of men (28%) born 1935-44 to 11% of women and 12% of men born in 1970. Meanwhile the proportion with a degree-level qualification or above increased from 11% of women and 19% of men to 42% of women and 40% of men between the same cohorts. What does the persistence of educational inequality in childbearing over time imply for the interpretation

of the trend in polarisation, when the relative size of the educational categories has changed to this extent?

To investigate whether the distribution of births by level of education has changed over time, allowing for the changing educational distribution, I present the proportion of the total number of children born to a cohort contributed by each educational group, relative to the size of the educational category. I thus focus the polarisation thesis directly on whether the share of total reproduction is disproportionate, and find that for women, but not men, there is some evidence of polarisation increasing over time.

In the figure below (Figure 6.2), the solid lines show the percentage of children contributed to the total number of children born to the cohort by adults with each level of educational qualification and the dashed line of the same shade shows the percentage of all adults in the cohort with that level of qualification. Where the solid line is above the dashed line of the same shade, adults in that educational category can be thought of as contributing more than their share to the cohort total number of children, and where the solid line is below its paired dashed line adults in that educational category can be thought of as under-contributing to the total.

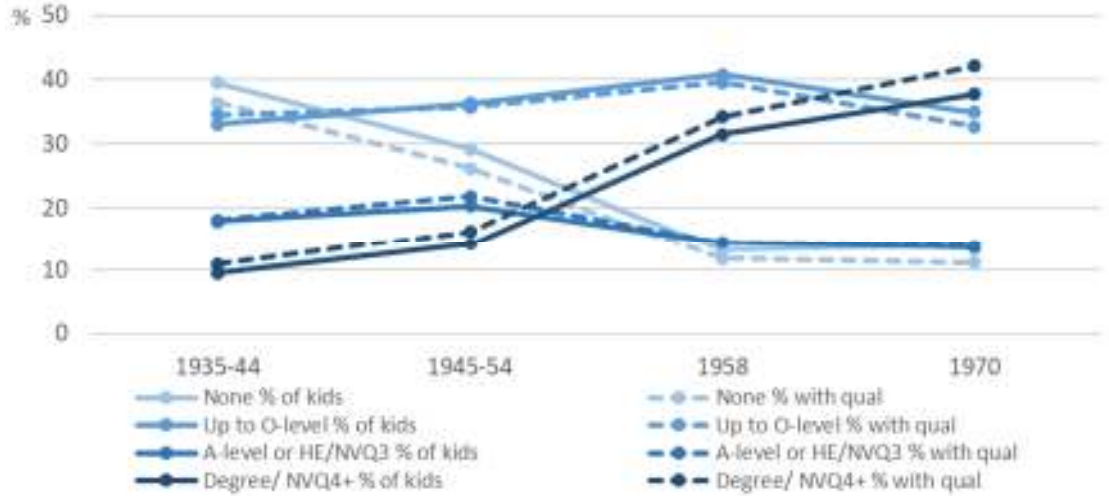
Thought of only in terms of over- and under-contribution this conveys the same message as average family size by level of education over time (see top panel of Figure 6.1; Table 6.4.A), but Figure 6.2 also serves as a reminder of the changing educational composition of the cohorts. For example, women without qualifications have consistently over-contributed to the total number of children born to each cohort. It is worth bearing in mind that as the relative size of the category has reduced, those without qualifications in more recent cohorts are more marginalised and disadvantaged relative to others in their cohort than those without qualifications were in previous cohorts. Thus, the over-contribution of reproductive labour by these women in more recent cohorts is likely occurring in less well-resourced circumstances, not just relative to more highly qualified women in the same cohort but also relative to similarly educated women in previous cohorts.

Women with some lower qualifications (up to O-level or equivalent) under-contributed slightly in the 1935-44 cohort, but this then reversed so that by the 1970 cohort the group over-contributed slightly. In almost all cohorts, the share of the total number of children contributed by women with A-level or equivalent qualifications was very similar to the relative size of the educational category. However, in all cohorts from 1935-44 onward, those educated to degree level under-contributed to the cohort's total number of children.

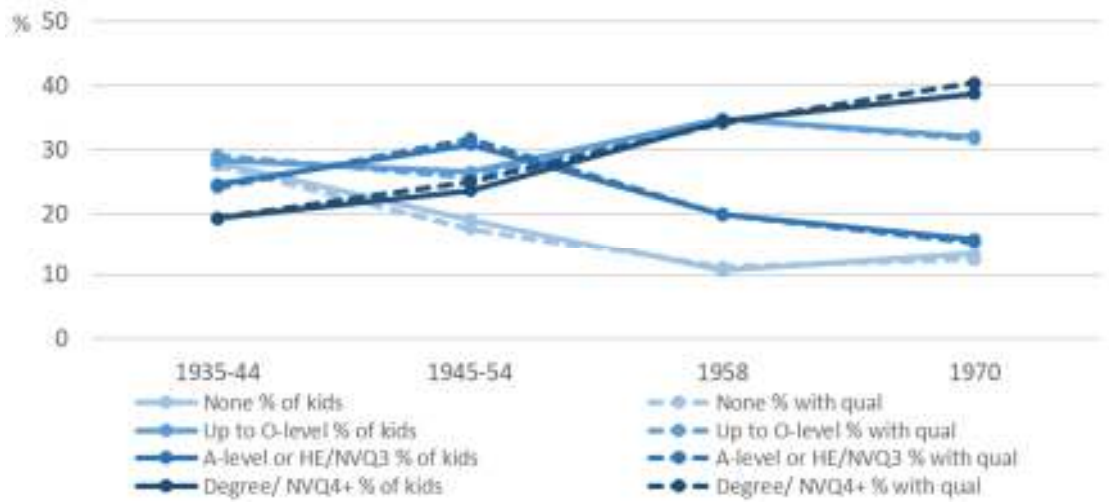
Among men, the differences between the proportion of children and the proportion of adults for each qualification are smaller and the pattern less consistent over cohorts.

Figure 6.2 Percentage of total births contributed by each educational category and percentage of adults with each qualification level

Women



Men



While useful for showing how the over- and under-contributions have changed or remained stable as the size of the educational categories have changed, it is difficult to directly compare the size of the contributions in this way. For easier comparison of the relative over- or under-contribution of educational categories across cohorts, as the size of the educational category has changed, the same information can also be presented as a ratio of the proportion of children contributed relative to the size of the educational category. If each category contributed the proportion of children equal to the size of the category (i.e. replaced itself) each cell in the Table 6.2 below would be equal to 1.

