

**BREADWINNING MOTHERS: THE LIVED REALITIES BETWEEN WORK
AND HOME**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Leicester**

by

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2019

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Breadwinning Mothers: The Lived Realities Between Work and Home

Abstract

The rapid increase in women's paid employment has been well-documented. However, within these figures exists a sub-group of maternal breadwinners, with statistics indicating that one in three of all working mothers are breadwinners, and that these numbers are also expected to rise in the future. Nonetheless, although there are increasing numbers of breadwinning mothers, very little is known about them as a group. This thesis sets out to address this gap by examining the lived realities of these women in order to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a maternal breadwinner in modern-day Britain.

The thesis also argues that there has been a lack of literature that defines the key concepts of breadwinning as there is no universal conceptualisation of the term. In addition, the thesis points out that there has been limited research about breadwinning, as previous studies have tended to be based on quantitative data. This thesis aims to address this gap by adopting a small-scale qualitative study in order to collect meaningful real-life data that exposes what it really means to be a breadwinning mother. A total of twenty breadwinning mothers (BWMs) were interviewed as part of the research.

The thesis argues that although there is common ground and acknowledged difficulties for all working mothers, many of the problems that these BWMs experienced were actually intensified due to their breadwinning responsibilities and complexities. What is more, the thesis highlights how there is a clear lack of choice for these women in how they managed work and home due to the financial importance placed on their breadwinning.

In addition, the thesis will argue how these BWMs were conforming to traditional arrangements of work and family even though they occupied the family breadwinner role. As a consequence, the thesis reveals that despite their breadwinning status and the apparent power that it might be perceived to bring, it has not been sufficient for these women to overcome traditional gendering of work and family.

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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank all the women who gave up their time to participate in this research. Without their openness and willingness to share their experiences this thesis would have not been possible.

Most sincere thanks and gratitude to my two amazing supervisors Professor Henrietta O'Connor and Dr Katharine Venter. Their encouragement, stimulating suggestions and friendship has allowed me to complete this journey and I will be forever grateful to them both for everything they have done.

Further thanks and gratitude to friends and colleagues who over the years have supported and encouraged me through this process. Particular thanks must go to Professor John Goodwin, Professor David Ashton and Professor Johnny Sung.

I would also like to thank all my friends and in particular my family for their unfailing moral and practical support from beginning to end. To Mum and Dad for all their love, to my eldest sister Anne-Marie for the long phone calls where she would have to listen to me moaning about the dreaded PhD. To Rebecca my other sister for stepping in to help with childcare during school holidays and for always being there when I needed her. Also, to my bother Declan and sister-in-law Sally for their continued encouragement.

Finally, and most importantly to my husband Paul and my two sons Eric and Arthur who have been on this journey with me. To Paul, for his love and putting up with me during the PhD. To Eric, who now understands that Mum's PhD is about 'breadwinning mothers' and not 'breastfeeding mothers', and to my youngest son Arthur who actually doesn't know what life is like without Mum having to work on her PhD.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The nature of work, earning and family relationships has changed. The model of a male breadwinner and a female carer as the ‘default’ for European families is long gone. With the employment rate of women – and especially of mothers – catching up to that of men ...

(Cory and Stirling, 2015:7)

1.1 Maternal Breadwinning

The increase in the number of women and, in particular, mothers who are now active within the labour market has had a profound effect on gender roles in relation to work, home and earnings (Lyonette, 2015; Meisenbach, 2009; Crompton and Lyonette, 2008; Ermisch, 2008; Harkness, 2008; Lewis, Gambles and Rapoport, 2007). What was therefore once assumed to be the ideal balance with the female carer and male breadwinner is clearly no longer viable or relevant (Ben-Galim and Thompson, 2013).

Attitudes have also progressed with evidence from the British Social Attitudes survey suggesting that the number of women who believed it was a man’s duty to earn the money, and a woman’s duty to look after the home, has decreased from 46 per cent in 1986 to 8 per cent in 2017 (BSA, 2017).

Moreover, these changes in attitude have had repercussions for many existing policies that are based on old-fashioned gendered beliefs about the role of men and women in relation to work and care, with many of these current policies not being fully representative of the lived realities of families in the UK today (Cory and Stirling, 2015).

Maternal breadwinning has also become more commonplace, indicating that there are over 2 million working mothers in the UK who are breadwinners, an increase of 1 million

since 1996. This means that one in three of all working mothers are the maternal breadwinner, suggesting that their incomes are also crucial to the economic survival of their families (Ben-Galim and Thompson, 2013:2).

Additional findings show how maternal breadwinning has also increased for all family types (Ben-Galim and Thompson, 2013:3). Most of this growth in maternal breadwinning took place before 2010, between the period of 1990 and 2000, and was predominantly driven by an increase in the number of single mothers with dependent children, whilst during the period of 2000 to 2010 the increase was accounted for by breadwinning mothers within couples (Cory and Stirling, 2015:9). Table 1.1 highlights these changes in relation to family type further.

Table 1.1: Number of maternal breadwinning households by family type in the UK, 1996–2013.

Family Type	1996	2001	2007	2013
Single	520,000	800,000	850,000	900,000
Couple	750,000	750,000	800,000	1,150,000

Source: Cory and Stirling (2015)

Further findings also show how maternal breadwinning has increased in all age groups from the period of 1997 to 2013, and although there was a slight decrease for the 16–29 and 40+ age groups, the statistics show that there has been an overall escalation. Table 1.2 highlights these findings further.

Table 1.2: Distribution of maternal breadwinning by age group in the UK, 1997–2013.

Age	1997	2007	2011	2013
16–29 years	22 per cent	23 per cent	28 per cent	26 per cent
30–39 years	22.5 per cent	28 per cent	30 per cent	32 per cent
40+ years	26 per cent	34 per cent	38 per cent	36 per cent

Source: Cory and Stirling (2015)

The evidence from this data visibly suggests that the viability and sustainability of the breadwinning mother is long-term and undoubtedly here to stay, therefore providing a solid and clear justification as to why undertaking this study is so important. Moreover,

finding out more about these women's lives will also highlight what changes are required to help respond to the daily reality that breadwinning mothers and their families face.

1.2 Understanding Breadwinning

The term breadwinning is contested, signaling why this research is so significant, as it aims to focus attention on the term 'breadwinning' due to the concept lacking any agreed definition – a limitation that Warren (2007:318) acknowledges when she suggests that 'breadwinning has an unproblematic, taken-for-granted, every-day, common-sense meaning in current sociology' – this thesis aims to conceptualise breadwinning.

As a result, this thesis will suggest that breadwinning can be better understood from four varying perspectives: 1) The financial aspects of breadwinning; 2) The orientation individuals have towards breadwinning; 3) The nature and extent of the actual breadwinning role; and 4) The relationship between breadwinning and work, and the impact that this subsequently has on the family.

In addition, this thesis will respond to Warren's (2007) plea, which argues that most breadwinning studies examine are based on quantitative data, and that due to this there is a clear lack of research that explores individual perspectives of breadwinning. Part of this discussion will show that breadwinning has largely been defined and explained in relation to its financial terms, resulting in the subjective aspects of breadwinning such as its values, identities and beliefs being ignored. Due to this oversight, it will argue that there has been a real absence of critical thinking that explains breadwinning from an individual experience.

The thesis will also point out how this lack of critical reflection on breadwinning can be understood, especially when we consider that the varying categories of care are now recognised to be more complex. For example, definitions such as 'caring for' and 'caring about' have been acknowledged (Ungerson, 1993), but it appears that no such critical reflection has taken place for breadwinning in the same way. Warren (2007:318) too appears to support this position by pointing out how breadwinning 'seems to require no questioning and nor does it appear to task our sociological imagination.'

As a consequence, this study will set out to address this shortcoming, adopting a qualitative approach and method in order to collect meaningful real-life data that explores and highlights the emotive aspects of breadwinning, and ultimately exposing what it really means to be a breadwinning mother in modern-day Britain.

1.3 Contemporary Breadwinning

The thesis will also illustrate how a more accurate understanding and conceptualisation of breadwinning can be gained from learning about its contemporary theoretical issues. For example, it will discuss how postfeminism, individualization and the retraditionalization of gender can help to provide a useful framework to understand contemporary breadwinning issues in a neo-liberal society.

As part of this discussion the thesis will highlight the importance of examining how ‘lived realities’ can also be conceptualised, thus illustrating that there is real value in understanding and studying the everyday life. As a consequence, it will point out the significance of ensuring that policies are devised with these women in mind, whilst also making sure that initiatives are truly reflective of the changes that have taken place and mirror the advancements in breadwinning.

1.4 Motherhood and Employment

Although there has been an increase in the number of both mothers and breadwinning mothers who are in paid employment, inequality within the workplace and also within the home is still evident within the literature (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Kan, 2008; Gatrell, 2005; McKie, Bowlby and Gregory, 2001; Standing, 1999; Mason, 1996).

A better understanding of this can be gained by considering the difficulties that mothers experience when having to combine the two separate spheres of work and home, and the challenges that this ultimately presents them with (Won, 2016; Herman et al., 2013; Schober and Scott, 2012; Scott and Plagnol, 2012; Crompton and Lyonette, 2008, 2010; Fagan *et al.*, 2008; McRae, 2008; Oakley, 2005).

Some of the difficulties that mothers experience in the workplace can be seen by considering the barriers they face in gaining promotions and the way in which they are unable to live up to, and also match, the characteristics of the ideal worker due to their caring obligations (Lewis and Humbert, 2010; Lewis, 2001; Schein, 1973). This has resulted in challenges and obstacles for many women when considering their career trajectory, something that has most commonly been coined as the glass-ceiling effect or the glass cliff (Ryan and Haslam, 2007).

Additional problems associated with career progression can also be understood when considering a mother's time out of the labour market during maternity leave, and even afterwards when managing caring obligations and commitments. Lewis and Lewis (1996:23) refer to this as 'Mommy tracks', suggesting that many working mothers also return to inferior employment and are subsequently working below their potential (Darton and Hurrell, 2005), simply finding themselves unable to cope with the pressure that work and home places on them.

In addition, the CIPD (2016) has suggested that work-family conflicts are more problematic for women and mothers when compared to men. Their study highlights the issues and problems in relation to conscious and unconscious gender bias, which presents real difficulties for mothers in the workplace. A further understanding of this can be gained from considering how gender stereotyping can also influence employer perceptions and judgements, resulting in many working mothers feeling the negative impact of this (Hoobler *et al.*, 2009).

One other important and final example of the difficulties that working women face can be seen by the gender pay gap between men and women's earnings, and although this gap has been closing, this still provides a clear indication as to why inequality between men and women exists (ONS, 2016 a).

Due to the difficulties that working mothers face in balancing work and home many have opted to work part-time as a potential solution to ease this burden (Warren, 2004). Statistics indicate that the number of women who work part-time is significant, and that these figures are also mostly associated with, and can be accounted for, by working mothers (ONS, 2016 b). However, although working part-time enables many mothers to

achieve a more agreeable and harmonious balance, the reality is that working part-time also presents real problems and barriers. This can be better understood by considering how part-time employees are viewed as being inferior to full-time employees (Beechey and Perkins, 1987), meaning that they are therefore not always entitled to the same benefits as full-time workers (Lewis, 2001; Newell, 1993). What is more, working part-time can also present a real mismatch, as it may not always be best-suited to the needs of the family due to the nature of part-time work, which may include having to work unsociable hours and even at weekends (Gray, 2004).

It is therefore apparent that action needs to take place to address the problems that working mothers face. One such solution could be to provide more supportive working environments by rooting out biased attitudes that exist towards work–family conflict (Hoobler *et al.*, 2009). In addition, having effective female role models in the workplace, who women can identify with and also emulate, would clearly be useful and also provide inspiration to encourage more working women to succeed (Durbin, 2016; Kelan, 2013).

These types of approaches would clearly help to challenge some of the existing gender roles, making it easier for women and working mothers to progress in the workplace. In addition, further measures to help address these problems could involve ensuring that policies in relation to balancing work and family are aimed at both sexes. Cornelius and Skinner (2008) suggest that promoting the role of commitment to the family and using this as a mark of good citizenship would help to challenge these existing barriers. In addition, Lewis, Rapoport and Gambles (2003) echo this position, pointing out that increased legislative action from a policy level would help to encourage fathers to take on more of the caring roles and responsibilities within the home.

As well as the barriers working mothers face in their paid employment it appears that similar barriers and difficulties are also present in the home. This has been fuelled by the ideology of motherhood (Sharpe, 1976), an ideology that promotes the mother as the person who is the key figure in their child's life. Moreover, further literature on this subject also points out how motherhood is something that is viewed as being both natural and instinctive (Oakley, 1981). Due to these beliefs, working mothers can experience real difficulties in fulfilling these more standard and traditional perceptions as a result of their lack of time. As a consequence, many mothers experience guilt and feelings of

inadequacy as they are simply not able to live up to these notions due to their paid employment (Gatrell, 2005; Ribbens, 1994; Brannen and Moss, 1991). What is more, this seems to indicate that traditional roles associated with the mother are subsequently also more likely to be sustained and reinforced due to these types of views and attitudes being maintained (Phoenix *et al.*, 1991).

Additional reasons why traditional gender roles are being reinforced become particularly apparent when considering how women continue to carry out more housework than men (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015). Indeed, housework in particular still appears to be associated with the role of the woman and there is an underlying belief and assumption that this duty falls into the women's realm and not the men's (Crompton, 2006). Additional explanations for women's increased involvement in housework can also be gained by considering how women can sometimes experience a reluctance to hand over housework due to attitudes about male incompetence and the belief that men fail to undertake housework to a high enough standard (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015).

A further example that highlights how traditional gender roles are reinforced is the view that women have less time for individual leisure activities when compared to men (Henderson *et al.*, 2002). The reason for this is due to the ethic of care, which subsequently impacts negatively on the leisure time that women can then enjoy (Karsent *et al.*, 2015; Such, 2006; Willming and Gibson, 2000; Kay, 1998; Peters and Raaijmakers, 1998; Larson *et al.*, 1997; Thompson, 1995). As a consequence, many mothers experience a lack of entitlement in relation to their own leisure, with the needs of their children surpassing their own needs, especially where leisure is concerned (Shank, 1986; Glyptis and Chambers, 1982).

Nonetheless, although these aspects highlight the barriers that working mothers experience, some headway has been made to encourage a more active role of care from the father. This has been especially evident in the Nordic countries, which have paved the way by encouraging and promoting the role of the father through legislative measures. Indeed, when these measures have been implemented they have proved to be very beneficial, helping to encourage and promote a strong bond to develop between father and child (O'Brien *et al.*, 2007).

However, although the UK introduced a new shared parental-scheme leave policy in April 2015, which encouraged the role of the father by enabling both parents to share 52 weeks of parental leave, it is questionable whether this policy will embed quickly enough or sufficiently enough to mirror and keep up with the changes that are taking place in women's employment and breadwinning.

The discussion has therefore highlighted some of the barriers that working mothers experience, showing that there continues to be conflict between work and family. What is more, it has illustrated that an increasing number of working mothers are facing these problems, especially when we consider the growing number of women in the labour market and the rise in maternal breadwinners. As a result, this clearly signals that direct and immediate action needs to take place to challenge inequality and to ultimately ease the burden for working mothers, maternal breadwinners and their families.

1.5 Research Questions

The key aim of this thesis is to examine the lived realities of breadwinning mothers by examining the impact of their breadwinning role on their home life and work life. The study has two unique elements: the first is its focus on breadwinning, which involves unpicking the term and illustrating that breadwinning is more complex than simply being about the financial aspects; and the second is to conduct a study that examines the experience of being a breadwinning mother, which will help to illustrate what is unique about them as a group.

The thesis is based upon qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with twenty women, all of whom were breadwinners and mothers.

The central research question that this study seeks to investigate is:

What are the lived realities of breadwinning mothers and what impact does their breadwinning have on their home life and also their work life?

Five subsidiary questions are also addressed:

1. How can breadwinning be classified and conceptualised?
2. How can postfeminism, individualization and the retraditionalization of gender help to provide a useful theoretical framework to understand contemporary breadwinning?
3. How can understanding the value of 'lived realities' and the 'everyday life' help us to gain a deeper understanding of the experience of being a breadwinning mother?
4. What is different and unique about breadwinning mothers?
5. What are the particular tensions associated with being a breadwinning mother?

1.6 The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured in the following way: the next chapter, chapter two, is the first of two literature review chapters, which sets out to conceptualise breadwinning, suggesting that there has been a lack of literature that defines its key concepts and that moves beyond the straightforward terms associated with the household finances. It will examine these issues, helping to categorise breadwinning more clearly by examining the different perspectives of breadwinning that have been discussed in the wider literature. Chapter two also aims to highlight the complexities and issues associated with contemporary breadwinning. It will argue that a more nuanced insight into the experience and 'lived realities' of breadwinning needs to be achieved. This chapter then moves on to explore debates centred around the retraditionalization of gender, individualization and postfeminism, highlighting synergies between neoliberalism and how this can also aid our understanding of contemporary breadwinning.

Chapter three provides a second literature-review chapter, and here the focus is on the difficulties that women experience in combining work and motherhood. This chapter will illustrate that even though women's participation in the labour market has increased, inequality between men and women continues to be persistent. It will begin by exploring the difficulties and challenges that mothers face at work, and the impact this subsequently has on their career path. The chapter will then move on to explore the difficulties and challenges that mothers face in the home, highlighting that despite the changes and

advancements that have taken place in women's paid employment and breadwinning, their roles within the home have not advanced to the same degree.

Chapter four outlines in detail the methodological approach taken in this thesis. Data collection was facilitated by the use of semi-structured interviews with breadwinning mothers who were the major earner in the family and who were in a heterosexual relationship. The chapter provides a justification and discussion of the research process. The sample of twenty women were selected according to the following criteria:

- 1) The women in the sample were all mothers;
- 2) The women in the sample were in paid employment and classified as breadwinners;
- 3) The women in the sample had children under the age of eighteen years living at home.

As previously stated, the data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with each individual respondent. Within the interview and the data-collection phase, questions focused on a number of key themes linked to family and work and how the woman became the breadwinner, issues around money and finances, and aspects associated with their views in relation to breadwinning and being the main financial provider.

Chapter five is the first of two results chapters in which the empirical analysis of the data through the interviews is presented. This chapter focuses on the identities of these women by discussing what is different about their experience of motherhood. It highlights that they have a distinct and unique identity when compared to other mothers due to the combination and complexities that the role of mother and the responsibility of being the breadwinner places on them.

The second results chapter, chapter six, presents the findings about these women's ascribed gender roles. It shows how this group of women are conforming to traditional arrangements of work and family even though they occupy the family breadwinner role. The chapter will illustrate this by examining both their home life and their work life,

which subsequently reveals that their gender is more significant and has more bearing than their breadwinning status.

Finally, chapter seven provides a conclusion to the thesis and offers a number of suggestions for future research, building on the findings of this study. The chapter begins by highlighting the main findings of the thesis, providing a more accurate and holistic conceptualisation of breadwinning, the uniqueness about these breadwinning mothers' lived realities, and finally, why these women are experiencing tensions at work and in the home. The chapter will then move on to present the main contributions of the thesis, the implications it has for future policy, limitations of the research, and ends with a number of suggestions and recommendations for further research in this area.

Chapter 2

Conceptualising Breadwinning – Challenging Simplistic Perceptions of Breadwinning and Understanding its Contemporary Theoretical Context

Introduction

The concept of breadwinning is acknowledged to be problematic due to the lack of literature that specifically defines its key concepts (Warren, 2007). The literature seems to suggest that there has been four varying interpretations or views about breadwinning. Firstly, the financial view (Meisenbach, 2009; Morris, 1999; Pahl, 1989; Hood, 1986), secondly, the orientation individuals have towards breadwinning (Hakim, 2000; Potuchek, 1992; Katona, 1975), thirdly, the nature and extent of an individual's economic contribution (Drago et al., 2005), and finally, the nature of their employment and the impact this has on the family (Kinnunen and Mauno, 2001). As a result, this chapter will begin by exploring these four varying positions associated with breadwinning.

The chapter will then move on to highlight the complexities and issues associated with contemporary breadwinning. It will argue that even though we are seeing increased numbers of breadwinning mothers, debates surrounding the relevance and sustainability of breadwinning as a concept is being questioned. As part of this discussion the chapter will argue that a more nuanced insight into the experience and 'lived realities' of breadwinning needs to be achieved, with the aim of providing a holistic and fuller appreciation of the facets of female breadwinning.

The discussion will then move on to explore debates centred around the retraditionalization of gender and individualization, highlighting how the process of retraditionalization and individualization are linked. Finally, chapter 2 will explore debates surrounding postfeminism, suggesting that there are synergies between

postfeminism, individualization and neoliberalism and that an appreciation of this can add further insight and aid our understanding of contemporary breadwinning.

The chapter therefore has two clear objectives that provide a persuasive argument for exploring these issues and highlight the significance of carrying out this research. Firstly, it illustrates important factors linked to conceptualising breadwinning by challenging the oversimplified views and perceptions of breadwinning. Secondly, due to increasing numbers of breadwinning mothers, this provides a solid justification for learning more about the lived realities of breadwinning mothers and their unique experiences.

2.1 The Financial View of Breadwinning

When defining breadwinning as a concept it is important to establish what its key indicators are. One of the central aspects of gaining a deeper understanding of this term is to consider how it has been linked to the financial contribution within households.

Indeed, the breadwinner has been described as the person who ‘wins the family bread’ or who ‘provides for’ the family (Warren, 2007:319), whilst Morris (1999:218) refers to the term ‘principal earner’ to label and also define a breadwinner.

Pahl (1989:125) discusses additional aspects linked to the financial view of breadwinning by pointing out that ‘being a breadwinner is often regarded as a burden, but it can also be a source of pride and power’, therefore suggesting that breadwinning provides individuals with more power and control when it comes to decision making in the home. Further research by Vogler and Pahl (1994:263) supports this position, indicating that there are clear links between ‘money’ and ‘power’, suggesting that the more money an individual contributes to the household, the more powerful they are likely to be.

Furthermore, the term breadwinning has been used to describe the polarisation of financial arrangements within the home in relation to the roles that individuals adopt. An understanding of this can be gained when we consider the more clear-cut cases of breadwinning, and how individuals can either fall into the categories of ‘breadwinner’ or ‘dependent’ (Pahl, 1989:4), suggesting that a key facet and focus of breadwinning is the person who is the financial or economic provider for the household. This is a belief

supported by Pahl (1989), who points out that breadwinning should be devoted to the needs and well-being of the family.

Nevertheless, it should also be acknowledged that there are problems in defining who is categorised as an actual breadwinner. This is apparent, as it is not always obvious in the academic literature whether breadwinning is simply defined by one sole provider, or by all of those in the family who contribute to the household income. There are varying positions taken on this; Meisenbach (2009) argues that breadwinning should be defined by the person who is the primary breadwinner in the family due to them providing the majority of the income, whereas Hood (1986:356) uses terms such as 'main providers, secondary providers, and co-providers' when referring to breadwinning.

This suggests that although defining breadwinning by the financial contribution is key, it does highlight that other considerations linked to the different types of financial contribution that individuals make are also valuable. This subsequently indicates that breadwinning is clearly more difficult and complex to pinpoint due to this lack of clarity about the relationship between the financial contribution an individual makes, and what this then tells us about how breadwinning is understood in the family unit.

2.2 The Orientation View of Breadwinning

An additional aspect that helps to shed further light on breadwinning is the orientation individuals place on their breadwinning role. The work of Hakim (2000) alludes to the concept of orientation and breadwinning by suggesting that secondary-earners are not full earners, and as a result are not breadwinners, as they are not explicitly concerned with the basic needs of the family. Hakim (2000) explains this further by adding that secondary-earners provide supplementary sources of income, and therefore only contribute to the household finances. This position is also echoed by Katona (1975:153), who adds that a secondary-earner's financial priorities lie with 'desires and aspirations', rather than basic needs and the survival of a family.

This in turn raises questions about the classification of breadwinning and whether individuals who contribute are indeed actual breadwinners, as their participation in employment is possibly more concerned with materialistic goods and consumerism rather

than sustaining the family's most basic needs. Hakim's (2000) preference theory appears to support this view, suggesting that lifestyle preferences are increasingly important in determining behaviour and motivation towards work. This also relates to individuals and their social-economic status and lifestyle aspirations, something that is referred to as 'keeping up with the Joneses'.

Furthermore, adopting a dual-earner model to breadwinning that includes primary- and secondary-earners may be a possible solution families adopt to fund the type of lifestyle or conspicuous consumption that is expected and also viewed as the norm in the twenty-first century. An explanation for this can be gained when we consider how dual-earners can still be breadwinners as households become more reliant on the earnings of both couples due to financial commitments being most commonly calculated on the basis of their joint incomes.

Further aspects that highlight the orientation view of breadwinning can be seen in the work of Potuchek (1992), who provides a typology based around an employed wife's orientations to breadwinning and the meanings attached to her employment. The findings from this study suggest that even though the women questioned participated in employment, some felt that their employment was not sufficient enough for them to be viewed as a breadwinner. Potuchek (1992:550) argued that understanding their varying orientations to breadwinning could be gained by examining certain 'behavioral measures', such as long length of marriage, low levels of education and low-level earnings, all of which decreased the chances of the woman defining her role as a breadwinner.

Two clear breadwinning groups emerged from Potuchek's study; *pure types* and *mixed types*. For the *pure types*, there were two clear categories; firstly, 'employed homemakers', who viewed breadwinning as a responsibility taken by the male, stating that their incomes were used for extras, viewing the male's work as more important than theirs and therefore suggesting that the women fitted into a traditional gendered model of female homemaker versus male breadwinner. The second *pure type* to emerge were 'co-breadwinners', who viewed breadwinning as being shared equally between the man and woman, stating that their jobs were just as important as the man's. This group of women stated that their income was vital for meeting the needs of the family.

There were a total of six *mixed types* that also emerged from Potuchek's study, which firstly included 'helpers', who viewed breadwinning as a way of contributing only basic monetary needs to the family. Due to this the women subscribed to the traditional gendered role of the male breadwinner, not viewing their income as vital to the family. Secondly, there were 'supplementary providers', who defined the male as the main breadwinner and viewed his work as being more important. However, they also viewed breadwinning as a duty that should be shared between male and female in the home. The third group were 'reluctant traditionals', who supported the male-breadwinner model and were therefore similar to the employed homemakers. However, their ideals were different, as the women would have liked to see breadwinning as an equal responsibility, making them reluctant in attitude. The fourth group were 'reluctant providers', who stated that their incomes were of great importance in supporting the family but that they would have preferred the men to be the breadwinners and sole providers, meaning that they were therefore reluctant in their role as providers. The fifth group were 'family-centred workers', who acknowledged the value of their employment for their family, but felt that they would leave employment if demands from the home increased. Finally, the last group were 'committed workers', who placed a strong commitment to their work and careers, valuing the personal benefits of having employment and contributing actively in the labour market.

Potuchek (1992) highlights the value of gender theory in helping to interpret findings, stating that gender identity and ideology is not just something that occurs in childhood but that develops all through adult life. Potuchek's model indicates that there is a need to consider gender constraints in households, and how this too relates to breadwinning. From considering Potuchek's study it is apparent that there are different types of breadwinners, all of whom view the concept very differently due to their varying orientations towards breadwinning. As a result, this suggests that breadwinning is difficult to define due to these differing attitudes and beliefs. Moreover, this suggests that when conceptualising and understanding breadwinning, consideration needs to be given to how it is interpreted and negotiated within the family and society as a whole. This demonstrates the value of gauging what individuals perceive breadwinning to be, including their relationship to breadwinning and also why they have developed these specific beliefs.

2.3 Breadwinning and the Nature and Extent of Economic Contribution

An additional aspect that helps to delve deeper into understanding breadwinning is the nature and extent of an individual's economic contribution to the household. The work of Drago *et al.* (2005) provides a model highlighting these aspects by identifying three distinct types of female-breadwinner families. The first group identified were 'temporary female-breadwinner families', who were women occupying the role of breadwinner unintentionally for a limited period of time. The reasons for this temporary role were linked to the male being unemployed or on a low wage, or the female having to take part in overtime to increase her wages. The key characteristics of this group were that the women were not always the most economically powerful within the couple. The second group were 'persistent economic female-breadwinning families', who were occupying the breadwinner role due to long-term unemployment or persistent low earning from the men. Explanations for this were most commonly linked to the male falling on difficult economic circumstances, resulting in the family being dependent on the woman's earnings. As a result, the woman had the most economic power within the couple. The final type of female-breadwinner family were 'persistent gender equity female-breadwinner families'. The reasons why the female was occupying the breadwinner role were linked to gender equity and fairness, with the man being willing to forgo his own career to support his partner's advancement. The findings also indicate for this group that the man was willing to take on more domestic duties within the home, operating within a more modern and egalitarian household, meaning that the power within the home was distributed equally between the couple.

Drago *et al.* (2005) provide a clear distinction between different groups of female-breadwinner families in relation to their preference for either economic factors or ideological gender equity. In addition, this study attempts to address why these families exist, pointing out that many breadwinning studies examine the role of the male or what they outline as being 'Mr Mom', whereas the female perspectives in relation to the family and breadwinning can have a tendency to be overlooked (Drago *et al.*, 2005:345).

Within the study, Drago *et al.* (2005:343) classify breadwinners as ‘major earners’, providing a clearer and neater way to distinguish who is categorised as a breadwinner and therefore overcoming issues linked to the difficulties of secondary-earners being labelled as breadwinners, who may not be directly linked to the basic needs of the family. It is therefore apparent that the nature and the extent of the economic contribution that an individual makes provides a useful way to understand how breadwinning is subsequently viewed and understood in households. It highlights how economic factors such as redundancy can impact on how a family operates, influencing the decisions they take with regard to their household finances and breadwinning. Moreover, it shows how aspects linked to gender equity and the views couples adopt can also shape and influence the roles that individuals take on within the home.

2.4 Breadwinning and the Nature of Work and Impact on the Family

A further aspect that helps to provide a deeper understanding of breadwinning is the nature of an individual’s work and the impact work has on the family unit. This is something that the work of Kinnunen and Mauno (2001) discusses in their study based on dual-earner family-employment circumstances. Within the study, they identified five varying dual-earner types. The first group were ‘low status dual-earner families’, who were categorised by both earners having a low level of education and occupying manual jobs. The second group were ‘low-job-exhausted and low-job-involved dual-earner families’, with both earners having limited responsibility at work but not necessarily manual work. The third were ‘high-status and highly exhausted mothers’, in which the women were more educated than the male in the household and therefore more financially superior. The fourth were ‘highly job-exhausted fathers’, in which the male of the house would have an involved job such as an entrepreneur versus the female working under less pressure, such as a nursery teacher. The last group were ‘high-status and highly job-involved fathers’, who viewed clear gender differences and adopted more traditional roles within the family, such as the male being a lawyer versus the female being a manager or secretary.

Unsurprisingly the study indicated that job exhaustion led to negative experiences for the family and the way the family functioned. It also highlighted how more women performed household duties compared to men, which was interesting as the data was collected from

Finland, which has one of the highest women's employment rates in Europe, and where it is also 'believed that more gender equality exists' (Kinnunen and Mauno, 2001:88). In addition, the findings surrounding job insecurity highlighted that more women than men were worried about their employment futures, which was a result of the lower-skilled work that these women occupied (Kinnunen and Mauno, 2001:103). A clear strength of this study is that it examined the experience of both fathers and mothers, providing a holistic view of breadwinning and the impact on the family, something acknowledged by additional studies (Crouter and Manke, 1997), which echo that there has been a limited focus on the exploration of dual-earner families.

A further study that helps to shed light on the nature of work and the impact this has on the family in relation to breadwinning is by Meisenbach (2009), who highlights six key facets about the experiences and realities of female breadwinners and their emotions. Meisenbach (2009:8) outlines these six facets as: 'having more control', 'added independence', 'increased pressures and worry', 'appreciating their partner's contribution', 'feelings of guilt and resentment', and finally 'valuing the importance on their career progression'.

It is evident that issues around the nature of work and the impact that this has on the family is linked to understanding breadwinning, as it helps to highlight some of the difficulties that families experience when combining work and home. Furthermore, this suggests that work can impact differently on the families as individuals adopt views and beliefs that are unique to them and their own circumstances, illustrating further reasons why breadwinning is so problematic to pinpoint and conceptualise.

Moreover, due to these varying perspectives, this illustrates that breadwinning is clearly a complex term with no straightforward, one-dimensional meaning. It is apparent that breadwinning is problematic to define due to the relationship that it has with the aspects that have been discussed in this chapter, such as the financial contribution, the orientations individuals have towards breadwinning, the extent of the contribution they make to the household and also the role and impact their employment has on the family.

Warren (2007) too supports this position, pointing out how there has been a lack of reflection that attempts to theorise or hypothesise breadwinning, adding that most of the

studies about breadwinning examine hard data about who contributes to the household income, but questions or evidence relating to why they are breadwinners and the choices that they make are seldom investigated. Warren (2007:318) adds that ‘breadwinning has an unproblematic, taken-for-granted, every-day, common-sense meaning in current sociology. It seems to require no questioning and nor does it appear to task our sociological imagination.’

In addition, Warren (2007) suggests that there has been a lack of critical reflection in relation to the meaning of breadwinning by referring to caring (which is largely set opposite breadwinning) as a way to highlight this limitation further. Warren proceeds to explain how care work has been widely debated and understood to be more complex, with varying categories of care being linked to ‘caring for’ and also ‘caring about’ (Ungerson, 1993), indicating that no such critical reflection has taken place to uncover or expand the academic understanding of the term ‘breadwinning’.

2.5 Understanding the Complexities of Breadwinning

From considering all these varying factors and positions about breadwinning it is apparent that specific aspects need to be defined and clarified to help provide a more accurate conceptualisation of breadwinning and how it should be used. The proceeding discussion will now move on to explore this further.

- *Economics of women breadwinners.* There has been a lot of discussion concerning the economics within households in relation to breadwinning, for instance secondary-providers, co-providers and dual-providers (Hood, 1986). However, the discussion in this chapter has indicated that the breadwinner is the person who earns the majority of the family income (Drago *et al.*, 2005; Potuchek, 1992). This would suggest that the earnings of a breadwinner are key to the family finances, which is different to what secondary-providers contribute, as they are more concerned with the purchasing of luxury goods and debates surrounding consumerism (Hakim, 2000; Katona, 1975). In addition, the discussion suggests that being a breadwinner and earning more money provides increased levels of power and control in the home with regard to decision making, therefore

challenging traditional gender roles for females who are breadwinners (Vogler and Pahl, 1994).

- *Different types of breadwinning families.* The discussion has suggested that in order to understand women breadwinners in the context of the family it is important to examine heterosexual couples (Drago *et al.*, 2005); although limiting the sample could be viewed as a weakness, examining many varying types of breadwinning families is not the focus or aim of this thesis. However, the possibility of looking at other forms of family and breadwinning would clearly prove to be beneficial and worthwhile for future research.
- *Understanding why there are women breadwinners.* The discussion has highlighted that there is clearly a need to gain an understanding as to why women are breadwinners. This includes finding out information about their backgrounds and ‘behavioral measures’ (Potuchek, 1992:550) and social-economic status and class, and what this then tells us about their journey as a female breadwinner (Drago *et al.*, 2005).
- *Types of breadwinners.* It is important to define the varying types of breadwinners and whether they are persistent or temporary (Drago *et al.*, 2005). Gaining an understanding of the factors that have helped to inform their decisions with regard to breadwinning and establishing whether they fall into more ‘pure’ or ‘mixed’ categories of breadwinning is also clearly useful (Potuchek, 1992).
- *Variables that will help to gain an understanding of women breadwinners.* Identifying additional variables will help to establish what it means to be a woman breadwinner and understand how the nature of women’s work impacts on their home life. Variables and measures such as income levels, education background, job involvement, gender attitudes, hours worked and labour-market status, as well as their reasons for working and also their family commitments, will all clearly help to unpick the issues that highlight the lived realities of women breadwinners (Meisenbach, 2009; Drago *et al.*, 2005; Kinnunen and Mauno, 2001; Potuchek, 1992).

Taking into account these factors will enable a deeper understanding about the experience of being a breadwinning mother to emerge. It will also help to address the limitations

linked to the lack of studies about breadwinning, and how it has been most commonly viewed as being ‘unproblematic and taken-for-granted’, and how breadwinning fails to ‘task our sociological imagination’ (Warren, 2007:318). Adopting this critical approach and considering the history and biography of an individual and their own experience and journey is also something that Mills (1959:6) supports, stating that ‘no social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within a society has not completed its intellectual journey.’ What therefore emerges from this discussion is that families make their own decisions surrounding breadwinning based on their own needs and also their own individual ideals, aspirations and desires.

2.6 Breadwinning Mothers Lived Realities in a Contemporary Context – Considerations and Implications of Retraditionalization, Individualization and Postfeminism

This element of chapter 2 aims to highlight the complexities and issues associated with contemporary breadwinning. It will firstly begin by providing a short introduction to the current situation of breadwinning in the 21st Century, pointing out that although many households operate within a dual-earner or adult-worker model, there has been a significant rise in the number of breadwinning mothers. Nonetheless, even though we are seeing increased numbers of breadwinning mothers, the discussion will highlight how debates surrounding the relevance and sustainability of breadwinning as a concept is being questioned, and that it has been argued that the principles that underpin breadwinning have been dismantled as one single family wage is no longer viewed as being viable. It will suggest that due to this, breadwinning as a concept is problematic and that a more critical understanding of the term needs to be gained.

The discussion will therefore address this concern and argue that a more nuanced insight into the experience and ‘lived realities’ of breadwinning needs to be achieved, with the aim of providing a holistic and fuller appreciation of the facets of female breadwinning. This part of chapter will then move on to examine how ‘lived realities’ can be conceptualised, to illustrate that there is real value in understanding and studying the everyday life. It argues that gaining a deeper understanding of the everyday provides a detailed snapshot into an individual life, which can be used as a platform to translate and also map onto wider social issues. This element of the discussion argues that an

appreciation of the ‘lived realities’ and the everyday is therefore crucial in helping us to gain a more accurate understanding of what it means to be a breadwinning mother.

The discussion then moves on to explore debates centred around the retraditionalization of gender and individualization, and argues how the process of retraditionalization and individualization are linked. This element of the discussion is important as it illustrates how the ideologies of individualization can lead to traditional workplace communities developing, and how this too becomes a gendered process due to the formation of these workplace communities being dependent on the assumption that women will take on the majority of domestic labour within the home. It will point out how this then presents tensions and difficulties for breadwinning mothers to become reflexive and individualized workers, even though they hold the responsibility of being the family breadwinner. The final section of the discussion explores debates surrounding postfeminism, and suggests that the exploration of synergies between postfeminism, individualization and neoliberalism can add further insight and aid our understanding of contemporary breadwinning.

2.6.1 Understanding the Context of 21st Century Breadwinning

Central to conceptualising and understanding breadwinning is the decline of the male-breadwinner model, as it helps to illustrate some of the changes and transitions that breadwinning has undergone (Warren, 2007; Pfau-Effinger, 2004; Lewis, 2001; Creighton, 1999; Crompton, 1999; Crompton and Harris, 1999; Janssens, 1997). This is pertinent as more couples are also jointly contributing to the household finances, a view echoed by Warren (2007), as a dual-earner model has become commonplace. A further explanation for this can also be gained when we consider the impact of changes to family formation and ‘significant growth in non-traditional family structures’ (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000:9), and how this too has led to the male breadwinner model becoming clearly less relevant (Drago *et al.*, 2005; Pfau-Effinger, 2004; Crompton, 1999).

Indeed, changes to family formations have meant that breadwinning has altered greatly, and subsequently the male-breadwinner model that was so prolific in earlier decades has now become outdated, and is no longer an accurate reflection of what is taking place in households. This position is echoed by Lewis (2001), who argues that governments have

recognised the shift towards an adult-worker model, where all adults participate in employment and maintain their own individual economic existence rather than relying on a spouse or the welfare state.

Additional explanations for these shifts can be understood when we reflect on the increasing number of breadwinning mothers who are now the main financial provider for their families. Recent research (Cory and Stirling, 2015) highlights how one third of all working mothers are now breadwinners, resulting in a total of 2 million breadwinning mothers in the UK. These figures illustrate how this change is persistent and expected to show continued growth, with the data indicating that in 1996 a total of 26 per cent of mothers in the UK were breadwinners, compared to 33 per cent in 2013. This too is acknowledged in additional studies (Meisenbach, 2009; Drago *et al.*, 2005), which argue that there has been a definite shift away from the male provider, with the breadwinning mother being more commonplace in contemporary society.

Due to these changes and transitions, there has also been an increased interest surrounding the female breadwinner within academic debate and literature (Drago *et al.*, 2005; Mundy 2012; Warren 2007). The work of Adkins and Dever (2014) is of particular value when understanding these debates, as they argue how the female breadwinners relates to feminist theoretical positions, providing a useful understanding of what this can then then tell us about breadwinning from a female perspective. They explain this further by adding that ‘the very idea of the female principle breadwinner is open to all manner of lines of feminist critiques ... which are vital for feminist analysis and understandings of transformations to women’s labour – both waged and unwaged – in the current moment’ (Adkins and Dever, 2014: 50-51)

However, although Adkins and Dever (2014:51) point out there is value in understanding feminist critiques of breadwinning, they suggest that there is also a certain amount of ‘hyperbole’ around the rise in number of female breadwinners. They argue that it appears to sit rather awkwardly with issues associated with the global economic crisis, and its relationship with factors such as recession, debt, austerity and inequality. Adkins and Dever (2014:53) explain this position further by stating that the female principle breadwinner ‘hollows out the history of women’s work within contemporary capitalist formations.’

Adkins and Dever (2014) suggest that existing feminist analysis has argued that breadwinning has always articulated a masculinised position. For example, the male breadwinner role was made possible by the status of the sexual contract, subsequently making it impossible for women to occupy. Moreover, they also add how breadwinning has been dismantled due to the deregulation of labour markets, the end of life-long employment and the disassembling of employment contracts with forms of social provisions (including aspects such as insurance and healthcare). In this way, the dismantling of the family wage has consequently undercut the breadwinner position, meaning that it is actually no longer possible for either men or women to occupy this role. Indeed, Adkins and Dever (2014:55) add how there been a ‘decomposition of this position’ and that the factors and aspects that maintained the breadwinning position in the past have been ‘radically dismantled’. Whilst making this point they proceed to question the validity of the female breadwinner by arguing that ‘it is therefore an analytical error to classify any such workers as female principle breadwinners. This is so, because such a classification amounts to a failure to grasp major and ongoing transformations to labour, labour markets and the state within post-fordism’ (Adkins and Dever, 2014:56).

Adkins and Dever (2014) work therefore clearly articulates how there has been a decomposition of the breadwinning category of worker, by pointing out that a family wage and the role of the breadwinner is in fact both illogical and also incoherent. Nonetheless, although they put forward this position, they state how they are not asserting that the literature linked to the female breadwinner is inaccurate. Rather, instead they appear to highlight that the category of female breadwinner requires more attention and also ‘critical reflection, not only on the category of breadwinner and transformations to the activities of social reproduction, but also on issues concerning money and earnings’ (Adkins and Dever, 2014:59).

Indeed, this position and call for critical reflection is clearly pertinent as there are increasing numbers of women who now occupy the role of breadwinner role, meaning that there is real value in finding out more about their unique experiences. This highlights the value of embarking on this thesis as it seeks to undertake this call for critical reflection of female breadwinning by providing a clearer picture and insight into their ‘everyday life’ and ‘lived realities’, and what this can then tell us about them as a group. The

discussion will now move onto explore this notion of ‘lived realities’ by reviewing and discussing everyday life sociology which helps to gain a further insight into the implications and considerations for contemporary female breadwinners.

2.6.2 The Importance of Lived Realities and the Everyday Life

Robinson (2015:903) argues that the ‘lived realities of everyday social lives are patterned by a dynamic interplay between the ‘mundane’ and the ‘extraordinary’. Robinson’s position therefore suggests that lived realities are clearly linked to the everyday occurrences that take place, and that we need to look at the everyday life in order to gain an insight and understanding of what this then tells us about an individual and their lived reality. It has also been argued that gaining an understanding of the mundane and ordinary can be grasped via the ‘sociology of everyday life’ (Ghisleni 2017). This signals that although everyday life sociology may appear to be trivial to the outsiders who is unfamiliar with the theoretical issues it addresses, rather the strength of studying everyday life encourages and also helps to ‘lay a foundation for understanding the basis of social order, social action, and the social construction’ (Adler *et al.*, 2017:230).

Studying the everyday life of individuals is therefore valuable as it allows us to drill down into the routine aspects of social life which reveal so much. It too draws on the work of Goffman (1959, 1997), who states that examining the everyday life allows us to develop an eye for detail whilst simultaneously drawing attention to the trivial. Consequently, studying routine and daily occurrences enables us to examine the unimportant, as it provides a tool to gain an insight into the unspoken or hidden realities of what is taking place in everyday life. Back (2015:834) similarly argues that by identifying the mundane aspects of the everyday life it can then enable us to transform ‘the smallest story to the largest social transformation’. He points out that ‘attentiveness’ towards the more ordinary, mundane and ‘trifling’, enables us to shed light onto larger widespread social issues.

Further value in studying the everyday life is articulated by Plummer (2013:506) noting that ‘our everyday life drips with stories of how people live and love, work and play, hate and die’. Moreover, this suggests that there is real significance in examining the everyday life, highlighting that it should not be overlooked or devalued as it encourages us to appreciate ‘human existence, the essence of who we are and our location in the world’

(Pink, 2012:142). Examining the everyday life is also about being able to capture routine practices, as it gives ‘importance to the ordinary’, allowing us to observe whilst providing valid ‘sites and moments of translation and adaption’, illustrating that it ‘is the landscape in which social gets to be made and unmade’ (Pink, 2012:142). These positions indicate that there is value in examining the everyday life of individuals, as it reveals so much about them and their own unique experiences. Moreover, beyond these positions there are clearly wider implications of studying the everyday life, as it provides a valid snapshot of society and in doing so, also enables us to comment on wider social situations and landscapes.

Robinson (2015:913) also calls for more studies and investigations into the experience and everyday life of women, arguing that ‘more empirical work is needed to explore how women negotiate agency in relation to dominant notions of femininity through their everyday practices’. This suggests that there is clearly value, and it is also pertinent to understand the lived realities of breadwinning mothers, especially when we consider how the breadwinner role has both historically and traditionally been linked to men. Moreover, although there are growing numbers of breadwinning mothers, very little is known about them as a group, consequently understanding their experience of breadwinning and drilling down into the most intricate and intimate aspects of their lives, will reveal and provide a useful insight into what it means to be a breadwinning mother.

Furthermore, a more nuanced understanding of the experience of breadwinning mothers can be gained from acknowledging the tensions between the role of the traditional male breadwinner, compared to that of the female breadwinner. An appreciation of this can be gained from considering how female breadwinning clearly links to debates surrounding the work of Adkins (1999) and her position on the ‘retraditionalization of gender’ and how the process of individualization is linked to the appropriation of family labour in the home by women. The discussion will now move onto explore these issues further in order to highlight these tensions.

2.6.3 The Retraditionalization of Gender and Individualization

Adkins (1999:119) argues that the traditionalization of the work in the economic sphere is ‘going hand in hand’ with a ‘retraditionalization of gender’. Adkins (1999:119) also

argues that we are now experiencing an intensification and increase of individualization 'where individuals are called upon not only to create their own certainties and forms of authority but also to create and invent their own self-identities and themselves as individuals'

Adkins (1999:122) notes how the changes associated with individualization are most common in the economic sphere adding that individualization is therefore understood to be 'undoing traditional economic relations and structures', where individualized workers are putting into play the uniqueness, variety and individuality of their work. Adkins (1999:127) therefore states that it is this process of 'individualization which allows for the formation of traditional workplace communities'. Moreover, she adds how the formation of these 'communities' and types of work often rely on a 'hidden' division of labour and the work of women, and that the appropriation of family labour is key to the formation of individualized workers. Therefore Adkins (1999:127) highlights that becoming an individualized worker is 'a gendered process' which is reliant on women's labour in the home, and that this is taking place as the domestic load is clearly and most commonly falling to them to manage. Moreover, the work of both Lash (1994) and Saso (1990) support this position, revealing that men are achieving individualization worker status whilst women are not.

The work of Banks and Milstone (2011:74) too builds on the work of both Adkins (1999) and Lash (1994) by illustrating how 'reflexive' forms of work that demand total 'flexibility' and 'independence' do not actually lead to a detraditionalization of work, but rather 'paradoxically' a 'retraditionalizing effect.' In putting forward this position Banks and Milstone (2011) therefore suggest that this notion of individualization and reflexive forms of work actually act to present barriers for women and subsequently fuels gender discrimination.

This can be further understood by considering how women are excluded from reflexive occupations that require workers to be accessible, adaptable and fluid. For example, due to women most commonly carrying out family and domestic labour in the home, men consequently find the process of becoming a reflexive worker more straightforward. Adkins (1999:131) points out how this can result in 'men being viewed as workers' whilst 'women are viewed as wives'. Adkins (1999:132) therefore argues that this demonstrates

that the process of individualization can rely on retraditionalization, or what she refers to as 'retraditionalized forms of family and kin bonds'

The work of Gill (2002), also confirms Adkins's theory by pointing out how the desire for organisations to have fully reflexive flexible workers can lead to women being excluded. Gill (2002) adds that the reason for this is due to difficulties in meeting the expectations of this type of work when combined with their domestic and family responsibilities. Indeed, Banks and Milstone (2011:82) explain this position further adding that 'for women, customarily charged with a fuller complement of domestic and familial responsibilities, ones that often require routine and stability, such demands are difficult to live with and may well inhibit their ability (and indeed desire) to fulfil reflexive roles'.

Living up to the notions of flexibility is often difficult and even impossible for many women. Indeed, this evidence appears to suggest that reflexive work opportunities are clearly linked and associated with the constraints that women experience due to undertaking both domestic and family obligations in the home. Moreover, these issues associated with individualization and the increase desire for reflexive workers, actually leads to an increase – and not a decrease in tradition, as men are more able to take advantage of reflexive occupations. Banks and Milstone (2011) provide a useful summary of this position by arguing:

The appropriation of family labour in this context serves men well, for it is they, rather than their wives, who are the self-regulating, autonomous and reflexivized workers, while women must rely on their husbands for status and security; indeed it is the existence of such family relations of appropriation that frees up men to fulfill reflexive roles.'

(Banks and Milstone, 2011:79)

It is apparent from the discussion so far that one of the key arguments put forward by Adkins (1999) is that traditionalization in terms of the economic domain is dependent on a retraditionalization of gender, and that individualization too relies on a retraditionalization of gender. Adkins (1999) therefore states that if feminism is to gain

more empirical, analytical and political value than clearly more critical attention needs to be directed towards emerging and individualized gendered relationship.

Individualization also lends itself well to debates centered around the notion of postfeminism. This can be further understood by considering how individualization is achieved and maintained via the usage and implementation of personal strategies. Indeed, this perspective of individual strategies rather than collective solutions is also something that is argued within postfeminism discourses. The discussion will therefore move onto to explore this further, highlighting some of these connections and how it also relates to the role of the female breadwinner.

2.6.4 Postfeminism

There is a recognised lack of consensus in the literature on exactly what postfeminism is (Gill, 2007) and ‘defining postfeminism is a matter of impassioned debate. Postfeminism has never been defined. It remains a product of assumption’ (Gamble, 2001:43). The reason for this lack of definition is because postfeminism is a highly contested and complex concept that has numerous interpretations. Nevertheless, Lewis (2018:22) suggests that central to all interpretations of postfeminism (‘historical’, ‘theoretical’, ‘backlash’, ‘positive’ and ‘governance’) is its sense of *‘mobility’*.

For historical and theoretical accounts of postfeminism the focus appears to centre around the breaks, changes and movement within feminism. For both backlash and positive forms of postfeminism, these can be better understood when they are viewed as reactions towards feminism. For example, whilst backlash postfeminism is associated with the breaking away of women from their traditional role within the home, and pursuing the somewhat idealist notion of women being able to ‘have it all’. Positive interpretations of postfeminism highlights the success of feminism in securing gender equality for women regardless of their situation and the choices that they make.

Therefore, a key feature of postfeminism is the role of choice and agency (Gill, Kelan and Scharff, 2017), with the added belief that there are also clear differences between men and women. From this perspective, postfeminism therefore upholds the principles of gender equality with an acceptance of femininity. This can be more clearly understood

by the postfeminist individual who places emphasis on the right to choose their own destiny. For example, a postfeminist would argue that their destiny is their own making, meaning that they shape their own path in life, removing any barriers via their own individual and personal strategies. This sense of choice can be better understood when considering how the postfeminist perspective suggests that women are able to decide how to manage their individualised decisions about home and work, by either choosing to engage in paid employment or by opting to stay at home on a full-time basis and focusing solely on their families. Postfeminist subjects thus have independence and autonomy, managing their own lives through their own individual agency. Lazar (2006) too validates this position adding that as long as it is the women's own choice, the overall outcome is viewed as being ultimately 'feminist'.

Further postfeminist positions have also argued that feminism has been successful, meaning there is no longer a need for feminism. Lewis (2018:24) points out how this too links to individualistic approaches, asserting that issues of inequality can be subsequently viewed and understood as 'personal problems', which should then be dealt with via individual and personal tactics rather than collective approaches. She explains this further by suggesting how this then therefore leads and propels individuals to develop 'an inner drive, determination to meet self-directed goals' (Lewis, 2018:26). Moreover, Lewis (2018) adds how the postfeminist positions suggests that women are also required to do masculinity alongside femininity, therefore trying to maintain some form of balance between the world of paid work and their home responsibilities. This in turn highlights how the postfeminist perspective reveals that there is a requirement to be visibly doing both masculinity and femininity concurrently.

A further understanding of postfeminism can also be gained from the work of Gill (2007:148) who argues that postfeminism is most effectively grasped when it is understood from considering it as a set of distinctive feelings and emotions, and what she refers to as 'sensibilities'. Gill (2007:153) points out how the 'notions of choice' and 'being oneself' and 'pleasing oneself' are central to the postfeminist sensibility that suffuses contemporary western culture.' Moreover Gill (2007:161) too argues that there is a tendency to 'entangle feminist and antifeminist discourse'. She explains this further by noting 'on one hand, young women are hailed through a discourse of 'can do girl power', yet on the other their bodies are re-inscribed as sexual objects, on one hand

women are presented as active, desiring social subjects, yet on the other they are subject to a level of scrutiny and hostile surveillance that has no historical precedent.' Thus Gill (2007) asserts that clear contradictions can be seen within postfeminist sensibilities, which also interweave with both the feminist and antifeminist debates.

Moreover Gill (2007:163) also argues that clear links can be made between neoliberal ideologies and the postfeminist discourse. She suggests that neoliberalism can be understood by 'constructing individuals as entrepreneurial actors who are rational, calculating and self-regulating. The individual must bear the full responsibility for their biography, no matter how severe the constraints upon their action'. Within this observation Gill (2007) argues how both postfeminism and neoliberalism are structured by individualistic approaches that subsequently replace social and political influences. This is mainly understood by considering how the autonomous, and self-regulating facets of neoliberalism clearly align with the freely choosing and self-reinventing postfeminist position (Gill, Kelan, Scharff, 2017). This in turn highlights how postfeminism has clear links to neoliberalism in that it promotes the message of individual success which is then shaped by individual agency, skill and capabilities. Indeed, the work of Sorensen (2017:298) also supports this position by noting that the links between postfeminism and neoliberalism, due to the emphasis on individual choice, and that postfeminism as basically 'a signifier of a neoliberal culture.' It is therefore apparent from the discussion that postfeminism sits well with neoliberal ideologies due to the emphasis being placed on individualistic, entrepreneurial and empowered women, who are able to shape and self-direct their own lives in order to meet their own personal ambitions and aspirations.

Nonetheless, although this account of postfeminism clearly fits well with the increase of women participating in the labour market, the successful postfeminist may be required to disconnect and lose her femininity if she is to gain equality with her male colleagues. This position is validated by Oksala (2013:39 cited in Lewis and Simpson, 2017:215) who argues, 'women not only want fulfilling family life with a partner and children but also they too want money, power and success (and as such) they are atomic autonomous subjects of interest competing for the economic opportunities available to them,' However, for women living in postfeminist times 'doing' masculinity is less achievable and also less desirable. Lewis and Simpson, (2017:218) explain this further by adding

that the ‘impact of having to enact the required rituals of femininity ‘tilts’ the balance of power in favour men and masculinity as the postfeminist woman cannot shed her gender.’

When used critically postfeminism highlights some of the persistent inequalities that exist within the world of work. Indeed, this is echoed by McRobbie (2015) who suggests there is an existing masculine position in place, which favours men and is largely untouched by the revolutionary changes that affect women’s lives. This in turn indicates that despite the growth of women in paid employment, and the rise in female breadwinners, the responsibility of the domestic sphere still falls to the woman to manage and they are at a disadvantage due to this. Moreover, due to these disadvantages and pressures there is an increased emphasis on women having to focus on their career and their children simultaneously. Indeed, Lewis and Simpson (2017) point out how examples and images of the successful postfeminist woman are often presented in the seemingly ‘have it all’ form of glamorous celebrities, which are clearly not representative, or even a true reflection of the lived reality of most working mothers and those who also have the responsibility of undertaking the breadwinner role. Sorensen (2017) argues that this notion of ‘having it all’ may also come at a cost, not only in the terms of the hard work and determination needed to cope with the demands, but also due to the difficulties associated with managing femininity alongside individualized agency, due to the indication that individualization is most commonly associated with masculinity. This perspective clearly resonates with the lived reality of being a breadwinning mother who is adopting the seemingly masculine role as the main financial provider, whilst also trying to undertake her mothering role successfully. Indeed, Adkins and Denver (2014) argue that there are lines for critique when understanding the female breadwinner, especially in the position of women adopting postfeminist characteristics which include economic capacity, self-invention and self-direction.

2.7 Conclusion

Although we have seen a shift from the male breadwinner towards an adult-worker model, we have also seen an escalation in the number of breadwinning mothers. However, as highlighted by Adkins and Denver (2014) there are some clear implications linked to concept of breadwinning, as they argue that one single family wage is no longer viable due to the global economic crisis and the changes to household income. This presents

added problems and difficulties for the female breadwinner, as it is questionable if the role of household breadwinner is indeed sustainable or even viable.

Nonetheless, although there has been a dismantling of the breadwinner concept, this does not detract from the fact that there are still growing numbers of breadwinning mothers, which validates why a deeper and critical understanding of their position is needed. In order to achieve this, the discussion argued how examining the 'lived realities' of everyday life can help to provide a more holistic and nuanced understanding of what it means to be a female breadwinner, which can then be used as a platform to translate and also map onto wider social situations and landscapes.

In addition, this chapter has also highlighted that there has been a 'retraditionalization' of gender which has been fuelled by the rise in individualized and reflexive workers. However, the discussion noted that many women are excluded and experience difficulties in becoming reflexive workers, as they are having to fulfil the burden of domestic duties in the home. Furthermore, it is evident that the discussion surrounding individualization sits within the postfeminist cultural regime due to the synergy between many of the characteristics of individualization and postfeminism, something that is most noticeably visible when we consider how aspects such as independence and autonomy appear to correspond with both of these positions.

This discussion has therefore demonstrated that there are undoubtedly complexities, considerations and implications surrounding retraditionalization, individualization and postfeminism. Focusing on these debates and having an understanding of the implication of these positions clearly provides a useful framework to understand the challenges and lived realities that contemporary breadwinning mothers face. Indeed, what is striking from the discussion is that although there are increased number of working women and breadwinning mothers, they continue to face barriers and experience tensions as they are unable to overcome the subjectivities that their gender place on them.

Moreover, we can see from the first element of this chapter that breadwinning is a complex term to define and conceptualise (Warren, 2007; Potuchek, 1992) and that there are no clear or specific indicators that help us to define what breadwinning is, and how it should therefore be understood and approached. When people think of breadwinning they

immediately think of the most basic economic terms and fail to consider all the issues that fit into the breadwinning debate. This chapter has helped to challenge this taken-for-granted view, highlighting that there are numerous aspects and variables linked to consumerism, as well as lifestyle choices, that impact on how breadwinning is viewed and managed in households. Furthermore, it has illustrated how other aspects such as orientations towards breadwinning, the contribution that individuals make to the household income and the way in which work impacts on their attitudes is also key to understanding breadwinning and gaining a fuller and deeper understanding of what it means. As a consequence, it is important that these factors are considered and also taken into account when conceptualising breadwinning in more broad and sociological terms.

What therefore emerges is that there is a need to address breadwinning as being unproblematic and straightforward, highlighting that there are not only objective and obvious forms of breadwinning relating to the financial aspects, but that there are also subjective themes that are linked to the values and identities. From considering these aspects the discussion therefore provides a clear rationale and reason for exploring the lived realities of breadwinning mothers, as it will help to address this limitation and provide a more holistic and critical understanding of breadwinning.

To conclude, it is apparent that this chapter has provided two solid justifications for undertaking a study focusing on breadwinning mothers. Firstly, because there has been an increase in breadwinning mothers active in the labour market, with the numbers expected to rise even further, it is important to find out more about these women as a group. Secondly, it has highlighted that there is a need to explore the subjective aspects linked to the views and attitudes associated with breadwinning, moving beyond the straightforward terms linked to household finances. Indeed, exploring and gaining a deeper knowledge of these views and attitudes will clearly help to expand our sociological imagination, and provide a more accurate and holistic conceptualisation of our understanding of maternal breadwinning.

Chapter 3

Challenges in Combining Work and Motherhood

Introduction

Although women's participation in the labour market has increased, inequality between men and women continues to be persistent (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Kan, 2008; Gatrell, 2005; McKie, Bowlby and Gregory, 2001; Standing, 1999; Mason, 1996).

Whilst these problems exist for many working mothers, this chapter argues that these issues are intensified for women who have the added pressure of occupying the breadwinner role. It will suggest how the breadwinning responsibility adds a further dimension and complexity for this group of mothers. Moreover, reflecting on the experience of breadwinning mothers in relation to these barriers is clearly important due to the increasing number of mothers who now hold the responsibility of the breadwinner role in their families (Cory and Stirling, 2015).

The chapter begins by exploring the difficulties and challenges that mothers face at work, and the impact this subsequently has on their career path. This will be highlighted by discussing how perceptions of the ideal employee appear to be more closely aligned with male rather than female workers, whilst also reflecting on how the literature being discussed addresses the significance of gender power relations. It will then move on to evaluate part-time work as an alternative strategy that working mothers choose in order to address difficulties centred around balancing work and home commitments. Part of this discussion will also examine the advantages and disadvantages of part-time work, and in doing so will draw out issues that impact on mothers who work in this way. Finally, this section of the chapter will outline potential coping strategies that both employers and

employees take to address barriers that working mothers face, therefore helping to provide an understanding of the possible solutions that could help support working mothers.

The chapter will then move on to explore the difficulties and challenges that mothers face in the home, highlighting that despite the changes and advancements that have taken place in women's paid employment, their roles within the family and the home have not advanced to the same degree.

In discussing aspects related to the ideology of motherhood, the chapter will suggest that women continue to take on the majority of duties associated with the family in its examination of how working mothers face difficulties in fulfilling this ideology due to their paid employment. As part of this, the discussion will also consider related debates, including mothers' guilt, pointing out how many working mothers experience guilt due to not being able to meet the ideologies of more standard roles of motherhood. In order to highlight some of these issues further, the chapter will then move on to discuss how attitudes associated with traditional gender roles result in women taking on the majority of housework. This element of the discussion will illustrate some of these inequalities further by examining how traditional gender roles and the ethic of care have impacted negatively on women's access to leisure time and leisure opportunities, whilst also considering how this too links to the significance of gender power relations. The final part of this chapter will then move on to examine the role of the father, arguing that although fathers are recognising the importance of being involved in the care of their children, policies and legislative changes are not being put into place quickly enough to have any worthwhile impact. This particular element of the chapter will consider EU and international policies that are aimed at sharing parental leave and encouraging the role of the father. Part of this discussion will show how the introduction and take-up of legislative measures in the UK have not happened quickly enough to have any real impact. As a consequence, it will therefore argue how this has presented barriers for working mothers in gaining equality.

In the chapter I will be arguing that a liberal feminist perspective that suggests there is an 'underlying sameness' (Halford and Leonard, 2001:10) between women and men and their capabilities, can help make sense of the difficulties that women experience in

combining work and motherhood, this is because at the core of the liberal perspective is a belief that both women and men are equal, and that gender stereotypes should be challenged in order to enable women to achieve their full potential. I will therefore suggest that equality can be facilitated by the eradication of stereotypes and prescriptive sex roles via the implementation of appropriate gender-neutral policies that help remove and contest old-fashioned prejudices.

3.1 Difficulties for Working Mothers – Glass-Ceiling Effect and Characteristics of the Ideal Worker

The issues that working women face are well-documented. Myrdal and Klein (1968:135) coined this struggle as the ‘feminine dilemma’ and pointed out that this is a predicament that continues to carry on throughout a woman’s life. Although Myrdal and Klein’s work was produced more than fifty years ago, it is apparent from more recent literature that the difficulties mothers experience when combining work and home still persist and are also equally relevant today (Won, 2016; Herman *et al.*, 2013; Schober and Scott, 2012; Scott and Plagnol, 2012; Crompton and Lyonette, 2008, 2010; Fagan *et al.*, 2008; McRae, 2008; Oakley, 2005).

Lewis and Smithson (2001) argue that gender is a key facet for women with work–life balance issues, suggesting that if a woman regards herself primarily as mother she is therefore more inclined to view work as an add on, or an additional pressure. This helps to highlight the pressures that working mother face, and this becomes particularly pertinent and problematic for those mothers who are breadwinners as their earnings and contribution are vital for the family, illustrating how this issue is clearly more complex for this group of women.

Furthermore, difficulties and pressures that working mothers experience can stem from existing traditional gender ideologies, which suggest that work and home should be mutually exclusive. Indeed, the work of Lewis, Rapoport and Gambles (2003) alludes to this by suggesting how mothers and those with caring commitments can often encounter feelings of not being able to cope with the general busyness of their everyday lives and the pressure that this in turn places on them. This suggests how working mothers can experience negative and pessimistic feelings towards their role as a mother, making it

even harder to break away from traditional ideologies and mind-sets. This too suggests how a liberal feminist perspective that promotes gender equality would clearly be beneficial in helping to deal with these pressures that mother experience in both spheres of life, challenging traditional sex roles via the usage and implementation of policies that are geared up to both men and women and that are therefore more gender-neutral.

To tackle the increasing burden and busyness that many working mothers experience, some have chosen to make difficult decisions about their careers. Herman *et al.* (2013:473) argue that some working mothers take a ‘cul-de-sac’ approach, viewing their career as something that is ‘more comfortable and leafy than a dead end, but nevertheless does not lead anywhere’. In addition, Herman *et al.* (2013:475) found many of the working mothers in their study adopted a ‘lying-low’ approach to work, choosing instead to put their careers on hold. This highlights the difficulties that mothers face in balancing home commitments alongside their paid employment, illustrating the detrimental impact it can have on their careers and thus suggesting even further complications and problems for those mothers who are breadwinners and whose employment and careers are vital for providing and maintaining the household income.

Moreover, although there are clearly difficulties with balancing work alongside home, deciding on the best path to take is not always completely clear-cut. This is because many working mothers do not always have a choice about changing their careers, or lessening their paid employment due to their financial commitments and obligations that they have to fulfil – something that would be especially true for mothers who have the responsibility of being the breadwinner in their family. Myrdal and Klein (1968:150) allude to this predicament further by arguing:

the woman who has to go to work in order to support her family need not be troubled overmuch about the psychological effects her absence from the home may have on her children. She knows that if she did not earn the money she needs to feed them, her children would go hungry. There is no doubt which is the lesser evil of the two.

Issues associated with the family and managing aspects related to the home are predominantly shouldered by the mother. As a consequence working mothers often reside in sectors of employment where working conditions are less favourable when compared to their male counterparts (Warren, Fox and Pascall, 2009). Such difficulties have been discussed in the wider literature, which indicates how this has also encouraged women's oppression and supported the philosophy behind patriarchy and male dominance, or what some writers have preferred to call the 'sex-gender system' (Witz, 1992:13). As a consequence, this has resulted in men having more power than women, and male supremacy being both common and 'systemic' in the workplace (Witz, 1992:24).

Moreover, although there is an espoused political commitment to address inequality and readdress the power balance, women continue to face unfair challenges in many areas of life. A recent report carried out by the European Institute for Gender Equality (2015:3) suggests that gender equality can only be achieved via the drive towards 'continued political commitment, quality data and regular monitoring'. This report highlights how the unequal distribution of power between men and women 'is a consequence of complex processes and the interplay between multiple factors that are deeply embedded in social structures'(European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015:3). Thus, gender power relations impact negatively on women due to allocation of roles within both the labour market and the home which reduce women's representation and hinder moves towards greater equality (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015:7)

It is also evident that gender power relations are of significance when we examine issues surrounding the glass-ceiling effect, or what others have referred to as the 'glass cliff' (Ryan and Haslam, 2007) or the 'leadership labyrinth' (Eagly and Carli, 2007) which highlights the invisible barriers that inhibit the progression and advancement of women's careers. This consistent underrepresentation of women in positions of power illustrates the presence of these barriers. Furthermore, the European Institute for Gender Equality (2015:55) offer an explanation for this noting 'a women's full participation in power structures and decision making is stalled by the persistence of gender-based stereotypes, reinforcing horizontal and vertical segregation of the glass-ceiling effect'. This work highlights the continuing need to address the impact of the glass-ceiling and the underrepresentation of women in positions of power and why gender-based stereotypes need to be broken down to ensure positive change is achieved.

Moreover, although increasing numbers of women are competing actively in the labour market and making headway in breaking the invisible barriers that exist in the workplace, many women remain stuck, or fail to progress beyond middle-management positions (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005). Furthermore, even when women are getting beyond middle management, and beginning to occupy executive-director positions, progression is still taking place at a very slow rate to have any real impact. As a result, reports in the press have suggest that men are still continuing to occupy high-ranking director roles, and that women are still struggling to secure top positions (Blinkhorn, 2009 - *Sunday Times*). This lack of progress can be understood further when we consider the persistent gender pay gap that exists between men and women. Indeed, although the latest figures show how the gap for all employees, including full-time and part-time, has decreased from 19.3 per cent in 2015 to 18.1 per cent in 2016 (ONS, 2016 a) there still appears to be a long way to go until equal pay for women is a reality.

Nonetheless, there have been some positive steps to try to address the inequality that women experience in the workplace; for example, increasing their participation on FTSE 100 boards, articulated by Lord Davies's February 2011 report. However, although Davies's report had initially set a target to have 25 per cent representation of women on FTSE boards by 2015, the latest report in March 2015 indicated that the target was not met, and that the actual figure for female membership was just short of the target at 23.5 per cent (The Female FTSE Board report, 2015). Reasons why there is an insufficient number of women occupying board-level positions have also been provided by the CIPD (2016), who argue that aspects such as stereotyping, the absence of role models, career breaks, caring obligations and a lack of mentoring have all had a negative effect on women securing top-level positions.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (2015) findings illustrate how the gendered division of labour in the home between impacts negatively on a woman's ability to take on leadership positions. While women are 'predominantly responsible for caring and domestic tasks' existing stereotypes about women's abilities at work are perpetuated (The European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015:13). In addition, their findings show how there is a continuing reluctance to appoint female candidates onto board positions due to organisations having entrenched male-dominated business cultures, reinforced by a lack

of transparency during the recruitment process. The long and unpredictable working hours, often a feature of leadership roles, have been found to have a detrimental influence on women being able to enter these leadership positions (Jones, Charles and Davies, 2008). Within persisting unequal gender power relationships, women continue to be expected to prove themselves and their abilities when occupying leadership roles, whilst men are presumed to already possess the required skills and experience (Murray, 2014). This signals that further measures and legislation is needed to help readdress the balance.

Further possible explanations to understand this lack of progress in relation to women's career trajectories can be gained by considering employers' negative perceptions of working mothers. Hoobler *et al.* (2009:951) argue that employers' views of family-work conflict can influence how employees are viewed with regard to 'fit' and 'performance', suggesting that biased attitudes are deeply rooted in organisations, with women being viewed as having a poorer 'fit' when compared to male employees. Furthermore, this study highlights that employers have a tendency to believe that employees should drop everything in order to put in 'face time', which clearly presents difficulties for working mothers who may find it difficult to commit to overtime or extended hours of work. A study by the CIPD (2016:7) echoes this, arguing that the 'perceptions' of employers in relation to 'conscious' and also 'unconscious' gender bias can present real difficulties and barriers for women, therefore illustrating why work-family conflicts appear to be more tenuous for women when compared to men, something that is clearly problematic for all working women but even more so for those women who are breadwinners and whose employment and earning are vital for their families.

Cornelius and Skinner (2008) highlight additional difficulties that working mothers face, pointing out how career breaks and in particular maternity leave can lead to obstacles in gaining promotions due to the employer perceiving that mothers are less committed or loyal to the organisation. Cornelius and Skinner (2008) point out that there has been a real concern about the incapacity for women to break through the glass ceiling and overcome workplace barriers. They argue that this lack of advancement is due to the organisation's structure and culture, the work practices they adopt and also the expectations of the employer. However, Blau and DeVaro (2007) provide an alternative rationale, arguing that the reason why promotion rates are higher for men when compared to women is because women tend to be employed within non-profit sectors where

promotions tend to be lower. This position is something that Hakim (2006) has suggested, noting it is common for women to gravitate towards careers and workplaces that have a certain amount of flexibility and that already have family-friendly policies embedded, once again showing how working mothers take into account their family commitments when considering and deciding on suitable sectors and career paths that will enable them to gain a more harmonious balance. This suggests how the difficulties faced by working mothers may be self-perpetuating, as working mothers seek work in sectors that provide more flexibility, but that simultaneously offer little career opportunity or advancement.

Moreover, it is important to consider the impact of some of the deeper-rooted beliefs about the characteristics of the ideal worker, and how men and women are subsequently viewed in the workplace. This is because traditionally men have been viewed as assertive and women have been seen as nurturing, meaning that sex-role ideologies such as the male being the breadwinner and the female being the care-giver have been sustained and reinforced. This view appears to support the position presented by Cornelius and Skinner (2008:147), who argue that when it comes to career progression women have to 'make space in order to make it to the top' whereas men are able to follow the more 'normative' paths that are expected. Hoobler *et al.* (2009:939) allude to this problem further, stating that an understanding of this can be gained when we consider aspects such as 'stereotyping' and the belief that 'men are more effective leaders and managers'.

Schein (1973) also supports this position and argues how male qualities are viewed as being better placed, and therefore more suited to organisational leadership and management roles. Lewis (2001) too echoes this, suggesting how the ideal worker has male characteristics, as he is firstly able to work on a full-time basis, and secondly has minimal domestic duties within the home. Moreover, this view is also put forward in more recent literature, highlighting that the ideal employee has both an unbroken career path and is someone who is highly visible in the workplace (Lewis and Humbert, 2010; Guillaume and Pochic, 2009). All of these studies help to illustrate how women who have had maternity leave, career breaks or changed their working hours due to having children have experienced difficulties and barriers in fulfilling this perception of the ideal-worker archetype. Once again it is clear that this is a problem for all working mothers, but the problem becomes heightened for breadwinning mothers whose commitment to paid employment is key due to the importance placed on their financial contribution.

Finally, further work that helps to illustrate this position about the ideal worker is highlighted by Hakim (2006), who points out how the majority of executive roles require long and irregular working hours. She argues that as a result, these high level and demanding jobs become less attractive to working mothers' due to the negative impact that they have on family time, providing a valid explanation as to why nearly fifty per cent of women in senior-level professions in the UK do not have children. The lack of representation of women in senior-level roles can be seen as an outcome of structural and institutional discrimination which hinders women's access and progression in the workplace and maintains existing patterns of unequal power between men and women (Dhalerup 2005)

It is apparent from the discussion that women experience difficulties in combining, and also achieving a balance, between their home life and work. Moreover, it has argued that although these problems are common for all working mothers, these difficulties can become even more complex and heightened for breadwinning mothers due to the importance placed on their earnings and their dual roles within the family. This clearly illustrates the problems that these women face, signalling that organisations are fundamentally gendered and that there is insufficient policy in place to readdressed the balance and assist in the fight to overcomes inequality.

Furthermore, the discussion has highlighted that many working mothers struggle to cope with the pressure of having to combine home and work, and subsequently take action to ease this pressure by putting their careers on hold, or on the back-burner. As a result, some working mothers have opted for career breaks, or decided to work part-time as a way of managing home and work more effectively (Lewis, 2001). In order to explore this further the chapter will now proceed to examine aspects associated with part-time work in more detail by looking at the pros and cons of this type of employment strategy.

3.2 The Part-Time Working Strategy

More women work part-time than men, with the latest figures stating that 41 per cent of women work part-time compared to 11 per cent of men (ONS, 2016 b). The reason why so many women opt to work part-time is due to it providing the best of two worlds,

meaning that it allows women to work whilst simultaneously enabling them to gain an effective balance with their home commitments (Lewis *et al.*, 2010; Warren, 2004). Indeed, there are some obvious advantages for women who decide to work on a part-time basis, which include providing them with an income, a purpose beyond the home, helping with self-esteem, and also enabling them to stay active within the labour market.

However, although working part time may appear to offer clear benefits to women the implications for career progression represent a further embedding of gendered inequalities. The work of Beechey and Perkins (1987) highlights the benefits of part-time work from an employer's point of view. They argue how part-time work provides a valuable source of labour in times of worker shortages, meaning that part-time workers are usually flexible in nature and that they are therefore subsequently easy to dispose of. This provides a serious indication of the disadvantages that part-time employees face, demonstrating how they are not always viewed as total or fully-contributing employees, meaning that they can be treated in an inferior way when compared to someone who works on a full-time basis.

This lack of recognition for part-time workers is predominantly an issue for women in the workplace, as women are most commonly occupying part-time jobs due to the need to reconcile work and home. This is something that is discussed in the work of Warren (2004), who points out that as women are undertaking the majority of domestic work in their homes, they are therefore more likely to make adjustments to their work, with changes such as career breaks and moving from full-time work to part-time work all being common. Moreover, it should be noted that these breaks are not only having a detrimental impact on career progression, they also have acknowledged negative consequences on pension contributions, meaning that many women who work on a part-time basis will have to work for a longer period of time if they wish to collect a full pension (Lewis, 2001; Newell, 1993).

Furthermore, other related issues that have fuelled the increasing number of women working part-time is the poor childcare provisions in the UK, as women are not being provided with sufficient alternatives to help support and resolve their childcare commitments. This subsequently means that an increasing number of women have taken career breaks in order to manage their obligations in the home, something Lewis and

Lewis (1996:23) refer to as 'Mommy tracks'. In addition, Warren, Fox and Pascall (2009) have argued that these career breaks have meant that when these mothers have to re-enter the labour market they have returned to marginalised and poorly-paid jobs. Further problems that part-time workers face are highlighted by Lewis (2001), who points out that the majority of family-friendly policies are developed and designed for full-time and not part-time workers, meaning that many of those who work part-time are left unable to claim or access help with childcare. This suggests that there are real problems for part-time workers, and that this too becomes largely a problem for working mothers as it is mostly commonly this group of women who are working in this way.

Moreover, although working part-time is often assumed to ease the pressures and conflict between allocating time to work and home, it should be noted that there are acknowledged problems associated with working part-time and managing family life. A study by Gray (2004) has illustrated this further, showing how women who work on a part-time or flexible basis can experience negative effects on the family, due to them having to work unsociable hours, something that Gray (2004:3) refers to as 'flexploitation'. Explanations for this have been linked to the changing demands of consumers, meaning that goods and services are increasingly required and even sometimes expected beyond and outside of normal working hours. As a result, employers have adapted to this change by introducing flexible ways of working which sometimes conflict with worker's home lives, highlighting how unsocial hours, twilight shifts, shift rotations and working at weekends are all contradictory to the ethos of working part-time.

Part-time workers are also generally viewed as not wanting to do interesting work or wanting to get involved in training, and findings suggest that there are actually fewer opportunities for training or promotion to take place. Crompton and Lyonette (2010) point out how lower pay and fewer training opportunities are common problems that part-time workers face, whilst Darton and Hurrell (2005) echo similar issues, suggesting that people who are employed on a part-time basis are more likely to be working below their potential.

It is therefore apparent from the discussion that there are issues and barriers that inhibit part-time workers from being viewed as equal employees in the workplace. This in turn raises the question as to whether part-time working is the best option for achieving an

effective balance between work and home due to the difficulties and problems that are associated with it, such as poorer pay, inferior rights, lack of career progression and also the potential requirement to work unsociable hours. However, working part-time may be the only option that some women have if they want to stay active in the labour market, and reconcile home and work. Furthermore, it should also be acknowledged that although part-time is not the ideal solution, the figures still indicate that it is clearly a popular option that many working mothers take.

As part of this discussion it is also worthwhile considering the implications that working part-time has on breadwinning mothers, as there are added issues for these types of mothers. For instance, although working part-time would clearly ease the tension between work and home for breadwinning mothers, they would still have the pressure and responsibility of being the main earner and provider for the family. In addition, it may also be the case that more breadwinning mothers would like to work on a part-time basis, but due to the importance placed on their earnings they would simply find this impossible or not as straightforward to implement.

The discussion on part-time work has clearly highlighted some of the difficulties associated with this way of working, showing how these issues predominantly impact on women. The chapter will now move on to examine the literature that discusses possible coping strategies that can be taken in order to address some of the difficulties that mothers face in the workplace.

3.3. Solutions and Strategies to Overcome Barriers for Women in the Workplace

A potential solution to help address the problems that mothers experience in the workplace is put forward by Hoobler *et al.* (2009), who argue that encouraging a supportive environment can help to reduce perceptions of work–family conflict. Indeed, adopting approaches that promote and also highlight an understanding of the pressures that mothers face, begin to help to overcome barriers and prejudices that may exist in the workplace. Moreover, we can see how this could be applied to employers' perceptions of face time, and how increased face time does not always equal increased productivity. If these considerations were taken into account and more support was provided, then problems associated with employers' perceptions might be subsequently challenged and

also greatly altered. Confronting the bias surrounding women and work–family conflict; has been proposed to help root out entrenched discrimination and ultimately improve promotional opportunities for women (Hoobler et al; 2009). Nonetheless, although such approaches would help to address gender bias, it is not clear how this would actually take shape, or what specific measures can be implemented as these changes will simply not happen on their own. Indeed, this seems to suggest that clear and detailed policy measures need to be devised that fully consider the gender perspective in order to help facilitate positive change.

Additional strategies to address the difficulties that mothers face in the workplace are put forward by Cornelius and Skinner (2008:148), who suggest that a change needs to take place that views the commitment to the family as an ‘important mark of good citizenship’, with the aim of increasing the role and participation of the father. Cornelius and Skinner (2008) point out that taking these steps would help to challenge traditional gender roles, as more fathers would subsequently take career breaks and change their working pattern from full-time to part-time. Moreover, we can see how this shift would have an impact on the attitudes and views about the ideal worker with regard to ‘fit’ and the compatibility for higher-level leadership roles. Pushing for change through the implementation of policy and legislative measures would clearly help to challenge some of the existing traditional gender role beliefs. Indeed, there has been some progress at policy level due to the increasing amount of UK policy associated with family-friendly and work–life balance issues (Warren, Fox and Pascall, 2009). However, many of these policies are not gender focused, most employers and workers still feel that many of them are designed with female workers in mind. The work of Lewis, Rapoport and Gambles (2003) also argues that many family-friendly policies have allowed women to manage their work and family commitments, but that this has not been the case for men, and that the overall impact of these policies has been limited as a result. Once again this suggests how policies need to be more inclusive and sensitive to gender issues, ensuring that they are inclusive and relevant to both the mother and the father so that real progress can be made towards equality.

A further acknowledged solution to assist women’s advancement in the workplace is the use of role models. The term ‘role model’ has been characterised by Shapiro *et al.* (1978:52) as being an individual whose ‘behaviours, personal styles and specific

attributes are emulated by others', therefore suggesting that a role model is carried out by observation and is therefore not a two-way process. Lockwood and Kunda (1997) use expressions such as 'symbolic', 'inspirational' and 'motivational' to describe the qualities that a role model should possess. Further work by Gibson (2004) also suggests how role models are selected by individuals who possess attributes that they are able to copy and relate to, therefore meaning that individuals choose role models based on a clear connection and correlation with themselves. This is something that is noted in the work of Kelan (2012), who points out that role models provide a source of identification, and that individuals therefore pick out role models based on these similarities and who they are most able to emulate and identify with.

Further studies by Durbin (2016:123) suggest how role models provide a positive influence and are a 'source of inspiration for senior women'. Her study shows how women who occupy senior positions had previously identified with role models, indicating that those who 'get on' may have done so by using role models who have previously 'got on'. However, although role models are viewed as being positive, we have seen from the Davies Reports (2014) that there is a clear absence of female role models, and how this has impacted negatively on raising the profile of women, and subsequently the likelihood of increasing their representation in executive leadership roles. The CIPD (2016:7) supports this, pointing out that there has been 'an absence of the right kind of role models', leading to a lack of women applying for the top positions. The CIPD (2016:7) highlight the value of having 'authentic' role models, and that an effective female role model would be expected not to reinforce male norms by 'aping' or copying male behaviours in order to be accepted into their group. In addition, their study argues that effective female role models should encourage other women to succeed, and avoid acting like 'queen bees' who subsequently pull the ladder up behind them. Nonetheless, although there are limitations to the concept of female role models in that being a role model is associated with the small percentage of women who have secured top positions, overall the use of role models would clearly help to break down some of the barriers and biased attitudes that women and mothers face in the workplace.

Myrdal and Klein (1968:154) refer to an additional consideration to assist working women in managing their competing demands by noting how women could potentially view their work versus home demands via a 'chronological order'. When referring to this

they suggest that working mothers could assess at what stage of their life they will give priority to either home or work. However, prioritising chronologically seems to be unrealistic for many women, especially for those who are breadwinners and whose earnings are vital for sustaining the family. Indeed, the work of Warren, Fox and Pascall (2009) supports this position, pointing out how work and home should not be mutually exclusive, and that there should also be a certain degree of collective status between the two spheres in order to gain a more harmonious balance.

Finally, the CIPD (2016) offers further advice by stating that in order to assist and break down some of these barriers for mothers in the workplace, organisational leaders need to gain an insight into what factors inhibit and promote the progression of women. They advise that once organisations have this information and evidence, they will then be better placed to act on it, and also put appropriate practices and policies into place which will ultimately benefit working mothers. This can be attained if companies engage in activities to create more opportunities for women, challenging social structures and also social norms which may include the male-dominated corporate cultures that exist, whilst also improving transparency during the recruitment processes. Indeed, taking this approach would be beneficial and adopting ‘a gender sensitive perspective towards gender stereotypes should be integrated into all policies and organisational practices’ (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015:57).

The discussion has shown that in order to assist mothers in the workplace, an encouraging working environment needs to be adopted that takes into account the issues that they face. Moreover, it has also argued that adopting a gender sensitive perspective will help in the struggle to eradicate stereotyping and prejudices towards mothers in the workplace. In addition, it has pointed out that the use of role models and, in particular, female role models would also assist in paving the way for other women, helping to have a positive impact on their career trajectories. This in turn suggests if these measures are considered, it will help to break down persisting gender inequalities enabling mothers to manage the two spheres of work and home more successfully.

On reflection, these solutions would help to promote organisations and employees to view work and home life as being more collective, rather than simply seeing the two separate spheres being pitched against each other. Furthermore, it is apparent that when measures

which challenge these prejudices are introduced, issues associated with work–family conflict can be greatly improved, and ultimately make the balance between work and home a more successful reality for working mothers.

Now that the chapter has examined the issues that mothers face in the workplace, it will move on to explore the difficulties that mothers experience in the home, highlighting some of these barriers and inequalities even further. The proceeding discussion will show that, despite the changes and advancements that have taken place in women’s paid employment, women’s roles within the home have not advanced to the same degree.

3.4 Women’s Burden – Changes in the Labour Market but Not in the Home

Sociologists such as Giddens (1992) and Beck (1992) have previously acknowledged that due to changes in the labour market and an increased level of participation by women in it, the balance between employment and domestic care in the home needs to be readdressed. Further literature highlights this dilemma by acknowledging that although there has been a rise in women’s employment, women still continue to take on the majority of the domestic burden within their homes (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Gupta, 2007; Creighton, 1999; Scott, 1999; Dryden, 1999; Crompton, 1997; Delphy and Leonard, 1992; Hochschild, 1990; Morris, 1990; Freidan, 1981). It is therefore apparent that there is a persistent and continued recognition acknowledging the difficulties women face when trying to manage the competing demands of work and home, reinforcing the importance of why these debates continue to be examined and revisited.

The reasoning behind why women continue to take charge of the domestic sphere has been noted by Sharpe (1976:67), who suggests that this is associated with the ‘informal’ ideology that underpins the differences between the sexes, which acts to reinforce and strengthen male dominance. This highlights the significance of gender power relations between the sexes when we reflect on, and also consider how the ‘demands of parenting’ are ‘greater for women’ than for men (Halford and Leonard, 2001:8). Phoenix *et al.* (1991:14–17) support this position, highlighting that the mother is most commonly viewed as the central figure in their child’s life, and the person who is also responsible for ensuring that their children ‘turn out right’. Others draw attention to the fact that motherhood is seen as a transitional point in a woman’s life, illustrating a uniqueness

when compared to men or other women who don't have children (Baxter *et al.*, 2015; Cusk, 2001; Ribbens, 1994; Cosslett, 1994; Phoenix *et al.*, 1991; Oakley, 1981).

Thus, traditional notions of the role of the mother continue to be reinforced, making it difficult for working mothers to challenge, even when they adopt egalitarian approaches in the way they manage their own families, such as adopting the breadwinner role. This position is strengthened further by the ideologies of successful parenting and what it means to be a good mother, and as a result of these predispositions and views, mothers can experience pressure to undertake all aspects directly associated with the care of the family, leading to difficulties in how they then cope (Hemetsberger *et al.*, 2015; Davies *et al.*, 2010; Graham, 1993).

Further issues related to this debate is the way the ideology of motherhood is seen as something that is unique, natural and something that should therefore not be challenged (Baxter *et al.*, 2015; Cusk, 2001; Davidson, 2001; Oakley 1981). As a consequence, motherhood can therefore be associated with increased gender-role attitudes (Baxter *et al.*, 2015; Schober and Scott, 2012; Moors, 2003), resulting in further difficulties which are intensified for working mothers who are trying to juggle paid employment alongside their family commitments, and even more so for mothers who also have the added responsibility of being the breadwinner because of the value placed on their earnings for the family unit.

Due to the prevailing ideologies of motherhood, many working mothers experience increased levels of guilt, as they feel as though they are unable to allocate sufficient time to the family. Ribbens (1994:170), found that for working mothers, not spending enough time or 'being there' for their children was one of the main reasons why they experienced guilt. Others have echoed this position (Gatrell, 2005; Brannen and Moss, 1991), arguing that working mothers experienced guilt due to the demands that their work commitments placed on them, and how this left them with limited time to concentrate on their role as a mother. This notion of guilt has been explored more recently, for example Cox (2011) suggests that working mothers not only experienced guilt per se, but that they also suffered with anxiety and questioned their own ability as a mother if they felt they were unable to spend enough time with their children. Thus many working mothers may experience heightened emotions of guilt or failure if they feel that they are not living up

to specific stereotypes, or what they feel are standard roles of motherhood. It seems likely that having the role of the breadwinner might heighten some of these emotions, adding further complexity and making it even harder to live up to these perceived beliefs about traditional roles of mothering.

Further aspects that can fuel feelings of inadequacy for working mothers are the disparities with and comparisons to full-time mothers (Crowley, 2015; Dillaway and Pare, 2008; Zimmerman *et al.*, 2008; Johnston and Swanson, 2004; Buxton, 1998). Tensions can exist between employed working mothers and mothers who stay at home with their children, and how these varying groups of mothers can often be pitched against each other. Buxton (1998) refers to this as the mother war, suggesting that this is something that is often propelled by the media, with no real recognition or consideration of the choices that either group faces. As a consequence, it becomes apparent why many working mothers experience guilt, as they are unable to carry out their mothering role in the same way as a full-time mother, meaning that they are unable to meet or live up to the ideals or views associated with more conventional approaches to mothering. It could therefore be argued that due to these issues working mothers and in particular breadwinning mothers would clearly experience feelings of inadequacy, and feel pressured into taking individual and personal approaches to try and tackle what they see as their own shortcomings with the likelihood of experiencing burnout due to this. This in turn seems to suggest that there is little recognition of the gendered inequalities that exist, as they are clearly embedded and propounded by these types of widespread social narratives.