As having no qualifications has become increasingly rare, the relative over-contribution of children by women without qualifications has increased substantially, more than doubling from a 9% over-contribution among women born 1935-44 to 24% for those born in 1970. While the relative size of

the group with some lower level qualifications (up to O-level or equivalent) has remained more stable over time, the relative contribution to the total number of children has increased over time from a small under-contribution of 4% among women born 1935-44 to a 7% over-contribution in the 1970 cohort. Meanwhile, as the degree-educated category has grown from 11% of all women born 1935-44 to 42% of women born in 1970 the consistent under-contribution by this category has remained, fluctuating around the 10% mark. The under-contribution of this group decreased from 13% to 8% between the 1935-44 and 1958 cohorts but rose again to 10% among women in the 1970 cohorts.[50] It is of course possible that the size of the under-contribution among the highest educated is somewhat overestimated, especially in the most recent cohorts. Although ONS data shows that only a small proportion of all births to a cohort are to mothers aged over 42, because postponement has increased over time and is related to education, these births after age 42 are likely to be disproportionately to highly educated women.

Among men, the relative contribution of each educational category to the total number of children born has been much more even throughout the time-period. With educational categories close to or at replacement levels and each educational category over-contributing slightly in some cohorts and under-contributing slightly in others, based on these data there is no consistent evidence of educational polarisation of men's fertility.

Table 6.2 Ratio of proportion of children to relative size of education category

	None	Up to O-level	A-level or HE/NVQ3	Degree/ NVQ4+	Unweighted n
Women					
1935-44	1.086	0.956	0.991	0.867	1,143
1945-54	1.115	1.017	0.931	0.870	1,358
1958	1.116	1.031	1.006	0.922	5,546
1970	1.239	1.067	0.973	0.895	5,062
Men					
1935-44	1.015	0.970	1.020	0.999	949
1945-54	1.082	1.032	0.971	0.946	1,117
1958	0.955	1.000	1.007	1.010	5,372
1970	1.071	1.011	1.029	0.959	4,666

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the suggestion is sometimes made that degree-educated women are, or at least were, a select group of more career-oriented and less family-oriented individuals, explaining why more of them choose not to become mothers or to have smaller families. However,

[50] Robustness checks of this analysis for the latest two cohorts using the highest level of qualification achieved by age 26 showed the same pattern of polarisation but with lower over-contribution among women without qualifications (1958: 1.10; 1970: 1.144) and slightly greater under-contribution for degree-educated women (1958: 0.864; 1970 0.871).

with educational expansion the group with degree-level education has become a less select group. If this means that for the more recent cohorts the category has become more inclusive of more 'family oriented' women than was the case in earlier cohorts, we might have expected larger average family sizes. Yet in terms of average contribution to the overall cohort total, the fertility behaviour of degree-educated women has not changed markedly over time. Clearly, on its own this is not definitive evidence against the notion that the lower fertility among highly educated women might be primarily because of personal orientation. However, when viewed alongside educational patterns for men in the UK and for women in other countries, it might be taken as an indication of structural constraints also playing some role, a point I return to in the next section of this chapter.

At this point it may be interesting to consider what the average number of children per adult woman (the cohort total fertility rate) would have been under different scenarios. Had the women without qualifications in the 1970 cohort made the same level of over-contribution as the women without qualifications in the 1935-44 cohort, i.e. 9%, the average number of children per woman (by age 42) would have been 1.75 rather than the actual 1.79 for the 1970 cohort. Conversely, had the proportion of women with degree-level qualifications in the 1970 cohort remained at the approximately 11% it was in the 1935-44 cohort (with the remainder of that educational group having instead obtained up to A-level qualifications, and otherwise keeping the average number of children per woman in each education group constant at the 1970 cohort levels), the average number of children per woman (by age 42) for the 1970 cohort would have been 1.83. These hypothetical scenarios, or thought experiments, suggest that the increasing over-contribution of the lowest educated group of women has indeed somewhat mitigated against, or slowed, the reduction in average completed family size that has accompanied the educational distribution changing over time.

To summarise the results and answer the second and third analytical questions posed, in brief: lower educated women, but not men, bear a disproportionate share of reproduction, and their relative share has increased over cohorts.

Large families: The overlap of concentration and polarisation

As the polarisation of fertility means larger average family sizes among adults with no or low qualifications and the concentration of fertility picks up how the distribution of children is uneven with some adults having no children and others having several, I conclude the results with a look at the educational characteristics of large families as an illustrative example of the ways in which the two conceptualisations of inequality in the distribution of reproduction overlap. The Have-half proportion discussed earlier captures the tail of the distribution with the largest families by age 42.

For the cohorts considered here, this part of the distribution broadly corresponds to families with three or more children (see Chapter Appendix Table 6.5.A), which I term 'large families' for brevity. Comparing the educational profile of parents of large families with the overall educational profile of the cohort overall shows how the concentration of fertility relates to the polarisation of fertility by education.

Among both men and women who have large families, in most cohorts, a somewhat larger proportion than in the cohort overall have no qualifications and a somewhat smaller proportion than in the cohort overall have a degree-level qualification or above. However, women born in 1970 stand out with 18% of those with large families having no qualifications, compared with 11% overall, and just a third (33%) having higher education, compared with 42% overall and 51% of women without children. Combining no and low qualifications (up to O-level), shows that for the 1970 cohort among mothers with large families more than half (55%) have no or low qualifications compared with 44% of the cohort overall and 36% of women without children. The over-representation of those with low or no qualifications among mothers with three or more children, relative to women overall in the cohort, or for example mothers of two children, has also become more distinct. In previous cohorts the differences were smaller, for example in the 1958 cohort a similar proportion of mothers with large families had low or no qualifications (56%), only somewhat higher than among all mothers in the cohort overall (51%). This is a parallel to the over-contribution analysis in the previous section. Not only are the least educationally privileged women disproportionately contributing to the total number of children but the women who contribute the most, in terms of having large(r) families, are also disproportionately more likely to have the least educational privilege.

Other research has emphasised the substantial contribution of childlessness to the unequal distribution of births overall (Shkolnikov et al., 2007) and to the educational gradient of fertility specifically (Berrington et al., 2015). Viewed in tandem with the polarisation findings, this analysis of large families highlights that the over-representation of women without qualifications, and the under-representation of women with higher education, among mothers of three or more children is also noteworthy. In a similar vein to the conclusions drawn by Ann Berrington and colleagues, it is not just that more women with the lowest levels of education than with the highest levels of education are becoming mothers but also that they are substantially more likely to have large families; 44% of mothers without qualifications have 3 or more children compared with 23% of degree-educated mothers (see Chapter Appendix

Table 6.6). Had 44% of degree-educated mothers born in 1970 also had similarly large families, the overall average number of children per woman in the 1970 cohort would also have been higher, at 1.94 (as opposed to the actual 1.79). This brings to the fore the issue of the costs associated with childrearing being borne disproportionately by those possibly least able to afford it, especially in the current UK policy context of the two-child limit on benefits.

6.5. Discussion: Gendered class inequalities in reproduction

The aim of this chapter was to show how the distribution of reproduction at the macro-level has changed, by exploring the concentration and the polarisation of fertility at the aggregate level. The results show that while the distribution of fertility has become increasingly uneven among both women and men over time, only among women is fertility also polarised by education. These findings complement the analysis of change over time in labour market trajectories, and of intra-household division of labour among families with young children, by linking these issues to a macro-level perspective of division of reproductive labour. As such, they have implications for social policies related to families and employment. The approach taken in this chapter also challenges the traditional focus of much demographic fertility research on the level of fertility rates, to devote more attention to the social justice issue highlighted by conceptualising the distribution of fertility as the division of reproductive labour between differently situated individuals.