It is apparent that regardless of advancements and the increasing numbers of working mothers and breadwinning mothers in the labour market, emotions of guilt for these women are persistent due to the role of mother being associated with more traditional mind-sets. Due to these pressures, many working mothers are continuing to take on the majority of domestic labour in their homes. Indeed, housework is a further topic that has generated academic interest with studies suggesting that the more money a woman earns, the more likely it is that her partner will undertake domestic housework (Coltrane, 2000; Brines, 1994; Pahl, 1984). However, although these studies show an increasing shift towards men's participation in housework, a significant number of studies still highlight that women continue to undertake the majority of domestic labour in their homes, even

when the women are working more hours and in some cases out-earning their male partners (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Kan *et al.*, 2011; Harkness, 2008; Gupta, 2007; Crompton, 2006; Gatrell, 2005; Bittman *et al.*, 2003; Bianchi *et al.*, 2000; Hochschild, 1990).

An explanation for why this trend is persistent is linked to the domestic sphere and the home still being clearly associated with the role of the woman, meaning that housework still continues to remain a woman's responsibility and is therefore still viewed as women's work. Crompton (2006:140) supports this position, highlighting that the 'order and cleanliness' of a person's home is seen as a reflection of a woman's competency as a wife and mother, whilst the work of Bittman *et al.* (2003:190) suggests how the intersection between the distribution of housework and who undertakes it is most commonly associated with the gender norms and gender power relations that exist between the sexes, meaning that there is a 'tacit' assumption that the woman will therefore undertake all of the housework duties. This in turn seems to highlight that despite recent advancements with policy changes that aim to move towards greater equality, there has been a failure to bring about any real change in the allocation of work in the home, which has therefore subsequently hindered the achievement of equality and advancement of women in the workforce.

Further reasons why women continue to carry out the majority of domestic chores have been linked to a reluctance by women to relinquish full control of the housework (Coltrane, 2000; Allen and Hawkins, 1999; Hays, 1996; Haas, 1992; Hawkins and Roberts, 1992; Ferree, 1991). The hesitancy in handing over housework is propelled by claims of male incompetency, which suggests that men have second-rate standards of carrying out housework when compared to women. Lyonette and Crompton (2015) also discuss this notion of male incompetence, pointing out that women have used this as an excuse not to allow men to have full involvement in housework, meaning that women continue to take on the responsibility for housework even when they are earning more money and are breadwinners.

In addition, women continue to undertake more housework due to domestic chores increasing once children are born (Miller, 2011; Maushart, 2002; Oakley 1981), which leads to the responsibility of housework falling to the mother when her period of

maternity leave starts, thus making domestic responsibility harder to share due to fixed routines becoming established. In addition, Maushart (2002) indicates that men have a tendency to overstate their involvement in the domestic duties that they carry out within the home, and that although they understand the concept of equality, they do not always conform to this by undertaking the everyday domestic tasks, therefore illustrating how gender power relations continue to shape and influence who is viewed as being responsible for undertaking these duties. Gatrell (2005:122) alludes to this too, arguing how household tasks can fall into gendered divisions of labour such as 'pink jobs' or 'blue jobs'. She explains how 'pink jobs' are duties that can be categorised as everyday jobs such as cleaning and cooking, whilst 'blue jobs' are associated with aspects like DIY or car maintenance, or jobs that are carried out on a less routine and more sporadic basis. As a result, this seems to suggest that women are involved more regularly in everyday housework duties, and men are more inclined to have responsibilities that are more varied and do not take place on a daily basis.

Maushart (2002) argues that many women accept their role as the main domestic contributor in order to avoid conflicts and disagreements in the home, whereas other studies such as Delphy and Leonard's (1992) seem to suggest that women can experience strong resentment towards their partners if they did not take on equal responsibility in the home, or just view their role as being a mere helper. One potential solution that has been adopted to avoid and resolve conflicts surrounding housework is the use of employed help. Indeed, research has indicated that couples that are both job-marketable, well-educated and in paid employment are more inclined to employ or pay for domestic help (Maushart, 2002; Gregson and Lowe, 1994). However, although employing paid domestic help may address conflict in the home, the overall responsibility for overseeing and managing this individual still most commonly falls to the woman (Delphy and Leonard, 1992), suggesting that even when women are not physically carrying out the housework duties themselves, they still have the task of taking charge of it, once again illustrating the significance of gender power relations which appears to advantage the masculine.

A further aspect that helps to illustrate the constraints and inequalities that women experience in the home is related to their attitudes and access to leisure time. Henderson *et al.* (2002) point out that although there have been some advancements in attitudes

towards women's roles, changes have not been mirrored when we consider women's access to leisure time and leisure opportunities. Kay (1998) indicates that even though there is a belief that housework and domestic duties should be equal, women still perform more of the duties in the home, which impacts negatively on their access to leisure. Furthermore, it is apparent that participating in leisure activities is difficult for women due to their family responsibilities and aspects associated with the ethic of care (Karsent *et al.*, 2015; Such, 2006; Willming and Gibson, 2000; Kay, 1998, Peters and Raaijmakers, 1998; Larson *et al.*, 1997; Thompson, 1995).

The ethic of care is discussed in other studies and shows how access to individual leisure becomes increasingly problematic for mothers with young children due to the physical caring responsibility that this places on them (Standing, 1999; Crompton, 1997; Mason, 1996; Oakley, 1974), with additional studies showing how childcare obligations only really diminish once children become older, leading to more time for leisure activities (Siegenthaler and Vaughn, 1998; Anderton, Fitzgerald and Laidler, 1995). Moreover, further studies seem to suggest this too (Shank, 1986; Glyptis and Chambers, 1982), pointing out that mothers are more inclined to experience a lack of entitlement towards leisure time as the needs of the family will take priority over any individual or superfluous desires related to their own leisure (Herridge, 2003; Giligan, 1982).

Thus, we see how access to leisure is also highly gendered with a leisure gap evident between men and women. Robinson and Godbey (1997) found that men have increased leisure time compared to women. Similarly, men have easier access to leisure when compared to women, and appear to experience greater sense of entitlement to leisure time and activities (Such; 2006). This entitlement is encouraged by men's lack of participation in domestic labour in the home, which fuels the widening of the gap between the extent of leisure time gained between men and women (Wilming and Gibson, 2000; Hochschild, 1990). Additional reasons why this leisure gap exists are provided in the work of Peters and Raaijmakers (1998), who point out that it is common for mothers to experience guilt if they participate in leisure outside the family, therefore offering further explanations for why these barriers in gaining leisure time exist for women. This suggests that access and attitudes towards leisure is actually shaped by gendered structures and social norms around parenting (particularly motherhood) and domestic labour, which ultimately

impacts negatively on the entitlement women experience towards their own individual leisure time.

Similar studies about women's leisure have highlighted the importance placed on having family leisure rather than individual leisure per se (Harrinton, 2015; Hallman and Benbow, 2007; Shaw and Dawson, 2001; Orthner and Mancini, 1980, 1991; Hill, 1988; Holman and Epperson, 1984; Orthner 1975, 1985), with further studies (Karsten, 1995; Cyba, 1992) emphasising how family leisure is not only viewed as being important, but that many people are now unable to distinguish or differentiate between individual and family leisure time.

It is evident from the literature surrounding leisure that working mothers experience a real time squeeze due to their competing responsibilities, making access to leisure time and leisure activities problematic. Further considerations around this time squeeze can be realised when we consider the lack of priority that leisure time actually has due to the increased responsibilities that many working mothers face. This notion of leisure priority has also been acknowledged by Hunter and Whitson (1991), who argue that for people with caring responsibilities, individual leisure time simply lacks priority due to their day-to-day pressures. Henderson (1996) echoes this position, pointing out that the day-to-day pressures working mothers experience present difficulties in gaining leisure time due to the range of roles and responsibilities that they have to fulfil and the knock-on effect this then has on their access to leisure. Clearly it is apparent how this issue is further compounded if the mother is a breadwinner, as having this extra responsibility as provider presents even more difficulties and challenges due to the additional pressure that the breadwinner role places on them.

Moreover, traditional ideologies linked to the role of the mother act as barriers, making it more difficult for working mothers to gain equal access to leisure time. Furthermore, due to these dominant ideologies women experience the added burden and responsibility of managing the two separate spheres of home and work. This suggests that gender power relations still appear to be a major issue and that 'gender traditionalism' is still evident and presenting barriers for women (Halford and Leonard, 2001:4). Subsequently, any free time that women gain appears to be minimal and, on the occasions where they are

able to gain free pockets of time for leisure, they do not always feel comfortable taking it. Holland (2013:318) discusses this aspect further:

the wider challenges they face which ultimately preclude them (women) from making real changes (especially if they have children) still include issues around paid work, housework and childcare, which severely limit women's access to leisure time.

It is apparent that mothers experience barriers when trying to gain access to leisure time and leisure opportunities. The literature highlights how a leisure gap exists between men and women, and that this gap is fuelled by aspects linked to the ethic of care, the burden of domestic responsibility and the significance of gender power relations. Many women experience a clear lack of entitlement to taking leisure due to the needs of the family taking priority, and also experience feelings of guilt if they do take individual leisure time away from the family (Herridge, 2003). Due to these aspects, the discussion has suggested that family leisure has become important due to the benefits it provides in encouraging harmonious household relations, meaning that individuals are not having to spend leisure time separately or away from the family. Finally, the discussion has pointed out how working mothers experience increased pressures due to the range of roles and commitments that they are responsible for, and how this also then provides an even tighter squeeze on their individual leisure-time opportunities, especially if they have the additional responsibility of occupying the breadwinner role.

A possible solution to address these problems would be introducing changes that help to promote greater equality, making the responsibility between the father's and mother's care obligations more equal. Indeed, this more equal distribution of caring and domestic responsibilities should be aided by policies that are 'family-friendly' and support 'work-life balance' ensuring that the father takes a more central role (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015:57).

However, there have historically been problems with this idealistic and simplistic approach to the role of the father, as many changes from a legislative and policy perspective have traditionally been devised with women in mind (Lewis and Giullari,

2005). The chapter will now proceed to discuss the role of the father in more detail in order to highlight some of these issues and debates further.

3.5 The Role of the Father

Maternity leave policies such as the Employment Protection Act (1975) were only aimed at women, in order to protect their health after childbirth, and also to encourage them to stay active in the labour market. The role of the father was undoubtedly overlooked during this time, something that Warin *et al.* (2001) verify by pointing out how a fathers' parenting was assumed to be invisible, as it was believed that their responsibility was that of a provider. In addition, Sears and Sears (2003) point out how the role of the father has always been viewed as a mere supporter, and how his main role was therefore to assist and help the mother in devoting her time to her new baby and her new role. Furthermore, this view was visibly preserved and maintained, as paid paternity leave for fathers was not introduced in the UK until 2003, almost thirty years after maternity leave legislation was initially put into place.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that there was some progress prior to 2003, propelled by the rising levels of women's employment and earnings, and the increased likelihood of mothers returning to work, both of which meant fathers were taking a more active role (O'Brien *et al.*, 2007). As a result, in the 1990s work-family policies were pushed onto the political agenda, with a particular emphasis on the sharing of parental leave between both the mother and the father. This was particularly evident in the European Union (EU) and in the EU Council Recommendation on Childcare (92/241/EEC), and also in the 1996 European Parental Leave Directive (96/34/EC), both of which aimed to promote the importance of equality and the role of the father.

Furthermore, during the 1990s there was also an increase in flexible-working provisions, which were stemming from the Nordic countries (something also referred to as the Nordic turn), with the aim of increasing both the practical and emotional care provided by fathers. Indeed, some studies have indicated that when paternity policies were introduced they had favourable outcomes (Fox *et al.*, 2009), with others acknowledging that when fathers took advantage of paternal leave it clearly increased their practical and emotional investment towards their children (O'Brien *et al.*, 2007). Further studies (Wall and

Arnold, 2007; Gatrell, 2005) highlight some of the benefits of involved fathers, stating how many fathers acknowledge the importance of establishing a close bond with their children at an early age, realising that the bond is further strengthened the more time they spend with their children. This is something that is echoed in the work of Maushart (2002:132), who points out how fathers are able to recognise the importance of maintaining close ties with their children due to the 'long-term benefits' it provides. In addition, more recent work by Kaufman (2013) has alluded to this position, arguing how these benefits can help to challenge the traditional mind-sets associated with both the mother and father roles.

These benefits helped to shape and propel father-friendly policies in the 1990s, and show how the Nordic turn emerged and developed. This is apparent in the case of Norway when in 1993 the Norwegian government introduced a four-week fathers' quota that had to be used during the first year of a child's life, and that could not be transferred to the mother. This mandatory policy was introduced to encourage fathers into taking part in childcare so as to establish a solid bond with their infants early on. This particular policy turned out to be widely taken up and many fathers took advantage of the scheme, leading to the quota being increased by a further two weeks in 2006, resulting in a total six-weeks' leave period (O'Brien *et al.*, 2007). However, possibly the best Nordic provisions that are offered to fathers can be seen in Iceland's case, when in 2000 the Icelandic government introduced a nine-month paid parental leave system that had to be taken within the first eighteen months after the birth of the child. This leave period was organised into three separate parts – three months for mothers (non-transferable), three months for fathers (also non-transferable), and three months between mother and father as they chose to organise it, with the addition of each family being offered thirteen weeks' unpaid parental leave that was made available to both parents.

In addition to these developments, we have seen recent positive shifts in the UK to promote and normalise the role of the father and increase their involvement, with legislation from April 2015 granting both parents a shared fifty-two weeks of parental leave. This legislation aimed to challenge parenting arrangements, reflecting the greater role of women in the workplace. Furthermore, these trends are not just evident in Nordic countries and the UK, as they have also been on the agenda in the US, with the Congressional Joint Economic Committee prioritising issues surrounding improving

work–family balance and the need to push policies aimed at fathers as well as mothers (O’Brien *et al.*, 2007:375).

Nonetheless, although there have been positive shifts in policy, it is questionable whether these legislative changes will be enough to challenge the underlying traditional parenting ideologies that still clearly exist. In addition, although countries and their governments may be committed to the idea of gender equality and promoting the role of the father, the reconciliation of these policies has in practice developed more slowly for men than for women (Duncan *et al.*, 2010; Featherstone, 2009; Fox *et al.*, 2009; Deutsch, 2007; Thébaud, 2010). This is also acknowledged by MacInnes (2006:230), who argues that even though policies are coming into practice to encourage equality, this implementation of legislation often ‘lags behind’ the changes in existing attitudes and beliefs, with more recent studies showing how the ‘mother is still left holding the baby’ (Miller, 2011:1107).

Furthermore, although legislation such as the April 2015 policy encourage a more involved and hands-on approach from the father, the take-up of these provisions, specifically in the UK, has been slow. This slow up-take is something that was also predicted by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2013), who in their impact assessment report pointed out that only between 2–8 per cent of fathers were expected to opt for this provision. Although this new policy has not had a chance to get fully embedded, it still appears questionable and that more work is needed to challenge deep-rooted beliefs about parenting roles.

Some of the potential explanations for this low up-take by fathers can be understood by considering the social and institutional difficulties that fathers face, something that the work of Doucet (2006) has explored, which highlights how fathers experience clear barriers due to the many aspects of parenting still being more closely aligned and geared-up towards the mother. These issues clearly present difficulties not only for fathers, but they also impact negatively on working mothers due to the reinforcement of gender roles, suggesting that the mother would continue to take on the bulk of the parenting. In addition, although this is clearly problematic for all working mothers, these complexities present a further added dimension for breadwinning mothers, who would clearly benefit if these provisions were utilised by fathers, helping them to ease the burden between their breadwinner and mothering role.

A further and final reason fathers are not utilising these provisions is because of mothers' attitudes towards this increased facilitation and involvement of fathers. For instance, a number of studies have shown how mothers can experience jealousy if they are not the main carers of their children (Burikova and Miller, 2010; Parreñas, 2001) and how they can experience difficulties in relinquishing mothering duties, making them territorial if they feel threatened or if their mothering role is being undermined (Gatrell, 2005; Baxter *et al.*, 2015; Lupton and Barclay, 1997). These studies are clearly interesting and relevant as they help to illustrate some of the more nuanced and complex issues associated with parenting ideologies, how they are reinforced, and why they then present barriers and difficulties in achieving greater equality for mothers and fathers. Again, it is apparent how these views reinforce traditional gender roles between the sexes, and how inequality within the home has a knock-on effect by impacting negatively on how working mothers are subsequently viewed in the workplace.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted that although there has been an increase in the number of mothers and breadwinning mothers in the labour market, inequality within the workplace and also within the home persists. The discussion has shown how a contradictory picture of equality exists, with some progress taking place due to the rise in women's employment and female breadwinning, whilst simultaneously noting continuing inequalities between men and women with regard to earnings, the under representation of women at senior level and in leadership roles and the way in which responsibility in the domestic sphere is managed.

The discussion above highlights how women's experience in the workplace are fundamentally gendered, illustrated by the glass-ceiling effect, the barriers in gaining promotion and also the persistence of a masculinised perception of work, consequently highlighting the significance of gender power relations and how women are disadvantaged due to this. The chapter also pointed out that the participation levels of women working part-time has increased, as many women work part-time as a way of coping and managing the balance between home and work. This element of the discussion highlighted how working part-time can be detrimental for career progression, and how

these workers are also not given access to the same rights as full-time staff, and are subsequently viewed as being less committed. Moreover, potential solutions and strategies were then discussed that could assist in helping address the difficulties for women in the workplace. These included providing a supportive working environment, having effective female role models, challenging gender roles and also ensuring that national policies in relation to family-friendly work–life balance issues are aimed more carefully and actively at both sexes to overcome persistent patterns of unequal power and challenge gender stereotyping.

The chapter then moved on to examine the difficulties that working mothers face in the home, therefore highlighting some of these unequal gender power relations further. It suggested how some of these difficulties were fuelled by the ideology of motherhood and the ethic of care, indicating how traditional roles associated with the mother are being sustained and reinforced. As a consequence, this element of the chapter argued that women continue to carry out more housework and have less time for individual leisure when compared to men.

We have seen how some headway and progress has taken place to readdress this balance by encouraging fathers to take a more active role within the home and engage in increased childcare. This was evident when considering the more progressive legislative Nordic examples that have paved the way, and which showed the positive impact on fathers when they increased their caring involvement. However, although similar and recent legislative advancements in the UK have taken place to encourage the involvement of fathers (the April 2015 shared parental leave policy), the evidence from the discussion suggests that policies have not embedded sufficiently to accommodate these changes and developments. In addition, the chapter highlighted how further complexities and difficulties centred around more nuanced gender roles presented added barriers and problems, impacting negatively on how domestic labour is then shared within the home.

As such, this chapter has demonstrated that there are many problems and barriers that need to be overcome if progress is going to take place to address inequality. It has illustrated that there continues to be conflicting tensions between work and home for many working mothers, and that these issues are magnified by the changing role of

women due to their increased activity in the labour market, and also the importance placed on their careers.

Moreover, it has also pointed out that this problem is continual, as more mothers are facing these difficulties due to the financial obligations that they are required to meet, and also due to the increasing number of breadwinning mothers who now exist within the labour market. It subsequently suggests that championing equality through the implementation of more effective and appropriate gender-neutral policies and legislation appears to be paramount. Indeed, adopting a liberal feminist perspective is a helpful position to take in order to understand the types of inequalities and challenges that women and in particular mothers face, as they seek to achieve the same rights and opportunities as men in employment, but the persistence of gendered social norms and structures clearly creates challenges and also inhibits women from achieving their full potential. This action seems more crucial than ever especially as increasing numbers of mothers will continue to face these problems, with the current situation seemingly suggesting that working mothers and also breadwinning mothers are clearly doing it all. However, it is questionable whether they are actually reaping the benefits and 'having it all'.

Now that the thesis has provided a comprehensive overview of the literature, which included conceptualising breadwinning, outlining breadwinning mothers lived realities in a contemporary context (retraditionalization, individualization and postfeminism), and finally discussing the issues that working mothers face at home and in the workplace, the thesis will now move on to chapter four, which provides a justification and rationale for the research design and methodological approach adopted.

Chapter 4

Research Design and Methodological Approach

Introduction

The previous chapters have provided a review of the literature pertinent to this study, showing that there are a lack of critical qualitative studies on breadwinning to help expand our sociological understanding of the term. In addition, the earlier chapters have also illustrated that although there are an increasing number of breadwinning mothers, little is known about them as a group and their lived realities.

In this chapter, an account of the methodological approach is provided alongside a discussion of the justification and rationale for the chosen approach. The chapter will firstly begin by providing an outline of the sample who provided the data for this research. It will then move on to outline the methodological approach to the data-collection process: semi-structured interview. This is followed by details of conducting the interviews, the data recording and also the analysis process. Finally, the limitation of the approach will be discussed and outlined.

4.1 The Sample

The objective of this thesis is to find out more about the lived realities of breadwinning mothers in relation to work and home. Bearing this in mind, it was important to find a sample that fitted and matched the profile required. As outlined in the previous chapter, a breadwinning mother was defined as the 'main' or 'major' financial earner in the household (Drago *et al.*, 2005, Potuchek, 1992). Therefore, the women could be the only earner in the household, or they could be residing in a dual-earner household where they were the person who was contributing the most financially. Further criteria for the sample was a requirement that they had dependent children living at home under the age of eighteen, and that they were in a heterosexual relationship (Kinnunen and Mauno, 2001).

Although including different types of families such as same-sex couples would have been extremely interesting, this was not the purpose of this particular piece of research. The reason and rationale for this was due to it being deemed to be more appropriate to have a sample that was comparable in order for the data to be consistent. Therefore, a sample of women was sought with the following criteria used as a guideline:

- 1) The women in the sample were all mothers;
- 2) The women in the sample were in paid employment and classified as breadwinners;
- 3) They had children under the age of eighteen living at home.

During the very early stages of the research it was felt that interviewing the father or the partner in the house would be useful to gain a holistic overview of how breadwinning is understood and experienced within the family (Drago *et al.*, 2005, Kinnunen and Mauno, 2001). However, this approach was abandoned prior to the fieldwork commencing due to it being questionable how relevant and meaningful the data would have been. In addition, it was considered more worthwhile to focus solely on breadwinning mothers due to the nature and aims of the thesis.

Locating and finding respondents that matched the sample criteria was initially thought to be problematic due to the nature of the research topic. For instance, these women were going to be busy and find it hard to commit to the study due to the pressures of their work and family obligations. In addition, it was thought that it would be difficult to approach these women as the nature of their financial circumstances is private, making it difficult to establish who actually fitted the criteria of breadwinner.

However, this was not the case and finding women who fitted the criteria was actually easier than first anticipated. The reason for this was that many women were able to recommend additional potential respondents. As such, both a snowball method (Robson, 1993) and a convenience sampling method (Bryman, 2012) to recruiting respondents quickly became established. In addition, further women who agreed to participate in the study were identified by personal contacts in schools and also within the workplace. In addition, other contacts were made via friends and family acquaintances who also knew women who fitted the criteria. Initially a verbal and informal agreement was given by the

women, and after this stage the women were sent a letter (Appendix 1) to confirm more formally their interest in taking part in the study, asking them to commit to a suitable date and time for the interview to take place.

Once formal agreement had been given, a final letter was then sent which confirmed the interview arrangements and provided information about the informed consent and data protection of the research process. In addition, this letter required the women to complete extra background information to help guide the interview (Appendix 2). This proved to be a very useful mechanism for gaining an insight into the women's family circumstances such as marital status and number of children, therefore helping to guide and personalise the interview. A total of twenty women were interviewed for the study. All of the interviewees names were changed for reasons of confidentiality and data protection. Table 4.1 provides full details of the final sample.

Table 4.1 The Interview Sample

	Name	Occupation: (Full-time/Part-time)	Children: Age(s) & Sex	Marital Status
1)	Louise	Academic (Full-time)	8 (F)	Married
2)	Vanessa	Academic (Full-time)	13 (M) 9 (M) 6 (M)	Long-term partner
3)	Anne-Marie	Academic (Full-time)	10 (M) 8 (M)	Married
4)	Nicola	Academic (Full-time)	4 (F)	Married
5)	Zara	Academic (Full-time)	1 (M)	Married
6)	Rose	Academic (Part-time)	13 (M) 15 (F)	Single/Separated
7)	Samantha	Academic (Full-time)	16 (F) 10 (M) 8 (M)	Long-term partner
8)	Cassandra	Scientist/Academic (Full-time)	16 (F) 15 (F)	Married
9)	Sinead	Solicitor (Full-time)	6 (F) 5 (F)	Married
10)	Lucy	Runs own business (Part-time)	2 (F) 2 (M)	Married
11)	Eileen	Apprenticeship Assessor (Part-time)	6 (M) 4 (M) 1 (F)	Married
12)	Natasha	Administrator (Full-time)	17 (F)	Single/Separated
13)	Sarah	Teacher (Full-time)	1 (M)	Long-term partner
14)	Rebecca	Bank Manager (Full-time)	1 (M)	Long-term partner
15)	Joanne	Business Consultant (Full-time)	10 (M) 8 (M)	Married
16)	Emily	University Manager (Full-time)	10 (M)	Married
17)	Abby	Print Business Manager (Full-time)	6 (M)	Single/Separated
18)	Anna	Dentist (Full-time)	2 (F) 8 months (F)	Married

19)	Linda	Manager – NHS (Full-time)	9 (M) 6 (F) 4 (M)	Married
20)	Melissa	Director – NHS (Full-time)	9 (F) 2 (F)	Married

As Table 4.1 illustrates, there was a group of eight academic breadwinning mothers who were part of the sample. Other women in the sample had occupations including dentist (Anna), solicitor (Sinead), teacher (Sarah) and bank manager (Rebecca), with two further women working for the National Health Service (NHS) at managerial (Linda) and director levels (Melissa). All of the women in the study were classed as having professional and vocational careers. Most of the women worked on a full-time basis apart from Eileen, an apprenticeship assessor (who had three young children aged six, four and one), who was working four days a week, and Lucy (who had twins aged two), who was working three days a week running her own marketing business. In both cases these women had worked full-time prior to having children. An additional respondent (Rose) was also working part-time and had recently decided to cut down her working week from full-time to four days due to personal circumstances.

The majority of women in the sample were educated to degree standard or higher, with all of the academic women having post-graduate qualifications. The ages of interviewees ranged from late twenties to late forties, with the youngest interviewee being aged twenty-six (Sarah) and the eldest being aged forty-eight (Samantha). The bulk of the women interviewed were also white with the exception of two women who were both born in the UK but came from an Indian (Melissa) and dual-heritage (Abby) background. Most women in the sample were either married or in a long-term relationship with the exception of Rose, Abby and Natasha, who were now single and separated from the fathers of their children.

Within the sample a total of eight women had one child, a further eight had two children and the remaining four women had three children. The ages of the children ranged from babies as young as eight months (Anna), with three women having older teenage daughters who were fifteen and sixteen (Cassandra), sixteen (Samantha) and finally seventeen years old (Natasha).

In order to provide further background information about the respondents it was important to gain an understanding of the circumstances of becoming a breadwinning

mother. This included the length of time that they had been a breadwinning mother for, and additional background information about how their breadwinning role had emerged and developed. Although the women had only become breadwinning mothers since having their first child, the data showed that the majority of interviewees had also earned more than their partners prior to having children.

Table 4.2 provides collated data about the timescale of being a breadwinning mother, whilst also providing contextual and background information to help gain a deeper insight into each of the respondent's individual backstories of breadwinning.

Table 4.2 Timescale as Breadwinning Mother (Including Background Information About Respondents).

Name	Occupation (Full-time/Part-time) Children Age(s) & Sex	Timescale as Breadwinning Mother	Additional Background Information
Louise	Academic (Full-time) 8 (F)	8 years	Became breadwinner when partner gave up job to be full-time carer of daughter. Prior to this both earned similar wages.
Vanessa	Academic (Full-time) 13 (M) 9 (M) 6 (M)	13 years	Always earned more than partner even before having children.
Anne-Marie	Academic (Full-time) 10 (M) 8 (M)	10 years	Always earned more than partner even before having children.
Nicola	Academic (Full-time) 4 (F)	4 years	Always earned more than partner even before having children.
Zara	Academic (Full-time) 1 (M)	1 year	Always earned more than partner even before having children.
Rose	Academic (Part-time) 13 (M) 15 (F)	15 years	Always earned more than partner even before having children and separation.
Samantha	Academic (Full-time) 16 (F) 10 (M) 8 (M)	2 years	Became breadwinner when partner took early retirement. Prior to this both earned similar wages.
Cassandra	Scientist/Academic (Full-time) 16 (F) 15 (F)	16 years	Always earned more than partner even before having children.
Sinead	Solicitor (Full-time) 6 (F) 5 (F)	6 years	Breadwinner for last 8 years. Prior to this both earned similar wages until she qualified as a solicitor.
Lucy	Runs own business (Part-time)	2 years	Always earned more than partner even before having children. She earns more

	2 (F) 2 (M)		working 3 days than he does working 5 days.
Eileen	Apprenticeship Assessor (Part-time) 6 (M) 4 (M) 1 (F)	9 months	Partner has recently started up his own business and not currently taking a wage. Prior to this both earned similar wages.
Natasha	Administrator (Full-time) 17 (F)	10 years	Has become a breadwinner since separation from partner.
Sarah	Teacher (Full-time) 1 (M)	1 year	Always earned more than partner even before having children.
Rebecca	Bank Manager (Full-time) 1 (M)	18 months	Always earned more than partner even before having children.
Joanne	Business Consultant (Full-time) 10 (M) 8 (M)	10 years	Always earned more than partner even before having children.
Emily	University Manager (Full-time) 10 (M)	10 years	Always earned more than partner even before having children.
Abby	Print Business Manager (Full-time) 6 (M)	6 years	Always earned more than partner even before having children and separation.
Anna	Dentist (Full-time) 2 (F) 8 months (F)	2 years	Always earned more than partner even before having children.
Linda	Manager – NHS (Full-time) 9 (M) 6 (F) 4 (M)	9 years	Always earned more than partner even before having children.
Melissa	Director – NHS (Full-time) 9 (F) 2 (F)	9 years	Always earned more than partner even before having children.

As Table 4.2 illustrates, sixteen of the women stated that they had always earned more than their partner even before they became mothers, with one of these women (Sinead) stating that although she had been a breadwinner before having children, both her and her partner had been on similar wages prior to her qualifying as a solicitor. A further three women (Louise, Eileen, Samantha) stated that they had initially been on similar wages to their partners, pointing out that the reasons for taking up the breadwinner role was due to circumstances that were unique to them. For example, Louise had adopted the breadwinner role due to her daughter's health and medical issues, as her daughter required full-time care which was taken on by the father/partner. Eileen's reasons were linked to her partner having a change in career and setting up a new business, resulting in him not taking a wage. Finally, for Samantha her partner had retired, resulting in her taking on

the role of the breadwinner whilst also acknowledging that her career began to advance and progress more successfully than his during this time.

With regard to actual earnings and contribution to the household finances some of the women stated that they were earning a significantly higher wage than their partners. Although some of the women did not disclose exact financial figures, they did reveal that they were earning £10,000 more (Vanessa), £20,000 more (Sarah), £40,000 more (Sinead), twice as much (Zara) and also seven times more (Cassandra) than their partners. Although gaining exact figures would have been interesting, it was felt that pushing the women into revealing this information was too personal and that having previously established that they were breadwinning mothers and fitted the selection criteria was sufficient for the purposes of this study.

In addition, a total of six of the women were the only individual contributing to the finances, resulting in their income being the only money coming into the home. Reasons for this were due to three of the women’s husbands being the primary carer of their children and therefore not being in paid employment (Melissa, Louise, Linda, Anna), whilst the remaining three (Abby, Natasha, Rose) were classed as single (Table 4.3).

Other factors that impacted on the financial contribution to the household were linked to the women’s partners working on a part-time basis. This was the case for three of the interviewees’ partners (Joanna, Anne-Marie and Zara). These families had decided that it would be more beneficial for the father to take a more active role in childcare, allowing the women to concentrate on bringing in the money to the household and focusing on her career. Table 4.3 provides further details about the women’s partner’s employment status, helping to illustrate some of these breadwinning patterns further.

4.3 Partner’s Employment Status

Name	Occupation (Full-time/Part-time) Children Age(s) and Sex	Marital Status	Partner’s Employment Status
Louise	Academic (Full-time) 8 (F)	Married	Partner not in paid employment. Full-time primary carer of daughter.

Vanessa	Academic (Full-time) 13 (M) 9 (M) 6 (M)	Long-term partner	Partner in full-time employment.
Anne-Marie	Academic (Full-time) 10 (M) 8 (M)	Married	Partner in part-time employment. Works 4 days a week.
Nicola	Academic (Full-time) 4 (F)	Married	Partner in full-time employment.
Zara	Academic (Full-time) 1 (M)	Married	Partner in part-time employment. Works 3 days a week.
Rose	Academic (Part-time) 13 (M) 15 (F)	Single/Separated	<i>Not applicable.</i>
Samantha	Academic (Full-time) 16 (F) 10 (M) 8 (M)	Long-term partner	Partner not working as took early retirement.
Cassandra	Scientist/Academic (Full-time) 16 (F) 15 (F)	Married	Partner in full-time employment.
Sinead	Solicitor (Full-time) 6 (F) 5 (F)	Married	Partner in full-time employment.
Lucy	Runs own business (Part-time) 2 (F) 2 (M)	Married	Partner in full-time employment.
Eileen	Apprenticeship Assessor (Part-time) 6 (M) 4 (M) 1 (F)	Married	Partner in full-time employment.
Natasha	Administrator (Full-time) 17 (F)	Single/Separated	<i>Not applicable.</i>
Sarah	Teacher (Full-time) 1 (M)	Long-term partner	Partner in full-time employment.
Rebecca	Bank Manager (Full-time) 1 (M)	Long-term partner	Partner in full-time employment.
Joanne	Business Consultant (Full-time) 10 (M) 8 (M)	Married	Partner in part-time employment. Works 4 days a week.
Emily	University Manager (Full-time) 10 (M)	Married	Partner in full-time employment.
Abby	Print Business Manager (Full-time) 6 (M)	Single/Separated	<i>Not applicable.</i>
Anna	Dentist (Full-time) 2 (F) 8 months (F)	Married	Partner not in paid employment. Full-time primary carer of children.

Linda	Manager – NHS (Full-time) 9 (M) 6 (F) 4 (M)	Married	Partner not in paid employment. Full-time primary carer of children.
Melissa	Director – NHS (Full-time) 9 (F) 2 (F)	Married	Partner not in paid employment. Full-time primary carer of children.

4.2 Data Collection and the Philosophy of Social-Science Research

The data for this thesis was collected via semi-structured interviews as it was viewed as the most effective way to collect the data. Although a quantitative approach aligned to positivism by using data from large-scale studies could have been a useful method, it was considered that an epistemological position allied with a qualitative and interpretivist method would be more useful for this particular study. The rationale for adopting an interpretivist approach was to gain detailed and in-depth information about these breadwinning mothers' experiences, in order to understand their environment, how they construct it and also the part that they play in it.

Interpretivism requires the researcher to gain an insight into the subjective meanings of social action. Taking an interpretivist approach therefore requires the researcher to understand and interpret the respondents' actions and points of view (Bryman, 2012). Adopting an interpretivist approach enables the researcher to capture the nuance and variation that an individual may be experiencing in their social world. Crotty (1998) notes how the interpretivist position is often linked to the work of Max Weber (1864-1920) who argues that human science is connected with what is referred to as *Verstehen* (the '*understanding*' of people's actions). The interpretivist approach is therefore used when the researcher wants to understand the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants they are researching (Hughes, 1990).

A further insight into the interpretivist position is explained by Hood (2006), who argues that there is less emphasis on prediction and control, and more emphasis on understanding how people make sense of their own world. Rather than assuming individuals experience the same events in the same way, the interpretivist researcher 'filters all experience through their own subjectivities' (Hood, 1996:215). Moreover, Creswell (2008) suggests that the usage of this approach not only requires the collection of participants' views, but it too requires the researcher to concentrate on interpreting the meanings of these views.

Therefore for the purpose of this thesis the main reason and justification for adopting an interpretivist and qualitative method was because this approach provided the most useful way to collect rich and full data, in contrast with the thin abstraction of numbers aligned to quantitative data collection (Smith, 1975). Adopting this type of qualitative approach via semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to reach and obtain data that other methods couldn't secure and collect (Pope and Mays, 2006). The main reason for this is that it is particularly effective at answering the 'why', 'what' or 'how' questions (Lacey and Luff, 2009:5). Moreover, it also provides the researcher with the 'opportunity to gain confidence of the subjects involved' (Bryman, 2012:41).

Further justification for this approach was that one of the key aims of the research was to respond to Warren's (2007) request, which suggests there has been a lack of reflection that attempts to theorise and hypothesise breadwinning. Warren (2007) points out that most of the studies about breadwinning examine hard data about who contributes to the household income, and that questions or evidence relating to why individuals become breadwinners and what it is like to be a breadwinner are rarely investigated. This in turn clearly suggests that there has been a limited number of studies that explore the experience of breadwinning in this way. Therefore, conducting a qualitative, interpretivist study via semi-structured interviews appeared to be a useful method to help address this plea whilst also making a valid and useful contribution to the research in this area.

In addition, due to these factors the use of a questionnaire as a data-collection method was quickly eliminated at an early stage of the research design. This was because the study aimed to examine the lived realities of this group of women, therefore requiring a more detailed way of exploring the emotions and attitudes linked to being a breadwinning mother. Bryman (2012:234–35) notes how using questionnaires means that the researchers 'cannot prompt' the interviewee if they are struggling to understand a question. In addition, issues linked to the questionnaire being 'seen as a whole', leading to the possibility of some questions not being answered independently of each other, can also be problematic. Likewise, another drawback linked to the use of questionnaires is that it can be 'difficult to ask a lot of questions' because of respondent fatigue. Consequently, questionnaires were considered to be less effective and therefore deemed unsuitable for this particular study.

4.3 The Interview Schedule

One interview schedule was used to guide the discussion and interview (Appendix 3). There was a slightly modified schedule for women who were single and separated (Rose, Abby and Natasha) as some of the questions were not applicable or required rephrasing (Appendix 4).

Each interview began with a scripted explanation of the research, the aims of the research and the structure the interview would follow whilst also providing reassurance of confidentiality and data protection. Although most interviews mirrored the interview-schedule format, this did on occasions change depending on how the women had already answered previous questions and whether they had already provided a suitable response to a later question due to this. However, each interview included questions on the following key areas: background questions about their family and work and how they became the breadwinner; questions about their home life; questions about money and finances; questions about their work life; questions to determine attitudes and views on managing home and work; and finally questions to establish views about their identity in relation to breadwinning and being the main financial provider.

In designing the interview schedule the research instrument used by Yeandle (1984) was examined as a guide. Yeandle's (1984:198–205) interview schedule was structured around a series of themes including 'first job and subsequent jobs', 'going back to work after childrearing' and the 'use of earnings' and finally 'statement' questions that required a response or reaction from the interviewee. The interview schedule for this thesis referred to this and others (McRae, 1986; Oakley, 1974) as a guide and also to see how questions had been phrased, although the questions asked in the final version were considerably different and explicitly tailored to address the aims and objectives of the thesis.

Once the first draft of the interview schedule had been produced, a pilot interview was then conducted with a breadwinning mother to check if the questions flowed and to

identify any other important issues. No major issues or problems came to light with the initial draft-interview schedule apart from rephrasing the odd question in order to make it clearer, and also moving questions around into a different order to help the interview flow more effectively. However, on conducting the pilot a question about how much money the woman earned (requiring them to provide specific financial details) seemed inappropriate and unnecessary. As a result, the question was modified to allow the women to provide financial information in more general terms (if they wished).

The interview schedule began with a question about the respondent's background and family life, asking questions about who lived in the household, then moving on to ask about their employment history and how they became the breadwinner whilst also asking about what stage this took place. Although some basic information about their family had been collected prior to the interview when confirming the interview arrangements (Appendix 2), asking them to talk about these more straightforward aspects proved to be a useful way to help commence the interview and also to relax them before moving on to more complex and personal questions.

The next set of questions were focused on home life, requiring the women to provide responses and accounts linked to childcare, housework and leisure time. The schedule then moved on to ask questions about money and financial aspects in the home and how money was managed. After this, questions about work life were then asked, including reasons for working and additional questions linked to the advantages and disadvantages of being in paid employment. After asking about these aspects the women were asked to reflect on the areas of home and work and their attitudes in managing both spheres successfully. The final element of the interview schedule required them to discuss views about breadwinning in relation to their own identity and what breadwinning meant to them. Part of the final element of the schedule also asked them if they knew any other breadwinning mothers. The reason for asking this question was twofold; firstly, it was both interesting and worthwhile to gauge if the women thought being a breadwinning mother was a common occurrence. Secondly, it provided the opportunity to ask if they would be willing to potentially recruit any of these breadwinning mothers to be interviewed for this study. Once the interview had concluded they were then asked if they had any additional questions or comments, which sometimes led to further interesting discussions being recounted that had not previously been covered in the interview.

4.4 Conducting the Interviews

All of the interviews took place between June 2013 and October 2013. Each interview lasted between one and two hours and all of the interviews were recorded. The interviews took place in two main venues; firstly, their place of work (as most of the women had their own private offices) and secondly, their homes. The only exception was when one of the respondents (Samantha) requested that the interview took place in a local museum café as she was sharing an office with a colleague at the time and it was deemed not private enough to talk openly.

Conducting the interviews in the women's offices was somewhat more straightforward as the women seemed comfortable in their surroundings and were also able to talk freely due to the privacy it provided. Interviews that took place in the women's homes were mostly straightforward too. However, receiving an interviewer (and stranger in some occasions as communication was initially conducted via email, letter or phone) into their homes must not have been a normal occurrence. In addition, an appreciation that these women were busy and had obviously carved out time to take part in the research was a pertinent factor. As a result, a conscious effort was made to make sure the face-to-face contact was warm and friendly at all times. This involved thanking them for giving their time, talking about how easy (or not) it was to find their house and even sometimes making a joke. This proved to be a useful way to ease into the interview, making it less formal whilst also establishing a suitable rapport.

There were also other factors that made interviewing in the women's homes more complex. For example, for one of the interviews the respondent (Sinead) had got held up at work and was therefore running late. This resulted in her husband letting me into their home. Although he was friendly and offered me a cup of tea whilst we chatted, I did feel awkward and as though I was slightly intruding. When the respondent finally got home I felt extremely guilty as she had clearly had a busy day and felt the need to apologise for being late and also for the 'state of the house'. After this she then asked her husband to

give us some privacy to talk and conduct the interview, to which he responded ‘why, are you going to slag me off?’ Although this comment was said in a jokey manner, I did wonder what he thought the research was about and hoped that I hadn’t caused any rifts or disputes due to this.

Further issues that made interviewing respondents in their homes complex was when pre-school children were present. This was the case for two of the interviews, as one of the women had twins aged two (Lucy), with the other woman (Rebecca) having a one-year-old baby. During the interview with Lucy the twins were playing nicely with only the occasional squabble, meaning that the interview and recording had to pause a few times. During the interview with Rebecca, however, the baby’s nappy had to be changed twice! This meant that the women sometimes found it difficult to concentrate due to the children demanding their attention. Clearly there is little that can be done when situations like these arise. Nonetheless, although these scenarios did not match the perfect interview situation, there was no negative impact on the data – it just resulted in the interviews taking a bit longer than normal.

4.5 Data Recording

The interviews were recorded on an Olympus digital voice-recorder VN-711PC, the sound quality was good and the device allowed the recorded interview to be downloaded to a file, which was then sent for transcription by a third party. Each interview produced on average twenty-five pages verbatim. In addition, the interviews were recorded onto an iphone which was used as a back-up system, and which also enabled the opportunity to access and listen to the interviews easily later on down the line and during the analysis stage.

Permission to record the interviews was granted by all of the women and they were informed at the start of the interview that the recording could be stopped at any point they requested. Whilst none of the women objected to being recorded, some of the women did appear to be more self-conscious and aware that this was an interview and not an informal chat. However, as the interview progressed the impact of the recording seemed to diminish and the women seemed relaxed and began to forget that they were being recorded.

After the interview, some of the women commented on how much they had enjoyed taking part in the study, stating that they had not really discussed these issues before, finding it to be a cathartic process. This was the case for Nicola, who commented:

I actually enjoyed talking to you and I found it really interesting, a bit like therapy (laughs). I suppose I've never really had the chance to reflect on being a breadwinner, or thought much about it, I think you just become so busy with work and home that you don't really stop to think do you . . .

Whilst a further respondent, Linda, stated:

Gosh, we have talked for ages haven't we, but I enjoyed it . . . I've probably told you too much . . .

Part of this relaxed and comfortable approach was also due to engaging fully in the discussion and making it feel more informal. For example, being a researcher who is a breadwinning mother myself seemed to enable the interviewee to feel able to share their experiences freely without being judged, and they appreciated that there was a real common and shared interest and understanding of their responses and accounts. This generated the collection of some really rich and emotive data. Finally, after each interview a set of notes was written up as part of the data-analysis process, and to help recall incidents or specific issues that came to light from conducting the interviews (Appendix 3 and 4).

A letter of thanks (Appendix 5) was then sent to each of the women a few days after the interview had taken place. The letter once again reiterated the confidentiality of the data collected whilst also providing contact details of the researcher.

4.6 Analysis

Once the interviews had been fully transcribed they were analysed and coded thematically (Strauss, 1987). Social scientists use words such as 'categories' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and 'labels' (Dey, 1993:96) as ways of describing and explaining themes. Other

useful considerations to aid the understanding of recognising themes is provided by Ryan and Bernard (2003), who recommend looking for repetition and reoccurrence in data, whilst Bryman (2012:580) provides a useful set of criteria to identify themes, stating that a theme should be 'identifiable', 'relate to the research', and 'provide a theoretical understanding of the data'.