Past research based on micro analysis of parity progression (Berrington et al., 2015) concluded that the higher fertility of women with lower levels of qualifications have partially offset the increasing childlessness and reducing family size of the highest educated. The analysis presented in this chapter can speak directly to this point of whether, and to what extent, this offsetting is evident at the macro-level. If women with lower levels of qualifications had fully compensated for the reduction in fertility observed among A-level & degree-education categories (thereby maintaining the overall replacement-level average family size of the 1945-54 cohort), the average family size among women with no or low qualifications would have needed to increase to on average nearly 2.4 children in the 1958 cohort and nearly 2.7 children in the 1970 cohort. Instead, broadly speaking average family size reduced, and the proportion of women without children by age 42 increased, within all educational categories over the cohorts considered here – including women with the lowest levels of education. Nonetheless, the relative reduction in average number of children was smaller among women with lower levels of education than among women with A-level education or above. Had the average family size among women with low and no qualifications instead been as low as it was on average among those with A-level education or above, the overall cohort average number of children per

woman in the 1970 cohort would have been 1.65 rather than the actual 1.79. This analysis of changing patterns at the aggregate level thus shows that the consistent and increasing over-contribution to the cohort total of children by women with no or low qualifications, along with their over-representation among mothers of 'large families', might better be thought of as having slowed the pace of change, rather than as having partially made up the shortfall.

Limitations and further study

The limitations of this analysis, largely relating to the data used as discussed in the methods section, must be borne in mind. Past research has suggested that retrospective fertility history data under-records births and for the comparisons that were possible with ONS birth registration statistics, some under-recording of total average family size among women was indeed found for these datasets. For this reason, I have avoided making inference about the absolute levels of fertility using these data, or differences in these levels between men and women, focusing the interpretation instead on patterns of change over time and relative differences by education among women and among men. The reliability of these patterns nonetheless rests on the assumption that the retrospective fertility histories produce data that are at least internally consistent, across the surveys and by education within the cohorts; an assumption that is open to critique, especially considering attrition in the birth cohort studies. Although beyond the scope of this thesis, further research could compare the UK birth cohort data with estimates for similar cohorts using other survey data (e.g. BHPS/ UKHLS). While the checks that were possible to do against the ONS data provide some reassurance of the reliability of the survey data used, further methodological analysis, of the kind discussed in the data section (Murphy, 2009; Ní Bhrolcháin et al., 2011) but looking not just at the reliability of overall fertility estimates but specifically at variation by education would be useful. Because education is not collected at birth registration, this makes direct assessment using UK data difficult, but other countries might have both administrative and survey data that would allow for such comparisons. Thus, as already noted previously, surveys are the only source of data for any analysis of UK cohort fertility patterns for men and for differentiation in the analysis by level of education.

One limitation of this study which may affect the comparability of these results with some other studies is the exclusion of adult migrants to the UK for the more recent cohorts. The sample design of the birth cohort studies means individuals who have migrated to the UK during adulthood and since then contributed to the fertility levels and reproduction of the population cannot be accounted

for in my analyses.[51] Although overall the cohort fertility estimates derived from these surveys were largely similar to those produced by the ONS for the same cohorts based on birth registration data, period fertility estimates suggest that approximately a quarter of births in the early 2000 were to women born outside the UK (ONS, 2017b; Tromans, Natamba, & Jefferies, 2009). It is thus possible that the patterns of change over time in fertility by education found here may differ somewhat from the patterns for all births to UK residents (i.e. irrespective of country of origin and timing of migration).

Another limitation of this study is the censoring of these data at age 42, the upper limit necessitated by the most recent sweep of data available for the youngest cohort. For women, ONS data on cohort fertility suggests that, average completed family size increased only minimally (by 0.01 to 0.02 births per woman born in 1958 and 1970 respectively) when including information on births to women aged older than 42. ONS birth statistics by parent characteristics show that male age-specific (period) fertility rates for age bands 45+ have increased steadily since the late 1970s. In 2016, 8% of births were registered to fathers age 43 years or older (including 3.5% to fathers aged 45-49 and 1.6% to fathers aged 50+). By comparison, just under 1% of all births in 2016 were registered to mothers aged 43 years or older. Thus the lower fertility recorded for men in this study may also be due to a combination of the censoring of the data at age 42 occurring 'earlier' in the conventional fertility life course for men than it does for women, as well as the under-recording and under-reporting issues discussed earlier. Further research estimating change over time in male cohort fertility should, where possible, include data up to at least age 50.

Findings in context, implications for fertility scholarship

Despite these limitations, the findings along with the analytical framing raise important issues for consideration in relation to policy and demographic research and knowledge production.

With regard to child poverty, the distribution of (reported) male fertility, while increasingly uneven over cohorts due to the increasing proportion of men reporting not having any children by age 42, may not be perceived as a major concern as the results do not suggest that children are disproportionately fathered by men whose educational level suggests they may be less well resourced. However, in cases of parental separation, most children tend to live with their mother after separation and rates of child poverty are higher among lone mother households and among

[51] While primarily consisting of cohort members born in the UK, both study samples were augmented at different childhood sweeps to include respondents who had been born abroad in the same week but migrated to the UK as children.

large families. Thus, the combination of increasing concentration and polarisation of fertility among women are also relevant for concerns about child poverty. The findings of increased inequality in reproduction among women raises the question of whether the changing educational distribution may have contributed to the increase in child poverty in the UK from the 1970s. While this analysis cannot speak directly to an association between these trends, it does suggest the question might warrant investigation in further research.

The focus of this analysis on changing fertility patterns from a distribution of (reproductive) labour perspective has highlighted women with the lowest levels of education as a group of women contributing more than their 'share' to the reproduction of society. This finding sits uncomfortably juxtaposed with recent changes to UK benefits policy. Instead of a move towards valuing reproduction and childrearing by socialising the costs and redistributing the labour of childrearing to a greater extent, the introduction of a two-child limit on child-related elements of Universal Credit financially penalises low income parents with large families, with clear implications for child poverty. Analysis by the Women's Budget Group further shows this policy disproportionately affects women and families of colour (WBG, 2017).

Considering the social justice argument put forward in this chapter for studying the distribution of fertility, the reproductive justice framework may offer policy alternatives that value and support childrearing rather than penalise the poorest parents for their reproductive contribution. Reproductive justice is a conceptualisation of the combination of rights and social justice in relation to reproduction, borne out of Black feminist and feminist of colour activism and scholarship in the US (Ross & Solinger, 2017). One of the core principles of the framework is the right to parent one's children in safe and healthy environments, dependent not only on access to quality health care but to other societal resources such as housing, education, and sufficient income and security from a living wage and benefits. As these authors carefully set out, holding the state accountable for adequate conditions for childrearing, is neither pronatalist nor at odds with environmental justice in its objectives. Instead this frame can be read as deliberate resistance to the neoliberal logics that blame poor women (often of colour) with large families for both their own children's disadvantage and the supposed link between childbearing (rather than Western production and consumption patterns) and environmental unsustainability.