As relevant themes developed from codes an initial coding sheet was produced, which started with a line-by-line approach whilst reading through the transcripts. These codes worked like shorthand, providing a clear structure and framework which therefore helped to develop a useful mechanism for data management. The main themes that emerged from the codes included information on: motherhood/parenthood, childcare, domestic duties in the home, work, money and finally leisure (Appendix 6).

Once these initial themes had been categorised further analysis was carried out, which involved breaking down the analysis into two main groupings in order to try to separate issues into the two main areas of these women's lives: 1) *home* and 2) *work*. In addition, a further part of the analysis required producing what was called an 'OSOP' (one sheet of paper), which outlined detailed information around each of these categories.

The different OSOPs that were produced for the *home* category included information about childcare, domestic labour in the home, leisure, money, and finally motherhood, whereas the various OSOPs that were produced for the *work* category included information about aspects that help breadwinning mothers, difficulties in the workplace for breadwinning mothers, and finally, reasons why breadwinning mothers work (Appendix 7 provides an example of the OSOP for motherhood).

Initially the OSOP started off like a mind map, where all ideas were written down and captured onto one sheet of paper (hence the explanation for the name), whilst also capturing data on which respondents had provided specific responses. The next step was to consider how these issues might be grouped together in broader themes. Once this was completed a summary of all the issues was then produced. The final stage was to type up these findings more formally using the quotes and tables to help draw out these findings further.

Creating each individual OSOP proved to be very useful and provided a clear overview of the data pertinent to each theme. This meant that information could be separated and extracted from the transcripts, whilst also highlighting what was emerging from the data and where the respondents had identified similar or divergent issues. This clearly facilitated the analysis process, helping possible patterns and explanations to be more visible whilst also helping to develop new ideas and theories in order to gain a clearer understanding of the lived realities of breadwinning mothers (Appendix 8 provides an example of the ‘motherhood’ findings, which helps to illustrate the process of the analysis further).

4.7 Ethical Considerations

The ethics of the research were fully considered and approved prior to the data-collection phase. Although there were no serious ethical issues or implications related to the research consideration was taken over the following aspects:

4.7.1 Data Protection

The research process complied to the Data Protection Act (1998) whilst also taking into account the storage of the information collected, guaranteeing that material was only used in connection with the research question under investigation. In addition, an agreement that the data was not kept for longer than necessary, with no other person(s) having access or being able to make changes or alterations to the information collected, was also confirmed.

4.7.2 Confidentiality and Integrity of Respondents’ Data

Care was taken to safeguard the confidentiality of the respondents’ identities. Pseudonyms were given to all of the women who took part in the research (and any family members that were discussed), confirming that no one could be identified through the research. In addition, the respondents were asked to check the final transcript in order to certify firstly that it was a true account of the interview, and secondly that they were happy for the contents of the transcript and interview to be used in the research.

4.7.3 Informed Consent

The respondents were asked to sign an informed-consent form that outlined the purpose of the research. The form explained how the data collected from the interviews would be used for the purposes of the PhD and for future research outputs, whilst also informing the respondents that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time (Appendix 2).

4.7.4 Ethical-Approval Process

Prior to the interviews taking place ethical clearance was sought and granted from the School of Management ethics officer at the University of Leicester. An online ethical-approval application was submitted on 2nd May 2013 which provided details on the following aspects:

Project title

Project purpose

Project aims

Proposed method

Method of recruiting

Criteria for selecting

Estimated number of participants

Start and end date of the research

Name and details of researcher

Name of supervisor(s)

Details of ethical issues

Final approval of the research was granted by the University of Leicester on 15th May 2013.

4.8 Limitations of the Interview Method

The main limitations that became apparent from conducting the research were aspects linked firstly to the qualitative method adopted, secondly to considerations connected with reflexivity, and finally implications associated with the sample. The chapter will now proceed to discuss each of these aspects in turn.

4.8.1 Qualitative Limitations

A large amount of the data that was collected as part of the study presented difficulties and challenges. Bryman (2012:565) notes that ‘one of the main difficulties with qualitative research is that it very rapidly generates a large, cumbersome database because of its reliance on prose in the form of such media as field notes, interview transcripts and documents.’ This was something that was particularly true for this study, as part of the analysis process involved writing over 80,000 words of initial findings associated with the main themes that emerged. As a consequence, this resulted in the analysis process taking longer than expected.

However, although this posed problems in relation to the length of time spent on analysis, it did have a positive outcome in relation to the approach. For example, tackling the analysis in this way enabled the key findings to emerge from the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990:44) suggest how adopting this type of method (aligned with grounded theory) allows the researcher ‘to see the research situation and its associated data in new ways, and to explore the data’s potential for developing theory.’

4.8.2 Reflexivity

A further issue that became apparent was how being a breadwinning mother myself (like the respondents I was interviewing) would impact on my data collection and analysis, and how aspects concerned with reflexivity could be managed.

Reflexivity is a predicament that Mauther (1998:49) discusses, noting that ‘placing myself in the research required me to consider the place of personal experience’. She proceeds to outline how this placed her in a contradictory position when it came to collecting data from respondents. For example, she was trying to preserve her own privacy, whilst asking and expecting her interviewees to make their own views and

feelings public. In order to deal with this dilemma, she chose to adopt ‘controlled self-disclosure and reveal little information about the self unless the participants ask and then keep it to a minimum’ (Mauther, 1998:50).

However, although adopting controlled self-disclosure to tackle issues around reflexivity may have been beneficial for Mauther’s (1998) study, this was not the case for this thesis. In actual fact, when conducting the interviews, acknowledging and pointing out that I was also a breadwinning mother turned out to be very useful. Sharing information when asked encouraged the women to feel comfortable enough to divulge detailed accounts of their own experiences. Further studies have also acknowledged the value of reflexivity during the qualitative process (Stanley and Wise, 1993; Douglas, 1985).

4.8.3 Sample

Although issues linked to the qualitative method and aspects of reflexivity could be viewed as having both weaknesses and strengths, there were specific limitations linked to the sample which became apparent as the interviews progressed. The chapter will now move on to discuss each of these issues associated with the sample in turn.

(a) The Women’s Partners

As previously discussed in the initial stages of this chapter, only the women pertinent to the research were interviewed for the study. However, it is important to highlight that the women’s partners could have been viewed as potential stakeholders. For example, although the men were excluded from the study, on reflection including them could have been potentially useful due to their role in the family. Moreover, when conducting the interviews the women discussed the role of their partner and how this had influenced and shaped their breadwinning role. Collecting data from the men in relation to their attitudes and views about living in a household where their wife was the breadwinner would have clearly added an interesting dimension. In addition, it would have potentially provided a useful set of data to establish more about this particular subject through the perspective of male members of the house.

(b) Same-Sex Couples

A further limitation linked to the sample is that it fails to consider different types of families such as same-sex couples. On reflection, including these types of families in the sample would have been beneficial. As such, the sample adopted in the study was restricted to traditional notions of family, therefore failing to take into account broader family types to provide a more accurate reflection of current family formations.

(c) Single Breadwinning Mothers

Further problems were linked to the classification of those breadwinning mothers who were single. Although these women matched the specified criteria outlined, further consideration should have been given to consistency and parity. For example, some of the women had become breadwinning mothers by default due to their single status. Also, this particular group of women experienced breadwinning differently when compared to those who were in a relationship. In addition, further problems arose when conducting the interviews, which meant that the responses the women provided required them to reflect on a time when they were in a relationship, whilst other questions were focused on their current state of breadwinning and being single. Due to these aspects, it made manging, interpreting and analysing the data quite complex.

(d) Length of Time as Breadwinning Mother

A further element that made interpreting the data complicated was classifying the women's backstory to breadwinning and if their role as breadwinner was interim or permanent, something that Drago *et al.* (2005:343) refer to as 'temporary female breadwinner families' or 'persistent economic female breadwinning families'. Due to these issues, when interviewing the women it was apparent that some of them had just become breadwinners, whilst others had been breadwinners for some time. This meant that there was clearly variation in their circumstances, resulting in difficulties linked to the consistency of the sample.

(e) Lack of Diversity

A further limitation of the sample is that the majority of women who were interviewed were professional, white and middle-class. The reason for this was due to the snowball and convenience approach to recruiting respondents. Due to this limitation, the data collected is only representative of the group of women who were interviewed in the study, and fails to consider wider socio-economic and ethnic groups. Indeed, there are grounds to suspect that these groups may have different experiences of being a breadwinning mother, in which case this means that the study is limited by their exclusion. Nonetheless, the qualitative data collected is still useful, providing perspectives from these particular women's accounts and representing a range of views pertinent to being a breadwinning mother.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has established the methodological procedure followed for the data collection of this study. It began by outlining details about the sample criteria, which included mothers who were the 'main' or 'major' financial earners within the household (Drago et. al., 2005; Potuchek, 1992) and who had dependent children under the age of eighteen living at home (Kinnunen and Mauno, 2001).

The sample included a total of twenty women who were recruited by a snowball method (Robson, 1993) and convenience sampling (Bryman, 2012). Information about the women's timescale of breadwinning, along with their partners' employment status, was also provided in order to set the context and gain a deeper understanding of each of the women's backstories to breadwinning.

The chapter then outlined that the data collection and philosophical approach for this study was allied to an epistemological interpretivist position conducted via qualitative semi-structured interviews. Part of the reason and justification for this approach was to address Warren's (2007) plea that there are a limited number of empirical studies about breadwinning. As a result, this approach helps to challenge the straightforward and unproblematic understanding of breadwinning, with the aim of enhancing our sociological imagination of breadwinning and what it means.

After this, details about the interview schedule were then outlined, drawing on other qualitative studies (McRae, 1988; Yeandle, 1984; Oakley, 1974) for guidance, whilst helping to ensure that the schedule was both relevant and useful.

Once this had been discussed the chapter then moved on to provide details about how the interviews were conducted and recorded. The chapter explained that although this was mostly straightforward there were factors such as pre-school children being present, and also more nuanced issues, which at times made the interviews more complex.

The next element of the chapter moved on to describe the analysis process, discussing how the codes and themes from the analysis developed and emerged. In addition, this part of the chapter also talked about the usefulness of the OSOP method, describing how this approach had encouraged a clearer and fuller understanding of the main issues for these breadwinning mothers to come to light.

Finally, the limitations of the method were discussed. Although problems linked to the qualitative method and reflexivity were acknowledged and addressed, the main weaknesses were linked to the sample. Specific aspects in relation to the sample became apparent as the interviews progressed, which involved not including all potential stakeholders, issues with consistency and finally the exclusion of particular groups.

Now that the thesis has provided a comprehensive overview of the methodological approach it will now move on to present the data collected for the research. The following two chapters provide a detailed analysis of the interview data and link the findings of the research to the wider literature on motherhood, employment and breadwinning.

The first of these, chapter five, examines these breadwinning mothers' (BWM) identities, exploring what is unique about them, whilst chapter six suggests that the gender of these women is more significant and has more bearing than their breadwinning status.

Chapter 5

Breadwinning Mothers' (Unique) Identities

Introduction

The literature indicates that there are increasing numbers of breadwinning mothers (BWM) who are now the main financial provider for their families (Cory and Stirling, 2015; Drago *et al.*, 2005; Meisenbach, 2009). In addition, there has also been an increased interest surrounding the female breadwinner within academic debate and literature (Adkins and Dever 2014; Mundy 2012; Warren 2007) all of which signal that there is a need for further critical reflection to find out more about the specific and unique experiences of BWM.

In this chapter, it is argued that the identities of these BWM are formulated around their emotions, orientations and attitudes in the context of their everyday lives (Adler *et al.*, 2017; Back, 2015; Goffman, 1959, 1997; Pink, 2012; Robinson, 2015). It will show how their experiences differ from working mothers who are not BWM because they face different challenges due to having the pressure of occupying the breadwinner role alongside their mothering role.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to explain what is unique and different about these women and their experience of motherhood. Although there are acknowledged difficulties and common ground for all working mothers, this chapter seeks to highlight that many of the problems that the women in this study experienced are actually intensified due to their breadwinning responsibilities and complexities.

The chapter will argue that there is a clear lack of choice for these women in how they managed work and home due to the financial importance placed on their breadwinning. In addition, it will also highlight that although these women were adopting egalitarian approaches to managing family life, their accounts suggest that they also hold traditional views and beliefs that align to more conventional approaches to motherhood. Moreover, this chapter will illustrate how these women's lived realities and experiences of motherhood are both heightened and intensified due to the responsibility of having two competing but equally important roles within the family as a mother and as a breadwinner.

In order to position this argument, the chapter will firstly present a typology of BWM developed from the interview data. Providing findings in the format of a typology is twofold in its objectives. Firstly, it highlights that there are distinct types of breadwinning mothers, resulting in a useful contribution to the discourse surrounding breadwinning therefore enabling us to understand the differences between each distinct and unique type of BWM. Secondly, the typology also offers a useful framework for the discussion and the subsequent findings chapters that will follow.

After this information has been presented the chapter will then move on to show how the transition into motherhood has fundamental implications for their BWM identities. It will highlight that these women experienced clear changes to their identity when they became parents for the first time. This will be illustrated by outlining the difficulties and challenges that they describe when taking on this new role alongside their breadwinning.

The findings will then proceed to illustrate the importance they placed on maintaining control as a mother, and how these women sought to maintain control from a distance by using control as a mechanism to consolidate their own mothering identities. It will show how the women felt that the notion of care and nurture (particularly during times of crisis) was unequivocally linked to the role of the mother. By presenting their accounts, it will illustrate how they then used control to assert, and also to claw back, their mothering identities, due to them being the breadwinner and adopting a non-traditional role in their families.

Furthermore, the findings will also argue that the emotions and feelings of guilt that these women experienced is also important in helping to understand how they distinguish

themselves in relation to their own mothering identities. The women's accounts will clearly show how many of them discussed feelings of guilt and inadequacy about how they were performing as mothers, which was further intensified and heightened by their breadwinning responsibilities and the combination of their two roles.

In addition, the findings also show how these women's mothering identities are central to how they view their own experience of motherhood, and how they then position themselves in relation to full-time mothers who are not in paid employment. The findings will show how some of the women expressed negative views of full-time mothers, and used this as a way to advocate and assert their own BWM identity. However, the data also illustrates how some of the women who were interviewed were more supportive of full-time mothers, acknowledging the difficulties associated with being at home with children and therefore indicating common ground between the differing groups. Nonetheless, these findings will show how having the pressure of the breadwinner role resulted in a lack of choice about motherhood versus employment. The women explain how this lack of choice and pressure acted to illustrate what is distinctive about their own experience of motherhood compared to full-time mothers and mothers in paid employment, therefore highlighting their unique BWM identity.

Moreover, the findings will also illustrate the connections between these women's parenting ideologies and their mothering identities. This will be demonstrated by examining nursery as a form of childcare and outlining some of the negative views that the women expressed about nursery. While examining their accounts, it becomes apparent that some of the women viewed traditional forms of childcare (that are centred around parental care) to be superior than formal childcare methods such as nurseries. Furthermore, this will also reveal how these women's financial earnings and breadwinning provided them with more leverage to influence decisions about implementing childcare strategies that matched their ideologies of 'good' parenting.

In addition, the findings from these women's accounts will also show the intersections and links between their mothering identity and their work identity, and how they then used this to position their own BWM identity. The findings will explain how some of these women stated that their work identity provided them with something outside the home. It will also show how those who were academic breadwinners talked about the

vocational nature of their employment, and how their identity was therefore clearly and closely bound up in their work.

Finally, by presenting these findings the discussion will also suggest how these BWM were on occasions displaying characteristics that were closely aligned with postfeminism, and how this can be used in order to provide a theoretical understanding of the lived realities and the phenomena that these BWM were experiencing.

5.1 Typology of Breadwinning Mothers

A typology of women's breadwinning was derived from the new knowledge generated from the data about the variations in women's experiences of breadwinning. The typology from the data shows five distinct categories of breadwinning mothers. 1) *Sole breadwinners*; these women were similar to the traditional male-breadwinner model. However, the gender role was reversed, and it was the mother who went out to work and the father who carried out the full-time primary-carer role. These women were different to the other BWM groups, as they had made a conscious decision to adopt the breadwinner role, and as a result were the only person bringing in an income to the household even though they were in a two-parent family. 2) *Circumstantial breadwinners*; these women had become breadwinners via circumstance. Examples included one of the women's partners retiring, whilst the other woman who fell into this category stated that her partner had recently started up his own business, resulting in a significant wage decrease. Prior to these circumstances both women had earned similar wages to their partners. For these group of BWM, they had found themselves occupying the breadwinner role via circumstance rather than choice. 3) *Single breadwinners*; this group of BWM were no longer in a relationship due to being either divorced or separated, and were therefore classified as single breadwinners. These particular group of BWM experienced the breadwinning differently as a result of their single status and how they managed housework and their access to leisure activities. 4) *Clear-cut breadwinners*; The women in this category earned a significantly higher wage than their partners and were therefore categorised as clear-cut breadwinners' due to their increased earnings. In addition, although these women were BWM they were residing in a dual-income unit as their partner was also contributing financially to the household income. 5) *Minor breadwinner*; these women were classed as contributing slightly more than their partners

to the household income. Only one of the women interviewed was categorised as a minor breadwinner; although she earned more than her partner, this was not a significant difference in their wages. However, worthy of note is that this particular woman still earned more than her partner even though she worked three days a week, whilst he was employed on a full-time basis. Within each category there was also a sub-category of *academic breadwinners*, who were all working within higher education providing a useful illustration of each of these types of breadwinning perspectives showing the specific and unique experiences that academics BWM encountered. Full details of the women who were categorised into these groupings are outlined in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 A Typology of Breadwinning Mothers

Sole breadwinner	Circumstantial breadwinner	Single breadwinner	Clear-cut breadwinner	Minor breadwinner
Anna Linda Melissa	Eileen	Natasha Abby	Rebecca Sarah Sinead Joanne Emily	Lucy
<i>Academic Breadwinner</i>				
Louise	Samantha	Rose	Vanessa Anne-Marie Nicola Zara Cassandra	

5.2 Breadwinning Mothers' Transitions into Motherhood

Motherhood is acknowledged by Phoenix *et al.* (1991) as being one of the highest physical and emotional accomplishments in a woman's life. However, much has also been written about the difficulties and challenges associated with motherhood (Hemetsberger *et al.*, 2015; Gatrell, 2005; Maushart, 2000; Cosslett, 1994; Oakley, 1981; Sharpe, 1976).

Many new mothers are not prepared for the physical and emotional demands that motherhood brings, with feelings such as exhaustion, frustration and also the huge sense of responsibility that it places on them (Davies *et al.*, 2010; Gatrell, 2005). Indeed, this

was evident among the BWM who were interviewed for this study. The women openly discussed some of these aspects, whilst also simultaneously highlighting that their transition into motherhood had led to them gaining a completely new identity.

This was illustrated by them talking about the difficulties that they had experienced whilst going through this transition. One woman, Melissa, stated how she did not feel satisfied or fulfilled during this time, and how she struggled with being at home and conforming to what was expected of her. Melissa also pointed out how she did not consider or view herself as being a 'baby person' or someone who enjoyed the demands of looking after a young baby, explaining how she found it both boring and mind-numbing. However, Melissa's account also signals that positive changes did occur by indicating that she is happier and more content now she is back at work full-time and her daughter has outgrown the baby stages:

I found it really boring and it was driving me mad being at home. Once she got to kind of eighteen months, two years, I mean I feel dreadful leaving Sofia every day now because it's a delight. It's lovely, but I'm not a baby person.

(Sole breadwinner with two daughters)

Indeed, this was a common theme between many of the women from different groups of BWM. Samantha reinforces these beliefs about struggling with her own transition into motherhood. She talks specifically about the isolation she experienced, and not having any support to help overcome these difficulties to make her transition easier:

I would just have been sitting on my own with the babies . . . I was tired and all the usual things, but I think quite unsupported. I mean not by my partner. I think by the structures of, by not having any family and friends around.

(Circumstantial breadwinner with three children)

In addition to the emotional demands and pressures of motherhood, some of the women also talked about the actual physical demands of their new role. Lucy talks specifically about this in relation to the daily lifting and carrying and the constraints of having young children, which is something that can often get overlooked when becoming a parent for the first time:

It's just physically demanding having to lift them . . . It's a lot of work when they're getting heavier. Lifting, putting the pram in and out of the car, and it's just all the physical demands of it.

(Minor breadwinner with twins)

Other physical demands that some of the women discussed were aspects associated with lack of sleep, and adjusting to this as first-time mothers. Many of the women talked about how tired they were, and the negative impact this had on them and how they functioned on a daily basis. Aspects associated with the sensation of tiredness and the negative impact that lack of sleep can have on mothers is not unusual. Indeed, it is commonplace for mothers to carry on with their usual daily commitments of working and caring, even when they are completely exhausted, a viewpoint also acknowledged by Graham (1993:171), who argues:

mothers try to ignore their tiredness, like the other symptoms they experience, in order to keep going. Mothers are frequently aware of this accommodation, recognising that their caring responsibilities leave them little time to be ill [and this] can blunt their sensitivity to their own needs.

This appears to signal how postfeminism could also be used to help understand these phenomena especially when considering how the role of the female breadwinner requires these women to undertake two roles simultaneously (mother and breadwinner), therefore

requiring them to be doing both masculinity (associated with breadwinning) and femininity (associated with motherhood) concurrently (Lewis, 2018).

Indeed, this is evident in the case of Cassandra who talks openly about her own experience of tiredness, pointing out how challenging she found it whilst trying to manage her work demands and having the responsibility of being the breadwinner whilst bringing up two young children:

It was full-on. Absolutely. And they didn't sleep very well. So it was just hideous really when you look back.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

The findings have clearly indicated that these women experienced changes to their identities due to the difficulties surrounding motherhood and becoming a parent for the first time. Aspects such as motherhood being demanding, monotonous and isolating were all common findings that emerged from the data. Indeed, some women pointed out that they actually didn't realise how demanding motherhood was until they had experienced it first-hand.

The findings therefore show how these women's identities were influenced and shaped by their transition into motherhood due to their increased commitments and new parental responsibilities, a view that is also supported in the work of Davidson (2001:286), who argues that when a woman becomes a mother for the first time, she becomes a 'transformed person, never to be the same again'.

However, the findings from this specific study suggest that this issue is actually more complex. This becomes noticeable when considering that these women also have the added pressure of maintaining the breadwinning role. Due to this, the value placed on their financial earnings and sustaining their income for the family is clearly paramount. This appeared to be particularly the case for the sole BWM, as an active decision had been made that they should be responsible for the supporting the family and adopting the breadwinner role.

As a consequence of this added pressure, it leads to further difficulties for these women due to the complexities of having to manage their breadwinning alongside their mothering responsibilities and identities. As a result, it illustrates that having the breadwinning role is an added burden, as it actually acts to heighten and also intensify some of the difficulties for these women as they recognise that their earnings and breadwinning is clearly central and important to the family unit. From the accounts provided by the women it also becomes noticeable that many of them were also not completely satisfied with their new identity as a mother. They talked about how they struggled with coming to terms with being a mother, and how they were now happier and more content as they had returned to work and regained their work identity. Again, the findings show that this was particularly pertinent for those women who were sole BWM, as their employment and financial earnings were key to sustaining the family. Due to this they had therefore placed an increased importance and value on their work identity. In addition, it is also apparent that there is clearly a difference for the sole BWM and how they experienced this due to them having increased financial pressure as they were the only person bringing an income into the home. Nonetheless, although their increased financial pressure could be seen as a problem and added burden, these sole BWM had the advantage that their partner would have the responsibility for the home and the childcare. The advantage of this was that it made going back to work easier for these sole BWM, as the roles and allocation of responsibilities were more clearly defined. Anna a sole BWM with two daughters aged two and eighteen months, illustrates this point, by explaining that she was happy and confident when going back to work as her partner would be taking charge of the home. She expressed these views by explaining how leaving for work in the morning was relatively easy for her, as her partner sorted out the children, and she could ‘just get up and just leave’ and that she was not ‘in a mad rush like some people are’.

Also, a similar position was taken by Melissa another sole BWM whose partner stayed at home on a full-time basis, therefore making her transition back to work more straightforward. This was clearly important for Melissa as she was keen to return to work as soon as possible after having children, as she did not enjoy her maternity leave and describes this period as ‘driving her mad’ and being ‘mind numbing.’ Indeed, although this transition back to work may have been easier for these sole BWM due to their partner being at home, this clearly was something that was not the case for the other groups of BWM (clear-cut BWM, circumstantial BWM, single BWM, minor BWM) who would

have experienced different issues due to their own breadwinning circumstances.

5.3 Maintaining Control and Asserting Breadwinning Mothers' Identities

Mothers can sometimes experience difficulties relinquishing duties that are associated with motherhood, as they can become territorial and also feel threatened if the bond between mother and child is challenged (Baxter *et al.*, 2015; Gatrell, 2005; Lupton and Barclay, 1997). In addition, there are also maintained social processes and structures that have socialised women into the idea of what a 'good mother' should be, propelling notions of idealised motherhood.

The women in this study talked openly about this in relation to maintaining control with aspects related to the care of their children. This was especially evident in times of crisis such as when their children were ill. Some of the women talked specifically about the mother being the best person to care for the children during these particular times. Some of them also stated that when these situations occurred they took time off work to care for their ill child, whilst others indicated that they were maintaining control from a distance, by overtly managing and overseeing the fathers' care due to their own working commitments. This was particularly noticeable for the sole BWM when compared to other types of BWM due to the father adopting the primary-carer role of the children.

These findings demonstrate that the women were clearly illustrating how they were using this control as a mechanism to maintain and assert their own mothering identities. These findings indicate that if they were not directly involved in this type of care, they were perceived to be poor at parenting, and would consider themselves to be a bad mother irrespective of their breadwinning responsibility.

An example of this can be seen in Cassandra's case, a clear-cut breadwinner; she has two daughters aged sixteen and seventeen and talks about how she would be the one who would always take time off work when her children were sick, and this was especially important when her daughters were younger. Taking this time off from work might have

been more straightforward for her due to being a clear-cut BWM when compared to a sole BWM who had a partner already at home to manage these occasions if they arose. However, although Cassandra acknowledges that her husband did help during these times, she felt it was clearly key for her as a mother to ensure that she was always there for her children. She emphasises this by expressing that she felt that they really needed her when these types of occasions happened:

I'd always take the time off. I mean he would help there's no doubt, but I'd be the one because I wanted to when they were younger, to do that, but again I was lucky because it was flexible. I could do that . . . Yeah. They need their mum.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

Nicola also talks about this notion of maintaining control, discussing what happens when her daughter Ellie is poorly. Nicola points out how she often checks and oversees what her husband Alasdair is doing if Ellie is ill. Nicola's account clearly illustrates how she maintains this control from a distance and asserts her mothering identity when she is unable to care for her daughter directly due to her work commitments:

As a mum I should be there looking after her and that's not always possible . . . I think it's this instinctive need to care for your child, to put your arms around them. It's very emotive that feeling . . . I do trust Alasdair. Don't get me wrong, but there is that, 'Make sure you do this. Make sure you do that. Have you done this? Did you take her to the doctor's? What did the doctor say?' There is that constant checking going on all the time.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

Linda also had similar experiences and attitudes towards this when her children were ill. Her account illustrates how she maintains control from a distance by affirming her

mothering identity when her husband Simon is looking after the children. Although Linda was quite happy for Simon to look after the children when they were ill, her account still clearly illustrates that she was retaining some form of influence and control as a mother via this form of monitoring:

I would be ringing up saying, 'Has he had his next lot of Calpol?', and I would have to explain to Simon several times that he can take Calpol and Nurofen. Simon gets really worried about medication and things and he's like, 'Well he's had that. So he can't have—' And I'm like, 'No. They're different medicines. So actually he can have both.' [. . .] I wouldn't say I'd be ringing constantly. Once Simon had got it. Once he'd done it a couple of times and he realised, I was quite happy. But yeah I'd probably ring up at lunchtime saying, 'How's he getting on or how's she doing?'

(Sole breadwinner with three children)

Again, Melissa, who is also a sole-breadwinner, echoes these views and also discusses the differences in parenting approaches between herself and her husband Richard, highlighting why she felt it was important to be involved with this type of care. Her account also demonstrates how she is able to reaffirm and justify her role as mother by describing how her husband can be inclined to overlook and miss incidents in relation to their daughters' care. Melissa's case illustrates how she struggles with this aspect and finds it hard to let go, believing that she is better at recognising and dealing with these problems when they arise. She talks about this in reference to when she is working away:

If there's been a week where I have had very little contact with Alice, I know her hair will be matted and I know that she's got like eczema. So her eczema will have played up. I mean I was away for a week two weeks ago. I went on a study tour to America. I came back and Alice has got eczema on her fingers and he'd

like not dealt with it at all and it was cracked and bleeding and I said to him, 'Did you notice this?' He went, 'No'.

(Sole breadwinner with two children)

Sarah, a teacher, also discussed this notion of control and asserting her mothering identity. This is particularly evident in her account when she talks about overseeing many aspects of her son Francis's care by effectively micro-managing her partner Mike. Sarah also explains how asserting this mothering identity and maintaining this control was particularly noticeable when she first returned to her teaching job after maternity leave:

I drop Francis off at nursery and pick him up because I need to know what's going on and what he's eating. Mike will come back and he's like, 'I don't know. I don't know.' [. . .] Yeah. Like in the first couple of weeks when I was at work Mike had a minute-by-minute breakdown of this is what you need to do at this time and where and when and what. What he has to wear. I always put Francis's clothes out.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

The findings from the women's accounts clearly signal that they experienced pressure to carry out the role of the carer when their children were ill. Their narratives show the importance they placed as mothers in retaining some form of control in their children's day-to-day lives. By acting like this they are finding new and also different ways to live up to societal pressures about what constitutes good mothering.

This notion or threat of relinquishing what they viewed as key mothering roles to their partners is explained further by Lupton and Barclay (1997:132):

The cultural imperative on women to be good mothers may mean that women may wish to involve their

partners more but find this difficult. To be shown to be over willing to hand over more responsibility to one's partner . . . however much a woman may want to, may seem too cavalier an approach to one's responsibilities as a mother.

The findings clearly illustrate that many of the women were not always able to be there for their children due to work commitments and breadwinning responsibilities. This in turn illustrates what is different and unique about these BWM when compared to full-time mothers and also mothers in paid employment, this is highlighted by the intensity and complexity that these women clearly experienced when managing two competing roles as mother and breadwinner. In addition, differences between the BWM types and the impact and pressure of their breadwinning could also be seen. For example, this was particularly an issue for sole BWM who were trying to claw back their mothering identity in the way that they would check and have input into their children's care from a distance. As a consequence, these women adopted monitoring and checking approaches as a way to gain and also maintain control in order to reaffirm their BWM identities. They adopted innovative ways to achieve a traditional input into their mothering role in non-traditional ways. The findings indicate that these women believed that care and nurture is unequivocally linked to being a mother, and that they were better placed to provide this care by taking the lead when these occasions arose. This in turn signals that many of the women's beliefs were closely aligned to more traditional and standard views of motherhood, illustrating the tension and conflict that these women experienced between their two roles as mother and breadwinner.

A postfeminist perspective also helps make sense of some of these issues further, as there are clearly added and complex pressures that these women experience due to having the role of breadwinner and mother. Indeed, this can be further understood by considering how the postfeminist notion of 'having it all' comes at a cost (Lewis and Simpson, 2017; Sorensen, 2017), as the findings seem to suggest that these BWM are clearly experiencing conflict between how they manage the demands of being a breadwinner alongside their role as mother, as a result the nature of their breadwinning clearly has some impact on how that conflict is both experienced and managed.

It is also apparent from their accounts that many of the women found it hard to take time off work when their children were ill due to the importance placed on their work and their increased earnings and breadwinning role. This was a common theme for all of the breadwinning mothers (sole BWM, clear-cut BWM, circumstantial BWM, single BWM, minor BWM). This in turn suggests that although there were variances in the type of breadwinner that they were classified into, much of their experiences and attitudes towards taking time off work to care for their ill children were all clearly similar. Suggesting that their breadwinning is key to understanding their experiences.

In addition, it is also apparent from the findings that undertaking the breadwinning role and having this added responsibility did not lessen the social expectations and attitudes that these women faced. This becomes clear when examining the data; it signalled that they felt they were best placed to provide this care during these times of crisis, clearly revealing how the women were demonstrating an acceptance towards the pressures of their gender, again irrespective of their breadwinner role and the obligations that this undoubtedly places on them. As a consequence, it therefore becomes evident that gaining a successful balance or harmony is clearly difficult due to the competing and opposing relationship between the role of mother and breadwinner and the complexities that this then presents women with.

5.4 Breadwinning Mothers' Guilt and Negative Emotions

Many working mothers experience guilt due to their competing demands between work and home (Cook, 2011; Cox, 2011; Meisenbach, 2010; Garrell, 2005; Scott, 1999; Ribbens, 1994; Brannen and Moss, 1991; Phoenix, 1991; Sharpe, 1984).

The findings show that all of the women who were interviewed stated that they experienced negative emotions about their role as a mother, with half of these women explicitly mentioning that they experienced feelings of guilt. These findings are important in helping us to understand how they perceive themselves in relation to their identity as a breadwinning mother. The findings clearly indicate that many of the women discussed feelings of inadequacy about how they were performing as mothers due to the pressures that their breadwinning commitments placed on them.

This notion of inadequacy can be explained by the women not feeling that they lived up to cultural and societal gender norms of successful parenting. This was also found to be the case in a study carried out by April and Mooketsi (2010) about working mothers in South Africa. April and Mooketsi (2010) observed that gender norms were embedded to such an extent that the working mothers in their study clearly wanted to uphold their traditional gender roles and the obligations associated with them. However, the findings from the breadwinning mothers in this study undoubtedly show that this issue is not as clear or straightforward. This is noticeable from the women's narratives in the way they discuss the pressures they experienced due to the importance placed on their breadwinning obligations, therefore helping to illustrate and highlight their uniqueness when compared to other mothers.

The table below outlines the BWMs' individual responses categorised by feeling guilty, and also negative emotions due to competing demands. * refers to all academic breadwinners.

Table 5.2 Feelings of Guilt and Negative Emotions Due to Competing Demands

Feeling guilty	Negative emotions due to competing demands
Melissa (sole breadwinner)	Anna (sole breadwinner)
Louise (sole breadwinner)*	Samantha (circumstantial breadwinner)*
Linda (sole breadwinner)	Zara (clear-cut breadwinner)*
Eileen (circumstantial breadwinner)	Anne-Marie (clear-cut breadwinner)*
Sinead (clear-cut breadwinner)	Cassandra (clear-cut breadwinner)*
Nicola (clear-cut breadwinner)*	Vanessa (clear-cut breadwinner)*
Sarah (clear-cut breadwinner)	Emily (clear-cut breadwinner)
Joanne (clear-cut breadwinner)	Rose (single breadwinner)*
Rebecca (clear-cut breadwinner)	Abby (single breadwinner)
Natasha (single breadwinner)	Lucy (minor breadwinner)

Explanations as to why these women were experiencing feelings of guilt and negative emotions towards their role as mother were a result of the varying pressures that they faced. Some of the women specifically mentioned that they felt guilty about not being there or spending enough time with their children both physically and emotionally, which again was further heightened by their breadwinning commitments.

This notion of insufficient time is also acknowledged by Ribbens (1994), who argues that not spending enough time with children was a key reason why mothers experienced guilt and questioned their own abilities as mothers. Additionally, Ribbens's (1994) work points out that the issue of time was not only about spending time with children per se, but also about being there when the children wanted and also needed them. It is also apparent from the data in this study that although spending insufficient time was a key reason mothers experienced guilt, it is also clear that this issue of lack of time is undoubtedly intensified by their breadwinning pressures. Suggesting how these complexities highlight what is unique about these BWM when compared to both full-time mothers and mothers in paid employment.

An example of feeling guilty can be seen from Sinead, a solicitor, who was also visibly upset and distressed when discussing this. She reflected on the emotions she experienced when she wasn't at home to put her daughters Savannah (six) and Emilia (five) to bed, and also how she felt when she thought she wasn't spending enough time with them:

I mean they do make me feel really bad actually when I'm not home to put them to bed and read to them and stuff like that . . . I'd just like to spend a bit more time with the kids. God, sometimes it makes me a bit, you know, like I might cry.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

Eileen, who has three children aged six, three and one, also echoes these feelings, stating that she too experiences guilt. She specifically talks about these feelings being most noticeable when she is physically away from her children overnight due to work. This seems to suggest that there are particular parts of motherhood that are less easy to delegate than others without experiencing guilt, and being away overnight and also not being able to put their children to bed appears to increase the experience of guilt:

[. . .] But I feel very guilty. I hate leaving them. I've got an over-nighter to do in two weeks.

(Circumstantial breadwinner)

These findings illustrate how negative feelings shape the identities of breadwinning mothers, signalling that many of the women questioned how they were performing as mothers due to their work commitments, and also due to the demands of their breadwinning role which in turn illustrates their distinctiveness and uniqueness when compared to other groups of mothers.

Another theme that emerged from the data was that the women experienced guilt if they were unable to attend important milestones in their children's lives. This was particularly apparent when they could not attend events like school assemblies. Their accounts signal that many of the women felt they were missing out, stating that they didn't want their children to feel as though they weren't there for them. This suggests how the women in this study felt being able to experience valuable transitional elements in their child's life was extremely important.

Linda a sole BWM talks about this and her feelings of guilt in relation to her role as a mother. She discusses how she makes a concerted effort to attend things like assemblies, as she doesn't want to miss them for her children's sake. However, Linda also acknowledges that she is not always able to make these events, due to her work commitments and being the sole breadwinner:

[. . .] it's the feelings of guilt towards the children. They're used to me going to work so that's not the problem, but like if there's things on at school . . . So that helps, but for me. I mean the things I do make sure and always try to get to are their school assemblies . . . So it's three lots of assemblies. Yeah. So work are really good but I know I can't push it too much because they are good. So I suppose there are little aspects of guilt about the children and things I perhaps feel that I've missed out on.

(Sole breadwinner with three children)

Other women discussed feelings of guilt about not giving sufficient time to their children. Melissa who is also a sole BWM talks about this too, stating that she clearly finds it difficult when she isn't spending enough time with them:

I think that the hardest thing for me is feeling guilty.
Feeling guilty about not being able to give time to the
girls . . . you know, that's the most difficult thing for me.

(Sole breadwinner with two children)

Melissa's account highlights why being there when her children wanted and needed her was important. If the women weren't able to be there physically for their children, they questioned their capabilities as a mother, leading to them developing feelings of guilt. The findings show how this was a particular tension for the sole BWM as they were aware that their partner who was the primary-carer of the children would be available for the children when these occasions arose, meaning that it was not really necessary for the mothers to be physically present. However, although this was the case, their accounts demonstrate how they display compliance to their assumed gender role by exhibiting these emotions irrespective of their breadwinning role and that they still wanted to be involved. This in turn helps to illustrate their uniqueness when compared to other groups of mothers who would not face the same issues.

This notion of struggling and questioning their ability as a mother was also apparent in some of the women's accounts when they talked about not carrying out the role of a mother as well as they wanted to. As a consequence, some of the women felt inadequate, or that they were falling short when they thought about how they performed or behaved as mothers. An example of this can be seen from Nicola's explanation, specifically when she talks about working full-time and being a breadwinner and how this makes her experience guilt when she thinks about the impact this has on her four-year-old daughter Ellie:

[. . .] but I continuously feel guilty about working full-time. It's my utopia. So in my ideal world I would work part-time but we can't afford to do that. So I try to make compromises all the time and make sure I carve out quality time with her where I can . . . I constantly feel guilty actually . . . I do feel guilty all the time that I feel like I'm not doing my job properly, I'm not looking after her properly, I'm not giving her the quality time she needs. Sometimes she'll say, 'Mummy, do you have to go to work? Can I come to work with you?' And there's this constant questioning of my ability as a mum I think all the time.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

Nicola talks candidly, providing explanations and reasons why she feels she is not able to give her daughter quality time, stating that she has to work full-time for financial reasons, thus highlighting that her breadwinning is clearly important to the family. In addition, she also discusses how she experiences a lack of choice in the way she manages her work and home life, due to the financial responsibility she holds. This lack of choice also provides a clear indication of why the experiences of a BWM is unique. Furthermore, Nicola's account clearly outlines how this leads to her developing feelings of both guilt and inadequacy as a mother. This notion of having quality time is also acknowledged by Gatrell (2005:112–16), who argues that working mothers want to spend time with their children and provide that 'emotional labour' in order to ensure that they have 'free pockets of time' carved out that enables them to exclusively focus on their children. Indeed, the women in this study acknowledge this, highlighting that they are not always able to provide this emotional labour due to their work commitments. As a result, the mothers then felt that they were not fulfilling their motherly role effectively or as well as they should be doing.

The findings surrounding these women's guilt demonstrate that they were aware of the difficulties that they faced as mothers who also had the responsibility of being the breadwinners. Indeed, using the typology to understand this phenomena indicates that

although there are different types of BWM that have been identified and categorised within this study (sole BWM, clear-cut BWM, circumstantial BWM, single BWM, minor BWM), the experiences surrounding guilt, and also having experienced negative emotions about how they were functioning as mothers were all actually very similar between the varying groups. Nonetheless, although there were clearly similarities, the findings have also illustrated that this was actually more complex and nuanced as the varying BWM types experienced guilt in different ways due to their breadwinning circumstances. For example, this was particularly evident in the case of the sole BWM who had the full responsibility of bringing in the income to the home, whilst also having a partner who was the primary-carer of their children and who was therefore able to undertake all aspects of care related to the children (including managing illness and attending school assemblies). Due to this, the sole BWM experienced confusion and difficulties in the way they were then expected to manage the role of mother alongside their breadwinning, as there were times when they were not actually physically needed as the father was able to undertake these duties. In fact, the data shows that having these conflicting demands resulted in these women being pulled in changeable and varying directions, leading to them developing negative and erratic emotions about how they were coping and functioning as mothers. An explanation for this is evident when we examine the difficulties that they face when moving between the breadwinner role and the role of the mother. Interchanging between these two roles and identities clearly provided challenges on a practical level, but these findings also illustrate that this requirement to switch was equally as challenging on an emotional level. As a result, this also highlights their distinctiveness and uniqueness when compared to full-time mothers and mothers who are in paid employment.

The findings have illustrated some of the difficulties that these women experienced, whilst also helping us to gain an understanding of what their mothering identity means to them. Being the family breadwinner clearly does not lessen or ease their feelings of guilt and inadequacy, as their accounts show that this is something that they clearly struggled with. It also signals that many of these BWM were also putting their own strategies into place in order to deal with these problems, as a result of this, they were also displaying postfeminist ideologies, as they clearly viewed these issues as 'personal problems' (Lewis 2018:24) rather than collective or shared problems.

Moreover, conventional gender views suggest that a father would not be seen as a bad father or feel guilty if he financially supports his family and is therefore unable to provide time and dedication to the care of his children, a position also argued by Walzer (1996:228), who asserts:

A father can be perceived as a good father without his baby;
in fact, his baby may pose a distraction to his doing what
he is expected to do.

In addition, this position is clearly not transferable for these breadwinning women's circumstances. In fact, these women's accounts plainly indicate that resultant guilt and negative emotions about how they are performing as mothers is undoubtedly linked to the traditional gender norms being so clearly embedded in these women's psyches, something that also helps to highlight what is unique about these BWM.

5.5 Breadwinning Mothers' Identities Compared to Full-Time Mothers

The discourse surrounding mothers who are in paid employment compared to mothers who stay at home has proved to be prevalent within the media, and also within academic literature (Crowley, 2014, 2015; Dillawa and Para, 2008; Zimmerman *et al.*, 2008; Johnston and Swanson, 2004; Buxton, 1998). The work of Phoenix (1991:203) argues how employed mothers are sometimes compared to full-time mothers who are not in paid employment, and who may be viewed as better parents, adding pressure for working mothers to be a 'mythical super mother'. Buxton (1998) and Hochschild (1997) echo this position further by adding that employed mothers, and mothers who stay at home with their children, are often set against each other. Buxton (1998) refers to this as the 'Mother War'.

Moreover, a postfeminist perspective would also suggest how (Oksala, 2013:39 cited in Lewis and Simpson, 2017:215) 'women not only want a fulfilling family life with a partner and children but also, they too want money, power and success' This in turn also helps to highlight some of the additional reasons and rationale for mothers actively seeking to maintain their positions in the labour market alongside their family life which clearly resonates with these BWM attitudes and views.

In this study the women discussed their reactions and attitudes towards full-time mothers who were not in paid employment. For some of the women interviewed this is highlighted by their negative views of full-time mothers, showing that these particular breadwinning mothers wanted to position and distance themselves from full-time mothers. This signals that they were using this as a method to challenge traditional views and ideologies of motherhood. Other women in the study expressed more neutral and supportive views of full-time mothers, as their accounts acknowledge the realities and difficulties associated with being at home on a full-time basis with children.

The findings also indicate that although there was acknowledged common ground between all mothers, many of the breadwinning mothers interviewed stated that full-time mothers were lucky if they could financially afford to have a choice that enabled them to stay at home with their children. Indeed, the findings and data in this study clearly signals that this was not an option for these BWM due to their breadwinning obligations and the importance placed on their income, therefore helping to demonstrate and point out what is unique about them when compared to full-time mothers and employed mothers.

The table below provides further details and categorises the individual responses from the BWM's perspectives about their views towards full-time mothers. * identifies academic breadwinners.

Table 5.3 Breadwinning Mothers' Attitudes Towards Full-Time Mothers

Negative views of full-time mothers	Neutral views of full-time mothers	Supportive views of full-time mothers
Melissa (sole)	Louise (sole)*	Natasha (single)
Zara (clear-cut)*	Vanessa (clear-cut)*	Linda (sole)
Samantha (circumstantial)*	Nicola (clear-cut)*	Anna (sole)
Cassandra (clear-cut)*		Lucy (minor)
Abby (single)		Joanne (clear-cut)
Rebecca (clear-cut)		Sinead (clear-cut)
Sarah (clear-cut)		Elieen (circumstantial)
		Rose (single)*
		Anne-Marie (clear-cut)*
		Emily (clear-cut)

The findings indicate that the majority of women expressed supportive views about full-time mothers. However, there was also a group of women who had opposing views and conveyed strong negative views about mothers who did not work.