At the other end of the spectrum, the educational polarisation of fertility also implicates policy in terms of the possible constraints on family formation resulting from the incompatibility of childrearing and career success in professional and managerial employment. Similar to findings for other Western European countries (Beaujouan et al., 2016), I find that the highest educated remain

a distinctive group, despite expanding and becoming relatively less select over time. As the proportion of women educated to degree level increased from just over a tenth of those born 1935-44 to over two-fifths of those born in 1970, the contribution to the total number of children born to the cohort remained around a tenth below the relative size of the group. The increasing proportion of women with degree-level education without children despite the category becoming less select over time suggests constraint (on individual choice and intention) plays a role for at least some women, as also suggested by other analyses of survey data looking at fulfilment of fertility intentions (Berrington, 2004; Ní Bhrolcháin et al., 2010), as well as qualitative research with women without children (Gillespie, 1999). Of course, it is difficult to separate choice or preference from the context of constraint. Further, some of the constraining circumstances will be individual and personal and not within the remit of policy but other, structural constraints, would be well within the realm of policy intervention (Hayford, 2009; Iacovou & Tavares, 2011; Liefbroer, 2009). Further, positioning the overall uneven distribution of births as a reflection of different fertility preferences in scholarship obscures the associated material inequalities and absolves policy makers of engaging with the incongruencies of the private costs versus public benefit of childrearing and the normative assignment of primary care roles to women versus the assumption of labour market engagement and progression characteristic of individuals without caring responsibilities.

The increasing concentration ratio and increasing Half-have proportions show that among both women and men, fertility has become increasingly unevenly distributed among cohorts born since the end of the Second World War. If these findings related to a context where the responsibility and labour of childrearing were evenly shared between the sexes, and the associated costs were broadly socialised one might argue that the increasingly uneven distribution were not of social concern, but merely reflecting (changing) personal preferences and intentions. However, fertility intentions in the UK tend to exceed actual fertility, especially among women without children and those who are highly educated (Beaujouan & Berghammer, 2019; Berrington, 2004), and while the gap between intentions and achieved fertility may not be entirely due to constraint (Iacovou & Tavares, 2011), the relationship is complex and the formation, revision and realisation of intentions are likely all influenced and shaped by the wider context. As discussed throughout this thesis, the UK context is one of limited policy support for parents, high formal childcare costs and substantial penalties to earnings and pension incomes for those parents (primarily mothers) who adjust paid work in order to accommodate parenthood commitments and responsibilities (Cooke, 2014; Davies et al., 2000; Sigle-Rushton & Waldfogel, 2007; Viitanen, 2005). Thus, even if merely reflecting preferences, the increasing unevenness of the distribution of fertility, in social reproduction terms, suggests an (increasingly) unjust division of labour as a shrinking proportion of adults is bearing the effort, costs

and risks associated with having children while, as feminist economists have argued, the benefits of childbearing/rearing are largely socialised.

The finding that the educational gradient to fertility is highly gendered points to the relevance of structures of constraint as an explanation for the changing fertility patterns observed, also suggested by cross-national research focused on women. Since men's labour market attachment, career or earnings progression are rarely diminished or adversely affected by having children, the lack of association between fertility and education among men, when considered alongside results presented in the other chapters in this thesis that it is women's careers that tend to be affected by parenthood, is indicative of the structural barriers to combining *motherhood* with the sort of professional and managerial careers that require higher education in the UK context of only limited public policy support for working parents (see e.g. Lyonette & Crompton, 2008, specifically for parents working in accounting).

This interpretation is also consistent with comparative research on polarisation of fertility among women that has concluded that the policy context influences women's completed family size resulting in greater variation in fertility by level of education and occupation in Britain than in for example France (Ekert-Jaffé et al., 2002; Rendall et al., 2009) and variation across European countries in 'work-life balance' reported by parents (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006). In fact, evidence from Nordic countries, where the costs associated with childrearing have been socialised more universally, suggests a weakening or disappearance of the educational gradient in completed family size (Andersson, Knudsen, Neyer, Teschner, Rønsen, Lappegård, Skrede, & Vikat, 2009; Jalovaara et al., 2018). In the UK context, however, with its more strongly gendered division of paid work and parenting, I found that among women, but not men, the polarisation of fertility has increased over the period of educational expansion. Accounting for the change over time in the relative size of educational categories among women, and given estimates that put the value of parental childcare in the UK at around 8-14% of GDP (Mullan, 2010), the social justice issue of the fairness of women with the lowest or no qualifications making a disproportionate contribution to the reproduction of society not only remains salient but has become increasingly relevant as their relative contributions have increased.

These findings thus raise important questions about the framing and normative ideas conveyed by family policies in the UK. The fairly consistent UK laissez-faire approach to family policy over much of the period covered in this thesis, espousing the view that how couples negotiate fertility and the division of paid and unpaid work is a private decision, has reinforced traditional gender roles and inequalities and undervalued childrearing, and care more generally, and underpin the high

opportunity cost of parenthood for highly educated women.[52] Yet precisely because of the normative role of policy and its potential for (re-)producing as well as dismantling inequalities, any policy suggestions to better value childrearing and remove constraint on childbearing require careful consideration to avoid further reinforcing the pronatalist social climate, and associated 'motherhood mandate' that exists in the UK despite the government's lack of explicit policy on fertility and population age structure (Brown & Ferree, 2005; Budds, Locke, & Burr, 2013; Giles, Shaw, & Morgan, 2009; Gillespie, 1999; McCutcheon, 2018; Russo, 1976).

The main empirical finding of this chapter is that while the concentration of fertility has increased among both women and men over cohorts, only among women is reported fertility also polarised by education. In recognition of the societal benefit of childbearing, implicit in much fertility research, I argue demographers should be concerned not just with the level of fertility but also with the distribution of fertility and the ways in which policy can perpetuate or mitigate against, the costs associated with childrearing being distributed along gendered and classed lines. This is especially the case in a context such as the UK, which relative to other European countries does not have particularly low fertility rates but does have relatively high levels of income inequality and child poverty rates. My results show the gendered way this appears in the unequal distribution of reproduction. Shifting the focus from low or replacement levels of fertility, which tend to readily be mobilised in media and politics in a pronatalist frame with racist and anti-immigration nationalist sentiments (Brown & Ferree, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 1997) may also be prudent in the current political moment. The analysis contributes to the previous chapters' findings by highlighting that the social injustice inherent in the division of labour is not merely an intra-household matter but that the same structures, including policies and gender norms relating to parenthood, reinforce social inequalities in the macro-level division of reproductive labour.

[52] As discussed more extensively in Chapter 2, examples include the male breadwinner model assumptions underpinning the benefit system (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Lewis, 1992; Rake, 2001), assumptions of a male-typical labour market trajectory underpinning pension reforms (Ginn & Arber, 1999; Rake et al., 2000; Waine, 2006) and 'maternalist logic' of family leave and flexible working policies (Lister, 1990; Orloff, 2017). See also Jeanne Fagnani (2007) on the role of policy in fertility and maternal employment in a comparative perspective.