For those women who expressed negative views about full-time mothers, these opinions touched on aspects linked firstly to being envious, as many of the women interviewed were not in a financial position to even consider this as an option. Secondly, others stated that they would not have anything in common with a full-time mother, with many of them suggesting that they could not imagine being a stay-at-home mother or even comprehend what it would be like. This data also adds a further dimension to help illustrate their unique BWM identity.

Sarah, a teacher, specifically talks about this and her views of full-time mothers. Sarah's account illustrates how she is using her own perception of full-time mothers to position herself and validate her own choices and identity as a BWM, whilst also simultaneously acknowledging that her comments may appear to sound unjust and slightly subjective:

Oh I don't know. Not good probably. I think it's a bit lazy and I know that's totally not okay . . . Maybe I'm jealous. I have to kind of front it up with there's something wrong with you [laughs] . . . No. I can't imagine it.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

Zara, who is an academic, echoes these negative views further. She states that there are clear differences between mothers who are in paid employment and mothers who are not. Her account also highlights her belief that these separate groups of women experience motherhood in very different ways. As a consequence, Zara's view suggests that she would not have much in common with a full-time mother, and she uses this to distance herself from them as a group:

Being completely frank? I can't imagine how it would be fulfilling. Just having – I don't know. It doesn't seem – I

don't know. It wouldn't be for me . . . I do see a massive gap between women that don't work and women that do. I think the experiences of motherhood are incredibly different. So I guess I feel like I wouldn't have much . . . I would have nothing in common with a woman that doesn't work.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

Other women in the sample also expressed negative attitudes towards full-time mothers more explicitly, using metaphors such as 'muesli mums' and 'desperate housewife' to sum up their opinions of mothers who were not in paid employment.

Melissa, who has two young daughters and whose husband Richard is the main carer of their children, talks about full-time mothers and in doing so expresses her negative views about them. It is apparent from her account that she has a very clear picture of what she sees as the off-putting way in which full-time mothers occupy their time. Melissa expresses her views frankly, and although she also acknowledges that her views may sound narrow-minded and biased, she clearly wants to distance herself from this type of parental approach. Whilst talking about this, Melissa also adds that these mothers are lucky to be in a position where they have the choice to be a full-time mother. It is evident from her views that she also uses her belief as a tool to validate her own position and identity as a BWM:

I think they're very lucky. Although it's not me, but it's great because I always take the piss out of Richards's ladies. I always say, 'Have you had your little bitches round?' [Laughter]. It's terrible. They're all muesli mums that feed their children organic food and go to Jabber Jacks and sing songs. Terrible thing to say. But you see when I was at home with Alice I couldn't do all that children's club thing. I couldn't do groups. It just wasn't me. Talking about nappy rash . . . It's great if that's what people want to do, but it's not what I would want to do.

(Sole breadwinner with two children)

Samantha, an academic, also expressed similar beliefs and opinions about full-time mothers. She talks about being envious of their position, pointing out that she believes they are taking the easier option. Again, like Melissa, Samantha also acknowledges that they are lucky as they have a choice to be a stay-at-home mum:

Honestly? I don't know. It's a combination of envy I think. 'Oh it's alright for you' [Laughs]. 'You can do whatever you want.' I suppose in some way I also think, 'Oh they've just given up. They're taking the easy way.' This doesn't really sound very nice, but I guess that would be the honest answer that I would think, 'Yeah. You're not trying. You're taking the easy option.'

(Circumstantial breadwinner with three children)

Cassandra, who has always worked full-time, also shares these views about full-time mothers who don't work. However, Cassandra's account outlined below is more specifically directed at women who are not in paid employment and the image this type of woman conjures up. Again, like some of the other women Cassandra is very open and frank in her attitudes about this:

I feel slightly sorry for them actually. Yeah I do feel they're maybe missing out. So I think what really irritates me is these really wealthy women whose husbands pay for their kids to go to posh schools and they spend all their time, you know, making themselves look what they think looks beautiful, but they're just so small-minded. And to be a small-minded person, I think don't be like that. So that irritates me. [. . .] So for some women I can completely understand that they've got their priorities right because they know themselves. So it's a personal

thing, but there are other women that really irritate me because of their small-mindedness because they're not working . . . The posh bit . . . Yeah. Desperate housewives type thing . . . But then their lives get caught up in sort of . . . They don't have opinions. They don't have opinions about things . . . just about clothes or whatever.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

Although Cassandra's account is about women who are not in paid employment, it is very apparent that she feels strongly that women should work and that they should develop a broader outlook. Her opinions, as well as the other women's views, clearly illustrate that they believe mothers who are in paid employment, and mothers who are not, have very different views and beliefs about motherhood. This indicates that some of the women have used their views to distinguish and narrate their own position in relation to their identity as a BWM. This is an interesting concept; by asserting this position these women also concurrently validate their own identity as a mother. Consequently, by emphasising these views and endorsing their BWM identity, they also challenge some ingrained traditional gender beliefs – something that they may do consciously or subconsciously.

In addition, the findings show that some of the women interviewed expressed more neutral feelings towards full-time mothers, which are outlined in the previous table. One such example was from Nicola, who is an academic and whose daughter Ellie is four:

What's my reaction to mothers who don't work? For some it's their choice that they don't want to work. On some level – God I'm contradicting myself all the time. There's that sort of sense of envy because they have the choice not to work. For me there was no choice. I had to work. On the other hand like I've said to you, for me I needed to be doing something. So that's important. I'm sure we all say, 'Oh God I wish I didn't have to work', but actually I do need to be doing something and I don't want to be at home all the time and

actually I think for Ellie that's much better because I'm happier, she's happier. But there is that issue of choice for women who don't want to work. I don't feel jealous of those individuals who make that decision, who can be supported by their husbands. Actually, that's not what I would want.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

Nicola's account, although neutral, is similar to some of the other women who expressed negative views; she felt that these particular women are lucky to have the choice not to work. However, Nicola does state that she would not want to be at home on a full-time basis as she clearly recognises the personal benefits that work provides her with. It is apparent from her views that she also feels that she is a happier, and therefore in some respects a better parent, due to her working and fulfilling that particular aspect of her life and her own personal identity as a breadwinning mother. This is also important because it illustrates how conflicted Nicola is. For example, her account suggests that she would prefer not to work, but at the same time it also highlights that she also wants to be doing something important (which she implies is not being at home with her daughter). This shows how conflicted these BWM are, as they respond to the pressures from social norms around motherhood combined with their desire to be successful at work.

It is apparent why this is an interesting concept, as many of the women also openly discussed the benefits of working and the individual rewards that they had gained from continuing to work. Again, this was interesting in itself, as many of the women had also previously acknowledged the difficulties of managing work with a family, and also having the added pressure of being the breadwinner highlighting this conflict in emotions and feelings.

Furthermore, the overall findings revealed that the majority of women who were questioned conveyed mostly positive views about full-time mothers. In doing so, these women discussed some of the difficulties that all mothers face. Lucy, who runs her own business, discusses her attitudes towards full-time mothers and their decision to stay at home:

That's cool. To be honest I think it's the hardest job in the world. So I take my hat off to them.

(Minor breadwinner with twins)

Eileen, who has three young children aged six, four and one, also echoes Lucy's feelings, and talks specifically about the difficulties of parenthood when reflecting on her own experience of maternity leave and the issues that full-time mothers face:

I think that they work harder than the rest of us to be honest with having experienced, having been on maternity leave, three times. I think it's very hard work being at home with children and I think sometimes you want to kill them all and everybody else. I think that from a kind of sanity point of view, you just need to get away and have a bit of a rest. I do on the one hand but I'm always quite envious.

(Circumstantial breadwinner with three children)

Eileen's account offers a very candid insight into the difficulties that she experienced whilst at home with three children. It is apparent from her discussion that she shares some common ground and appreciation of the actual realities of being at home with children. This is interesting, as her views are very different from those of the women who had negative attitudes to full-time mothers and who associated this type of mothering with images of 'muesli mums' and 'taking the easy way' or the 'easy ride'.

Nonetheless, although this particular group of women were positive towards full-time mothers, they too also acknowledged that they felt that full-time mothers were clearly fortunate if they could financially afford to stay at home. Anna, whose husband is the main carer for their daughters, specifically discusses the financial implications around the choices that full-time mothers have:

No. If they can afford to do that and . . . My own view is if you can afford to do it then why not.

(Sole breadwinner with two children)

It is clear that Anna's position is aligned with postfeminism as she points out that all women have a right to choose. Indeed, this notion of individual choice is clearly articulated via a postfeminist sensibility which suggest that the postfeminist individual would place an emphasis on the right to choose their own destiny in order to meet their own needs. For example, a postfeminist perspective would argue that women should be able choose if they wish to reside in paid employment or stay at home on a full-time basis. A further understanding of this can be gained from by considering how as a postfeminist would argue that managing their own lives via their own individual agency categorically means that the overall outcome as a consequence is one that is fundamentally 'feminist' (Lazar, 2006).

The women who expressed these positive views about full-time mothers were clearly aware of, and felt able to acknowledge, the difficulties and challenges associated with being at home on a full-time basis with the children. However, they also stated that they felt envy towards full-time mothers, as these women were not able to stay at home full-time due to their breadwinning and financial commitments, whilst some also pointed out that they could not imagine being at home full-time, and that they wouldn't want this for themselves either.

The findings clearly indicate that these women view themselves as being different from full-time mothers as they are positioning themselves differently to them, which also acts to confirm their unique BWM identity. The findings have shown that those women who expressed negative views about full-time mothers wanted to position and dissociate themselves from this group of mothers, and in doing so challenged traditional ideologies of work and family, whereas other women expressed neutral and supportive attitudes to full-time mothers by recognising and also identifying some of the difficulties and the practicalities of being at home with children.

Furthermore, the findings also indicate that although there were challenges and difficulties for all mothers, many of the women stated that full-time mothers were lucky if they had the financial choice to be able to afford to stay at home with their children. The

women in this study clearly point out that this was not an option available to them due to their breadwinning responsibilities. Indeed, it is apparent that the women experienced an increased sense of strain due to managing multiple roles and also due to having the added pressure of being the household breadwinner, which is also something that is different and unique when compared to a non-breadwinning mother who is just in paid employment.

It is therefore apparent from these findings that the women in this study clearly exhibited a different identity as a result of their breadwinning status. Indeed, the data shows how having the responsibility of breadwinner meant that there was a noticeable lack of choice to stay at home due to financial pressures and the importance placed on their earnings. Indeed, when referring to the typology it is apparent that this lack of choice was a common finding for all of the BWM (sole BWM, clear-cut BWM, circumstantial BWM, single BWM, minor BWM) . It is also this lack of choice and the importance placed on the breadwinning earnings that helps us to understand what is distinctive about them as a group, and in doing so simultaneously acts to highlight their own unique BWM identities when compared to full-time mothers and working mothers.

5.6 Breadwinning Mothers' Parenting Ideologies

An additional theme that emerged from the findings demonstrated that some of the women were conforming to traditional patterns of family and work by displaying their attitudes and beliefs about parenting ideologies. This became particularly evident when examining the views and opinions surrounding formal childcare in the form of nurseries. When talking about childcare some of the women openly expressed their attitudes towards nurseries whilst discussing their own childcare strategies. In doing so, some of these women talked about their reasons for opting out of using nurseries, whilst others talked about only wanting to use nurseries on a part-time basis.

This argument is illustrated further when some of the women stated that nurseries failed to meet their expectations and beliefs of good and appropriate parenting. This was particular evident in the sole BWM cases as they had made a conscious decision that the father would adopt the primary-carer role. By expressing these views, these women signalled that they believed that traditional forms of childcare, and those that centred

around parental care, were more fitting, and that formal childcare such as nurseries were subsequently second rate.

Brannen and Moss (1998) acknowledge this standpoint further by pointing out that in order to challenge negative views, a more positive image of non-parental care needs to be established. Indeed, it is apparent that contesting these views would help to reinforce positive attitudes about working parents and challenge the existing traditional ideologies regarding successful childcare and parenting approaches.

The findings in the below table outline the women’s reasons for not using full-time nursery. The table indicates that a group of women talked about issues surrounding full-time formal nursery as a childcare strategy. None of the women in this group had placed their children into full-time nursery as they had opted to use other strategies or a combination of approaches.

Table 5.4 Formal Childcare – Reasons For Not Using Full-Time Nursery

Name and type of breadwinner	Number and age(s) of children	Childcare strategy	Reasons for not using nursery as full-time childcare strategy
Zara (clear-cut)	1 child 18 months	Nursery 3 days, with father 2 days. Father works part-time.	Did not want to use full-time nursery, ‘not wanting it’ for her son, wanting to get back to work and also money reasons. No family living nearby to help. - Parenthood ideologies. - Financial.
Joanne (clear-cut)	2 children 8 + 10 years	Father. Father works part-time.	Did not want to use full-time nursery, ‘want them to know their parents’. No family living nearby to help. - Parenthood ideologies.
Anna (sole)	2 children 2 years, 8 months	Father full-time carer.	‘I didn’t want that’, also ‘financially it wouldn’t work out’. - Parenthood ideologies. - Financial.
Linda (sole)	3 children	Father full-time carer.	‘I hated the nurseries I looked round’, also financially wasn’t worth it.

	9, 6 + 4 years		Paternal grandparents live nearby. - Parenthood ideologies. - Financial.
Sarah (clear-cut)	1 child 18 months	Nursery 4 days, with father 1 day.	Father wanted to have 1 day off a week. Child will be in full-time nursery after 1 year. No family leaving nearby to help. - Father wanted more involvement.
Melissa (sole)	2 children 9 + 2 years	Father full-time carer.	Father full-time carer for children. 9- year-old did not go to nursery as mother's sister looked after her due to mother not liking the nursery environment. Paternal grandparents live nearby. - Parenthood ideologies.

The findings signal that the reasons identified for not using nursery as a full-time strategy were linked to it not being financially viable, and also that the parents were not happy with it as a method of childcare due to their parenting ideologies. These women used alternative childcare approaches that they were more comfortable with and that they felt suited them and their children better.

Within this group, the women cited aspects linked to parenting ideologies influenced by their views of good parenting, stating that they felt that full-time nursery did not meet their expectations or perceived good-parenting principles. As a result, these women devised strategies to manage this, pointing out that due to their increased financial earnings they would continue to work full-time whilst their husband or partner would alter his working day in order to adopt the primary-carer role. As a result, this suggests that they were using tactics to try to hold onto their perceptions of good-parenting, and also using these approaches to maintain some form of control and input over what they viewed to be more standard approaches to managing childcare.

Some of the women expressed strong personal views that were clearly linked to their own parenting ideologies about using nursery as a childcare strategy. Melissa talks candidly

about her experience and feelings about nursery care and why she did not want to use a nursery for her daughter Sofia:

I'd taken her to a few nurseries and that was probably the catalyst. I went to a few nurseries, cried a lot, and thought, 'I can't possibly go back to work'. I said to Richard, 'You're going to have to give up because we can't possibly leave our child in one of these establishments'.

(Sole breadwinner with two children)

It is apparent from Melissa's account that she was clearly not comfortable with using nursery whatsoever. Indeed, Melissa had not used nursery for either of her children; her eldest daughter Alice had previously been cared for by her sister, and her youngest daughter Sofia was now being cared for by her husband Richard, who had given up work to be the full-time primary-carer. Melissa's explanation highlights the strong views that she associates with using nursery as a childcare strategy. Her position is also acknowledged further by Brannen and Moss (1998:237), who argue that some view formal childcare provisions as 'substitute homes' that provide 'substitute parenting'. Furthermore, it is noticeable from Melissa's case that she initially made the decision not to send her daughter to nursery due to her possessing the most financial power in the home. As a result, her husband then agreed to stop working in order to be the principal childcare provider.

Zara, an academic, also echoes some of these views about parenting ideologies. Although she had decided to use a formal nursery, this was only for a total of three days in her working week, as she did not want her son Charlie to be in full-time nursery. As a consequence, her husband Jerry, who works part-time, provided the childcare for the remainder of the working week:

I know I wouldn't have been happy with him full-time in nursery. I did know that. So it made a really big difference knowing that he was going to be three days nursery and two days with my husband.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

Zara's account clearly acknowledges that although full-time nursery was not what she wanted to use, she was more comfortable using nursery as part of a combination to manage her childcare.

Linda also discusses nurseries and talks about her own personal decisions around childcare. She reflects back on the time when she had her first child and points out that she hated all the nurseries she looked at and did not want to hand over her baby to just anyone. When talking about this she also discusses some of the financial costs of using nurseries, stating that it also was not financially viable for them as a family. Although Linda discusses some of the financial reasons for opting not to use nursery, her account provides added reasoning and rationale to help her validate this decision:

I was looking at nurseries and things like that and fifty pound a day for a nursery . . . Simon would have had to have worked full-time and me three days a week just to keep us ticking over . . . I just said to Simon one day . . . because I hated the nurseries that I looked round and I think I was one of these overprotective mothers, first baby, didn't want to hand him over to anybody. He was so precious. I just said to Simon, 'The other option is I work more hours and you give up your job. Then we're not paying for a nursery but actually I only need to work an extra day to make up the difference that you'll be earning and paying for a nursery kind of thing for a whole week at work.' I did say to him, you know, there's no pressure because I know that's a big ask. That was my preferred option at that stage. I'd thought about it and thought why didn't I think about this before? And so it was at that stage really when we started looking at the finances and nursery and having to leave my child with somebody I didn't know and actually was it really worth

it for an additional forty or fifty pound a week? To have all that stress of . . . And I was on a career path. That probably came a bit after because it was going back to work. So anyway Simon decided he would do that.

(Sole breadwinner with three children)

Linda's account clearly signals how her own parenting ideologies and views led to not using a nursery, and also how she was then able to influence her husband Simon to give up work in order to look after the children.

It is apparent from Linda's case and also some of the other women's that due to their financial status and being the breadwinner they were able to influence decisions around childcare. Furthermore, these findings also demonstrate that they were the ones who were mostly responsible for making the decisions about what form of childcare was most appropriate. This finding was also evident in the work of Vogler and Pahl (1994), who found that the more money an individual contributes in the home, the more power they have over decisions. Indeed, this appears to be the case for these women in the study, and this is most noticeable the for the sole BWM, as their earnings clearly provided them with added leverage to influence their own childcare strategies.

Moreover, the findings also indicate that the costs of nurseries seem to be an obstacle for these women who did not want to use nursery full-time; a number of them had found it difficult to share childcare due to the importance placed on their breadwinning income. Samantha, an academic, talks about nurseries and the cost involved, and although her children were no longer in nursery (her eldest daughter Ruby is now sixteen), she reflects back on her situation when she was paying for full-time nursery and the lack of policy and provision to help working mothers at the time:

I'm a bit past that point now, but at the time there was no tax relief at all when I had my children and when I had Ruby. Academic pay has gone up quite a lot in the last few years, but when I first had Ruby, my first job I went into and I was on £15,000 as a lecturer. To try to

pay a mortgage and childcare and I had less disposable income than I had as a student, and that was a real struggle for a period and that was only with one child. Then my salary had gone up a little bit by the time I had the boys and so on, but even so I didn't get any kind of tax relief at the time when they were in nursery.

(Circumstantial breadwinner with three children)

Issues surrounding the cost of formal childcare have also been noted in the work of McRae (2003), who adds that in 2001 Britain had one of the highest levels of childcare costs in Europe. Indeed, the cost of formal childcare is 33 per cent of net household income in the UK compared with an average of 13 per cent in OECD countries (*Guardian*, 8 June 2014). Crompton (1997) also acknowledges the cost of formal childcare, stating that many working mothers have had to 'buy themselves back in to the labour market' (Crompton, 1997:79), whilst the work of others has pointed out that women spend almost the same amount of time on childcare regardless of paid employment (England and Sravastava, 2013; Craig, 2007; Bianchi *et al.*, 2006).

The work of McKie, Bowlby and Gregory (2001) also supports this view, arguing that childcare has fallen mainly to the mothers, who find formal childcare, vet it and then also pay for it so they can sustain their places in the labour market, therefore indicating that mothers are still shouldering this burden.

Further limitations of nursery were also identified, and they were related to the lack of flexibility surrounding closure times. Rebecca, a bank manager, talks about her issues in relation to this. She points out that as she is the manager she is responsible for locking up the bank at night, and consequently is the last person to leave. Her account describes some of the issues she has faced when trying to collect her eighteen-month-old son from nursery:

My only problem is getting to nursery for six o'clock because every nursery closes at six o'clock. That's my only stress. We close the doors at five but then you have

to cash up and everyone has to do their paperwork and stuff. So I try and be out of the door for twenty-past five but it doesn't always happen like that.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

Samantha also supports this, recalling the difficulties of getting to nursery on time, especially at the end of the working day:

I always had to, 'Oh my god. It's quarter-past four or whatever. If I don't leave now I won't be in time to get the kids from nursery and so on'.

(Circumstantial breadwinner with three children)

Other women also discussed the limitations of nursery with regard to the lack of flexibility it offers when last-minute problems arise. Sinead, a solicitor, is expected to work long hours and socialise outside working hours, and she specifically talks about why she chose not to use a nursery. Sinead's parents live nearby and she has a paid arrangement with them to look after her children, which involves collecting and dropping off at school and helping during school holidays:

It's the unsociable hours and the last-minute changes. If you can't send them to nursery or childcare because they're ill, you know, the time off work and all those things.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

The findings indicate that some of the women who were interviewed had negative views of nurseries, stating that it failed to meet their perceptions of successful parenting. As a result, some of these women had therefore decided not to use full-time nursery and used this as a mechanism to help them overcome any negative connotations associated with being a bad parent or a bad mother.

Through their accounts, these particular women illustrate that they believe traditional forms of childcare – centred around parental care – were more acceptable, and that formal childcare approaches such as nurseries were subsequently inferior.

In addition, the findings also signal that these women's increased earnings and breadwinning status enabled them to shape their childcare strategies in order to meet their individual parenting ideologies. This reveals how these women's financial earnings and breadwinning provided them with increased leverage to influence decisions about implementing childcare strategies that matched their ideologies of good parenting. When referring to the typology to further understand these phenomena it is apparent that this was particularly noticeable for the women who were sole BWM. In fact, none of the sole BWM had used nurseries, as their partners had taken on the role of full-time primary-carer of their children and therefore had the overall responsibility for childcare. Nonetheless, this particular finding shows that, regardless of their egalitarian approaches to managing family life by being the breadwinner, their accounts and the childcare strategies they adopted signal that they held traditional beliefs about parenting which were more closely aligned with standard roles of motherhood.

As a consequence, this illustrates how having the added responsibility of breadwinner leads to a mismatch in demands, and these findings also illustrate how these women had to manage and organise these difficulties within the context of their own family circumstances in order to meet their own parenting ideologies. This suggests that links to the postfeminist perspective can be made here also, as postfeminist characteristics are being displayed via this usage of 'personal problems' (Lewis 2018:24) and tactics rather than collective strategies to manage these aspects of childcare. Moreover, as a result, this also helps us to understand the complexities that these women face, and how challenging it is to gain compatibility between their two opposing roles as breadwinner and also as mother, therefore highlight out what is unique about them as a group when compared to other groups of mothers.

5.7 The Importance of Having a Work Identity

Several studies have highlighted the importance that mothers place on having a separate work identity, and the value of having something that is distinct and outside of the home (Schober and Scott, 2012; Potuchek, 1997; Yeandle, 1984; Sharpe, 1984).

The women in this study demonstrated that they clearly placed an importance on their work identity, pointing out that their work identity was both significant and key to them. Whilst discussing this, some of the women also stated that work provided them with a separate identity outside of the home, whilst others talked about how work acted to define them, pointing out that it was central to their own identity.

By examining the aspects associated with these women's work identities, the findings will demonstrate how they then asserted and also placed an importance on this work identity. Possible explanations for this may be due to them using this to position themselves and reaffirm their own unique and distinct individual BWM identities.

The majority of women talked about work being linked to their sense of self and also the benefits of having a separate work identity. Emily acknowledges this specifically, recalling an occasion when her son Harry came into the office with her:

I remember actually Harry coming into work once and a colleague popped in to see me and we were just discussing whatever work things. And he was like, 'God, Mum.' I was a different person. He hasn't seen that person in action and I think you're two different people generally at work and home. I think sometimes that's quite a good thing because maybe you can be something different at work and fulfil another thing.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

Emily goes on to talk about work further, stating that it provides her with a distinctive character that is separate to the identity that she adopts at home. Whilst talking about this,

she recognises that work has been beneficial as it is something that she has uniquely accomplished for herself:

In fact, I feel more comfortable in some ways. Like I've achieved more certainly at work. Work is my little beacon of something that I've got for me. I've done it on my own. Whereas at home I feel I'm just a shambles. My house is not like how I run an office [laughs].

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

This notion of work being linked to identity is something that Lucy also acknowledges. She specifically talks about work enabling her to be more than just a mother, and that it actually enables her to have a different identity and therefore be a different person:

[. . .] you feel a bit – You're a different person. You're you. You're not just the mum. You've got a bit more of an identity.

(Minor breadwinner with twins)

In the typology, a total of eight academics BWM were categorised into a group, and issues of identity also became apparent when examining the findings from these academic breadwinning mothers' perspectives. In fact, many of these academic BWM talked about their job, and how their research and academic subject links to their overall identity. Skevington and Baker (1989) and their discussion around social-identity theory can aid in helping us to understand this experience for these BWM. For example, their work highlights how womanhood has many different aspects, including specific work role identities. They argue how self-worth and self-esteem can therefore be gained through these inter-group comparisons, which is clearly something that is noticeable for these academic breadwinning mothers when thinking about and also defining their own unique academic identities.

One example of this was highlighted by Vanessa who, when talking about the benefits of work, acknowledges the importance of being an academic and a scholar and how this in turn relates to her identity:

Well I suppose it gives you the sense of identity, being a scholar. So it's not just work in general. It's what I'm doing . . . I love research and I love reading books. So part of what I like to do is paid for [laughs], which is very nice.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with three children)

In addition, Samantha also reaffirms this view about being an academic by arguing that her work is clearly aligned to her identity and that this is of great importance to her due to the personal benefits it provides her with:

A lot of my sense of self comes from my work and so there's quite a big kind of identity aspect to it. The money is significant but I'm not working just for money . . . I mean it's quite fulfilling. I'm quite good at what I do and I get recognition for that and that's quite nice. And I think if I was not doing that, then I would have to find that from somewhere else I suppose. I'm not sure what that would be exactly.

(Circumstantial breadwinner with three children)

Samantha then proceeds to talk about her sense of self and her identity further, suggesting that she would not be happy if she did not work. She talks about this in relation to her career, contemplating what impact this would have on her from a personal point of view if she was not working in academia:

I think I would feel a little frustrated and unfulfilled, I think particularly if my partner was working and I wasn't. If I was at home with the kids and I'd see my partner coming in,

especially doing a similar job to me, and saying, 'I'm off to this conference. I've been asked to do this. I'm writing this paper', and I'd be thinking, 'I could do that'.

(Circumstantial breadwinner with three children)

Again, being an academic and the sense of identity it creates is also reiterated and echoed further by Anne-Marie. Her account highlights that she sees clear intersections between her own identity and her research and teaching:

A big part of my identity's bound up in my research . . . I'm really dedicated to the research that I do, to communicating that research. [. . .] Kind of contributing to the discipline and actually when I'm teaching, making a difference to students and we really do make a difference to students because they tell you that we do and that's a really nice feeling.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

Nicola, another academic breadwinner, also supports this view. She talks about her academic career with specific reference to her research and how she views this in relation to her own identity. Whilst talking about this, she acknowledges that she finds it hard to separate or divorce her own identity from her work identity:

You can't divorce it from who you are because it's integral to me. It's part of my identity because it's about what I'm interested in. I've always been interested in learning and so you can't really divorce the two.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

In addition, Rose also affirms these views about the sense of identity she gains from her academic career. She specifically talks about the benefits of her career and the enjoyment she gets from teaching and researching around her specialist subject area:

Well I work because I enjoy it and it does give me a sense of satisfaction and a sense of identity, but I also work because I have to because I have to bring in the money. [. . .] Well it gives me money and it gives me a well-paid job for three days a week. I can manage two teenagers and myself on three days a week. Not many jobs can do that. I enjoy it. I get a real sense of satisfaction. Like we've got the graduation this afternoon. Just seeing the students come through and kind of that kind of pastoral side of things. And there's some students that, you know, I really worked hard for this year that I think, you know, wouldn't have perhaps have done as well, may not even have got their degree had I not stubbornly persisted with them. So I really like that side of stuff, but I also really enjoy my subject . . . I love kind of finding out about my subject and writing . . . So I've always said there's nothing I would rather do.

(Single breadwinner with two children)

It is clear that Rose's and the other BWM positions are aligned with postfeminism as they point to this notion of individualization and being able to choose. Indeed, a postfeminist perspective clearly places emphasis on women being both individualistic and empowered, and who are also able to shape and self-direct their own lives in order to meet their own personal ambitions and aspirations. Indeed, many of the accounts provided by the BWM appear to illustrate these 'notions of choice' and 'being oneself' and 'pleasing oneself' which are viewed as being central to the postfeminist sensibility (Gill, 2007:153).

It is clear from the above findings that these women acknowledge that work is linked to their identity. The evidence indicates that some of these women believe that work gives them a different and autonomous side to their life that is outside the home, and one that

is in addition to their mothering identity. They point out that they enjoy their work and that it provides them with job satisfaction, which in turn provides them with an increased sense of individual recognition and self-worth.

In addition, it is apparent that for the BWM who are academics there is an added factor to consider as they also talked about their identity in relation to their specific subject areas and their own research. These academic BWM clearly expressed their passion for their occupation by defining their work as a vocation, and acknowledging that it is more than simply a job for them. Indeed, it could be argued that this initial enthusiasm and interest for their subject and research could have been one of the reasons that attracted them to their academic career in the first instance.

Indeed, a recent study by Li (2015) indicates how being an academic is viewed with both esteem and respect; this is clearly something that resonated with the breadwinning women in this study. However, another study by Archer (2008) has highlighted the difficulties and problems associated with gaining successful academic identity. Archer's (2008) work argues how the role and requirements of being a successful academic is constantly changing due to the pressures associated with shifting teaching and publishing criteria. As a consequence, Archer's work highlights how many academics (particularly those at the early stage of their career) can hold negative views about their own authenticity and identity as an academic. This in turn leads to difficulties surrounding the legitimacy of their own professional identity.

The findings show that the BWM in this study acknowledge that work provides them with a distinct and different identity that is outside the home, and that they view themselves as being more than just a mother and a housewife. The findings have also illustrated how those women who are categorised as academics BWM also felt that their work identity, and being an academic, was central and clearly bound up with how they viewed themselves. This in turn also helps to demonstrate how the typology can be used to highlight their own unique and distinctive identities as academic breadwinning mothers.

5.8 Conclusion

The findings have highlighted how these women's transitions into motherhood played a pivotal role in shaping their mothering identities. This is illustrated in the difficulties they discussed surrounding the transition into motherhood. However, the findings from this study have also demonstrated that this transition and change to their identity was actually more complicated for these BWM. This becomes especially apparent when considering the implications of their breadwinning, and how it acts to intensify some of these problems further when it is combined with their role as mother. Indeed, this is clearly illustrated in the findings, as there is an increased sense of pressure and complexity due to having the breadwinner responsibility. This is visible as these BWM clearly encountered an added financial burden, subsequently meaning that they experienced a lack of choice about how they could then manage the tensions between home and work when compared to full-time mothers and employed mothers. Moreover, the discussion also argued how postfeminism could also be used to help understand these phenomena further, as these BWM were having to occupy two roles simultaneously (mother and breadwinner) meaning that there was a requirement for them to be performing both masculinity and femininity concurrently (Lewis, 2018). Nonetheless, although these women experienced a lack of choice about their responsibilities due to the financial importance placed on their breadwinning, the typology indicated that those women who were classified as sole BWM experienced an easier transition back into their paid employment. The main reason for this was because their partners were able to take on the role of primary-carer for their children, therefore highlighting a difference for this particular type of sole BWM when compared to the others categories of BWM.

In addition, the accounts from these women also show how they used control as a mechanism to consolidate their own mothering identities. This was apparent during particular circumstances, and predominantly when their children were ill. They pointed out how having the breadwinning responsibility had not reduced their own expectations, and that they were best placed as mothers to provide care during these times of crisis. By displaying this, it exposed how these women also demonstrated an acceptance towards their gender role, regardless of their non-traditional breadwinner role. The discussion also pointed out how this finding also has links to the postfeminist perspective by highlighting how these BWM experienced an added pressure due them having the responsibility of the

breadwinner and mother. Indeed, the findings suggested how the postfeminist notion of 'having it all' came at a cost (Lewis and Simpson, 2017; Sorensen, 2017) as they were clearly experiencing tension between their two roles. The findings have also illustrated that the experience and views of good-parenting with regard to taking time off work for childcare reasons were similar across all types of BWM, as this was fundamentally shaped by being a breadwinner. However, variances between the different BWM groups were also apparent, this was most noticeable in the case of the sole BWM who had the full responsibility of bringing in the income to the home, and who also had a partner who was the primary-carer of their children. Due to this, the sole BWM experienced difficulties in the way they were then expected to manage the role of mother alongside their breadwinning. For example, there were times when the sole BWM were not physically needed to be involved in this care as the father was able to resolve these issues due to being at home on a full-time basis. As a result, this led to the sole BWM wanting to gain some form of involvement, demonstrating that they were almost trying to claw back their mothering role. This was particularly evident in the way they used checking and monitoring techniques over the father, by effectively micro managing his care of the children.

It is apparent from the findings that many of the women experienced negative emotions and feelings of guilt in relation to their identity as a BWM. This was highlighted in the way they talked about the difficulties they faced as a mother who was also simultaneously undertaking the breadwinner role. Furthermore, the findings clearly show how these conflicting responsibilities resulted in them developing negative thoughts and feelings about how they were coping as mothers. These particular findings illustrated how switching between these two roles was also not only difficult in a practical sense, but that it was equally difficult for the women on an emotional level. As a consequence, it was also obvious that this resultant guilt was clearly embedded in these women's psyches due to traditional gender ideologies and their own acceptance and compliance with these beliefs, and how these emotions were also intensified as a result of their breadwinning responsibilities and pressures. Moreover, the findings and the typology also indicated that although there were different types of BWM categorised within this study, the experiences surrounding guilt and negative emotions about how they were functioning as mothers were actually all very similar between the varying types of BWM. Nonetheless, again although there were clearly similarities simply due to the impact of their

breadwinning, there were again differences and variances here especially for the sole BWM due to having a partner who was the primary-carer of their children and who was therefore able to undertake all aspects of care, which also illustrated that having the availability of this care at home could actually help these BWM manage the tensions that occurred between their competing roles. Indeed, this clearly shows how the experience of the BWM is different and unique when compared to full-time mothers and also mothers who reside in paid employment, as there were clearly tensions between how the BWM coped with managing with these difficulties as these issues were specifically related to being a breadwinner. In addition, I argue how postfeminism could be used as a tool to gain a understanding of this phenomena, as the findings suggest these BWM clearly viewed these issues as 'personal problems' (Lewis 2018:24) rather than collective or shared problems.

The findings have shown how these women position themselves differently when compared to full-time mothers, and mothers in paid employment, therefore displaying their unique BWM identities. The findings have shown how those women who expressed negative views about full-time mothers wanted to distance themselves from this group of women in order to validate their own mothering identities, whereas those who voiced more supportive views about full-time mothers displayed a greater acceptance of traditional gender roles. When considering the postfeminist perspective in relation to this, the discussion argued that this could be understood by the notion of individual choice which suggests that women should be able choose if they wish to reside in paid employment or stay at home on a full-time basis. Moreover, this postfeminist position also suggests that if an individual is managing their own live via their own individual agency, then the overall outcome is one that is 'feminist' (Lazar, 2006).

Furthermore, the findings emphasise the connections between these women's parenting ideologies and their mothering identities. This was highlighted by the negative views that they voiced about nursery, emphasising that traditional forms of childcare were more superior than nursery care. The findings also revealed that these women were clearly able to influence decisions around childcare due to their financial power in the home. This was particularly evident for the sole BWM as they were the only person bring in an income to the home. As a consequence, they were therefore able to shape their childcare

strategies in order to meet their own notions of parenting ideologies. In addition, the study has demonstrated how, even though they were sole breadwinners and adopted egalitarian approaches to managing their families, the women expressed views and beliefs (specifically about nursery as a form of childcare) that highlighted an alignment to more traditional ideologies and conventional views of motherhood. Again, we can see how this links to postfeminism, as postfeminist characteristics are being displayed via the usage of 'personal problems' (Lewis 2018:24) and not collective strategies within their homes and family life to manage these attitudes and parenting ideologies towards childcare.

Finally, the findings revealed that there were clear links between these women's mothering identities and work identities, and their accounts have shown how they then use this to position their own BWM identity. This was apparent in the way that some of the women talked about their work identity providing them with something separate to their home life. The findings and typology also illustrated how those women who were academics stated that there were clear intersections between their identity and their work when they pointed out how their scholarly identity was clearly connected to their own unique and distinctive identity as an academic BWM. The discussion also pointed out how a deeper understanding from this could be gained from reflecting on the postfeminism perspective, which champions the 'notions of choice' and 'being oneself' and 'pleasing oneself' all of which are viewed as being central and closely aligned to postfeminism ideologies (Gill, 2007:153).

The findings from this study have shown that there was an increased sense of pressure on these BWMs as they were undertaking two conflicting and competing roles within the family. Furthermore, although all working mothers undoubtedly experience similarities, it is clear that these BWMs have a distinct and unique identity which is a result of the combination and complexities of the relationship that the role of mother and the responsibility of the breadwinner places on them. In addition, although breadwinning can be used as a way to understand these tensions, the discussion has also showed how the typology in this study can be used to help to understand the more nuanced differences between the lived realities of the BWMs who are also categorised and classified differently

Now that the thesis has provided an overview of the unique identities of breadwinning mothers, chapter six will move on to suggest that the gender of these women is more significant and therefore has more bearing than their breadwinning responsibilities.

Chapter 6

Ascribed Gender Roles – Why Gender is More Significant than Breadwinning

Introduction

This chapter will present the findings about ascribed gender roles from the perspective of breadwinning mothers (BWM). It will show how this group of women are conforming to traditional arrangements of work and family even though they occupy the family breadwinner role. By presenting this evidence the discussion will therefore reveal why these women's gender is more significant than their breadwinning status.

In order to demonstrate this, the chapter will firstly examine the worklife of these women, discussing the relevance of their gender role and the difficulties they experience at work due to being a breadwinner, and how this then leads to them conforming to traditional ideologies of work.

This will be demonstrated by presenting the accounts of these women when they specifically talk about the negative impact of having children on their careers. This includes aspects associated with having time out of the labour market during maternity leave. In addition, it will also explore the explanations provided about why they opted out of promotions, which resulted in slower career trajectories for many of the women.

The chapter will then move on to explore more issues linked to BWM's work lives by arguing that their accounts illustrate how an ideal employee remains more closely aligned to male characteristics and those with nominal caring and domestic responsibilities. This becomes particularly apparent in the way that these women were able to recall incidents and provide examples of difficulties they faced in their workplaces due to not meeting this masculine archetype.

The discussion will turn to the relevance of the women's gender role and the difficulties they experience at home due to being a breadwinner, and how this too leads to them conforming to and adopting more traditional ideologies within their family.

This will be demonstrated by presenting the accounts of these women when they specifically talk about the gendered role of motherhood. It will demonstrate how these women were conforming to their ascribed gender roles, regardless of them having the responsibility of being the breadwinner. Furthermore, the findings will highlight that due to the negative views that they encountered about working mothers, the women subsequently struggled to make positive connections between their breadwinning and mothering roles.

The chapter will then move on to show how these women were conforming to stereotypes about their gender by carrying out the majority of the housework within their homes. In order to explain this further, their accounts will show how they took control of their housework, believing that they performed housework duties to a higher standard when compared to their male partners. This becomes apparent from their accounts, which signal that they also experienced pressures to carry out housework, therefore displaying gender irrespective of their breadwinning demands.

The final element of this chapter concerning home life will discuss issues linked to these BWM leisure time. It will illustrate how aspects related to the ethic of care, and how factors linked to traditional gender views, play an important role in understanding the barriers these women face with regard to access to both leisure time and leisure opportunities.

Whilst discussing the aforementioned issues, the chapter will also reflect on the significance of postfeminism, individualization and the retraditionalization of gender, with the aim of highlighting how these particular perspectives help to provide a theoretical understanding of BWM's experiences and lived realities.

The overall discussion in this chapter will therefore show how these women occupy two roles that are clearly competing with each other, and that this remains fundamentally defined by societal norms about gender roles. It becomes noticeable that these women struggled to make sense of the relationship between their breadwinning role and their mothering role, especially because the views that support traditional gender roles ultimately mean that gaining a successful connection between the two responsibilities is actually incompatible and clearly mismatched.

The findings in this chapter will conclude that aspects centred around these women's ascribed gender ultimately have more bearing on their work and home life than their breadwinning role and the money that they contribute to the family through their employment.

6.1 Breadwinning Mothers' Work Lives - the Impact of Children

Issues surrounding working mothers have received much attention in the literature over the years, signalling that it continues to be a subject of interest and importance (Won, 2016; Lyonette, 2015; Crompton and Lyonette, 2010; Crompton, 2006; Oakley, 2005, Gattrell, 2005; Hakim, 2000; Hochschild, 1997). Furthermore, obstacles continue to be a reality for working mothers who have to manage childcare and domestic responsibilities alongside paid work, something that is clearly significant for breadwinning mothers who also experience the added financial responsibility.

The work of Lewis and Lewis (1996) refers to the term 'mommy tracks' to explain the damaging consequences on women's careers as a result of time out of the labour market due to having children, suggesting that working mothers return to inferior employment and are subsequently working below their potential. Moreover, the work of Cornelius and Skinner (2008) highlights that career breaks and, in particular, maternity leave often lead to barriers and obstacles for women's promotions. More recent studies (Herman and Webster, 2010; Tomlinson *et al.*, 2009) have also shown that many highly-qualified women leave their employment, and then opt to return to lower-skilled paid work at a later date when their caring commitments alter or become easier to manage.

The impact of children on BWM's careers was clearly relevant for the women in this study who, when questioned, talked about the issues around being a working mother. Indeed, the findings from this study indicated that the majority of women felt that having children had impacted negatively on their careers. Specific details about this are outlined in table 6.1 on the next page, which presents data on those who stated that yes, having children did impact negatively on their careers, and those who stated that there was no detrimental impact. The purpose of the table is to illustrate how the majority of women felt there had been a negative impact on their careers since having children.

Table 6.1 The Impact of Children on Breadwinning Mothers' Careers

Name	Occupation	Type of breadwinner	Children impacted on career - Yes
Louise	Academic	Sole breadwinner	Yes
Vanessa	Academic	Clear-cut breadwinner	Yes
Anne-Marie	Academic	Clear-cut breadwinner	Yes
Nicola	Academic	Clear-cut breadwinner	Yes
Zara	Academic	Clear-cut breadwinner	Yes
Rose	Academic	Single breadwinner	Yes
Samantha	Academic	Circumstantial breadwinner	Yes
Cassandra	Scientist/Academic	Clear-cut breadwinner	Yes
Sinead	Solicitor	Clear-cut breadwinner	Yes
Lucy	Runs own business	Minor breadwinner	Yes
Eileen	Apprenticeship Assessor	Circumstantial breadwinner	Yes
Natasha	Administrator	Single breadwinner	Yes
Sarah	Teacher	Clear-cut breadwinner	Yes
Rebecca	Bank Manager	Clear-cut breadwinner	Yes
			Children impacted on career – No
Joanne	Business Consultant	Clear-cut breadwinner	No
Emily	University Manager	Clear-cut breadwinner	No
Abby	Print Business Manager	Single breadwinner	No
Anna	Dentist	Sole breadwinner	No
Linda	Manager – NHS	Sole breadwinner	No
Melissa	Director – NHS	Sole breadwinner	No

For those women who talked about the negative impact of children on their careers, they specifically mentioned issues related to career progression. Whilst discussing this, they talked about the reasons for not taking on additional responsibility at work or going for promotions. The reasons that they provided were linked to the increased pressures that this would lead to, and the negative impact that it would have on their home life. Sarah, a teacher, talks openly about this issue:

I was ambitious but I've kind of been there, seen that, done it. I certainly wouldn't go any higher because I just don't think it's worth the kind of effort. Because I just see too many people kind of higher up and the things they have to do, you know, they have to sacrifice everything. It's just not worth it.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

Eileen, who now works part-time, also echoes these views about career progression when she talks about the adverse impact it would have had on her family life and also herself as a parent:

I absolutely loved having a high-profile job and sometimes I think that I could go back and do that and kind of climb the ladder a bit further when the kids are a bit older. But then having encountered this more enjoyable work/life balance that I've got at the moment, I don't know if I would ever want to do that again . . . You can still have children and progress if you want to, but it depends how much time and investment you want to spend at home even in terms of mental space in your head. I could do that now but I'd be a terrible parent. Not a terrible mother but a terrible parent and I don't want to do that. It's not about the hours that you spend at work. For me anyway it's the amount of headspace. I know what I'm like. You know. I could be a workaholic, you know, so I have to be very measured about what I do at work and very compartmentalistic about it.

(Circumstantial breadwinner with three children)

Both Sarah and Eileen stated that they decided not to progress further with their careers or take on added responsibility at work since having children. For Eileen, who works

part-time, her account reveals that in her current position she recognises that she is not working to her maximum potential and ability. This is highlighted by her acknowledging that she would find it too difficult to take on added responsibility and manage home and work effectively.

This notion of not meeting full working capability is also highlighted in the work of Darton and Hurrell (2005), who found that people who are employed on a part-time basis are most likely working below their potential. The accounts provided by Sarah and Eileen suggest that they recognise that taking on more accountability would have an adverse impact on them and their families. The work of Herman *et al.* (2013:473) also found this to be the case; their study points out that many women no longer wish to advance their careers, and they adopt the term ‘cul-de-sac’ to define this, describing it as something that is more ‘comfortable and leafy than a dead end but nevertheless does not lead anywhere’.

As a consequence, women like Sarah and Eileen who, in this study, identified with this notion of not working to their full capability, stating that they didn’t want to go for promotions, signal that increased financial remuneration is not the only factor that motivates them, and that their views about appropriate and good mothering are actually more significant.

However, additional findings that are also illustrated in the previous table indicate that there was a smaller group of women who had opposing views, and who stated that having children did not have a negative impact on their careers. One of these women was Joanne, whose husband works part-time and therefore adopts the main carer role. When talking about her situation, she maintains that having children did not impact negatively on her career. However, she does acknowledge that she too made a conscious decision not to progress beyond her current position and take on further responsibilities:

I was a director-level vice president when I had the kids. So I’ve continued at that level. And interestingly, since I’ve had the kids, I’ve had one promotion since but I’ve kind of got to the stage where I’ve thought I really don’t, you know, if I go to the next level, I would spend three days a week on a plane and I don’t want to

do that. And at a certain point that have I got capacity to earn more? Yes. Do I want to? No. Can I have a nice life with what I earn? Absolutely.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

It is therefore apparent that although Joanne feels that having children has not impacted on her career, she has also chosen – like Sarah and Eileen – not to progress further, acknowledging that she is content with her current role and also the money it provides, and that the trade-off would not be worth it.

The findings also illustrate that all eight of the academic BWM talked about the difficulties in getting promoted, stating that having children clearly had a negative and adverse impact on their careers. This was illustrated by them acknowledging that their career trajectory had been slower when they compared themselves to their male colleagues or those colleagues without children.

Several studies also appear to support this finding, acknowledging that there are clear barriers for women and mothers in academia and that female academics are therefore less likely to gain higher positions and secure promotions (Masson *et al.*, 2013; Baker, 2010; Etzkowitz, 2008; Drago *et al.*, 2006; Anderson and Williams, 2001; Munn-Giddings, 1998; Leonard and Malina, 1994).

A possible explanation for this slower career trajectory is linked to academic promotions being largely based on publication and research output. The women in this study pointed out that due to them having time out of the labour market when they had children, their productivity and output was subsequently affected. This suggests that they are taking individual responsibility for the fact that the labour market is structured around the ideal of a worker who works continuously, full-time and with no breaks, meaning that they are presenting ideologies of the masculinised way of working. Cassandra talks specifically about this in relation to her own career path:

I've been slower than men at my equivalent stage, definitely. So I got promoted later than them because my

productivity was affected at the time. There's no doubt about that. And also I think at the time when the kids were young, you just don't have the motivation to put yourself in there.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

Cassandra's points are interesting and also resonate in the work of Herman *et al.* (2013:475), who note in their study that many women actually adopt a 'lying low' approach to their career strategy. As a consequence, they put their career on the backburner so that they can pick up their career again at a later and more appropriate time in their life course. This suggests that Cassandra was unable to become a fully reflexive worker who is adaptable and independent, as she lacked the required flexibility due to having children. Indeed, she was 'charged with a fuller compliment of domestic and familiar responsibility' (Banks and Milstone, 2011:82) which inhibited both her ability and also her desire to become a fully reflexive and individualized worker.

This finding is also noted in the case of Vanessa, who also talks about how male equivalents and women without children have advanced quicker than her in their careers. Whilst discussing this she also acknowledges that she found the transition back into work after having children difficult, stating that she had to make a conscious effort to re-establish herself back into work. This in turn seems to suggest that the prevailing narratives mean that the system itself which actually holds women back is not blamed, but rather the women's own individual 'choice' are, meaning that patriarchal systems are therefore never actually challenged:

Well taking the time out. I mean if I compare myself with men who studied with me, who graduated at the same time and went into the same career path, they're all far ahead of me . . . And I think I hope that's not due to me being stupid . . . You lose the connection and it takes time to re-establish that. Then so that's during maternity, taking maternity leave, but even afterwards with very small children you just – I mean basically in the first

years I just had to get the work done that was screaming at me and I never worried about research. It was just so far away. There was no way I could – because it's not just about sitting down and starting to write. I mean you need time to think about it and I never had that. So in that sense yeah certainly it had negative consequences if I compare myself to a single woman just dedicated to her career. I certainly wouldn't want to have done that, but – yeah.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with three children)

Rose also echoes these views when she talks about how she had to change her research subject when she had her children, as it was simply not practical or workable. Furthermore, when talking about these issues Rose also discusses some of the difficulties she faces in attending conferences and enhancing her external presence, all of which are considered to be important elements of academia and that are clearly beneficial for career progression:

Oh it would have been definitely easier without [having children]. I mean if I look at my people who started at the same time as me, most of them are professors. They've been professors for a long time. Oh without a doubt . . . I mean my original research was in West Africa. Well when I had Poppy [daughter] I had to completely change my career path and started doing other stuff because I couldn't be going out there doing, you know, going out there for months on end . . . I've had to really carve out something that works for me and I think women still have to do that, you know, even though the policies are in place and even though it's definitely getting easier, but I still think those pressures of – If you want to progress in academia and get up to the senior levels, the things that you have to do make it very hard: a) if you have children, b) if you're a single

parent . . . because things like travelling, attending the international conferences, going away, you know.

(Single breadwinner with two children)

Nicola also acknowledges the negative impact of having children on her career and promotions too, which helps to illustrate this perspective of reflexive and individualized workers being at an advantage. Whilst talking about this, she also discusses some of the difficulties she thinks exist in networking and maintaining the external commitments that are required therefore recognising how the system of work is set up against her:

Well actually I think it does make it a lot harder. You take a career break and in this type of job where you need to be publishing, you need to be networking externally, you need to take on external commitments as well as internal ones. All those things are quite important as part of the profile of being an academic. If you take a year out of academia, a career break, then it's much harder to get back into those things. I felt that when I returned to work in the first year it was all about almost learning the job again . . . but in a way it's about finding yourself, who you are in terms of the job that you do and the direction you want to take it and therefore I think in terms of career progression, as a woman in academia, that has a significant impact on your chances for promotion and it's not taken into recognition when you do apply for an internal promotion as I found out because I applied through the sort of internal promotion round. I applied for a senior lectureship and I did and they actually ask you when you complete the paperwork, 'Have you taken time out for whatever reason?' So I flagged up that I'd had a career break but that wasn't really taken into consideration in terms of my eligibility for promotion. (Clear-cut academic with one child)

Other aspects linked to academic exchange schemes are something that Samantha talks about, highlighting how having children makes them too difficult or unrealistic to take part in, again illustrating this notion of the disadvantages that these women experienced in not being able to fulfil the characteristics of being an individualized and reflexive worker. Whilst talking about this, she discusses a male friend who started his career at the same time as her, and compares how different their choices have been with regard to accepting and even taking part in these types of opportunities:

We started jobs around the same time and this guy stayed single and childless and he was spending the year at Princeton on one of these exchange schemes. So you can go and be a visiting scholar for a year. It's just lovely. It was just gorgeous, you know, all these wonderful facilities. A year of just research time with no expectations. It was just lovely. But I can't do that because I can't move my whole family and things like that especially now they're in school. So that wouldn't happen.

(Circumstantial breadwinner with three children)

This view is also echoed by Vanessa, who acknowledges the difficulties associated with attending academic conferences and academic exchanges, pointing out that it is too difficult to manage with young children:

Yeah. Again that is something that has become easier as the children get older. I mean I think I didn't go to conferences for at least three years or something and this has, I think, had a negative impact. That goes back to the career thing. Also what I'd love to do and I think would benefit my CV immensely, would be to go for half a year to Stanford or supposing I could get the scholarship or whatever it is, the grant, but like now – I think the bigger

impact probably career wise is the fact that you can't go away for half a year or even a year. I can't be bothered to sort out schools and everything for that time and I don't think it would do the children very good. So this mobility that people expect from top academics is something I can't do.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with three children)

Again, this was the case for Rose who, as a single academic breadwinner, also discussed the difficulties associated with attending conferences, even now that her children are older and more independent:

Yeah. Like there's a big conference. I say to the kids, 'Look. This year I've got to go to it. You're going to have to stay with your dad.' The trouble is, the big geography conference starts the day they go back to school. If it was at any other time it would be fine. But I say to them, 'You've got to go this year', and my son's face . . . So I just thought, you know, 'Do you know what? He's thirteen and he still needs support.' I just thought sod it, its not important. It's more important that he feels okay.

(Single breadwinner with two children)

The majority of the women felt that having children had a negative impact on their careers. Interestingly, the discussion has illustrated that for all of the academic BWM, having children had clearly impacted negatively on their publication and research output. They pointed out that having time out for maternity leave, caring responsibilities, re-establishing themselves, and aspects linked to attending conferences and having an external presence, had all meant that dedicating time to their research and career was difficult. As a consequence, this particular group of academic women stated that having children had clearly had a negative impact on the likelihood of them gaining a promotion

and a positive career trajectory. The findings around this theme demonstrate that the women struggled with becoming reflexive and individualized workers that required complete flexibility. Indeed, this suggests that becoming an individualized and reflexive worker is 'a gendered process' as it relies on women taking on a greater share of the domestic load in the home which subsequently results in men finding it easier to occupy reflexive occupations (Adkins 1999:127). Moreover, this too demonstrates why a retraditionalization process was taking place, and how the traditionalization of the work in the economic sphere is 'going hand in hand' with a 'retraditionalization of gender' (Adkins, 1999:119). In fact, this can be clearly seen from these BWM accounts as traditional workplace communities that promote individualization and reflexive workers clearly rely on the domestic labour undertaken by women in the home. When using the typology to understand this further, it is clear that the sole BWM who had a partner at home enabled them to behave more like the masculine idealised worker as their partner was able to take on responsibility at home, meaning that the sole BWM could concentrate on their work responsibilities. However, this was clearly not the case for single BWM who had no support at home and who were still having to manage the full load of both work and home spheres.

It therefore becomes apparent from these women's accounts that they were noticeably conforming to traditional forms of work due to the negative impact that having children had placed on their careers. This is particularly evident when we hear how some of the women chose not to progress further with their careers, feeling that their family would undoubtedly experience a trade-off and detrimental knock-on effect if they did secure a promotion or take on added responsibility at work. Furthermore, it is noticeable from their narratives that these women were obviously experiencing difficulties, and also struggling to cope with the demands of their two opposing roles as a breadwinner and as a mother, therefore signalling that their ascribed gender was actually a more significant factor than the impact of their breadwinning earnings.

A further theme to emerge from the findings that also illustrates some of the barriers at work for these BWMs was the notion of the ideal employee. The chapter will now proceed to discuss some of these findings further.

6.2 Breadwinning Mothers' Work Lives – The Ideal Worker Archetype and Visibility in the Workplace

The work of Cornelius and Skinner (2008:147) argues that women have to 'make space' for their careers due to their caring and domestic responsibilities, whereas men are able to follow more 'normative' paths. Lewis (2001) also echoes this view, stating that the ideal worker has male characteristics, as he is able to focus solely on his role as an employee due to him being able to work on a full-time basis and have nominal domestic obligations. This notion also appears to resonate in more recent literature, which highlights that concepts of the ideal employee are based on workers having an unbroken career path and consistent visibility at work (Lewis and Humbert, 2010; Guillaume and Pochic, 2009).

Again, as argued in section 6.1 of this chapter, these barriers and the male model of work demonstrates why these women struggle to become individualized and reflexive workers and why a retraditionalization of gender is therefore being demonstrated. Indeed, the findings from this study suggest that some of the acknowledged barriers that exist in the workplace are linked to people's views concerning what it is to be an ideal employee. Aspects linked to face time, hours spent in the office and also visibility at work were all seen to influence people's attitudes. Due to these views, and the existing perceptions of what constitutes a good employee, this was clearly difficult for the women in this study because of their family and childcare commitments.

The sole-breadwinners in the typology is of particular use in helping to illustrate this notion of being an ideal employee, as they are clearly different in the way that they are able to use their financial contribution which may provide them with greater power when making decisions about childcare strategies.

Nonetheless the fact that the ideal employee is more closely aligned with and geared up to male characteristics is clearly problematic for all of the women in this study, whose gender role dictates that they should also be adopting the role of mother and all the duties that are associated with motherhood. This problem is also further exacerbated by their breadwinning responsibilities and the importance placed on both of their roles for the family unit.

Samantha, an academic, specifically talks about these issues when she reflects on the negative impact of an ex-boss who was also her direct line manager at the time. In doing so, she discusses why she felt she did not fit the ideal employee archetype, pointing out the negative impact this then had on her opportunity for promotion and career path. It is apparent from Samantha's account that she clearly experienced difficulties in meeting the expectations of being an individualized and reflexive worker:

I was much slower being promoted to senior lecturer than I should have been and I still feel a bit angry about that . . . my former head of department who was a woman, but she belonged to that generation of women who did make a choice of either having a career or having children. So she was a single women without children and she was not very supportive of mothers in the department and she would quite often make comments about, 'Well you can see whose car is in the car park at 7.30 in the morning and those are the people who are really dedicated to work'. And she would talk about a particular male contemporary of mine as being very dedicated and he got promoted and she never supported my promotion even though I knew that my publications were actually a lot better than his. But because I couldn't be as visible. We also had a period where I was, before the boys were born I moved here with Ruby [daughter]. Colin [partner] was still in London for about two years. So I couldn't stay for seminars . . . I couldn't go to any conferences. I couldn't take up any invitations to go and give a visiting seminar or anything like . . . So I could do my day but I couldn't do any of the extra things that you need to do and it reduced my visibility . . . I don't think she thought I was being lazy or anything, . . . She probably thought I should have decided not to have children if I was serious

about my career. Although she never said anything like that. I'm putting words in her mouth [laughter].

(Circumstantial breadwinner with three children)

Anne-Marie, an academic, also talks about similar issues and her views around employers' attitudes, illustrating how she feels the ideal employee is clearly male. She makes this more apparent when she talks specifically about the situation and circumstances she feels that she, and also other working mothers, encounter at the university she is employed at:

I think that universities have taken delight on two occasions of promoting somebody who had small children. It's like, 'Look. There's no issue here' and . . . we know there's a huge issue on equal pay.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

Louise acknowledges this too, highlighting that a problem exists and that there are barriers that women with children in academia experience when they go for promotions. She states:

Right. I mean promotion's complicated enough for women I think in universities. It's not straightforward at all. [. . .] I have been promoted. My experience is that it's been – well I should say that the school's going for a gender equality mark. So actually we've been looking quite closely at all of this stuff. So all women in this department would say the same thing which is they feel completely supported at departmental level but once their promotion applications go out into the system in the university, the data tells us that men get through more easily. Men in this school are eighty per cent more likely to get promotion first time round than the women and I

think I'm right in saying that that's across the university. But I think a lot of people were quite surprised by that data. I mean you have to be a bit careful about it because we're talking very small numbers but you know. My experience has been I was appointed by a female head and then I've had two male heads since and actually under all three of them it's been different but good.

(Sole breadwinner with one child)

The accounts provided by these women clearly indicate that negative attitudes towards working mothers exist, and that they can also have an adverse impact on career progression. Attitudes about what constitutes an ideal employee are ingrained in people's mindsets, which means that these women have encountered the detrimental consequences of this. It is apparent from Samantha's case that face time and visibility do not equate to productivity and output, as she outlines that even though she had produced more work than her male equivalent, she was bypassed for promotion whilst he was put forward. Furthermore, this also suggests that the attitudes of senior management and staff that make decisions about promotions have ultimately influenced the direction and level of success of these women's careers, and the systems in place which influence this are clearly geared up to favour male characteristics and the male model of work. It is also apparent that a theoretical understanding of this can be gained by acknowledging that these women clearly experienced difficulties as they were unable to become fully reflexive or individualized workers due to their domestic responsibilities. In fact, these women's accounts show how they perceived that male colleagues did not encounter the same difficulties, and that a retraditionalizing effect is therefore taking place due to this (Adkins, 1999). Moreover, this too seems to suggest how individualization and reflexive forms of work can act as barriers for women, fuelling gender discrimination (Banks and Milstone, 2011).

In summary the majority of women in this study felt that having children had a negative impact on their careers. This was apparent in the decisions that some of the women took to not progress further with their careers due to their family commitments. All eight of the academic breadwinning mothers who were interviewed stated that having children

clearly had a detrimental knock-on effect on their publication and research output, which inevitably meant that gaining a promotion was highly unlikely and mostly unachievable. The findings also highlight that the ideal worker is more closely aligned to male characteristics, and this is clearly a barrier that many of these women experienced due to the pull of their family and caring commitments. As a consequence, this has highlighted some of the issues and problems that these women face in the workplace, and also acts to illustrate why their gender is clearly more significant than their breadwinning status as they are unable to meet the expectations of this male archetype.

6.3 Breadwinning Mothers' Home Lives – The Gendered Role of Motherhood

Regardless of their breadwinning obligations the women in the study were also conforming to very traditional roles within the home. Sharpe (1976:56) states that the ideology of motherhood is seen as 'natural' and something that cannot be challenged. Other literature has highlighted that motherhood is seen as a turning point that affects a woman's life, highlighting their distinctiveness when compared to men and also to women without children (Baxter *et al.*, 2015; Cusk, 2001; Ribbens, 1994; Cosslett, 1994; Phoenix *et al.*, 1991; Oakley, 1981).

Questions about the appropriateness and acceptability surrounding motherhood and employment are often debated as a result of these opinions. The belief that the father is the person who links the family to the outside world, and the mother is the person who maintains the emotional stability of the family, are traditional positions that still achieve credibility and standing in twenty-first century society.

Traditional beliefs about motherhood are also something that the women within this study discussed when they outlined some of the negative and gendered comments they had experienced or heard from other parents, or from older people who expressed more traditional views about motherhood. The table below divides these individual responses into two groups: those who had encountered negative comments, and those who had not.

* refers to academic breadwinning mothers.

Table 6.2 Negative and Gendered Comments About Working Mothers

Experienced negative comments	Did not experience negative comments
Rebecca (clear-cut breadwinner)	Eileen (circumstantial breadwinner)
Zara (clear-cut breadwinner)*	Lucy (minor breadwinner)
Samantha (circumstantial breadwinner)*	Cassandra (clear-cut breadwinner)*
Rose (single breadwinner)*	Anne-Marie (clear-cut breadwinner)*
Abby (single breadwinner)	Nicola (clear-cut breadwinner)*
Joanne (clear-cut breadwinner)	Vanessa (clear-cut breadwinner)*
Received negative comments from older generation/traditional views	Emily (clear-cut breadwinner)
Linda (sole breadwinner)	Sinead (clear-cut breadwinner)
Melissa (sole breadwinner)	Sarah (clear-cut breadwinner)
Anna (sole breadwinner)	Louise (sole breadwinner)*
Natasha (single breadwinner)	

It is apparent that when reflecting on table 6.2 with regard to the typology of BWM, that no real commonalities or themes emerged between specific types of BWM in relation to their experiences of negative and gendered comments about working mothers. Indeed, the findings show that half of the BWM (who were also classed into varying categories of the typology) explicitly stated that they had directly experienced or encountered negative comments about mothers in paid employment. Due to this sample of women occupying the family breadwinner role, these comments are especially pertinent, namely because of the importance placed on ensuring their ongoing employment. An example of this is seen when Samantha discusses her experience of this at mother-and-baby groups:

Certainly . . . for example when I was on maternity leave and I used to go to these mother-and-baby groups, and I would hear people's comments all the time about, 'Well how I could never just dump my child in a nursery. For me the most important thing is the children', 'Oh well no. Not for me. For me the most important thing is my own ambition.' [Laughter] So there's this kind of implied criticism of people who make other kinds of choices and the suggestion that you don't care about your children or people say, 'I don't know why people have children if they're not going to look after them'. Which again they wouldn't say

that to a man. They would never say that he should give up but it is okay for women.

(Circumstantial breadwinner with three children)

It is apparent from Samantha's position, and the other women who had similar views, that they were clearly aware of the issues they faced when trying to manage their two competing roles. Samantha felt that opinions and beliefs about the role of the mother were clearly gendered, stating that a man or father would not experience the same type of criticism. It is also clear that these women felt some form of pressure when hearing these views from other parents or other mothers. These findings show that due to their breadwinning responsibilities, the choices that these women had made in order to manage work and home were obviously shaped by their own personal and financial circumstances and intensified by them undertaking the breadwinner role.

The findings from the women's accounts also indicate that some of the negative views that they had experienced tended to come from people who were older, or who had more traditional views about motherhood. This was clearly the case for Anna, a dentist, who is also the sole breadwinner for her family, and whose husband Liam gave up his job as a mechanic to look after their two daughters. Anna shares her experience of this by discussing a conversation she had with a male patient whilst at work that morning:

I had a patient this morning I was telling our situation to and he was like, 'Oh I think men are totally ill-equipped for looking after children'. He said, 'Or maybe men of my generation'. He was probably late-fifties.

(Sole breadwinner with two children)

When relaying this conversation Anna appeared not to be too concerned or bothered by her patient's comments, and she was also tolerant towards the negative attitude and view of her family situation and circumstances. Anna appeared to recognise that her situation was probably not considered to be the typical method of managing family life, meaning that she was more open and accepting of this type of opinion.

In addition to the difficulties associated with negative views of mothers in paid employment, mothers also face inconsistent views and opinions about the role of motherhood. This is acknowledged in the work of Johnson and Johnson (1980), who argue that conflicts occur when mothers are exposed to contradictory beliefs and ideals. They explain that educated women who choose to work are deemed to be shunning their parenting responsibilities, as they are focusing on their careers at the expense of their children. Conversely, educated mothers who do not work are seen as not making the most of their educational achievements and not contributing fully to society.

These polar positions appear to heighten the difficulties and decisions mothers are faced with about work. It is also apparent how a postfeminism perspective can be used to gain a greater understanding of this particular phenomena, as this seems to suggest that there is a requirement that working mothers should be able to be 'doing' both masculine and feminine concurrently (Lewis, 2018), and if they can't, then they are clearly failing. It is therefore apparent why this leaves many mothers questioning their own circumstances, wondering if they have made the right choices. However, although this may be the case for some working mothers, this issue is clearly more complex for the women in this study. An explanation for this can be seen when we examine the lack of choice that these women have with regard to managing work alongside motherhood because of the importance placed on their breadwinning.

The literature also highlights that mothers face external pressures via the media and medical publications, which provide images and advice about the ideologies of good mothering (Phoenix *et al.*, 1991; Marshall, 1991; Sharpe, 1976). These types of images and information professionalise motherhood and place mothers under pressure to perform and act as 'super' women or 'yummy mummies'. Indeed, this archetype is obviously unrealistic and unachievable for many mothers, and even more so for the mothers in this study, who are already trying to manage two roles simultaneously.

Moreover, more recent studies (Baxter *et al.*, 2015; Schober and Scott, 2012; Moors, 2003) have also illustrated how the transition into motherhood has been associated with an increase in traditional gender-role attitudes. These particular studies point out some of

the potential barriers and difficulties that exist for mothers who are in paid employment, therefore suggesting that traditional gender beliefs are still clearly being reinforced.

When discussing gendered views, the women who were interviewed also talked about the role of the father in relation to other people's views and attitudes, suggesting that fatherhood is experienced differently to motherhood as it is still considered 'normal' for a father to be less involved with his children, whilst still being viewed as a good father. Indeed, Gregory and Milner's (2008) comparison study of the UK and France shows that although men's contribution and involvement with their children has increased, it does not appear to correlate with the increased levels of female employment participation. This study suggests that although positive change is occurring, there is still some headway to be made to help facilitate and ease the burden of childcare for working mothers, which again appears to correlate with the findings of this particular study of BWMs.

However, there are some positive signals; more recent literature has highlighted the emergence of a reconstruction of fatherhood, supporting the benefits of the positive involvement of fathers (Fabricius *et al.*, 2010; Pleck, 2010; Burgess, 2009; Morgan *et al.*, 2009; Diener *et al.*, 2008; Flouri, 2006; Ang, 2006). Furthermore, we have seen how labels such as 'new man' and 'involved fatherhood' have emerged in order to describe those men who take on and share childcare tasks equally, and which also correlate with postfeminist perspectives which seems to encourage the role of the father.

The work of French (1990:8) provides an insightful view of what is meant by the term 'new man' and the way that it has acted to present fathers and men in a more attractive way:

In general the new man concept seemed nothing more than an attempt to grab the potent mother-child imagery and remake it in masculine terms, hence all those absurd photographs showing muscle bound half dressed men brandishing a baby as if it were the FA cup. Even those defending the imagery talked of the baby as a new accessory.

Moreover, we can also see how this notion of promoting seemingly attractive fathers and ‘new men’ links to the postfeminist perspective. Indeed, it is also apparent that successful postfeminist women are presented as ‘having it all’, something which is often highlighted and projected via the form of glamorous celebrities (Lewis and Simpson, 2017). What is more this postfeminist perspective also seems to suggest that commercialised forms and images of sexuality are therefore clearly embraced.

When considering the concept and notion of ‘involved fathers’ and the ‘new man’, Joanne reflects on her own family experience which suggests that she may be reliant on the support and labour of her ‘postfeminist husbands’, (Dow, 2006: 121).— her husband Angus works part-time and is the main carer of their two boys – and how she thinks people’s attitudes have changed over the years in relation to the role and level of involvement of fathers:

It’s interesting because when we started the kids were at school or nursery, Angus used to joke. There’s like thirty women and three blokes. [. . .] Over the years it’s changed a lot and you now go to the school gates at pick-up time and it’s 50/50 and sometimes 60/40 the other way round. So I think it has changed dramatically over the last ten years.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

Linda, a sole breadwinner whose husband Simon looks after their three children full-time, also discusses and reflects on her own personal experience of having an involved father and what it has meant for them as a family:

I think the children have benefited from being able to know their dad I think a lot more than other children do because they’ve spent a lot of time with him. So I think that’s been a real plus, real bonus, and they are really close and it’s lovely to see.

(Sole breadwinner with three children)

Anna also talks about having a full-time stay-at-home father, and points out the reasons why she feels that men and fathers are more than capable of managing the home and children:

If I think that a woman can do any job, you know, can be an astronaut or can pilot a ship or whatever, then I have to be prepared to think that a man can stay at home and look after children and look after the house . . . and they can.

(Sole breadwinner with two children)

In addition, Zara discusses the important role that her husband Jerry plays in rearing her son, acknowledging what a good father he is and highlighting how involved he is with their son's care and how he often takes the lead, especially at times when she is busy at work:

Jerry actually gets up with him much more often than I do. He does more of the early mornings and more of the getting up in the middle of the night, especially this time of year because it's so full-on with work. This is really the busiest three weeks of the entire year in lots of ways with the massive marking that I have to get on with. Dissertation chapters to read and never-ending. So partly because of the time of year he's doing probably three-quarters of them, two-thirds maybe, of the early mornings, middle-of-the-night stuff but he's better with him as well. He knows him better. He's better able to deal with him really than I am I think.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

Zara's account also appears to support the work of Lewis (1986), who argues that those

fathers who organise themselves around their wife's employment are more likely to have a higher involvement in childcare. However, this particular aspect appears to be more complex for Zara, as she also signals that she lacks confidence in her own ability as a mother. This is noticeable in her account, where she states that her husband is better at dealing with their son's care, pointing out that she feels he knows their son better. A possible explanation for her experiencing these feelings may be linked to her husband providing more of the childcare, and her not being as closely involved due to her work commitments and breadwinning pressures.

Further discussion around fathers' involvement is indicated in the findings; there was an acknowledgement from the women that the fathers were also spending a lot of time with their children. The women then stated that this had enabled the fathers to build strong bonds and relationships with their children. As a consequence, these fathers were able to recognise the importance of maintaining close ties with their children. Maushart (2002:132) supports this finding, arguing:

once they had begun to undertake a substantial amount of childcare most fathers were prepared to continue doing so because they had begun to realise the long-term benefits of this genuine intimacy with their children.

However Linda, a sole breadwinner and mother of three children who had previously acknowledged the positive benefits of having a full-time stay-at-home father, also talked about feelings of resentment she had towards her husband Simon. She pointed out that although the decision had been made that he would be the main carer, she experienced times when this was an issue and problem for her.

The work of Cox (2011) also discusses this concept and argues that mothers who work often feel uncomfortable about not being proper mothers, and that they can experience anxiety surrounding how their children are cared for, reinforced by social expectations that the mother is the most fitting person to care for her own children. Further studies have also found this to be the case (Burikova and Miller, 2010; Macdonald, 2010; Parreñas, 2001), verifying that the mother can develop feelings of jealousy and

resentment if she isn't undertaking the central caring role of her children. Linda's account below discusses her own individual feelings and actual experience of this:

I don't know how this sounds really, but people always say, 'Oh isn't Simon great for giving up his job? Doesn't he do a great job? As he looks after the children.' And I think, 'Yeah but nobody acknowledges the sacrifices I've made so that he could do that . . . although he's the one that's given up his job and that is a massive thing, whereas a woman would give up their job and nobody would think anything of that. That would just be the norm. I've got lots of friends from school, they don't work because their husbands are their main earner, but nobody acknowledges that must be quite hard sometimes and actually – I've made a sacrifice because I've sacrificed to have my children.'

(Sole breadwinner with three children)

It is apparent from Linda's account that she has clearly struggled with handing over the main carer role to her husband Simon, as it resulted in her moving away from what she views to be the models of standard motherhood. It is evident that Linda also views this as a sacrifice she has had to make in order to sustain her breadwinner role for the overall benefit of the family. It is also obvious that this too resonates with the postfeminist perspective and that working mothers experience problems in seemingly 'having it all', and that it clearly comes at a cost (Sorensen, 2017). It is apparent that this is especially evident in Linda's case, due to the way that she outlines the personal 'sacrifice' she felt she had to make. Furthermore, it is also noticeable that this is compounded by the contradictory responsibilities that the role of mother and breadwinner have placed on her, leading to the development of emotions such as hostility and resentment.

In addition, Linda also expressed views about her husband Simon taking on the care of the children full-time which showed an awareness of the implications of gendered opinions:

He's been fine with it. I think the only thing he does say, he doesn't want people to think he's lazy and that he doesn't want to work because that's not the reason, because there are benefit scroungers that we all know and don't love, and he doesn't want to be badged as one of those. He doesn't want to be badged as though he's just off work because he can't be bothered to get a job or – So I always make sure I say to people that yes Simon's stayed home because that was a conscious decision we made for him to give up his job. It wasn't because he couldn't get a job or lost his job, because I do feel for Simon that way because I think he does feel a little bit – There are more and more men looking after the children, but it's still quite unusual . . . Simon's found it fine. He just doesn't want to be labelled as something he's not because he's not lazy.

(Sole breadwinner with three children)

Linda and Simon's case relates to the work of Dienhart (1998), which also argues that in those relationships in which the father is the primary carer and the wife is the breadwinner, the father is usually happy with his role as the main carer as this is a choice that they have made. However, although Linda was able to recognise the clear benefits of having Simon as the primary carer of their children, we can see that the issue is actually more complex. This becomes apparent as we have seen that Linda felt she had made sacrifices in relation to her relationship with their children and also her role as mother due to her being the sole breadwinner.

To summarise, we can see from the findings that half of the women interviewed recalled occasions when they had experienced negative views about working mothers. It is also apparent that, on occasions, these views were expressed by people with more traditional beliefs about the role of the mother. Furthermore, it is also evident that these opinions are sometimes endorsed by the media and medical publications, which subsequently act to professionalise motherhood. In addition, we have also seen how the discussion has made links to the postfeminist perspective, and how the accounts from these BWM seem to

suggest that there is a requirement for them to be ‘doing’ femininity alongside masculinity (Lewis, 2018).

The data has also shown how some of the women discussed the role of the father and how this impacted on their experience of motherhood. This was particularly evident in the ways they talked about how the role of the father had changed over the years, whilst also discussing the positive elements of having an involved father for them and their children. However, although they were aware of the benefits of having an involved father, the findings also suggest that some of them struggled with handing over the caring responsibilities. This resulted in a build up of conflicting emotions such as lacking confidence in their own abilities as mothers and also sometimes feeling resentment towards the father, who was now adopting the primary caregiver role. The discussion therefore pointed out that this could be understood by reflecting on the postfeminist perspective, due to issues and difficulties associated with ‘having it all’ and how this ultimately comes at a cost (Sorensen, 2017) for some of these BWM.

It is therefore noticeable from these findings that the gendered role of motherhood means that these women were conforming to traditional ideals in the home as a consequence of their ascribed gender. The negative attitudes that they had encountered resulted in them experiencing pressures that were reinforced by the fact that many of them were not the main carers of their children. Consequently, they then displayed characteristics that suggest they were also struggling to make positive connections between their mothering role and their breadwinning role due to the contradictory nature of these two responsibilities.

Furthermore, it could similarly be argued that this struggle and difficulty would not be something that a breadwinning father would experience or have to face as it does not conflict with his ascribed gender role. This in turn illustrates the significance of the women’s gender in shaping their views of motherhood, notwithstanding their increased financial earnings and upholding the breadwinning responsibilities in their homes.

6.4 Breadwinning Mothers' Home Lives – Housework

Women's employment participation and earnings have increased, yet women still spend more of their time doing housework than men, signalling that housework is seen as women's work (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Kan *et al.*, 2011; Harkness, 2008; Gupta, 2007).

Many of the women in this study similarly talked about how they were the person who took control of the housework. Some of the women talked about this specifically, drawing on examples such as trying to tidy the house before going to work, and also stating that they were usually the person who self-initiated housework.

Although they talk about their husbands and partners carrying out housework, their accounts highlight how the main responsibility for organising housework and managing it still fell to them. Similar findings have also been observed by Lyonette and Crompton (2015), who argue that women are still carrying out more housework than men regardless of their employment hours and earnings, and that they also feel responsible for organising it.

Many of the women in this study talked about how they coped with and managed housework alongside their other commitments. The women discussed aspects such as not wasting time, being constantly busy and also always finding something in the home that required their attention. In addition, they also talked about the pressures that they put themselves under, and the negative impact it had on them, meaning that they sometimes struggled or found it difficult to switch off or relax. Coltrane (2000) also discusses this, pointing out that there is clearly a disproportionate level of housework sharing in the home, with women undertaking more housework that leads to them exposing themselves to the increased threat of tension and depression.

In order to explain this further the chapter will now move on to discuss how these women would take control of the housework, therefore illustrating the gendered views they had about domestic chores.

6.4.1. Control and Housework

Lyonette and Crompton (2015) point out that the notion of male incompetence is used as an excuse to allow men not to share the domestic load of housework. Other literature has also highlighted how women are sometimes unwilling to relinquish their housework duties, as they feel that their husband's standards are second-rate when compared to their own (Coltrane, 2000; Allen and Hawkins, 1999; Hays, 1996; Haas, 1992; Hawkins and Roberts, 1992; Ferree, 1991).

This was also a theme that emerged from this study, with some women stating that they were better at performing housework than their partners. The explanations and justifications that the women provided to support this claim were that they felt they had higher standards, and that they were also able to identify what housework needed carrying out, as their partners sometimes failed to be aware of this.

As a result, this signalled that the women wanted to maintain some form of control over their housework and how it was carried out. Explanations for this were associated with meeting societal gender norms and also retaining an acceptable standard of housework that would not reflect badly on them. Table 6.3 below, provides details of the women who expressed views about why their housework standards were superior when compared to their male partners. It is apparent that when reflecting on this table with regard to the typology of BWM, that there appears to be commonalities between clear-cut breadwinners. This is because the findings indicate that all of the women who stated that they wanted to maintain control over the housework were clear-cut breadwinners apart from one who was a sole breadwinner.

Table 6.3 Control and Housework

Maintaining 'Control' of Housework Women who stated that they are better at domestic duties compared to men due to having higher standards.	Sinead (clear-cut breadwinner) Sarah (clear-cut breadwinner) Joanne (clear-cut breadwinner) Emily (clear-cut breadwinner) Linda (sole breadwinner) Rebecca (clear-cut breadwinner)
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This can be seen in the case of Sinead, who has two daughters aged six and five, and who talks about her husband's inability to identify and complete housework tasks fully. She states that although her husband Eric will do some aspects of the laundry, he fails to follow the whole job through:

He puts the washing in the washing machine because he's got an OCD thing about it and then when it's dry he won't iron it, and if it's ironed, he just goes and dumps all the ironing or whatever he's washed in a great big mountain of crap on the spare bed which drives me potty.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

Sinead proceeds to talk further about these differences in standards between her and her husband, stating that if she did not work full-time then these issues would not be such a problem as she felt that she would be capable of organising the housework more effectively. Her feelings towards this indicate that there is clearly an acceptance and compliance to her gender role, whilst also simultaneously demonstrating some resistance to it, too:

I can't live with total chaos and it is total chaos and that's because I'm not in charge at the end of the day. If I was in charge at the end of the day, it wouldn't be total chaos. It's because – he tries his best bless him. I know he does, but he just doesn't do it the way a woman would do it.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

Sinead also talks about how she would organise her job around housework more, illustrating how her husband doesn't see housework as a priority and that her housework expectations are higher than his. She specifically talks about how she takes control of the housework on a Saturday morning when she is not at work:

The first thing I think about on a Saturday morning is, 'Right. I've got to get this house straight because it's—' And Eric will say, 'Do it tomorrow'. 'I can't.' My mind is like, 'Up. Jobs. Da-da-da. I've got to—' [. . .] You're still on a mission. [. . .] Eric thinks I'm a bit of a control freak but I would like things done my way. For example, I would like the towels folded up and put back on the towel rail. I would like him to stop building a mountain of clothes that I then have to spend hours. Just tidying as you go along is so helpful. Tidy as you go along.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

Finally, she also offers an insightful and amusing example, which she felt highlighted the differences in their attitudes and standards concerning housework and cleanliness and why she feels it is important to maintain control:

The toilet could have inches of you know what around it and he'd be oblivious to it.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

Sinead's accounts clearly suggest that she feels a need to maintain control over the housework. Interestingly, in her comment where she states that if she 'was in charge' that it 'wouldn't be total chaos', seems to signal that she would welcome the opportunity to be able to take charge of the housework and therefore embrace domesticity and femininity. Indeed, it is apparent that this view clearly resonates with the postfeminist woman, as the postfeminist individual is required to manage their career whilst upholding feminine behaviours and requirements (Gill and Scharff, 2001) something that is clearly demonstrated by Sinead via this notion of her wanting control over the housework.

This can also be seen in the case of Linda, whose husband Simon adopts the main carer role, as she echoes these feelings about cleaning standards and differences between men and women. In doing so, she states that her cleaning standards are far superior to his and

explains why she still maintains control over the housework, which again seems to suggest that this notion of embracing the postfeminist view of domesticity and femininity:

If it was left to Simon the house would not be tidy. He would clean it to his way of cleaning it and that's fine, but he's not good at putting things away. Things get left around. He picks something up off the floor and it goes on the nearest surface and I find bits of things everywhere and have to put them away. So I still maintain a certain standard and so some days I come home and I think, 'Oh I'll just have a quick wipe round the bathroom', or do those things at the weekend and I sweep up round the kitchen floor. Just general wipe round and things. So yeah. [. . .] That's me and there have been days when I have come home and said to Simon, 'This is not good enough'. [Laughter] I'm horrible.

(Sole breadwinner with three children)

The findings suggest that these women were still taking control of the housework even when their husbands or partners were at home on a full-time basis. We can see from the findings that there are recognised differences in housework, and the standards of housework between these men and women. It is also apparent that although these women are breadwinners, they still clearly feel the burden and responsibility of maintaining control of the standard of housework carried out in their homes. Furthermore, the typology is also useful in helping to highlight some of the variances between the different types of BWM's experience of housework and control. This can be seen in the case of Linda who is a sole BWM as she is able to say 'this is not good enough' about her husbands' housework standards - even if this is expressed somewhat flippantly! This can be more clearly understood by the appreciation that both her and her husband have effectively swapped roles, where she holds full responsibility for the financial earnings, and he has primary responsibility for childcare. Indeed, this is something that the other BWM types who reside in either dual earner or single earner households would not experience in the same way. For example, the findings suggest that sole breadwinners may therefore have to provide more direction and overseeing of the housework due to

their working commitments and also because their partner is at home on a full-time basis.

The reason why women feel responsible for housework can be understood when considering gender-role attitudes and why housework and domestic labour is linked to a woman's female and feminine identity. The work of Bittman *et al.* (2003:190) highlights this further, stating that the allocation of housework is brought about through the gender norms and beliefs that exist between the sexes, and that there is a 'tacit' assumption that the woman will perform all of the housework duties.

This was indeed apparent from some of the women's accounts, especially in Rebecca's case when she points out how her partner does not take much interest in helping with the housework. She talks about this specifically, stating that she has to ask him directly if she wants help, signalling that she is the person who is in control of the housework:

Because I'm still female and I think it's still very much about male and female roles isn't it. He is good if I ask him to do something but he wouldn't do any of the clearing of pots off the table or anything like that. I'd walk in and it'll be how it was when I left in the morning. So no. It's still my job and I have to ask him to do it . . . [laughs] I wouldn't expect him to do it because . . . he wouldn't do it to my standard anyway.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

Rebecca's case clearly has links to the literature; indeed, Coltrane's (2000) work suggests that men are less inclined to undertake the more everyday and routine household duties, whilst work carried out by Greenstein (2000) also notes that husbands or partners that hold more equal gender ideologies tend to perform more housework, and those husbands who hold more traditional ideologies would perform less housework. Rebecca's case clearly signals that even though she adopts an egalitarian approach to managing work and family, attitudes and beliefs about the roles of men and women clearly influence how these realities play out in practice. As a result, this then means that these egalitarian notions are not always transferred into the home and how domestic duties are allocated.

The issues associated with gender roles were an additional theme to emerge from the findings. This becomes especially evident in the way in which the women show how they were placing themselves under added pressure to carry out the housework due to their gender. This notion of pressure to carry out housework, as well as gender display, will now be explained further.

6.4.2 Pressures of Housework and Gender Display

Crompton and Harris (1999:106) argue that ‘good women’ are women who undertake domestic duties in the home. Oakley (2002, 1999) explains this notion further, stating that the perfect woman is described in a Victorian poem as ‘the angel in the house’ (Patmore, 1856) and that she sacrifices her own needs for the sake and happiness of her family. Crompton (2006:140) also argues that the ‘order and cleanliness’ of a person’s home are seen as a reflection of a woman’s competency as a wife and mother.

Other literature by Gatrell (2005:69) highlights how women like Nigella Lawson, the celebrity cook and writer, have transformed the notion of the ‘angel of the house’ by referring to the term ‘domestic goddess’, which aims to celebrate femininity and embrace domesticity whilst also highlighting how postfeminist perceptions are being played out, due to notion of upholding feminine behaviours (Gill and Scharff, 2001). However, the realities and daily commitments that many working women face make these ideologies and principles highly problematic.

The theme of gender roles and housework also emerged from the findings of this study. This was demonstrated by the importance the women placed on having a tidy and organised home. Furthermore, when discussing this they also signalled why they associated standards of housework with the role of the woman, suggesting that they experienced an internalised social pressure to comply to this ideal.

Due to this internalised pressure, the women were clearly conforming to their ascribed gender and therefore displaying gender in their beliefs about housework. Table 6.4 provides details of the women who expressed these views. It is apparent that when reflecting on this table with regard to the typology of BWM that there appears to be

commonalities between clear-cut breadwinners. Indeed, the findings indicate that all of the women who experienced ‘pressure’ and ‘gender display’, were actually all clear-cut breadwinners apart from one who was a minor breadwinner. What is more, this is also significant, as it mirrors the findings presented in table 6.3 about clear-cut breadwinner and ‘control of housework’.

Table 6.4 Pressure and Gender Display Through Housework

<p>‘Pressure’ and ‘Gender Display’ in Housework</p> <p>Maintaining housework standards.</p>	<p>Emily (clear-cut breadwinner) Nicola (clear-cut breadwinner) Lucy (minor breadwinner) Sinead (clear-cut breadwinner) Cassandra (clear-cut breadwinner) Zara (clear-cut breadwinner)</p>
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Emily, whose husband works part-time, talks about her circumstances. When asked whether she felt less pressure to carry out housework as she worked full-time and brought in more money to the home, she states that her financial contribution does not have any influence or leverage:

No. [. . .] But the odd thing about my husband, and I don’t know whether your man’s the same, but he’s convinced that he does everything . . . I still think if somebody comes round to the house and it’s a mess, that it reflects on me as the lady of the house [laughter].

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

It is clear from Emily’s dialogue that she feels that a level of importance is placed on keeping her home tidy and organised. She points out that if standards are not maintained in the home, she feels that it reflects on her negatively and that it is viewed as her responsibility. This therefore suggests that she is conforming to traditional gender ideologies due to her beliefs about housework and who should carry it out. Moreover, it also suggests how Emily was compliant with postfeminist perspectives as she wanted to uphold her femininity and domesticity via undertaking the housework, whilst also making

sure that others outside the home see that she is conforming to these norms. Indeed, this is clearly evident in her account especially where she talks about being the ‘lady of the house...’

This notion of wanting a tidy home is acknowledged by Bianchi *et al.* (2000) and was also echoed by Nicola, who has one daughter Ellie aged four. In discussing her circumstances, she outlines the reasons for having paid domestic help as a way of maintaining standards, and also in order for it to free up some time so that she can spend it with Ellie:

I have a cleaner who comes every other week . . . I think it was a joint decision but mainly in terms of the housework, which [laughs] fell to me, I just couldn't manage that and work full-time and look after Ellie. I'm very house proud. That's the first thing to say. Alasdair is less so, but it's not a criticism about him not being house-proud. It's just to him it's not a priority whereas for me it is and I want to come home to as clean a house as I possibly can bearing in mind you've got a little person running through it . . . It just makes a difference in terms again about me having quality of time with Ellie on the weekend. So I'm not spending time with my hands down the toilet [laughs] or having to do cleaning . . . I do a bit of cleaning still but I can do enough and I can manage that but having a cleaner has freed up the time to spend with Ellie.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

This notion of having a clean home and maintaining standards is also discussed by Oakley (2005), who notes that the media and also the impact of advertising and influence of people's attitudes towards housework adds pressure on people to undertake it to a high standard. In addition, Oakley's research (2005) also indicates that women can feel guilty, worried, miserable and depressed if they do not perform the housework to the standard

that they see as appropriate. Although the women in this study didn't discuss explicit feelings of stress or depression about housework, they did clearly associate negative feelings with housework, and viewed it as an additional pressure and source of conflict in their homes, indicating that they felt it was their responsibility to manage housework alongside their working commitments regardless of their breadwinning.