6.6. Chapter 6 Appendix: Results Tables

Table 6.3.A Summary of women's cumulative fertility estimates at age 42, comparison of ONS and survey estimates

	Proportion had at least one birth		Average number of births	
	ONS	Survey	ONS	Survey
1925-34	0.86	0.87	2.27	2.34
1935-44	0.88	0.89	2.33	2.20
1945-54	0.87	0.88	2.08	2.10
1958	0.82	0.82	1.98	1.85
1970	0.82	0.81	1.89	1.79

** ONS data from 'Childbearing for women born in different years', based on birth registration information https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths;*
Surveys: 1925-34, 1935-44, 1945-54 ELSA; 1958 NCDS; 1970 BCS70

Table 6.4.A Summary fertility statistics and educational distribution by cohort and gender

	None	Up to O-level	A-level or HE/NVQ3	Degree/ NVQ4+	Overall average	*Unweighted n*
Women						
Average (nearly) completed family size by highest level of education, all adults						
1935-44	2.38	2.10	2.18	1.91	2.20	*1,143*
1945-54	2.33	2.13	1.95	1.82	2.10	*1,358*
1958	2.06	1.91	1.87	1.71	1.85	*5,546*
1970	2.21	1.91	1.74	1.60	1.79	*5,062*
Average (nearly) completed family size by highest level of education, among parents						
1935-44	2.65	2.34	2.46	2.38	2.48	*1,006*
1945-54	2.57	2.34	2.28	2.22	2.37	*1,186*
1958	2.48	2.26	2.25	2.20	2.26	*4,535*
1970	2.60	2.26	2.14	2.07	2.21	*4,103*
% without children at age 42						
1935-44	10.2	10.5	11.5	19.6	11.5	*949*
1945-54	9.1	8.9	14.5	17.9	11.6	*1,117*
1958	16.9	15.5	17.1	22.4	18.2	*5,372*
1970	14.9	15.5	18.9	22.7	19.0	*4,666*
Educational distribution: % with highest level of qualification						
1935-44	36.4	34.7	18.1	10.9	100	*1,143*
1945-54	26.2	35.7	21.8	16.3	100	*1,358*
1958	11.8	39.6	14.4	34.2	100	*5,546*
1970	11.2	32.7	13.9	42.1	100	*5,062*
Men						
Average (nearly) completed family size by highest level of education, all adults						
1935-44	1.98	1.89	1.99	1.95	1.95	*949*
1945-54	1.98	1.88	1.77	1.73	1.83	*1,117*
1958	1.51	1.59	1.60	1.60	1.59	*5,372*
1970	1.70	1.60	1.63	1.52	1.59	*4,666*

	None	Up to O-level	A-level or HE/NVQ3	Degree/ NVQ4+	Overall average	*Unweighted n*
Average (nearly) completed family size by highest level of education, among parents						
1935-44	2.54	2.25	2.32	2.31	2.35	*793*
1945-54	2.43	2.27	2.19	2.24	2.27	*897*
1958	2.28	2.16	2.13	2.19	2.17	*3,925*
1970	2.30	2.15	2.10	2.09	2.14	*3,466*
% without children at age 42						
1935-44	22.1	15.9	14.3	15.4	17.1	*949*
1945-54	18.7	17.1	19.2	22.7	19.4	*1,117*
1958	33.7	26.4	24.6	26.7	26.9	*5,372*
1970	26.1	25.6	22.2	27.0	25.7	*4,666*
Educational distribution: % with highest level of qualification						
1935-44	27.5	29.1	24.2	19.3	100	*949*
1945-54	17.6	25.7	31.7	25.0	100	*1,117*
1958	11.2	34.8	19.8	34.2	100	*5,372*
1970	12.4	31.7	15.5	40.4	100	*4,666*

Table 6.5.A Percentage of families part of 'Have-half' group by number of children in the family

Number of children	Women				Men			
	1935-44	1945-54	1958	1970	1935-44	1945-54	1958	1970
1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2	0.0	0.6	7.7	11.7	0.0	8.5	14.6	15.9
3	72.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.5	100.0	100.0	100.0
4+	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 6.6.A Percentage of mothers with each family size, by level of education and cohort

		Mothers: Number of children					
		1	**2**	**3**	**4+**	**Total**	***Unweighted n***
None	1935-44	16.5	37.1	24.7	21.6	100	*327*
	1945-54	13.2	45.8	24.3	16.8	100	*275*
	1958	15.6	45.7	23.1	15.6	100	*545*
	1970	18.0	38.0	23.6	20.5	100	*484*
Up to O-level	1935-44	15.1	47.2	27.9	9.9	100	*364*
	1945-54	11.5	56.2	23.3	9.0	100	*439*
	1958	18.2	52.0	21.6	8.3	100	*1,857*
	1970	19.8	50.1	19.9	10.2	100	*1,400*
A-level or HE/NVQ3	1935-44	14.4	46.2	27.3	12.2	100	*198*
	1945-54	13.6	55.0	22.2	9.3	100	*264*
	1958	18.3	51.2	23.0	7.4	100	*660*
	1970	22.0	53.3	17.0	7.7	100	*572*
Degree/ NVQ4+	1935-44	13.5	51.3	22.2	13.0	100	*117*
	1945-54	16.2	55.0	21.2	7.6	100	*208*
	1958	18.4	53.4	20.6	7.6	100	*1,473*
	1970	23.3	53.4	17.7	5.6	100	*1,647*

7. Concluding discussion

7.1. Summary of findings

The findings from the empirical analyses presented in this thesis point to the stability of classed gender inequality in Britain, amidst decades of social change. These empirical patterns of inequalities persisting despite the extensive changes in women's paid work over the life course, at first apparently indicative of equalities increasing, are less surprising in the context of the analysis of the policy context in Chapter 2. The analysis demonstrated the continuity in gendering of parents, and relatedly workers, resulting from the substantive stability in the policy model of the family. This construction has been (only minimally) revised from a male breadwinner/ female homemaker to a main earner/ main carer model. I also identified several examples of the undervaluation of reproductive and care work increasing over time, with clearly classed gendering implications.

The analysis presented in Chapter 4 did find reducing differences between men and women over cohorts, as other research has also shown. However, as the focus on patterns centred on the transition to parenthood illustrated, fertility postponement, rather than a change in the gender order towards more egalitarian sharing of childrearing appears to be a major reason for the reduced differences. The centring on the transition to parenthood also highlighted the extent of the remaining gap between mothers and fathers in full-time paid work, part-time employment and time spent caring full-time. The change observed has been both asymmetrically gendered, and classed. Mothers' full-time and part-time paid work in the years following the transition to parenthood has increased across cohorts, but more so among the most highly educated group, and without evidence of fathers in any discernible number reducing their paid hours from full-time to accommodate their transition to parenthood.

In a similar vein, the analysis of paid and unpaid work arrangements among 'atypical' different-sex couple families with young children, families with highly educated mothers, with steeper potential maternal earnings trajectories, re-partnered mothers, or older fathers, do indeed have *slightly* more egalitarian arrangements on some of the outcomes than do more typical families. These results in Chapter 5 are thus consistent with economic bargaining models of the family. However, the emphasis here is very much on the difference being slight. Consistent with feminist economist critiques of bargaining models, the findings point to the importance of gender in structuring arrangements even in families where the mother is more highly educated or has a steeper potential earnings trajectory.

Increasing educational polarisation among women over the time period is a central finding of both Chapters 4 and 6. The final empirical chapter thus returned to analysing change across cohorts, applying the concept of division of labour at a macro level to fertility to investigate how the distribution of (near) completed family size has changed over cohorts among men and among women. I found that while the distribution of childbearing has become increasingly uneven (i.e. concentrated) among both women and men over time, only among women is fertility also polarised by education. In discussing these findings I drew on cross-national comparative research of the polarisation of fertility among women in different contexts, and my policy analysis in Chapter 2, to link this gendered class inequality to the structures of constraint on combining motherhood with career advancement and success, in professional and managerial careers that require higher education, in the British social and policy context.

Relatedly, in Chapter 4, I also found that educational differences have become increasingly important over time as highly educated women's trajectories have changed more. This pattern may at first seem at odds with the interpretation just suggested for the educational polarisation in family size. However, it should be borne in mind that the early parenthood stage analysis in Chapter 4 excludes those who are not parents and the educational gradient to the proportion who do not have children (by age 42) is a crucial component of the unequal distribution of childbearing in the UK. These patterns are thus quite compatible as the remaining gap in labour market outcomes between highly educated women and men points to the challenge of combining involved parenting with paid work that presumes no caring responsibilities.

While continuous full-time employment may be more common among more highly educated mothers than lower educated mothers, it is still the case that part-time employment is a common occurrence among highly educated mothers. Other research has found that maternal part-time work is often viewed in Britain as a way to combine the need for two incomes with meeting the care needs of the family and, for lower income families especially, to minimise the cost of childcare by drawing on extended family support for informal childcare (Lyonette et al., 2011). Viewed through the lens of Ready-Willing-Able, such findings point in part to British society being unwilling to revise the gender order underpinning the main earner/ main carer division of labour. However, the unwillingness also needs to be interpreted within the context of minimal policy support for working parents in the UK, restricting parents' Ability to adopt a more even distribution of paid and unpaid work between them.

In Chapter 2, I argued that the gendered division of labour persists and contributes to economic inequalities between women and men because the legacy of separate spheres is maintained through

policy's commitment to a heteronormative 'ideal' family comprising a main earner and a main carer. Through this approach, it becomes clear that policy and legislative structures not only relate to Ability but also are both influenced by, and themselves shape Willingness. Within these constraints, parenthood can also be a distinctly unattractive option for some highly educated women (and men), thus also related to Readiness, with implications for the division of reproductive labour at the macro level as discussed in Chapter 6.

7.2. Implications for policy and feminist engagement with 'the state'

> *A rewriting of ... policy rules is needed to engender a more egalitarian gender order, encompassing both production and social reproduction... but currently the prospects do not look bright.* (Elson & Warnecke, 2011, p. 127)

> *Full gender equality implies a radical change in the organization of working life, and tackling traditional forms of specialization. Women today often combine paid and unpaid work, albeit with great difficulty. A true gender-equal society would ensure that men do the same, while also re-arranging the institutional mix of provisions so as to eliminate the difficulty and the strain.* (Plantenga, Remery, Figueiredo, & Smith, 2009, p. 32)

Social policy is of central interest in this thesis. I set it up early on as a key structuring force and a gendering process. In each of the empirical chapters I have been drawn to discussing how the policy context might be implicated in the patterns found, and thus how a different policy configuration might be needed for greater equality to emerge. However, throughout the project this has been a difficult balance to strike. Firstly, the research was not intended to evaluate policy in any formal sense and so both the discussion of policy shaping gendered and classed outcomes, and any speculations of more preferable alternatives, might be best characterised as interpretive. Secondly, once I adopted the conceptualisation of policy as gendering practices and critiqued the British policy context as hindering progress towards gender equality through its lack of commitment to a radical transformation of the gender order, I felt increasingly ambivalent about the prospect of speculating about specific policies and especially a holistic transformation, as the quotes at the beginning of this section, and indeed my own analysis of the policy context, suggest would be required.

As I discuss in Chapters 2 and 6, British policy still needs to break with the tradition of 'separate spheres' and to find ways to encourage and value caring and childrearing work as an important component of most people's lives as well as a contribution to society, while also rebalancing the

distribution of this work between women and men and between individuals and the state (Budig, 2004; England & Folbre, 1999; Fraser, 2016; Rake, 2001). The extent to which gender inequality is problematised and centred as a policy aim seems, based on the analysis in Chapter 2, of key importance as steps towards individualisation in relation to paid work without addressing the division of unpaid work will always have gendered and gendering effects (Daly, 2011), suggesting a coherent plan for gender relations is required to avoid contradiction (Bakker, 1994). As the experience with the equalisation of men and women's state pension age has shown, any coherent plan towards a more equal social order would require attention to the different starting points of differently situated men and women, as well as the gendered life course 'baggage' with which different people begin any change process.

Yet the ambivalence I mention above, is also directly linked to the notion of gendering practices. Accepting the premise of policy as an active force producing inequalities, is it conceivable that done differently policy could unequivocally reduce inequalities? Or would they just be different inequalities – perhaps unintended consequences resulting from different blind-spots? These are difficult tensions to navigate, and ambivalence in engaging with policy, beyond critique, is not entirely uncommon in feminist critiques of and engagements with the state (Charles, 2000). As an example, Sheila Blackburn (1995) concluded in her critical review of feminist critiques of the post-war welfare state that for all his flaws, at least Beveridge was very clear in his intentions, while she saw the evaluations and solutions proposed by feminists as often indistinct and inconsistent rather than providing a coherent alternative.

Nevertheless, simply holding up gender-sensitive evidence or theory is unlikely to be sufficient to prompt whole-scale policy change because structures of power have an incentive to maintain themselves (Bakker, 1994; Connell, 1990). Further, because of its gendering, and simultaneously classing and racialising effects, policy must be an important object for feminist engagement towards progress. After all, a central commitment of feminist research is that it aims for transformation, for increased gender equality or an improvement in women's circumstances. With the above caveats in mind, and without any intention of proposing a coherent, holistic, alternative, which would be well beyond the scope of this thesis, I thus tentatively conclude this section with some thoughts for policy measures that might aid rather than constrain the transformation of the gender order, drawing, along with the empirical analyses, primarily on the discussion in Chapter 2 of policy examples that were found to construct or maintain inequalities in the UK context. As mentioned in that chapter, suggestions for bringing about social change through state institutions and policy ought to be grounded in an understanding of the historical policy pathways that have maintained the gender order and norms (Htun & Weldon, 2017).