When talking about housework and the difficulties of being a working mother and maintaining housework standards, Zara, an academic, reflects on the possibility of having domestic help. Whilst talking about this she also refers to some historical images that have been portrayed of working mothers and their homes. Although the images Zara talks about are historical, she still felt that they had relevance for working mothers today:

I really think it [domestic help] would make things so much easier because it's such a point of friction between us. There's this famous poster. It's an anti-suffragette poster from Britain. I don't know what year it was. Maybe 1907 or 1908 or something like that. There's a caption underneath saying 'A Suffragette's home' and there's a crying child and there's clothes all over the floor and there's a husband who's just got home from work and he's surveying this scene with the tatty, grubby child and clothes everywhere and it's 'A Suffragette's home'. And sometimes I feel like a working mother's home. I feel like everything is just so messy that you could just tell this is a woman that works full-time.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

The pressures of trying to sustain a tidy and organised home become difficult as a result of the varying number of jobs to be carried out. It has also been argued that women perform far more household duties than men, and that the duties that they undertake also differ. For example, women do the traditional women's work such as cooking, laundry and house cleaning, whereas men take responsibility for more masculine tasks such as car and outdoor maintenance (Crompton, 2006; Greenstein, 2000; Bianchi *et al.*, 2000).

These findings indicate that some of the women placed importance on their houses being tidy and organised. These particular women clearly felt that the pressure and responsibility of undertaking housework and ensuring it was carried out to an appropriate standard was of importance. For example, one woman talked about being ‘the lady of the house’, pointing out that if her house was untidy she felt as though it was a reflection on her. Three further women talked about maintaining what they felt were certain standards in the home in relation to housework. The discussion highlighted how an understanding of gender display of housework could be gained by referring to the postfeminist perspective which encourages the celebration of femininity and domesticity. Indeed, it is clear from these BWM accounts that they were displaying femininity via taking control and also undertaking the majority of housework in their homes. In addition, these findings also signal that the women were also conforming to traditional female gender ideologies about housework and who was therefore better at carrying it out.

The findings therefore show that these women were still viewed as being the key person with the principal obligation for ensuring that the housework was organised. This was highlighted by them stating that they carried out the majority of the housework in their homes, believing that they were better at maintaining housework standards (when compared to men).

The findings have illustrated that traditional gender ideologies were clearly being displayed through housework, regardless of these women’s earnings and breadwinning obligations. As a consequence, it is evidently visible that these women’s gender has more bearing, and is therefore more significant when compared to their breadwinning and the money that they contribute to their households.

6.5 Breadwinning Mothers’ Home Lives – Leisure Activities

Leisure is used to describe free time, or an activity or even a state of mind (Hemingway and Parr, 2000; Parr, 2000; Mobily, 1989). In this particular study, the women were asked about their own individual leisure time; Holland (2013) uses the term ‘autonomous leisure’ to categorise this type of leisure that is separate from the family.

A theme associated with leisure that emerged from the findings was the influence of children (and their ages), and the impact this had on leisure opportunities, illustrating why these women's gender had more bearing than their breadwinning. The chapter will now move on to explain this further.

6.5.1 Ages of Children and Scheduling Individual Leisure Time

Several studies have examined the constraints that women face due to their family responsibilities, and how it impacts on their attitudes towards leisure time and their opportunities to access it (Karsten *et al.*, 2015; Such, 2006; Willming and Gibson, 2000; Peters and Raaijmakers, 1998; Kay, 1998; Larson *et al.*, 1997; Thompson, 1995).

The overall findings of this study indicate that there were difficulties for these women taking individual leisure time due to their work commitments and family responsibilities. This was further fuelled and intensified due to their breadwinning and managing these competing roles. This is something that is also acknowledged in the work of Henderson (1996:145):

the more roles undertaken by a woman, the more likely that individual is to have less personal leisure.

However, the findings indicate that for those women in the study who had older children (between the ages of eight and seventeen years) it was now easier for them to have individual leisure time, as their children were more independent both physically and emotionally. Conversely, those women with younger children (between the ages of nine months to seven years) pointed out that they found it difficult to schedule or take individual leisure time as their children were still young and needed more involved care.

As a result, the women with younger children had a tendency to schedule their leisure time when the children were asleep, or when there would be no impact on them. Table 6.5 below outlines details of the women who had younger children and those who had older children.

The table 6.5 also illustrates that some of the women had more than one child, at varying ages, and so could therefore be categorised into both groups. However, for the purposes of this study, when the interviewee had a child under the age of seven years (i.e. their youngest child was seven years or younger, as indicated by *) they were categorised into the younger-children group due to caring implications.

In addition, when reflecting on table 6.5 with regard to the typology of BWM, it appears that single BWM experienced leisure time and leisure opportunities differently to the other types of BWM. For example, this can be further understood because of their ex-partners access rights to the children, therefore enabling the single BWM to have scheduled free time which they could dedicate to their own individual leisure.

Table 6.5 Age of Children and the Impact on Leisure Time

BWMs with Young Children:	No. of Children:	Age(s) and Sex of children:
Zara (clear-cut breadwinner)	1	13 months (M)
Sarah (clear-cut breadwinner)	1	18 months (M)
Vanessa * (clear-cut breadwinner)	3	13 years (M), 9 years (M), 6 years (M)
Anna (sole breadwinner)	2	2 years (F), 8 months (F)
Sinead (clear-cut breadwinner)	2	6 years (F), 5 years (F)
Lucy (minor breadwinner)	2	2 years (F), 2 years (M)
Rebecca (clear-cut breadwinner)	1	18 months (M)
Abby (single breadwinner)	1	6 years (M)
Eileen (circumstantial breadwinner)	3	6 years (M), 4 years (M), 1 years (F)
Melissa* (sole breadwinner)	2	9 years (F), 2 years (F)
Linda* (sole breadwinner)	3	9 years (M), 6 years (F), 4 years (M)
Nicola (clear-cut breadwinner)	1	4 years (F)
BWMs with Older Children:		
Samantha (circumstantial breadwinner)	3	16 years (F), 10 years (M), 8 years (M)
Cassandra (clear-cut breadwinner)	2	16 years (F), 15 years (F)
Rose (single breadwinner)	2	13 years (M), 15 years (F)
Natasha (single breadwinner)	1	17 years (F)
Emily (clear-cut breadwinner)	1	10 years (M)
Anne-Marie (clear-cut breadwinner)	2	10 years (M), 8 years (M)
Joanne (clear-cut breadwinner)	2	10 years (M), 8 years (M)

Louise (sole breadwinner)	1	8 years (F)
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The above table indicates that a total of twelve women were classified as having younger children between the ages of thirteen months to seven years whilst the remaining eight were classified as having older children between the ages of eight and seventeen.

For those women who had younger children, they stated that it was more difficult to get access to leisure time. Some of these women also had children aged two or under, including babies, which demanded a lot more physical care and attention (Standing, 1999; Crompton, 1997; Mason, 1996; Oakely, 1974) and which also subsequently impacted negatively on opportunities to take individual leisure time. A study by Willming and Gibson (2000) has also shown how the transition into parenthood means that there is a negative impact on leisure time and leisure opportunities, whilst the work of Such (2006) also helps us to understand these implications further, stating that parenthood leads to a shift in the type of leisure that is taken, meaning that individual leisure time is not always viewed as a priority due to all the competing factors that have to be managed.

This appears to be the case for Linda, who discusses the lack of importance of individual leisure. When asked if she has any individual leisure time outside work and home, she states that she struggles to find opportunities for leisure, and when she does it is usually when the children are asleep:

No . . . But even if I could, I just don't think I've got time . . . The only thing I probably did more in the summer is I would go off for walks in the evening when the kids were in bed. I just walked over the fields . . . or whatever, but again it wasn't regular. I'd do it probably a couple of times a week, but not now. It's getting dark anyway. Horrible.

(Sole breadwinner with three children)

Sinead also echoes Lisa's views about taking her autonomous leisure when her children are asleep. Whilst discussing this she also points out that her leisure activities are mostly unplanned and not usually scheduled because of how busy she is:

It's a bit haphazard to be fair. On Sunday night I put the kids to bed and I went down to the pool at about twenty-past eight. I say the kids were all in bed. They were probably awake . . . I try to schedule it if I can when the kids are asleep. I try not to impact on the time that I have with them.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with two children)

The reason why mothers take leisure time when their children are asleep is linked to feelings of guilt; they avoid taking individual leisure so that they have more time to spend with their children. This was also found to be the case in the study by Peters and Raaijmakers (1998), who discovered that it was common for women to experience feelings of guilt when they had leisure time away from the family.

In addition, other research (Shank, 1986; Glyptis and Chambers, 1982) has also indicated that women can feel a lack of entitlement to taking leisure time. This is because of their caring responsibilities, which places added barriers on them and makes it more difficult for mothers to take individual leisure time. Indeed, this was also found to be the case in the work of Giligan (1982), who argues that the ethic of care means that women are socialised to cater to the needs of others at the expense of their own needs. This was indeed found to be the case for the BWMs in this study, who clearly indicated that they struggled to get access to leisure due to their caring responsibilities, and didn't want it to have an impact on their children.

Herridge (2003) too supports this notion, pointing out that women's ethic of care and desire to please others can provide a barrier to them taking their own individual leisure time. This finding clearly highlights why the notion of leisure is gendered, pointing out that many mothers feel that they must conform to these models of correct mothering behaviour in relation to how they function in the home.

The previous table also indicates that eight of the women interviewed had older children between the ages of eight and seventeen. This group of women were aware that their

leisure time and opportunities for leisure, although not straightforward, had now become easier, since their children were older and more physically independent.

Samantha, who has three children aged sixteen, ten and eight, talks about how her access to leisure has changed as the children have got older:

It's got easier over the last few years. It does get better [laughter]. [. . .] I mean not much that's scheduled in advance . . . Now that Ruby, my daughter, is old enough to look after her brothers, we've started being able to go out together in the evening. So we spent about ten years never going out. We never went out. We never had anyone to babysit, but now that Ruby can look after the boys, we'll go to the pictures tonight and that's very nice to be able to do that. Then as the children are a little bit older, I can spend Saturday afternoons reading a paper and drink some coffee [laughter] which is very nice and there was a long time where every waking minute is full of demands.

(Circumstantial breadwinner with three children)

This notion of not having to meet the physical demands of younger children is also echoed by Natasha, a single breadwinning mother whose daughter Jade is now seventeen years old. Natasha points out that it has now become easier to take individual leisure time, as her daughter is old enough to look after herself. This therefore suggests that there is a temporal dimension that can be experienced, and that changes in coping strategies will take place as the children get older. Indeed, this temporal and chronological dimension can be seen in the case of Natasha who states that she enjoys this freedom and having this time to herself, pointing out that she is now not tied down by caring demands, and that having leisure time is therefore easier and much more straightforward:

It's easier. It is easier in one respect because you're not constantly having to think if I wanted to go out and do something or I needed to pop somewhere without having to

take her with me because you know what they're like. They get settled don't they in front of the telly and then you're like, 'Come on. We've got to go the supermarket.' It's like, 'Oh. No.' They've got their arms on the door going, 'Don't take me!' So no. It is easier and I do have a lot more time to myself now and probably I am happier because of that.

(Single breadwinner with one child)

This concept of access to leisure time being easier once the children get older is also highlighted in more recent studies. For example, Karsten *et al.* (2015) highlight in their study how parents now use toys or gadgets to entertain children, stating that, 'Today the iPad is the new nanny' (Karsten *et al.*, 2015:176). Other research has also pointed out how leisure activities and leisure time alters as the life-course transitions of individuals and families change. For example, the work of Greer (2006), Burns and Leonard (2005), Langhamer (2000) and Scraton (1999) all points out that people and families change over time, influencing the leisure time they have and how they choose to spend it. Additional research has also pointed out how leisure has become more important for women as they get older as they have more available free time. This was found to be the case as many women's caring roles associated with childcare responsibilities lessen and alter as they get older (Siegenthaler and Vaughn, 1998; Anderton, Fitzgerald and Laidler, 1995). These particular studies also appear to validate both Samantha's and Natasha's attitudes towards leisure whilst also acknowledging that there is temporal and chronological dimension to these experiences, as these women state that that now have less physically caring demands to carry out for their children, and are therefore able to access leisure more easily as a result.

The discussion above clearly illustrates how the age of children and the demands around caring and domestic home life have had a negative impact on leisure and access to leisure for these women. It is evident from this study that the responsibilities associated with caring leave the women with less access to leisure opportunities or individual leisure time. As a consequence, we can see the significance of these women's ascribed gender role, and therefore how their gender has more bearing than the money that they earn.

An additional theme to emerge from the findings is linked to the priority that these BWMs placed on individual leisure. The chapter will now proceed to explain these findings further.

6.5.2 Prioritising Leisure Time

The women in the study were asked about their attitudes and feelings towards having individual and autonomous leisure time. The findings indicate that some women stated that it was important for them to have this type of leisure time, whilst others felt that it was not as important. Table 6.6 below categorises these individual responses about individual leisure into groups of ‘high priority’ or ‘low priority’.

Table 6.6 The Priority of Leisure Time for Breadwinning Mothers

BWMs Individual Leisure Time = High Priority:	No. of Children:	Age(s) and Sex of Children:
Emily (clear-cut breadwinner)	1	10 years (M)
Joanne (clear-cut breadwinner)	2	10 years (M), 8 years (M)
Rebecca (clear-cut breadwinner)	1	18 months (M)
Natasha (single breadwinner)	1	17 years (F)
Abby (single breadwinner)	1	6 years (M)
Nicola (clear-cut breadwinner)	1	4 years (F)
Lucy (minor breadwinner)	2	2 years (F), 2 years (M)
Rose (single breadwinner)	2	13 years (M), 15 years (F)
Samantha (circumstantial breadwinner)	3	16 years (F), 10 years (M), 8 years (M)
BWMs Individual Leisure Time = Low Priority:		
Sarah (clear-cut breadwinner)	1	18 months (M)
Zara (clear-cut breadwinner)	1	13 months (M)
Eileen (circumstantial breadwinner)	3	6 years (M), 4 years (M), 1 years (F)
Linda (sole breadwinner)	3	9 years (M), 6 years (F), 4 years (M)
Louise (sole breadwinner)	1	8 years (F)
Sinead (clear-cut breadwinner)	2	6 years (F), 5 years (F)
Anna (sole breadwinner)	2	2 years (F), 8 months (F)
Vanessa (clear-cut breadwinner)	3	13 years (M), 9 years (M), 6 years (M)
Melissa (sole breadwinner)	2	9 years (F), 2 years (F)

Anne-Marie (clear-cut breadwinner)	2	10 years (M), 8 years (M)
Cassandra (clear-cut breadwinner)	2	16 years (F), 15 years (F)

Less than half of the women stated that having individual leisure time was important to them, and this was therefore classified as a ‘high priority’. The women who identified individual leisure as high priority talked about the importance of this type of activity as a way of dealing with stress and anxiety, and also as a mechanism to escape from their responsibilities and have time to engage in activities that were explicitly for their own needs as opposed to work or family needs. This finding is also supported by Freysinger and Flannery (1992), whose study indicated that women who have separate leisure time away from the family found that it provided an opportunity to gain both independence and also a sense of self. Moreover, we can see how these BWM who viewed their individual leisure time as being ‘high priority’ links to postfeminism. Indeed, the sensibility of individualism, choice and empowerment (Gill, 2007) are all central to the postfeminist woman. This is particularly evident in the way these particular BWM demonstrated the importance of choice and ‘being oneself’ and ‘pleasing oneself’ when expressing their attitudes and beliefs about their own access to leisure time and leisure activities.

However, the table above also indicates that for the majority of these women, having individual leisure time was too difficult to manage and schedule. As a consequence, individual leisure time was classified as ‘low priority’ due to their responsibilities and also their attitudes towards individual leisure time.

The sense of there being a lack of time for individual leisure is highlighted by Zara, a clear-cut breadwinner who has an eighteen-month-old baby boy. She talks about her lack of leisure time in relation to becoming a mother and how she feels about this. Whilst discussing this, Zara also talks about the leisure activities she used to participate in before having her son, pointing out that she has not even had time to read since she was in the hospital and was due to give birth:

I used to be a runner. Half-marathon runner. I used to go to a knitting circle on a Tuesday. I used to go to a book club.

But not now?

No. I don't think I've done anything for myself since he was born really. I'm not just saying that. I really don't think I have. [. . .] Yeah it was a stitch and bitch group that met. I miss reading. I used to read a lot. Novels. I desperately miss that. Yeah I do but I think the last book I read was when I was in hospital when I was hooked up to all those machines when they were monitoring. I don't think I've read anything since then.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with one child)

It is apparent from Zara and some of the other women that they had experienced changes to their leisure time since becoming mothers. They both talked about not having the energy to participate in leisure. Zara specifically mentioned not being able to partake in hobbies that she enjoyed prior to the birth of her son. This notion of caring and the impact it has on leisure time was also found in research carried out by Hunter and Whitson (1991), who highlighted that for people who are caregivers, leisure can simply become irrelevant and lack priority.

Another apparent theme to emerge from the findings was that other women in the study placed a lower priority on individual leisure time away from the family, as they viewed their own leisure as family leisure time. There have been many studies that have discussed the value and importance of family leisure due to it helping to aid and promote stability and build a close family bond (Hallman and Benbow, 2007; Shaw and Dawson, 2001; Hill, 1988; Holman and Epperson, 1984; Orthner and Mancini, 1980, 1991; Orthner, 1975, 1985).

Vanessa talks about leisure in general and also about her views and beliefs surrounding family leisure:

Well I think it's a tricky question. In principle I don't like the idea of, or this notion of, having time for me, because I

think that implies that the children are not part of you. That there is a nice life somewhere [laughs] but it's not where your family is or something like that . . . So I do have time at home. So I have time to read and stuff like that. I would find it more difficult to go to the gym or to leave the house. That's simply due to the fact that the children are now old enough to occupy themselves when they're in the house . . . I mean I could certainly arrange something with my neighbours, but I'm just not bothered enough to do it . . . I'm happy to be at home and I don't have a hobby that would require me to go away.

(Clear-cut breadwinner with three children)

Vanessa's views on individual leisure versus family leisure are also echoed in the work of Karsten (1995) and Cyba (1992). These studies indicate that due to the value and importance of family most people within families are unable to separate or distinguish family time from leisure time.

Melissa also discusses her leisure and her family leisure and the enjoyment she gains from this. Whilst talking about it she points out that her family actually socialises with other families and their children and that her leisure time is therefore focused on family leisure:

No. I've got a very close small circle of friends, girlfriends . . . and we have a kind of a rotation of four families and we all go to each other's houses but it's not time to myself. It's family time but I like that.

(Sole breadwinner with two children)

Anna also shares Melissa's views on family leisure, pointing out that her leisure time is also centred around her children and her friends who have children, too:

Our social life is children's parties [laughs]. So yeah. Because generally because they're so young and it's not school friends . . . it's basically our friends' children. So it's an excuse to see our friends as well.

(Sole breadwinner with two children)

When considering family leisure with regard to the typology of BWM, it is apparent that commonalities exist between the sole BWMs, as all of these women placed a 'low' priority on individual leisure viewing family leisure as more important.

It is apparent that Anna's position is echoed in research carried out by Karsten *et al.* (2015), who highlight that family leisure is a mix of leisure and care. Their work argues that there are three types of family leisure, the first being leisured caring such as family outings, the second being own leisure time, where parents and children develop activities alongside each other, and the third being when families interact with outsiders, which includes socialising with other families or friends. Both Anna and Melissa, who are sole breadwinners, provide clear examples of how they participate in social family leisure with their friends or people who are outside of their family unit. It becomes apparent from their accounts that due to their work commitments, any spare time that they schedule is usually spent as family leisure, not autonomous or individual leisure away from the family.

Anna also points out that her own individual leisure time is not a priority. She states that as she works full-time and is the sole breadwinner, she sees taking individual leisure time as another activity that would have a negative impact on the time she has to spend with her children. Like other women in the study, Anna points out that if she does have individual leisure time for herself it is usually when the children are in bed:

I wouldn't want to sort of get in and, 'Right. I'm going out.'
So like I go to something. Like one of the classes I go to is after they've gone to bed. It's not the same for Liam I suppose because he's been with them all day.

(Sole breadwinner with two children)

It is apparent from Anna's comment that she recognises that her husband does not experience the same constraints on his individual leisure opportunities and time. The reason for this is due to him being with the children all day, and she therefore points out that he needs more autonomous leisure, which she feels is both understandable and acceptable.

A study carried out by Such (2006) also supports this view, indicating that husbands and fathers were able to access individual leisure time more easily than their wives or the mothers. In addition, further studies by Kay (1998, 1996) also signal that men feel a certain sense of entitlement with regards to taking individual leisure time. In addition, research carried out by Robinson and Godbey (1997) has also argued that a leisure gap exists between men and women, and that men are able to access leisure time more easily.

This literature and the findings of this study also appear to support Anna's position and attitudes towards her husband's leisure time whilst also illustrating that these women clearly experienced limitations in gaining access to leisure due to their caring commitments and notions of being a good mother.

It is apparent from this discussion and these specific findings that access to leisure opportunities are difficult for working women due to the competing demands between work and home. The findings clearly indicate that the women in this study experienced problems around access to leisure opportunities. In addition, it is also apparent that access to leisure for this group of women is further intensified due to them trying to manage the two separate roles of breadwinner and mother.

The findings have illustrated how the women with younger children faced more difficulties in gaining individual leisure time. As a consequence, some of the women talked about taking individual leisure when their children were asleep or when it had a minimal impact on the family. When considering the typology, it also pointed out the single BWM's in the study experienced leisure differently to the other types of BWM, something that could be understood due to them having more clearly defined pockets of time due to their ex-partners childcare access rights.

Furthermore, the findings have illustrated that these women placed varying degrees of priority on having individual leisure time. Some of them placed a 'high priority' on taking individual leisure time due to the personal benefits that they gained from it and by viewing it as a coping strategy. In the chapter, it argued how the postfeminist sensibility of individualism, choice and empowerment (Gill, 2007) could be used to help to explain these phenomena, and the reasons for these particular group of BWM felt that their individual leisure time was important. Indeed, the discussion highlighted how the notions of 'pleasing oneself' and 'being oneself' are central to the freely choosing postfeminist woman.

In addition, the findings also illustrated how other BWM placed a 'low priority' on individual leisure, stating that their commitments and views about individual leisure time meant that it was not of primary importance. Additional explanations for assigning lower priority were mainly fuelled by aspects linked to lack of time and energy. However, the findings have also indicated that additional reasons for having a low priority were linked to some of the women placing more importance on family leisure rather than individual leisure time, which is a symptom of the lack of time they have due to their work and breadwinning responsibilities. The discussion also pointed out that this was a commonality for the sole breadwinners, as all women who fell into this category/type stated that individual leisure time lacked priority. This suggests that the preference for family leisure was linked to the benefits it provides and also to the women's restricted family time due to their jobs and the demands of being the breadwinner. As such, these women were mindful of their breadwinner role and the time they committed to work. As a consequence, these women expressed the opinion that any spare time that they did have should be devoted to the family and not spent separately.

Although there is no 'one size fits all' approach with regard to access to and preference for taking leisure time and how it is spent, it is apparent that breadwinning is an important factor in helping us to understand the leisure opportunities of this particular group of women. Indeed, it is clear that the ethic of care and aspects linked to traditional gender views appear to play an important role when helping us to understand the barriers to these specific women's leisure time. As a consequence of these findings it is apparent that issues in the home and the intersection of the women's ascribed gender ultimately have more bearing than their financial and breadwinning obligations.

6.6 Conclusion

The findings have demonstrated the significance of these BWM gender role, and the difficulties that they experienced at work and how this subsequently resulted in them complying to traditional ideologies of work. This was particularly apparent when examining their accounts about the negative impact that having children had placed on their careers. Furthermore, this was also illustrated by the notion that the ideal employee is more likely to be seen as someone with minimal caring or domestic obligations. The discussion also pointed out that when considering the typology of BWM it highlighted that for those BWM who were academics, as all of these women stated that having children had clearly impacted negatively on their publication and research output. Due to these factors, the discussion suggested that this could be further understood via an appreciation of the difficulties and barriers that these BWM experienced. Indeed, this was highlighted by the women in their accounts that show how they experienced a greater domestic and familiar responsibility, which acted to inhibit both their ability and their desire to become fully reflexive and individualized workers. Moreover, the discussion also explained how becoming an individualized and reflexive worker was ‘a gendered process’ (Adkins 1999:127) and how this too was leading to a ‘retraditionalization of gender’ (Adkins, 1999:119) due to the continuation and upkeep of individualized and reflexive workers being clearly reliant on the domestic labour shouldered by women in the home.

Breadwinning status did not lead to a decrease in responsibilities or obligations in the home. This was illustrated by the fact that many of these women had encountered negative views about working mothers. As a result, this meant that these women struggled to make positive links between their breadwinning and mothering roles. In trying to explain this, the discussion pointed out how postfeminism could be used to help understand these phenomena, as there was a requirement for these BWM to be ‘doing’ femininity alongside masculinity (Lewis, 2018). However, although these BWM were clearly displaying both femininity and masculinity via the obligations of their two roles and therefore seemingly ‘having it all’, the accounts from these BWM clearly show how at times this notion of ‘having it all’ actually ‘came at a cost’, especially in the way that some of the women discussed the personal ‘sacrifice’ that they had experienced as

mothers due to their breadwinning.

In addition, these women were conforming to their ascribed gender role by carrying out the majority of housework. In addition, the discussion also suggested that when reflecting these findings in relation to the typology of BWM it was apparent that commonalities existed between clear-cut breadwinners. Indeed, the findings indicated that all of the women who wanted to have 'control of the housework' and who experienced 'pressure' and 'gender display', were clear-cut breadwinners. An understanding of this phenomena could be gained by referring to the postfeminist perspective, which encourages the celebration of femininity and domesticity. Indeed, it became clear from these BWM accounts that they were exhibiting feminine characteristics and displaying their gender via this control and also undertaking the majority of housework in their homes.

The ethic of care, fuelled by traditional gender notions, also resulted in barriers for these women in the home, due to it impacting negatively on their access to leisure opportunities and leisure time. Some BWM placed a 'high priority' on individual leisure which seemed to correlate with the postfeminist sensibility of individualism, choice and empowerment. However, for others individual leisure seemed to be 'low priority'. Indeed, this notion of 'low priority' for individual leisure was particularly relevant for the sole BWM in the study who stated that family leisure time was more important. The reason for the sole BWM having this preference for family leisure was linked to the demands of having this sole breadwinner responsibility and the time they therefore dedicated to work, adding that as a result any spare time that they did have should be devoted to the family and not individual leisure. Further variances are highlighted by the typology which indicated that single BWM also experienced leisure time and opportunities differently. This was illustrated by the single BWM personal circumstances, and because of their ex-partners access rights to the children, enabling them to schedule their own individual leisure time more easily.

Moreover, although these mothers were carrying out the role of the breadwinner, they have clearly experienced barriers both at work and home due to the traditional views that help to support the patriarchal order. The women openly discussed their experiences of home and work, pointing out the barriers and difficulties that they have faced whilst also highlighting how they have adopted their own individual strategies to help them manage

their careers alongside their domestic responsibilities. This in turn suggests that these women had been left to shoulder the main pressures and burdens that combining home commitments alongside a career had placed on them, which again seems to correlate with the postfeminist individual who would view these issues as ‘personal problems’ (Lewis, 2018:24).

BWM occupy two opposing roles, which is often complicated by the relevance of their ascribed gender role and the views and opinions that support these traditional notions. As a consequence, these women undoubtedly struggled to make sense of and achieve harmony between their breadwinning and mothering roles. This indicates that these women’s ascribed gender is undoubtedly more significant than their breadwinning and the money that their employment and breadwinning status provides them with.

Now that the thesis has provided a full account of the research findings, which has been covered in chapter five and chapter six, the thesis will now move on to present its final conclusions in chapter seven.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter will present the key conclusions of this research. It begins by highlighting the key findings of the thesis in relation to the original research question that was put forward for investigation. This particular section is divided into three distinct parts; firstly, a conceptualisation of breadwinning is provided; secondly, an overview of what is unique about a breadwinning mother's experience is outlined; and finally, the tensions that these breadwinning mothers experience between work and in the home is discussed. The chapter will then move on to present the main contributions of the thesis, the implications it has for future policy and the limitations of the research, ending with a number of suggestions and recommendations for further research in this area.

The central research question that this study sought to investigate was:

What are the lived realities of breadwinning mothers and what impact does their breadwinning have on their home life and also their work life?

In order to unpick this central research question, a further five subsidiary questions were also addressed:

1. How can breadwinning be classified and conceptualised?
2. How can postfeminism, individualization and the retraditionisation of gender help to provide a useful theoretical framework to understand contemporary breadwinning?
3. How can understanding the value of 'lived realities' and the 'everyday life' help us to gain a deeper understanding of the experience of being a breadwinning mother?
4. What is different and unique about breadwinning mothers?
5. What are the particular tensions associated with being a breadwinning mother?

This concluding chapter will now address and discuss each of these questions, firstly outlining how breadwinning has been conceptualised.

7.1 Conceptualising Breadwinning

The preliminary chapters have outlined that there has been a lack of literature that defines the key concepts of breadwinning (Warren, 2007). As a result, the thesis set out to establish how breadwinning had previously been approached and understood in the literature. It suggested that breadwinning is currently seen from four varying perspectives: 1) The financial aspects of breadwinning; 2) The orientation individuals have towards breadwinning; 3) The nature and extent of the actual breadwinning role; 4) The relationship between breadwinning and work, and the impact that this then has on the family.

7.1.1 The Financial Perspective of Breadwinning

The thesis highlighted that one of the central ways to gain a deeper understanding of breadwinning was to consider how it has been linked to the financial contribution within households. For example, Warren (2007:319) suggests how breadwinning and breadwinners have been classified as the person who ‘wins the family bread’ or who ‘provides for’ the family. Whereas Morris (1999:218) refers to terms such as ‘principal earner’ to define and understand breadwinning. Furthermore, the thesis pointed out how breadwinning has been used to describe the financial arrangements and roles that individuals adopt within the home, suggesting that an individual can be either a ‘breadwinner’ or a ‘dependent’ (Pahl, 1989:4).

Nonetheless, although these straightforward financial perspectives of breadwinning may be helpful, the thesis pointed out how there are problems linked to categorising the role of the breadwinner in financial terms due to there being no single clear-cut definition. For example, it pointed out how Meisenbach (2009) classifies breadwinning, stating that it is the person who is the single primary financial breadwinner in the family, whilst Hood (1986:356) refers to terms such as ‘main providers, secondary providers, and co-providers’ when discussing and defining breadwinning. What therefore becomes apparent

is that although defining breadwinning by its financial contribution is fundamental, the different types of financial contributions themselves are also significant. Due to this lack of clarity, the thesis illustrated that breadwinning is difficult to pinpoint and is clearly more complex to understand.

7.1.2 The Orientation Perspective of Breadwinning

The orientation that individuals place on their breadwinning role is also key in helping to gain a fuller understanding and conceptualisation of the term. The work of Hakim (2000) alludes to this, stating how secondary-earners provide supplementary sources of income, and therefore only contribute to the household finances. Katona (1975:153) too appears to echo this position, suggesting that a secondary-earner's financial priorities lie with 'desires and aspirations' and not the basic needs of the family. These studies indicate that those who only *contribute* to the household finances are not classed as breadwinners, as their economic contribution is more concerned with consumerism rather than sustaining the family's most basic needs. Nonetheless, although Hakim's (2000) and Katona's (1975) studies are useful and provide an interesting lens through which to consider breadwinning, this thesis pointed out that households are now more reliant on the earnings of more than one person due to financial commitments now being most commonly calculated on the basis of joint or dual incomes.

The thesis also pointed out how the work of Potuchek (1992) helps to highlight the orientation view of breadwinning further. This was apparent when considering how Potuchek's study showed that even though the women who were interviewed for the research were in paid employment, they felt that this was not enough to be viewed as a breadwinner. Potuchek (1992:550) pointed out that an understanding of these varying orientations to breadwinning could be gained from examining certain 'behavioral measures', which included the length of a couple's marriage, low levels of education and low-level earnings, all of which decreased the chances of them defining their role as 'breadwinner'. Potuchek's study also helps to highlight the importance of gaining an awareness of the links between breadwinning and gender boundaries within the household and 'gender construction in families' (Potuchek, 1992:558).

As a consequence, the thesis illustrated that there are different types of breadwinners who have varying orientations towards breadwinning. It suggested that in order to fully conceptualise breadwinning, consideration should be given to how it is interpreted and negotiated within the family and broader society. As a result, it pointed out that the value of understanding what individuals perceive breadwinning to be is fundamental, including their relationship to breadwinning and also why they hold these deep-rooted beliefs.

7.1.3 The Nature and Extent of the Actual Breadwinning Role

A further aspect that helps to conceptualise and understand breadwinning is the nature and extent of an individual's economic contribution to the household. The work of Drago *et al.* (2005) was useful in helping to illustrate this perspective. Their study categorised different groups of female-breadwinner families in relation to their preference for either 'economic' factors or 'ideological gender equity'. As a result, it suggested that economic factors such as redundancy impacted on decisions about the nature and extent of breadwinning and how it is then managed within the family. Drago *et al.*'s study is therefore useful in helping to gain an understanding of how breadwinning in families can change due to the ups and downs in circumstance that families experience during particular periods of time. Moreover, it illustrates how attitudes towards gender equity can influence and shape breadwinning, therefore impacting on who takes on the role of breadwinner within the household.

7.1.4 The Relationship Between Breadwinning, Work and Family

The final perspective that was discussed in the thesis was the relationship between breadwinning and the impact that this has on the family. The work of Kinnunen and Mauno (2001) provided a useful study to help gain a deeper understanding of breadwinning in terms of work and the impact work then has on the family unit. Kinnunen and Mauno's (2001) research points out that different types of dual-earner families exist, whilst also highlighting the difficulties that families experience when managing the spheres of work and home simultaneously. As a result, the thesis suggested that work can impact differently on families due to individuals adopting unique beliefs and attitudes in relation to work and home and how they subsequently manage this. Due to these types of

factors, the thesis suggested that they can provide further reasons and explanations as to why breadwinning is problematic to define and conceptualise.

7.2 Challenging the Straightforward, One-dimensional Meaning of Breadwinning

From considering these four varying perspectives, the thesis then suggested that there was no straightforward or one-dimensional definition of breadwinning. It pointed out how this was also acknowledged by Warren (2007:318), who suggested that ‘breadwinning has an unproblematic, taken-for-granted, every-day, common-sense meaning in current sociology. It seems to require no questioning and nor does it appear to task our sociological imagination.’ In addition, the thesis also responded to Warren’s (2007) plea, which states that most breadwinning studies examine hard data, and that very few examine why these individuals are breadwinners. As a result, the thesis argues that there has been a lack of critical reflection that helps to aid and expand our academic understanding of breadwinning. The thesis therefore set out to address this limitation and find out more about the nuanced and emotive aspects of breadwinning. It argues that although adopting a quantitative study is clearly useful, there has been a lack of empirical studies about breadwinning. It therefore argued that adopting a qualitative approach with a smaller sample would help to address this weakness, allowing stronger and richer data to emerge about these women’s experiences and the lived realities of being a breadwinning mother.

Moreover, the thesis also suggested that due to it often being misconceived and because of the compulsion to define breadwinning by its most basic and simple economic terms, there has been a failure to consider the more subjective aspects of breadwinning linked to its values, identities, histories and biographies. Indeed, the thesis also highlighted the importance of this by referring to C. Wright Mills (1959:6), who argues that ‘no social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within a society has not completed its intellectual journey.’

By taking these factors into account it was clear that an appreciation of, and consideration for, these varying aspects provided a solid foundation for this research, and would ensure that a fuller and more holistic perspective about being a breadwinning mother was gained.

This then allowed for a typology of different types of breadwinning mothers to emerge in relation to their status and circumstances.

The details of these varying types of breadwinning mothers is outlined in the below typology.

Sole breadwinner	Circumstantial breadwinner	Single breadwinner	Clear-cut breadwinner	Minor breadwinner
Anna Linda Melissa	Eileen	Natasha Abby	Rebecca Sarah Sinead Joanne Emily	Lucy
<i>Academic Breadwinner</i>				
Louise	Samantha	Rose	Vanessa Anne-Marie Nicola Zara Cassandra	

The typology within the findings showed five distinct categories of breadwinning mothers: 1) *Sole breadwinners*, who were similar to the traditional male breadwinner but the gender role was reversed, as the mother was in paid employment and adopted the role of the breadwinner whilst the father stayed at home and undertook the role of the full-time primary carer; 2) *Circumstantial breadwinners*, in which the breadwinning mothers had become the major earner as a result of their family circumstances. For instance, one of the women's partners had recently retired which led to her becoming a breadwinner, whilst a further woman pointed out that her partner had recently started up his own business, resulting in a significant wage decrease for him and her subsequently taking on the role of breadwinner; 3) *Single breadwinners*, in which the women were no longer in a relationship due to being either divorced or separated and therefore a lone parent; 4) *Clear-cut breadwinners*, in which the women earned a significantly higher wage than their partners; 5) *Minor breadwinners*, in which the women earned more than their partners, but there was not a significant difference in their wages. In addition, within each category the typology also showed that there was a sub-category of *academic*

breadwinners, who were all working within higher education and facing similarities due to their occupation.

From an examination of this typology, it becomes clear that these varying types of breadwinning mother could be categorised into types that were closely affiliated with their earnings and the status of their breadwinning in the family. However, in addition to these more straightforward financial understandings and categorisations, the thesis has also showed how these women could be grouped into types in relation to how they have become breadwinners, taking into account their history and biography, and also their family circumstances at the time. As a consequence, this ensured that a full exploration of their lived realities was gained, whilst also taking into account what it means to be a breadwinning mother within the context and framework of the twenty-first century.

7.3 Understanding Breadwinning Mothers' Uniqueness

The preceding chapters have shown that much has been written about the difficulties and challenges associated with motherhood (Hemetsberger *et al.*, 2015; Davies *et al.*, 2010; Gatrell, 2005; Maushart, 2000; Cosslett, 1994; Oakley, 1981; Sharpe, 1976).

Within this study, the women openly discussed the problems they experienced with their own transitions into motherhood, such as isolation, lack of support, increased commitments and also some of the physical demands, including lack of sleep. Nonetheless, although it could be argued that all mothers experience these types of problems, the findings from this thesis argued that this was actually more complex for these women due to their breadwinning.

An understanding of this could be gained when considering how this group of women had the combined responsibility and pressure of becoming a mother whilst simultaneously having the responsibility of being the family breadwinner. Indeed, we can see from the preceding chapters how managing their breadwinning alongside their mothering actually heightened and also intensified some of these aspects, as they failed to have one clear-cut identity due to the importance placed on both their breadwinning and mothering roles within the family unit.

Further aspects that highlighted their uniqueness and identity were illustrated in the use of control when mothering. We also saw from the literature examined in the previous chapters how mothers can experience difficulties relinquishing duties that are associated with motherhood, making them territorial if they feel the bond between mother and child is being threatened (Baxter *et al.*, 2015; Gatrell, 2005; Lupton and Barclay, 1997). This was something that was also evident for these breadwinning women, as they pointed out that they had used control as a tool to assert and claw back their mothering identity due to them being the breadwinner and occupying a non-traditional role within their families. What is more, the thesis highlighted these differences further by illustrating the importance that these women placed on maintaining control, as many were using it as a mechanism to consolidate their own unique breadwinning-mother identity.

A deeper understanding of this was gained by considering the relationship between control and care, specifically during times of crisis and when their children were ill. Many of the women felt that they were failing as a mother if they did not carry out, or were not involved in, this type of care. This was further highlighted by the fact that many of the women were not able to be there physically during these times due to their work commitments, leading to them putting monitoring and checking strategies into place to help reaffirm their own unique breadwinning-mother identity.

As a consequence, this seemed to suggest that many of the women's beliefs were aligned more closely to traditional and standard views of motherhood. It therefore became apparent from the thesis that undertaking the breadwinning role did not lessen the social expectations and attitudes that these women experienced when carrying out the role of the mother. What is more, it revealed how these women were acknowledging an acceptance towards their traditional gender role irrespective of their breadwinning and the obligations and pressure this placed on them.

Further elements that helped to illustrate their uniqueness related to their negative emotions about how they felt they were performing as mothers. The thesis argued that many working mothers experience guilt and negative emotions due to their competing demands of work and home (Cox, 2011; Cook, 2011; April and Mooketsi, 2010; Meisenbach, 2010; Gatrell, 2005; Scott, 1999; Ribbens, 1994; Phoenix, 1991; Moss, 1991; Sharpe, 1984) with aspects such as not spending enough time both physically and

emotionally with their children and how this impacted on how they felt they were undertaking their role as mother being apparent. Gatrell (2005:112–16) has referred to this as ‘emotional labour’.

The thesis highlighted how these specific issues were even more complex for these breadwinning mothers, and that this was fuelled by the lack of free time that these women had as a result of their breadwinning commitments. The women openly discussed how they were unable to carry out the role of mother as well as they wanted to due to this lack of time, resulting in them developing feelings of inadequacy. Furthermore, this could be better understood when taking into consideration that many of the women were working full-time because of the importance placed on their earnings for the family.

The thesis therefore illustrated how moving between the role of breadwinner and mother presented further challenges and difficulties, not just in a practical sense, but also on an emotional level. Occupying the role of breadwinner clearly didn’t lessen or combat the development of feelings of guilt and inadequacy. This finding was viewed as being significant, as it helped to highlight what was unique and different about their experience. It also showed how they exhibited a compliance towards traditional gender ideologies about mothering, even though they adopted egalitarian approaches in their own households, which was displayed as a result of them being the breadwinner.

Another aspect that highlighted the distinctiveness of these breadwinning mothers was evident when comparing them to full-time mothers who did not work, something that was previously discussed in the earlier chapters (Crowley, 2014, 2015; Zimmerman *et al.*, 2008; Dillaway and Pare, 2008; Johnston and Swanson, 2004, 2008; Buxton, 1998; Hochschild, 1997; Phoenix, 1991). However, the findings from the thesis shed further light on this discourse, as some of the women in the study expressed negative views about full-time mothers and used this as a method to advocate and assert their own breadwinning-mother identity. Conversely, additional findings in relation to this subject showed how some of the other breadwinning mothers who were interviewed voiced more supportive views of full-time mothers, suggesting that there was common ground between mothers who work and mothers who do not work.

Nonetheless, although these varying positions supported the literature, the thesis pointed out that these breadwinning mothers exhibited a different and unique identity due to their breadwinning responsibilities. This was further understood when taking into account how occupying the role of breadwinner resulted in a noticeable lack of choice for these women to stay at home on a full-time basis because of the importance placed on their breadwinning and earnings. This lack of choice was seen as being significant as it clearly illustrated the constraints and pressures that these women experienced when making decisions about work and family.

Further aspects that also highlighted the distinctiveness of these women were their views on parenting ideologies; the findings illustrated how some of the women were conforming to traditional patterns of family and work by displaying their attitudes and beliefs about childcare strategies.

This became particularly evident when examining the views and opinions surrounding nurseries, with some of the women pointing out how they had decided not to use this type of formal childcare on a full-time basis in order to avoid the possible connotations it had with being a 'bad' parent or mother. This is something that the work of Brannen and Moss (1998:237) highlighted when they suggested that formal childcare provisions have been viewed as 'substitute homes' that provide 'substitute parenting'. Moreover, even though these women had adopted egalitarian approaches to managing family life due to being the breadwinner, their accounts and childcare strategies signal that they still held traditional beliefs about parenting that were more closely aligned to more standard roles of motherhood.

Nonetheless, although these findings clearly added to the debate, the real value which helped to gain an understanding of these breadwinning mothers' uniqueness was that they were the person who possessed the most financial power in the home, and were therefore able to use this as leverage to influence and shape their own decisions around their childcare strategies. Once again this provided a significant insight into the lived realities of these women, helping to highlight what is unique and different about their own experience of being a mother.

A final finding that helped to demonstrate these women's distinctiveness was their views and attitudes about their identity in relation to work. The previous chapters discussed this, highlighting how several studies show the importance that mothers place on having a separate work identity (Schober and Scott, 2012; Potuchek, 1997; Yeandle, 1984; Sharpe, 1984).

The importance of having a work identity was also something that these breadwinning mothers discussed, stating that their work identity provided them with something that was outside the home. Moreover, it showed how those mothers who were academic breadwinners valued the vocational nature of their employment in their acknowledgement of how their identity was also closely bound up in their work. An understanding of this can be gained by considering how the majority of women talked about their work providing an increased sense of individual recognition and self-worth. Those women who were academics also argued how their job and, in particular, their research, was central to them and their overall identity.

As a consequence, the thesis highlighted that there were clearly links between the women's mothering identity and work identity, and that they used this to position their own unique breadwinning-mother identity. Moreover, for those women who were academics there were also clear intersections linked to their scholarly identity, which subsequently emphasised their own unique and distinctive identity as an academic breadwinning mother.

Due to all of these factors the thesis highlighted that although all working mothers undoubtedly experienced similarities, the breadwinning mothers in this study clearly had a distinct and unique identity. An understanding of this was gained when we considered how factors such as their transition into motherhood, their use of control, how they experienced guilt, their views about full-time mothers and parenting ideologies, and also their attitudes towards their work identity ultimately supported this. An examination of these aspects illustrates how there was a heightened sense of pressure on these women, which was fuelled by the combination and complexities of undertaking the role of mother whilst simultaneously having the responsibility of the breadwinner.

These issues lead on to the final subsidiary question of the study being addressed, which provides an outline of the tensions that these breadwinning mothers experience within the workplace and also within their homes.

7.4 Understanding Breadwinning Mothers' Tensions

The thesis has indicated how the breadwinning mothers in the study faced tension as a result of conforming to traditional arrangements of work and family, even though they occupied the family-breadwinner role. As a consequence, it showed how these women's ascribed gender had more bearing than their breadwinning. The evidence for this was gained from examining both their work life and home life.