Based on my research, I agree with Anja-Kristin Abendroth and colleagues (2014) who argue that individual action is insufficient to mitigate the motherhood penalty and policy is required to redistribute the costs of childrearing both from individual parents to the state and importantly from women to men. As Sarah Thébaud argues "increasing men's involvement in household work may be the only effective way to increase the value societies place on activities that have traditionally been viewed as feminine" (Thébaud, 2010, p. 350). The first suggested measure would thus be to break with the legacy of maternalist logic and male-breadwinner assumptions inherent in UK post-birth leave, shared parental leave needs to be available, through individual entitlement and at high salary replacement levels to stop perpetuating the assumption and endorsement of the carer's financial dependence on the earning partner. To encourage a shift towards a culture of sharing of unpaid work, shared parental leave take-up might also be made more flexible so that parents can share the week between them, each working part of the week and caring part of the week.

Secondly, the above should be followed by efforts to curb the long working hours culture in the UK as men's increased involvement cannot be assumed to follow from women's increased engagement in the labour market. At least not while part-time employment among mothers remains widespread, and it is likely to remain so while full-time hours remain long and incompatible with sharing routine care (Lyonette & Crompton, 2015). Continued social movements and feminist organising are needed to achieve the sorts of policies and legislation that will start valuing care and expecting men to participate in it. Research also suggests especially low-income mothers would welcome such policies aiming to address gender inequalities in paid working time (Warren et al., 2010). A right to work a four-day week, or to reduce to 80% of full-time hours spread across five days, could help parents share paid hours and childcare between them more evenly than the traditional 1.5-earner model common among families with children. However, because of the gender pay gap and traditional gender roles this right would likely need to be accompanied by some policy of salary replacement for employees who reduce hours for care reasons.

Recognizing children as a public good arguably implies childcare is a social right and ought to be free at the point of use, like schooling and healthcare. Free or highly subsidized formal childcare ought be aligned with the working time policy, to cover parental employment and study time, as well as travel to and from their place of work/study, from the end of the statutory parental leave period to the child starting school and for the full calendar year. The recently introduced 30-hours 'free childcare' might conceivably cover the childcare needs of a two-parent family where each works a four-day week and take their non-working day off on different days of the week. But it would not cover a lone parent's full-time working if they had even a minimal amount of commuting time, and the policy

only applies to 3- and 4-year-olds and covers just 38 weeks of the year, leaving most employed parents with 10 weeks a year short of childcare cover (assuming four weeks of annual leave).

Finally, drawing directly from the gendering effects identified in Chapter 2, entitlement to benefits, and unemployment support services, should be individual – as should be the receipt of payments – again to break with the state-endorsed financial dependency on a (usually male) partner. To value childrearing and encourage father involvement in care would also require re-thinking how fathers are treated in policy when they do not reside with the other parent. Recognition of shared parenting following divorce or separation, when it takes place in practice, would require the benefit system to recognize 'non-resident' fathers as parents in social housing rules, housing allowance and benefits with child or family elements. Taking a longer-term view over the life course suggests that to protect carers of any gender from the risks of low income in older age, the successive shifts towards pension privatization would need to be reversed and replaced with investment in a sufficient state pension, with redistributive elements.

7.3. Reflections on further research and knowledge production

In the first chapter of this thesis I questioned the idea of gender equality emerging of its own accord through processes of cohort replacement and innovation and diffusion. In this final section I draw out some implications of my findings for further research, and I also return to these questions raised in the first chapter, including relating them to the researcher's role and responsibility as knowledge producer and narrator, which I discussed in Chapter 3.

Firstly, the findings in Chapter 5 suggest some general implications for the conceptualisation of cohorts in research. In much demographic literature the conceptualisation of the patterns of family change that have taken place since the 1960s implies that the change is occurring through a process of cohort replacement. For example, in the second demographic transition articulation of the process of change, increased prevalence of divorce, decline in marriage rates and increase in cohabitation as well as later partnership formation and both later and reduced childbearing, are explained as younger cohorts, born in the post-WWII era, not only having access to more reliable contraception but also being characterised by an ideational shift compared with earlier cohorts. This ideational shift has resulted in more recent cohorts increasingly focused on individual autonomy, gender equality, relationship quality and self-fulfilment (Lesthaeghe, 1995; van de Kaa, 1999). However, while Ron Lesthaeghe (2014) suggests that the process of value change over time also occurs on the individual level and is contingent on the life course trajectories taken, research has

tended to focus on the cohort succession aspect of the second demographic transition, emphasising cross-cohort difference which can give the impression of cohorts as internally homogeneous. As my analysis in Chapter 5 shows, however, cohorts are not discreet but intertwine and overlap through the linking of life courses (Elder, 1998), as individuals born to different cohorts form relationships and families. This is itself arguably a feature of the second demographic transition, with increasing separation and re-partnering and larger age gaps more common among couples following prior separation. Accordingly, more research could fruitfully explore how the ideational change associated with the second demographic transition occurs over individual life courses, with attention to the roles of age-heterogamous relationships and re-partnering.

Secondly, some of the issues that arise when cohort replacement and innovation and diffusion processes become positioned as vehicles of current and ongoing social change warrant further discussion. To be clear, I am not suggesting that these are not valid and accurate descriptions of historical patterns of social change. Rather, my concern is that these macro-level descriptions obscure the struggle and contestation involved and have the effect of naturalising a process that is inherently social. When describing a process of social change that is currently ongoing, it is especially critical to make the social and the political features of the process visible. The social changes to paid work and family life since the 1950s pose a substantial challenge to the British welfare state. The gendered implications of which politicians and policy makers appear to be not only ignoring but contributing to. Social science narratives of 'gender equality' increasing of its own accord through cohort replacement allow this policy of endorsing the status quo in the gender order through non-intervention to go unchallenged and women as a group, but less privileged women to a greater extent, bear the costs and risks. As research is both shaped by social norms and stereotypes but also contributes to shaping what is seen as social problems (Neyer, 2011; Sigle, 2016), researchers need to attend to the effect that describing a pattern or process can easily have either in foreclosing imagined alternatives or otherwise in problematising inequalities that it reflects. Incorporating these conceptualisations of change, the Ready-Willing-Able framework can help researchers make visible some of the individual or group-level struggle for or against change. The framework also alerts attention to the way policy change may be required for the process of change over time, or diffusion across groups, to be maintained (including the possibility of social movements and activism being needed to effect policy change).

With this in mind, I want to return to this notion of ‘forerunners’ raised in Chapter 5 as a motivation for focusing on ‘atypical’ couples. As mentioned, because of the relative characteristics of the partners in these families, such families may reasonably be thought of as more Ready to adopt more

gender egalitarian arrangements for paid and unpaid work. I want to complicate this idea somewhat, not just because this analysis finds limited evidence of 'atypical' families having substantively different arrangements but because the idea of particular groups as innovators or forerunners routinely attaches to privilege also in research that is not merely describing patterns of change as observed but testing a hypothesis based, explicitly or implicitly, on the conceptualisation of innovation and diffusion. As a description of patterns of change (itself also not a value-free exercise), the notion of particular groups, usually with educational, class or income privilege to lever, being potential forerunners and attitudinal and behavioural change diffusing to other social groups over time may well be accurate. Yet it can easily lead researchers as well as readers and users of research to overlook the structural reasons for certain behavioural innovations occurring first among more privileged groups, thus leaving unarticulated an accompanying critique of the structures constraining less privileged groups from being either Ready or Able (or both) to take up the behaviour in question. Further the application of innovation and diffusion seems to even direct attention towards privileged groups for potential solutions to inequalities. Working-class families sharing childcare by working different schedules to avoid formal childcare costs are rarely suggested as exemplars of progressive change that other groups ought to emulate. Black women who have tended to combine full-time paid work with childrearing in greater proportions than white women throughout the period of interest in this thesis are rarely positioned as innovators. More critical analysis using conceptualisation of innovation and diffusion is needed, such as analyses of historical fertility patterns finding examples of domestic servants and factory workers as innovators in early fertility control (Janssens, 2007). Finally, as articulated in research without critique, innovation and diffusion appears to implicitly endorse, or at least settle for, a 'trickle-down' mechanism for social change (see e.g. Lesthaeghe & Vanderhoeft, 2001, for this framing), when the test for whether social progress is occurring ought to focus on whether structures enable less privileged groups to adopt new more progressive or egalitarian behaviour, and argue for transformation whenever this is found not to be the case.

The final point I want to make regarding knowledge production, draws together the concept of Willingness with the feminist notion that the researcher is socially embedded which influences the interpretation of findings through taken-for-granted assumptions about gender roles and relations (Watkins, 1993). The facilitating role of part-time work is an example of how the description of a pattern in research seemingly leads 'naturally' to a policy recommendation, that in turn reinforces the status quo of the underlying gender order. The increased availability of part-time work has enabled more women in recent cohorts to maintain more continuous employment trajectories. As already discussed, research has also shown that many women in the UK appreciate part-time

working for these very reasons. Better access to secure and good quality employment is thus often seen as a good recommendation to help women balance paid work and caring commitments. Yet part-time paid work, as opposed to full-time, is still associated with disadvantages. Importantly, in the absence of measures to redistribute part-time employment and parenting work to fathers, such recommendations also reaffirm childrearing as primarily mothers' responsibility.

An alternative recommendation to support both parents to work short full-time hours is rarely suggested. This recommendation ought under individual income taxation be deemed just as economically beneficial to many couples as the 1.5-earner model, and certainly more so than the male breadwinner model, thus meeting the Readiness precondition. Admittedly, the gender pay gap will influence this calculation, but for many couples the same paid hours split between two earners results in higher disposable income, and a more equal division of paid hours enables both parents to progress their careers more evenly as well as share in the enjoyment, as well as the labour, of childrearing. That this is relatively rarely recommended or discussed at length in research on women's employment in the UK context, perhaps reveals that many scholars are themselves unwilling (in the RWA sense)[53] to imagine solutions beyond the current gender order. Recommendations for high-quality part-time work, while indeed much needed in the UK labour market context, are implicitly positioned as an improvement (on the career break/ full-time carer default) for women. And specifically, a solution for women. Conversely suggesting policies and legislation designed to induce men to reduce their paid work is not viewed as viable because of the associated reduction in income and the potential damage to their career progression. This relative silence on the need to restructure the stereotypically male pattern of paid work reveals the 'supremacy' of the male career patterns not just in marital arrangements (Pyke, 1996), but also social science scholarship. The asymmetry of recommendations focusing on childcare to enable women's employment and part-time work to facilitate their 'work-life' balance mirrors the asymmetry of the gender revolution to date. An implication for analysis of gender differences at the intersection of paid work and family that emerges from this thesis is the need to engage with gender theory and feminist research methodology in interpreting differences between men and women to try to avoid the risks of individualising and naturalising patterns that could be more productively problematised and challenged.

Combining feminist-informed empirical and policy analysis in this thesis, I found that despite the changes to women's paid work in the UK, the underlying gender order, that structures the

[53] By unwilling, I here mean in the sense of something being perceived as normatively legitimate or "an acceptable mode of thought and form of behaviour" (Coale, 1974, p. 353).

organisation of family and paid work, remains substantively unaltered. Setting these findings within the Ready-Willing-Able framework can help make sense of the currently ongoing gendered social change process, in ways that do not naturalise the process but caution against complacency if more equitable gender relations are to be achieved. The first empirical analysis described women and men's labour market trajectories across cohorts, showing the pivotal role of the transition to parenthood on women's, but not men's, paid work trajectories in all cohorts. It is often suggested that this pattern can be explained by the combination of the gender pay gap and the relative characteristics of the partners meaning a gendered division of labour among different-sex couple families with young children is economically rational. That is, based on a cost-benefit calculation, families are not Ready for more egalitarian arrangements. However, Chapter 5 specifically investigated this claim. Yet the findings in that empirical analysis suggested that gender is a strong organising principle for paid and unpaid work arrangements, including among families that might be expected to be more Ready, as has long also been argued by feminist economists. Much scholarship has suggested that the limited policy support for the combination of paid work and involved parenthood in the UK limits women's labour market progress and thus gender equality more generally. Within the Ready-Willing-Able framework, positioning policy as constraining behaviour relates to the Able pre-requisite for social change. The findings from the final empirical chapter suggest that these structures of constraint, and the gender norms they reflect and reinforce, are also implicated in the social polarisation of reproduction among women. Mirroring the asymmetry in the headline finding from the first empirical chapter, in the last one I found that the distribution of fertility is socially polarised among women, but not among men. My interpretation of the findings aligns with other scholarship that emphasises the importance of policy as structure of constraint, but it also extends this conclusion. Combining the understanding of gender as a structuring principle of society with the Ready-Willing-Able framework of social change shows that gender equality at the work-family nexus will not emerge in the UK until women and men are not just Ready to, but also Able and Willing to share the unpaid care and housework, including the associated indirect costs. Importantly, Willingness is broader than individual preference. Willingness "depends on the degree of internalization of traditional beliefs and codes of conduct.... [and] on the severity of sanctions attached to transgressions of normative prescriptions" (Lesthaeghe & Vanderhoeft, 2001, p. 244). On the individual level, Willingness requires overcoming the moral objections and social opprobrium of doing family and parenthood (i.e. gender) differently to the traditional (white middle-class) hetero-patriarchal norm. Once aggregated, on a social level this shift would amount to a transformation of the gender order. On the evidence presented in this thesis, this depth of transformation has yet to occur and there is limited evidence to suggest it has begun or will unfold

of its own accord. To transform the gendered care arrangements in the UK, in the way proposed by the second stage of the gender revolution, would require a radical overhaul of social norms and roles regarding parenting and paid work, and for this to be reflected in the policy framework that determines whether the combination of paid work and care by individual parents, including the sharing of care between parents, is accessible and affordable.

8. References

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