When considering the aspects related to work life, the thesis showed how factors linked to the impact of children had a negative bearing on the women's career trajectory. Indeed, the preceding chapters highlighted some of the difficulties linked to the problems that working mothers face when managing childcare alongside paid work (Won, 2016; Lyonette, 2015; Herman *et al.*, 2013; Crompton and Lyonette, 2010; Herman and Webster, 2010; Tomlinson *et al.*, 2009; Cornelius and Skinner, 2008; Crompton, 2006; Gattrell, 2005; Oakley, 2005; Hakim, 2000; Hochschild, 1997; Lewis and Lewis, 1996).

Explanations for this negative impact were highlighted in the findings, which showed that the breadwinning mothers were opting not to take on additional responsibilities at work or deciding not to go for promotions due to having children. The reasons that they provided were linked to the increased pressures that this would lead to, and the negative impact that this would have on their home life. Moreover, this in turn signalled how increased financial remuneration was not the only factor that motivated these women, and that their views about appropriate and good mothering were clearly important and therefore influenced and shaped their decisions around work.

An additional aspect that the thesis highlighted in relation to tensions at work was that all of the academic women in the study talked about the difficulties they had encountered in gaining promotions since having children. They pointed out how this had clearly had a negative impact on their career trajectory, stating that theirs had been slower when compared to male colleagues or colleagues without children.

An understanding of this was gained when considering the importance placed on research within academia when trying to secure promotions. The difficulties that the women discussed were linked to not having the headspace to work on research, stating that it had been hard to re-establish themselves back into work after maternity leave. In addition, these academic breadwinning mothers pointed out how they faced problems with attending conferences and also developing their own external academic profile.

A further aspect that highlighted difficulties and inequalities for women at work was how they failed to meet the criteria of the 'ideal employee'. Indeed, the previous chapters showed how the ideal employee was more likely to be seen as someone with nominal caring or domestic responsibilities, or someone with male characteristics (Lewis and Humbert, 2010; Guillaume and Pochic, 2009; Cornelius and Skinner, 2008; Lewis, 2001).

The findings from this study appear to support this position as the thesis argued how the breadwinning mothers in the study experienced difficulties at work with regard to career trajectory due to not meeting notions of the ideal employee. Some of the examples that the women gave were associated with the barriers that they faced due to having children, face time and visibility, and the negative attitudes that this then generated. The findings also showed how this became even more problematic for the women when these attitudes were held by senior management who made decisions about their career progression.

As previously stated there were also issues that highlight the tensions that these breadwinning mothers faced in their home life. The first aspect that illustrated this was views about motherhood and the gendered beliefs that they generated. This could be understood when we consider how motherhood has been viewed as something that is natural, and that highlights a woman's distinctiveness. This explains why questions about the relationship and appropriateness of motherhood and employment are debated (Baxter *et al.*, 2015; Schober and Scott, 2012; Cusk, 2001; Cosslett, 1994; Ribbens, 1994; Phoenix *et al.*, 1991; Oakley, 1981).

Indeed, the findings from this study also reflect this, and illustrate how these breadwinning mothers had been at the receiving end of views about the value of traditional and more standard roles of motherhood. The negative views that these women

encountered were mainly expressed by other parents or from people of an older generation. Interestingly, the findings showed that there was a level of tolerance towards comments that had been directed from the older generation.

Nonetheless, the thesis highlighted how these negative comments were significant for this group of women as their employment was so central to the family unit, because of the importance placed on their breadwinning earnings.

In addition, it was apparent from the findings that these negative views about working mothers were clearly gendered, as the women stated that a man or father would not experience this type of criticism, highlighting the inequality these women were subject to. It also showed how these women struggled with this criticism, leading them to question whether they had made the right choices about their own work and breadwinning decisions.

Moreover, the thesis pointed out how these issues were further fuelled by the professionalisation of motherhood, which placed additional pressures on women to live up to benchmarks about what was viewed as appropriate mothering. This heightened their anxiety, especially when considering that they were trying to manage their two roles of breadwinner and mother.

As a consequence, the thesis pointed out that the role of the mother was clearly gendered, something that was illustrated by the negative views they had encountered about working mothers and the inequality this then led to. In addition, the thesis argued that this could be further understood by considering how the contradictory nature of their responsibilities made this even more of a challenge, as they clearly struggled to gain a positive connection between their mothering role and their breadwinning role.

A further aspect that the thesis highlighted which helped to illustrate why women experience tension in their homes was gained when we consider the impact of housework and how this has been viewed as women's work (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Kan *et al.*, 2011; Harkness, 2008; Gupta, 2007). For the women in this study this inequality was highlighted by two main findings: firstly, maintaining 'control' of the housework, and

secondly, the 'pressure' they experienced to carry out the housework due to being a woman.

The thesis showed that the issue of maintaining control over the housework had led to many of the breadwinning mothers performing and carrying out more of the housework than their male partners. Explanations for this were linked to male incompetence and the women stating that their partner's standards were second-rate when compared to their own. A deeper understanding of this was illustrated by the women being able to identify what housework needed carrying out, and how they felt their partners were mostly incapable of this.

Further examples that highlighted control over housework were associated with the women's partners not viewing housework as a priority or seeing it as being important. As a result, some of the breadwinning mothers asserted their control, making it a priority to carry out housework at times when they were not at work and particularly at weekends, whilst others stated how they had to request or ask their partners directly for help with housework, which again demonstrated that they were the person who was in control and who took on the overall responsibility for managing it.

In addition, the findings showed how these women were taking control of the housework even when their partners were at home on a full-time basis. As a result, the thesis illustrated that, even though these women had egalitarian approaches to managing their household (due to them adopting the breadwinner role), these approaches were not being transferred across into the way in which their housework was being undertaken. This subsequently demonstrated that although these women were breadwinners they still felt responsible for maintaining control of the housework regardless of their earnings.

Furthermore, the thesis highlighted further explanations for understanding the tensions that women encounter in their homes by considering the impact of 'pressure', and how the bearing of their gender led to them undertaking the majority of housework (Crompton, 2006; Oakley, 2002, 1999; Crompton and Harris, 1999).

This was illustrated by the breadwinning mothers when they discussed the importance of having a tidy and organised home, stating that if certain standards of housework were not

maintained then it reflected negatively on them as a woman rather than on their male partners. This in turn suggested that they experienced an internalised social pressure to conform to traditional gender ideologies due to their beliefs about housework and who had the responsibility for it.

A further and final aspect that highlighted these tensions for women within the home was their views and attitudes on individual leisure time (Karsten *et al.*, 2015; Such, 2006; Willming and Gibson, 2000; Kay, 1998; Peters and Raaijmakers, 1998; Thompson, 1995; Larson *et al.*, 1997). Two separate findings from these women's accounts appeared to support this position. The first of these findings was how the *ages* of their children impacted negatively on their individual leisure, and the second was linked to the *low priority* that these women placed on gaining access to leisure time.

For those women with younger children the difficulties that they discussed were associated with scheduling and taking individual leisure time due to their caring commitments and obligations towards their children. The thesis highlighted this further by pointing out how those women who had children aged two or under were required to be involved in more physical and hands-on care (Standing, 1999; Crompton, 1997; Mason, 1996; Oakely, 1974), which subsequently left them less time for individual leisure.

A further insight into this can be gained when we consider how the absence of leisure time was linked to feelings of guilt and the clear lack of entitlement they experienced. As a result, many of the women with younger children pointed out how they would schedule their leisure time when the children were asleep in order to avoid feelings of guilt and having to take this leisure time at the expense of spending time with their children. Others stated how their leisure activities were largely unplanned and rarely scheduled due to their general busyness. The thesis therefore showed how some of these breadwinning mothers were conforming to what they viewed as correct models of mothering, indicating how their caring obligation took priority over their own needs and their own leisure opportunities and therefore helping to illustrate why these women were experiencing tensions.

In addition, the thesis highlighted further explanations for understanding leisure-time difficulties, particularly when considering the impact of 'priority' in relation to leisure time. It illustrated how some of the breadwinning mothers felt that having individual leisure time was important. When discussing leisure time, the women stated how having access to it had provided them with a useful tool to manage stress and anxiety, enabling them to have explicit time for themselves rather than fulfilling their work or family obligations. As a result, for these particular women their individual leisure time was categorised as 'high priority'.

Alternatively, other BWMs within the study talked about their individual leisure time being too difficult to manage or schedule in. As a consequence, individual leisure time for them was classified as 'low priority'. The reasons they provided were related to the changing nature of their leisure time since becoming mothers; for them, leisure time had become irrelevant due to lack of time and energy.

Additional explanations for this lack of priority were also linked to the negative impact that individual leisure had placed on the time they could spend with their children. As such, some of the women talked about having family leisure that was not separate from the children. Furthermore, the thesis showed how some of these women acknowledged that they were unable to separate or distinguish family time from their own leisure time, pointing out that any spare time that they had was largely spent with the family and not away from them.

A further finding from the thesis was that a leisure gap existed between men and women, which highlights further tensions. Indeed, the women pointed out that their male partners did not experience the same barriers or constraints about taking individual leisure time, and that to some extent their male partners also experienced a certain sense of entailment to it.

As a result, the thesis showed that aspects linked to the ethic of care played an important role for these mothers, and it provides an understanding of the barriers these women faced when making decisions about leisure time. The thesis also illustrated how these issues were compounded by their gender and their role as a mother, resulting in difficulties in the way that decisions about leisure time and leisure opportunities were then taken.

7.5 Contribution of Thesis

The thesis makes a contribution both conceptually and theoretically, therefore helping to provide a useful understanding of the unique experiences and ‘lived realities’ of BWMs. Firstly, the conceptual contributions of the thesis will be presented, helping to highlight the value of ‘lived realities’ and the ‘everyday life’ when gaining a deeper understanding of the experience of BWMs. It will then move on to outline the theoretical contributions of the study, outlining how postfeminism, individualization and the retraditionalization of gender can help provide a theoretical framework to understand contemporary breadwinning.

7.5.1 Conceptual Contribution

The key conceptual contribution of this study is highlighted via the typology of BWMs that has been presented in the thesis. The typology provides a useful tool which helps to create a deeper understanding of the BWM phenomena, illustrating how the varying types of BWMs experienced their lived reality via their role as mother and breadwinner differently.

For example, the findings show how sole BWMs experienced an increased financial responsibility due to them being the only person bringing an income into the home. However, although this increased financial pressure could be viewed as being negative, the sole BWMs actually had the advantage of having a partner who had full responsibility for the home and the childcare, therefore making the transition back to work easier due to the allocation of responsibilities being more clearly defined. Indeed, for those women who were classed as sole BWM, it is clear that having a partner at home enabled these women to behave more like the masculine idealised worker, as their partner was able to take on responsibility at home, meaning that it was easier for the sole BWM to be able to concentrate on their paid employment when compared to other types of BWMs. A further understanding of this can be gained from the data which highlights variances between the different types of BWMs experience of housework and control. For example, the findings show how these sole BWMs were carrying out an ‘overseeing’ role in relation to the housework, due to their working commitments and also because their partner was at home

on a full-time basis. However, although these aspects could have been seen as advantages for the sole BWMs, there were also further differences that had a more negative impact on their experience. For example, the sole BWMs acknowledged confusion and difficulties about the expectations of managing the role of motherhood alongside their sole breadwinning. In fact, the findings show that these women were not always physically needed in relation to childcare, due to the father being able to undertake these types of duties. As a result, these sole BWMs talked about their conflicting negative emotions, as they felt, they were not able to fulfil traditional gender ideologies associated with more standard roles of motherhood. Due to this, these sole BWMs adopted checking and monitoring techniques which they felt helped them to claw back their mothering role. One example of how they clawed back their mothering role was linked to their attitudes and views about their own individual leisure time, as the findings illustrate how all of the sole BWMs placed a 'low' priority on individual leisure, instead viewing family leisure as being far more important and a way of asserting their presence as a mother.

The typology is also valuable as it helps to highlight further differences between the varying types of BWMs. For example, in the case of the academic BWMs it is apparent that their work identity and being an academic was central and clearly bound up with how they viewed themselves. What is more, all eight of the academic BWMs talked about the difficulties in getting promoted, pointing out how having children had an adverse and negative impact on their careers. The explanations that they gave in relation to these difficulties were linked to the pressures of meeting research demands and the struggles with managing the external requirements that are expected as part of scholarly activity. Indeed, all of these academic BWMs talked about the pressure that these aspects placed on them, therefore helping to highlight their own unique experience and what it means to be an academic BWM.

Further aspects that illustrate the value of the typology was the way in which it helps to highlight the variation between different BWMs experience of housework. For example, all of the women who stated that they wanted to maintain 'control' over the housework were clear-cut BWMs. In fact, these clear-cut BWMs also talked about how they felt 'pressure' to carry out housework, and as a result the thesis suggested that 'gender display' was being demonstrated with regard to the expectations of who was best placed to carry out the housework in their homes. Indeed, what emerges from the data is that

although these clear-cut BWMs were still contributing more than their partners to the household income, their increased financial contribution did not provide any real advantage or leverage when allocating housework roles and responsibilities.

Further usage of the typology can be seen when we consider the experience of the single BWMs in this study. For example, the single BWMs experienced leisure time and leisure opportunities differently to the other types of BWMs. This can be understood due to their ex-partners access rights to the children, enabling these single BWMs to have scheduled free time which they could then dedicate to their own individual leisure time and leisure opportunities. In addition, further variances regarding the single BWMs could be seen by reflecting on housework and domestic labour in their homes. For example, unlike some of the other BWM types, these single BWMs had no support from a partner and were subsequently having to manage the full load at home, while simultaneously trying to maintain their breadwinning position in the labour market.

7.5.2 Theoretical Contribution

The thesis has argued how postfeminism can be used to gain a theoretical understanding of the lived realities of these BWMs, by highlighting how their narratives constitute postfeminist sensibilities. The discussion therefore uses postfeminism as a way to understand these BWMs experiences, pointing out how their narratives and accounts are interspersed with postfeminist discourse. As a result, postfeminism is used as an ‘object of study’ (Litosseliti, Gill, and Favaro (2018:4) rather than a standpoint or perspective, as the study aims to analyse the postfeminist culture via these BWMs experiences.

Moreover, the proceeding discussion also shows how these BWMs are harnessing their own individual resources and drawing on their own self-reliance as a way of surviving and coping in neoliberal times. Consequently, it therefore suggests that the postfeminist and neoliberal sensibilities that these BWMs use clearly focus on their tenacity rather than any collective support or solutions.

The thesis has argued how the BWMs narratives illustrate that the role of the female breadwinner means that they are required to undertake two roles simultaneously (mother and breadwinner), meaning that they are therefore ‘doing’ both masculinity (associated with breadwinning) and femininity (associated with motherhood) concurrently (Lewis,

2018). In addition, this also signals how the BWMs experience added complexities and pressures due to having the role of breadwinner and mother. An understanding of this can be gained by considering how the postfeminist notion of 'having it all' therefore clearly comes at a cost for these women (Lewis and Simpson, 2017; Sorensen, 2017). Indeed, the findings from this study illustrate that these BWMs were clearly experiencing conflict between how they managed the demands of being a breadwinner alongside their role as mother. As a result, this suggests that the nature of their breadwinning clearly has some impact on how that conflict is both experienced and managed.

The thesis also highlights how these BWMs were putting their own strategies into place in order to manage and cope with the difficulties that they encountered between work and home. A postfeminist perspective can help to gain a theoretical understanding of this, as these women clearly viewed any difficulties they had as being 'personal problems' (Lewis 2018:24) rather than collective or shared problems. What is more, these BWMs outline their reasons and rationale for wanting to maintain their positions in the labour market alongside their family life. This too appears to correlate with postfeminist discourses which suggests how 'women not only want a fulfilling family life with a partner and children but also, they too want money, power and success.' (Oksala, 2013:39 cited in Lewis and Simpson, 2017:215).

In addition, the thesis has suggested that the notion of individual choice is also clearly articulated via these BWMs accounts, as they are evidently placing an emphasis on the right to choose their own destiny in order to meet their own needs. Again, it becomes apparent how using postfeminism can help to gain a greater understand of this, which suggests that women should be able choose if they wish to reside in paid employment or stay at home on a full-time basis. Indeed, a postfeminist individual would argue that managing their own lives via their own agency categorically means that the overall outcome as a consequence is one that is fundamentally 'feminist' (Lazar, 2006). Further illustrations and examples of agency and individualization can also be seen in the case of the academic BWMs. For example, the academic BWMs placed great importance on their research and the vocational nature of their work, therefore providing further links and evidence about 'notions of choice', 'being oneself' and 'pleasing oneself' which are all central to postfeminism ideologies (Gill, 2007:153).

Postfeminist sensibilities are also evident in the BWMs accounts in the way that they express their views about the differences between working mothers versus full-time mothers. Indeed, the BWMs narratives appear to indicate that there is a requirement that they should be 'doing' both masculine and feminine concurrently (Lewis, 2018), and if they can't, then they are clearly failing. What is more, the thesis has also suggested how other relevant debates linked to that of the 'new man' and 'involved fatherhood' also correlate and can be understood via an appreciation of postfeminist masculinities. For example, the postfeminist perspective encourages the role of the father, and the BWMs in this study clearly express their attitudes and own circumstances in relation to these debates. This in turn seems to indicate how postfeminist media willingly promotes the notion of the empowered successful woman, and in doing so questions can be raised about the extent that these women may be reliant on the support and labour of their 'postfeminist husbands' (Dow, 2006: 121).

The thesis also highlights further aspects related to postfeminism and media, which presents women as 'having it all', something that is often projected via the form of glamorous celebrities (Lewis and Simpson, 2017). The thesis suggests that these types of commercialised forms and images of sexuality are clearly embraced. A greater understanding of this can be gained by considering how the postfeminist woman is required to manage their career whilst also upholding feminine behaviours and requirements (Gill and Scharff, 2001). Indeed, some of the BWMs accounts highlighted the importance of maintaining control over the housework and therefore embracing their own domesticity and femininity.

Additional aspects that are presented and which can be understood by further postfeminist is how some of the BWMs viewed their individual leisure time as being 'high priority', therefore displaying the postfeminist sensibility of individualism, choice and empowerment (Gill, 2007). This was particularly evident in the way that these specific BWMs placed importance on 'choice' and 'pleasing oneself' when expressing their attitudes and beliefs about their own individual leisure time and leisure activities.

Finally, the thesis suggests how individualization and retraditionalization of gender influences these BWMs lived reality. For example, the majority of BWMs accounts illustrate that having children impacted negatively on their careers. What is more it shows

how some of the BWMs adopted a 'lying low' approach to their career strategy, pointing out that male equivalents and women without children did not experience the same difficulties and barriers. Moreover, the BWMs discussed the difficulties they experienced in becoming fully reflexive workers because they lacked flexibility due to their childcare and family responsibilities. Consequently, their accounts seem to indicate that many were also 'charged with a fuller compliment of domestic and familiar responsibility' (Banks and Milstone, 2011:82) inhibiting their ability and desire to become fully reflexive and individualized workers, therefore suggesting that a being a reflexive worker is 'a gendered process'.

What therefore becomes apparent from this discussion is that postfeminism is clearly a useful in helping understand these BWMs experiences. Indeed, it suggests that postfeminism is therefore beneficial when mapping contexts with broader cultural relationships, showing its usefulness when creating a deeper understating of the BWM phenomena. Likewise, this study has helped to show that many of the features and characteristics of individualization and self-reliance that these BWMs were displaying, are also seemingly essential for maintaining and upholding life in a contemporary and neoliberal society.

7.6 Implications of the Research for Future Policy

The BWMs in the study discussed the impact of having children on their careers. They explained that having children had a negative impact on their career progression, mentioning that they did not want to take on additional responsibility at work, or go for promotions due to the negative impact this would have on their home life. What is more, they explained that although they were breadwinners, increased financial remuneration was not as important as their views about appropriate and good mothering. This in turn seems to suggest that despite their breadwinning status, they still held traditional views about the roles and responsibilities of the mother.

In addition, many of these women also discussed how they had experienced negative comments about working mothers as they failed to meet notions of the 'ideal-employee' which are more closely aligned to the male model of work. This in turn demonstrates

that they experienced barriers and difficulties at both work and home due to traditional views that support the patriarchal order.

The thesis also argued how the use of female role models was beneficial in helping to challenge negative views about working mothers. In addition, it was argued how further examples of inequality could be seen when considering the lack of women who occupy positions on FTSE 100 boards. For example, although some action has been taken to address the lack of women in these roles, the target of achieving 25 per cent representation of women on FTSE boards by 2015 was not met (The Female FTSE Board report, 2015). This suggests that more commitment is therefore required to challenge and confront negative gender perceptions. Indeed, more serious perseverance and additional policies would clearly help to address some of the problems linked to conscious and unconscious gender bias, helping to overcome some of the difficulties that exist for women in the workplace, therefore encouraging more women to be able to take up positions on boards.

The findings from this study also signal that even though these women were breadwinners, they were still carrying out the majority of domestic labour in the home. In addition, the thesis has also highlighted the impact and influence of the media in fulfilling traditional gender roles. However, some action to address this problem is being taken as policies are being implemented to challenge this type of gender stereotyping. For example, this can be seen in the recent 2018 initiative by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) which states that adverts encouraging gender stereotyping, such as only women carrying out housework duties in advertisements will now be banned (BBC, 2017 b). These types of strategies clearly promote tougher advertising standards whilst also educating individuals, therefore providing a useful mechanism to tackle inequality and pave the way for future initiatives with similar objectives.

Additional aspects that these BWMs in this study raised to promote equality was linked to normalising the role of the father. Indeed, some advancement at a policy level which aim to address issues of inequality can be seen by the implementation of the April 2015 UK sharing of parental leave policy. The purpose of this policy was to promote equality in relation to childcare by increasing the role and involvement of the father. Nonetheless, although this policy can be viewed as a positive step, the thesis has questioned if this type of legislative change will be enough to challenge underlying traditional parenting

ideologies, and whether more direct action will be needed to help break down imbedded attitudes linked to traditional gender views and more specifically the role and expectations of the mother.

A further aspect that the BWMs in the study talked about was the negative aspects of formal childcare provision in the UK, stating that it was both 'expensive' and 'inflexible' and that it did not always meet their own personal 'parenting ideologies'. This could be seen in the way that many of the BWMs voiced negative views about the usage of nurseries, asserting that instead, they felt traditional forms of childcare (centred on parental care) were more superior and suited their own personal circumstances.

In relation to this finding, a recent policy has seen an increase in the number of hours of free childcare for children aged between three and four years. This recent legislative change implemented in September 2017 has seen free childcare being increased from 15 hours to 30 hours. Nonetheless, although this provides a further positive signal for working parents, recent reports in the press (BBC, 2017 a) have indicated that this is somewhat lagging, and has not actually been clearly thought through. An example of this can be seen from the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA), who suggest that 74 per cent of nurseries feel the government has underfunded the scheme, resulting in many nursery providers facing precarious futures and raising questions about whether they will be able to sustain their businesses. What is more, even though the aim of these types of policy advancements are seen as a step in the right direction, the increase in childcare funding fails to fully address the issues about parenting ideologies and the negative attitudes towards formal childcare provision, something that the BWMs in this study acknowledged. Consequently, this seems to indicate that greater attention is needed to help break down these views and attitudes towards formal forms of childcare. Indeed, challenging these views would be a useful segue, therefore helping provide parents with more options about their own individual childcare solutions, that are both affordable and that also crucially meet their own parenting ideologies.

Finally, the thesis has suggested that future policy needs to consider the gender pay gap that exists between men and women. It has highlighted that although the gender pay gap is closing, there is a long way to go until equal pay is a reality (ONS, 2016 a). As a consequence, until parity exists and both sexes are paid and valued equally, women will

continue to face difficulties both at work and within the home, therefore presenting barriers when trying to challenge the status quo and achieve equality.

7.7 Limitations of the Research

The research was based on semi-structured qualitative interviews with a group of twenty female breadwinning mothers, who were categorised as the major earner in the family (Drago *et al.*, 2005; Potuchek, 1992), had dependent children living at home under the age of eighteen, and were in a heterosexual relationship (Kinnunen and Mauno, 2001).

Although more general limitations of the research in connection with the qualitative data process and issues associated with reflexivity were discussed, the rationale and valid justification for both of these aspects were presented in chapter four, which provides a full account of the research design and methodology. Nonetheless, there were still additional limitations to the research linked to the sample.

The first of these limitations associated with the sample was the omission of men from the research – this includes husbands, partners and fathers. The inclusion of men's perceptions about living in a household where the woman was the breadwinner would have provided an interesting dimension to the research, whilst also providing a useful set of data to gain an insight from their perspective and standpoint.

A further limitation linked to the sample was the absence of same-sex couples. As a consequence, the sample was restricted to traditional notions of family and failed to consider broader family types, which would have provided a more accurate reflection of present-day and existing family formations.

Finally, a further problem associated with the sample was the lack of diversity, as the majority of women who were interviewed were professional, white and middle-class. As a result, the sample failed to consider wider socio-economic and ethnic groups. However, although this weakness is acknowledged, the qualitative data collected for the research is still both useful and relevant as it provided valuable accounts from this group of women that are pertinent to being a breadwinning mother.

7.8 Future Research Agenda

There are several areas linked to this research that could be explored for a future research agenda. For instance, the thesis has pointed out how conducting interviews with the partners and fathers would shed more light on some of the issues raised by these breadwinning mothers. In addition, it would also provide an interesting insight into how these men feel about the implications and also advantages of living in a household where the woman is the breadwinner.

In addition, and as previously noted in this chapter, this study focused only on the experience of heterosexual couples; it would also be valuable to explore other types of breadwinning families such as same-sex couples. This would be an interesting avenue to investigate in order to determine if the issues highlighted in this thesis are the same, or if there are further considerations and complexities that add to the overall discourse of breadwinning for same-sex couples.

Further aspects that could be studied would include establishing if initiatives such as the April 2015 shared parental leave legislation have had any real bearing on families in its encouraging of fathers to take on a more central childcare role. It would therefore be useful to conduct a further study later on down the line to ascertain if there has been any sway as a result of this. Moreover, this would also help to provide data on the impact of the changing role of women in the workplace and also the effect of changing attitudes towards more egalitarian approaches to fatherhood.

Studying one specific group of breadwinning mothers from this study's typology, and their particular experiences, would also be a useful avenue to explore. For example, the thesis highlighted a sub-group of academic breadwinning mothers which illustrated some similarities that were unique to these academic breadwinning mothers. Exploring this sub-group further would enable a deeper insight into issues of breadwinning for particular types of breadwinning mothers.

Finally, carrying out a comparative study on the experiences of different types of breadwinning mothers that have been identified within the typology of this thesis would also be useful. This would show what the key differences and similarities are between the

varying groups, shedding more light on the issues surrounding the overall discourse of breadwinning for mothers.

The thesis has examined the lived realities of breadwinning mothers by considering the impact that their role of breadwinner has on their work life and their home life. However, as suggested in the section above, the thesis has raised a number of questions which lead on from this particular piece of research and which could potentially form a future research agenda. This thesis therefore aims to inspire others to follow similar avenues and carry out research into areas that this study touches on, some of which may have been neglected but would clearly be worthy of investigation.

Appendix 1

Interview Recruitment Letter

Dear X,

Thank you for verbally agreeing to be interviewed in connection with my PhD research – *Breadwinning Mothers and the Lived Realities Between Work and Home*.

The purpose of this study is to find out about the lived realities of women breadwinners and how this particular group of women manage the competing demands of home and work. The research aims to find out about the barriers that women breadwinners face and the impact of this from a work and home perspective. If you have any other queries about the research please feel free to contact me.

I am writing to establish when it would be convenient for me to interview you. I appreciate that you are very busy so I will work around you with regard to preference for a date and time. Would you therefore be willing to contact me to arrange this via email or telephone:

Email: ebol@le.ac.uk

Telephone: 0116 2525951 (**work**); 0116 2101023 (**home**); 07739 178134 (**mobile**)

The interview will take approximately 1 hour and will be audio recorded in order for the interview to be transcribed.

The information collected will be used for PhD and research purposes only and will not be used in a way that would allow identification of individual responses. The information that you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. All data collected will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). In addition, your responses will not be attributed to either yourself or any organisation which your work for or have previously worked for.

The interview data that I collect in the first instance will be used for my PhD. I would also like to use this information to hopefully produce a series of academic papers. Please note that at all times the information I collect, including your own data, will be completely anonymous and you will not be identifiable through published work.

Once again, many thanks for agreeing to participate in this research. I am looking forward to meeting you, and also finding out about your own personal circumstances and what you feel the realities are of being a breadwinning mother.

Yours sincerely,

Eimer Sparham

Appendix 2

Informed Consent, Data Protection and Personal Respondent Information Letter

Dear X,

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed in connection with my PhD research – *Breadwinning Mothers and the Lived Realities Between Work and Home*.

The purpose of this study is to find out about the lived realities of women breadwinners and how this particular group of women manage the competing demands of home and work. The research aims to find out about the barriers that women breadwinners face and the impact of this from a work and home perspective. If you have any other queries about the research please feel free to contact me. The interview will take approximately 1 hour and will be audio recorded in order for the interview to be transcribed.

The information collected will be used for PhD and research purposes only and will not be used in a way that would allow identification of individual responses. The information that you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. All data collected will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). In addition, your responses will not be attributed to either yourself or any organisation which you work for or have previously worked for.

The interview data that I collect in the first instance will be used for my PhD. I would also like to use this information to hopefully produce a series of academic papers. Please note that at all times the information I collect, including your own data, will be completely anonymous and you will not be identifiable through published work.

The interview is scheduled for:

Date: Time:

Location:

Before the interview takes place could you please complete the attached form and send it back to me:

By email – ebol@le.ac.uk – and the form can then be signed prior to starting the interview.

Once again, many thanks for agreeing to participate in this research. I am looking forward to meeting you, and also finding out about your own personal circumstances and what you feel are the realities of being a breadwinning mother.

Yours sincerely,

Eimer Sparham

Breadwinning Mothers – The Lived Realities Between Work and Home

Your Personal Details

Please complete the following information:

Name:

Occupation:

Do you work at weekends –

Do you work in the evening or unsociable hours –

Total employment hours (per week):

Number of children:

Age and sex of children:

Marital status* – married/partner/divorced/separated/single (*delete as appropriate*)

Your Partner's Personal Details

Please complete the following information, if applicable:*

Partner's name:

Partner's Occupation:

Do they work at weekends –

Do they work in the evening or unsociable hours –

Partner's total employment hours (per week):

Interview consent:

- I understand what the research is about and why I have been asked to participate.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and how the information collected from me will be used.
- I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed.
- I understand that personal information such as names, addresses or employer details will not be used.
- I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any material related to the information collected to Eimer Sparham for research purposes.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Appendix 3

Breadwinning Mothers – Lived Realities Between Work and Home

Interview Schedule

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this research about breadwinning mothers. The reason why you have been approached is because you meet the criteria of the research.

By carrying out this research I am hoping to find out about the realities of what it means to be a breadwinning mother, and how the competing demands of home and work are managed. I will be asking you questions about the types of difficulties you encounter in both the workplace and at home due to being a breadwinning mother.

I would like to stress that anything you say during this interview will be completely confidential. When I write up the interview material, any personal details such as your name and the names of family that you talk about will be changed. Please therefore feel free to elaborate and talk freely as there are no wrong or right answers as I am interested in finding out about your opinions and attitudes. If there are any questions that you don't want to discuss during the interview please feel free to inform me and we will move on to the next question.

The interview will take about 1 hour and I will be asking a series of questions around the following themes:

- *Background questions about you and how you became the breadwinner.*
- *Questions about your home life.*
- *Questions about your work life.*
- *Questions about how you view success in managing home and work.*
- *Questions about your identity towards breadwinning and being the main financial provider.*

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I'd like to begin by asking you some background questions about your life, starting with your family and also your work history to establish how you became the breadwinner.

- Tell me a bit about your family and who lives with you.
- Tell me about your career – what is your employment history?
 - *Starting with your first job and then moving through to your current employment.*
- Tell me about how you became the main earner. At what stage in your career did this happen?

- *So how long have you been the breadwinner for?*
- *What is your story to becoming the breadwinner and how did this happen?*
- *Do you think you have always had more potential to earn more than your partner?*
- *Have you always earned more than your partner?*
- Do you see your role as breadwinner changing in the future?
 - *If yes, how? Will this be something you are looking forward to or not? Why?*
 - *If no, why not? How do you feel about this?*
- At what stage in your career did you have children?
- Were you the main earner at this time?
- Can I ask you some questions about your maternity leave?
- How long did you have for your maternity leave period?
- Did you take the maximum maternity leave time allowed?
- What were your reasons for this?
- Would you have liked to take more maternity leave or time off?
- Did you return to work full-time after maternity leave?
- How do you look back on your maternity leave period?

SECTION 2 – HOME LIFE: CHILDCARE, HOUSEWORK AND LEISURE TIME

I'd now like to move on and ask you some questions about your home life in relation to childcare, housework and also leisure time.

- Who looks after the children when you work and what strategies do you have?
 - Are you happy with this?
- If your children are sick who takes time off work?
 - How do you manage this?
 - How do you feel about this?
- Tell me about how domestic work and childcare is managed in the home?
 - Do you split the duties?
 - Are you happy with this?
- What do you think the positive impacts of earning more than your partner gives you from a home-life perspective?
- Do you think as you are the main earner that there is less pressure on you to manage everything in the home, or do you still try to keep a high standard within the home just the same as if you didn't work?
- Do you have paid domestic help in the home? If so, why? If no, why?
 - Who made the decision to have paid domestic help?

- Who manages this, i.e. tells them what to do and pays them?
- Do you have help at home from any family members or friends?
 - If yes, what aspects do they help with?
- If you and your partner have disagreements in the home what things do you think you disagree about the most?
- Do you have any leisure time outside work and home?
 - If yes, is it scheduled or ad-hoc?
 - Is this important for you?
 - What do you do if you have a free couple of hours?

SECTION 3 – MONEY

I'd like to move on and ask about your home life further, by asking some specific questions about how you manage the financial aspects in your home and the implications that your breadwinning has on these decisions.

- Would you mind telling me about how money is managed in your home?
 - Do you have separate or joint bank accounts?
 - Why do you choose to do this?
- Do you earn a fraction more or a lot more than your partner? Do you mind telling me how much more per year you earn than your partner?
 - Is it: 2–5k more? 6–10k more? or 11–20k+ more?
- Do you tell people you earn more than you partner?
 - Why do you choose to tell people?
 - Why do you choose not to tell people?
 - Or is this not an issue?
- Do you think there are **disadvantages** to earning more than your partner?
 - If yes, tell me about your negative experiences of earning more than your partner
- Do you think there are **advantages** to earning more than your partner?
 - If yes, tell me about your positive experiences of earning more than your partner
- As you are the higher earner is a higher importance placed on your income?
- Do you ever think about what would happen if you lost your job, or what would happen if your partner lost his job?
 - Would it worry you equally?
- Would you still choose to work if money was no object?

SECTION 4 – WORK LIFE

Now let's move on to examine aspects of your work life and your experience of work and being a breadwinner.

- Tell me about why you work.
 - What are the most important reasons for you being in paid work?
 - Are there other reasons that you choose to work for?

- Tell me about the benefits that working in general gives to you.
- Is your employer aware that you are a working mother?
- Are they aware you are a breadwinner?
- Does your employer have family-friendly policies?
 - What are they?
 - What kind of policies would you benefit from?

- Have you ever had any negative comments about you being a working mother – have people made disapproving comments?
 - Can you talk through some examples?

- Do you think that being a working mother has made it harder to get a promotion?

- Has having children had any negative impact on your career?
 - Can you provide some examples?

- What do you think the **disadvantages** are of not working if you are a mother?

- What do you think the **advantages** of not working are if you are a mother?

- Does your job require you to work away from home for periods of time?
 - Have you experienced difficulties with this?
 - How do you manage this?

- Do you socialise and network with colleagues out of work hours? Why?

- Do you feel guilty if you have to leave early or take time off work if the children are sick?

- What is your reaction to mothers who don't work?

SECTION 5 – VIEWS ABOUT MANAGING HOME AND WORK SUCCESSFULLY

I'd now like to ask you some questions about how you view success and possible strategies that would help you in this area.

- Are there any changes you would like to make in your home life which would make you happier or make things easier for you?
 - How do you think this could be achieved?
- Are there any changes you would like to make in your work life which would make you happier or make things easier for you?
 - How do you think this could be achieved?
- What are your long-term goals in terms of work and home life?
- Do you think you can be happy in both areas (home and work) at the same time?
 - Or do you feel it is not always possible to manage both (see-saw analogy)
- Can you think of any government policies that would benefit breadwinning mothers, or what would make your life better as a working mother?

SECTION 6 – BREADWINNING IDENTITY

Finally, I'd like to end the interview by asking about your identity in relation to being a breadwinner and how you view this.

- Do you think you face the same issues and pressures as a mother who works? Or do you think there are differences because you are a breadwinner?
 - What things are the same for you?
 - What are the additional pressures for you because you are a breadwinner?
- How do you feel about the following statement – *'it is the mother's responsibility to stay at home and look after the children and the father should go out to work and earn the money'*?
- Do you think of yourself as the main breadwinner?
 - Explain how you would define your financial contribution to the family income. For example, breadwinner, sole provider, co-provider or something else – or do you not think about defining it?
- Do you know many women who are breadwinners – how many can you think of off the top of your head?
- Do you think attitudes to working women and breadwinning women are changing? Why? Any examples?

That is the end of the interview.

Once again, I'd like to thank you for taking part in this research.

I will now explain what happens next.

Are there any areas that you feel I should have asked you about?

Is there anything else you would like to add or ask me?

Interview Notes.....

Appendix 4

Breadwinning Mothers (*Single Status*) – Lived Realities Between Work and Home

Interview Schedule

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this research about breadwinning mothers. The reason why you have been approached is because you meet the criteria of the research.

By carrying out this research I am hoping to find out about the realities of what it means to be a breadwinning mother, and how the competing demands of home and work are managed. I will be asking you questions about the types of difficulties you encounter in both the workplace and at home due to being a breadwinning mother.

I would like to stress that anything you say during this interview will be completely confidential. When I write up the interview material, any personal details such as your name and the names of family that you talk about will be changed. Please therefore feel free to elaborate and talk freely as there are no wrong or right answers as I am interested in finding out about your opinions and attitudes. If there are any questions that you don't want to discuss during the interview please feel free to inform me and we will move on to the next question.

The interview will take about 1 hour and I will be asking a series of questions around the following themes:

- *Background questions about you and how you became the breadwinner.*
- *Questions about your home life.*
- *Questions about your work life.*
- *Questions about how you view success in managing home and work.*
- *Questions about your identity towards breadwinning and being the main financial provider.*

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I'd like to begin by asking you some background questions about your life, starting with your family and also your work history to establish how you became the breadwinner.

- Tell me a bit about your family and who lives with you.
- Tell me about your career – what is your employment history?
 - *Starting with your first job and then moving through to your current employment.*
- Tell me about how you became the main earner. At what stage in your career did this happen?
 - *So how long have you been the breadwinner for?*
 - *What is your story to becoming the breadwinner and how did this happen?*
 - *Do you think you have always had more potential to earn more than your partner when you were together?*
 - *Did you always earn more than your partner when you were together?*
- Do you see your role as breadwinner changing in the future?
 - *If yes, how? Will this be something you are looking forward to or not? Why?*
 - *If no, why not? How do you feel about this?*
- At what stage in your career did you have children?
- Were you the main earner at this time?
- Can I ask you some questions about your maternity leave?
- How long did you have for your maternity leave period?
- Did you take the maximum maternity leave time allowed?
- What were your reasons for this?
- Would you have liked to take more maternity leave or time off?
- Did you return to work full-time after maternity leave?
- How do you look back on your maternity leave period?

SECTION 2 – HOME LIFE: CHILDCARE, HOUSEWORK AND LEISURE TIME

I'd now like to move on and ask you some questions about your home life in relation to childcare, housework and also leisure time.

- Who looks after the children when you work and what strategies do you have?
 - Are you happy with this?
- If your children are sick what do you do?
 - How do you manage this?

- How do you feel about this?
- Tell me about how domestic work and childcare are managed in the home.
 - Are you happy with this?
- Do you have paid domestic help in the home? If so, why? If no, why?
 - Who made the decision to have paid domestic help?
 - Who manages this, i.e. tells them what to do and pays them?
- Do you have help at home from any family members or friends?
 - If yes, what aspects do they help with?
- When you and your partner were together and you had disagreements in the home, what things do you think that you disagreed about the most?
- Do you have any leisure time outside work and home?
 - If yes, is it scheduled or ad-hoc?
 - Is this important for you?
 - What do you do if you have a free couple of hours?

SECTION 3 – MONEY

I'd like to move on and ask about your home life further by asking some specific questions about how you manage the financial aspects in your home and the implications that your breadwinning has on these decisions.

- Would you mind telling me about how money is managed in your home?
- Would you still choose to work if money was no object?

SECTION 4 – WORK LIFE

Now let's move on to examine aspects of your work life and your experience of work and being a breadwinner.

- Tell me about why you work.
 - What are the most important reasons for you being in paid work?
 - Are there other reasons that you choose to work for?
- Tell me about the benefits that working in general gives to you.
- Is your employer aware that you are a working mother?
- Are they aware you are a breadwinner?
- Does your employer have family-friendly policies?
 - What are they?
 - What kind of policies would you benefit from?

- Have you ever had any negative comments about you being a working mother – have people made disapproving comments?
 - Can you talk through some examples?
- Do you think that being a working mother has made it harder to get a promotion?
- Has having children had any negative impact on your career?
 - Can you provide some examples?
- What do you think the **disadvantages** are of not working if you are a mother?
- What do you think the **advantages** of not working are if you are a mother?
- Does your job require you to work away from home for periods of time?
 - Have you experienced difficulties with this?
 - How do you manage this?
- Do you socialise and network with colleagues out of work hours? Why?
- Do you feel guilty if you have to leave early or take time off work if the children are sick?
- What is your reaction to mothers who don't work?

SECTION 5 – VIEWS ABOUT MANAGING HOME AND WORK SUCCESSFULLY

I'd now like to ask you some questions about how you view success and possible strategies that would help you in this area.

- Are there any changes you would like to make in your home life which would make you happier or make things easier for you?
 - How do you think this could be achieved?
- Are there any changes you would like to make in your work life which would make you happier or make things easier for you?
 - How do you think this could be achieved?
- What are your long-term goals in terms of work and home life?
- Do you think you can be happy in both areas (home and work) at the same time?
 - Or do you feel it is not always possible to manage both (see-saw analogy)
- Can you think of any government policies that would benefit breadwinning mothers, or what would make your life better as a working mother?

SECTION 6 – BREADWINNING IDENTITY

Finally, I'd like to end the interview by asking about your identity in relation to being a breadwinner and how you view this.

- Do you think you face the same issues and pressures as a mother who works? Or do you think there are differences because you are a breadwinner?
 - What things are the same for you?
 - What are the additional pressures for you because you are a breadwinner?

- How do you feel about the following statement – *'it is the mother's responsibility to stay at home and look after the children and the father should go out to work and earn the money'*?

- Do you think of yourself as the main breadwinner?
 - Explain how you would define your financial contribution to the family income. For example, breadwinner, sole provider, co-provider or something else – or do you not think about defining it?

- Do you know many women who are breadwinners – how many can you think of off the top of your head?

- Do you think attitudes to working women and breadwinning women are changing? Why? Any examples?

That is the end of the interview.

Once again, I'd like to thank you for taking part in this research.

I will now explain what happens next.

Are there any areas that you feel I should have asked you about?

Is there anything else you would like to add or ask me?

Interview Notes.....

Appendix 5

Letter of Thanks to Interviewees

Dear X,

This is just a short letter to say many thanks for participating in the interview for my PhD research. I really enjoyed our conversation and I am extremely grateful that you were willing to give up some of your time to talk to me.

I would also like to reassure you that the information that you have provided me with will be treated with the strictest confidence. I would like to reiterate that your real name and any personal details that make you identifiable will not be used in the research.

If you have any questions about the research or if you would like to find out how it is progressing please feel free to contact me.

My contact details are as follows:

Telephone – 0116 2525951

Email – ebol@le.ac.uk

Once again I would like to emphasise my appreciation and thanks to you for allocating the time to talk to me.

Best wishes,



Eimer Sparham

Appendix 6

Coding of Themes

1) Motherhood/Parenthood

- 1.1 Being a mother (perceptions, identities, maternal instincts – others perceptions).
- 1.2 Difficulties for mothers (isolation, stress, guilt).
- 1.3 Parenting differences between mothers and fathers.
- 1.4 The role of the father.
- 1.5 Coping strategies for parents in the home.

2) Childcare

2.1 Caring 'for':

- 2.1.1 Childcare strategies and the organisation of childcare.
- 2.1.2 Friends' support and help with childcare.
- 2.1.3 Grandparents' support and help with childcare.
- 2.1.4 Childcare problems and difficulties.

2.2 Caring 'about':

- 2.2.1 'Emotional support' for children.
- 2.2.2 'Academic and personal development' for children (homework, social, leisure and sport).

3) Domestic Duties in the home

- 3.1 Division of household responsibilities.
- 3.2 Conflict about domestic responsibilities.
- 3.3 Differences between men and women.
- 3.4 Older children helping out with domestic duties.
- 3.5 Paid domestic help.
- 3.6 Domestic help from families, friends, neighbours.

4) Work

- 4.1 Reasons to work, attitudes to work and benefits of work.
- 4.2 Identity (having a work identity).
- 4.3 Career – career progression, promotion, career pressures.
- 4.4 Career versus home life (WL balance), barriers to work, feeling guilty.
- 4.5 Flexibility at work/family friendly.
- 4.6 Social aspect to work and lack of it due to busyness.
- 4.7 Maternity leave and returning to work.
- 4.8 Part-time work.
- 4.9 Perceptions of breadwinning mothers – ideal employees.
- 4.10 Attitudes to working mothers and non-working mothers and women.
- 4.11 Travel – to and from work and travel as part of work.
- 4.12 Technology – email/Skype being available 24/7.
- 4.13 Job security.
- 4.14 Supportive colleagues and work environment.
- 4.15 Job security.
- 4.16 Coping strategies at work.

5) Money

- 5.1 How money is managed (joint accounts and separate accounts).
- 5.2 Attitudes to money (salary, feeling proud to earn a good wage, financial independence).
- 5.3 The pressures to earn money – choice.
- 5.4 Control/Power – having a say in the financial matters in the home.
- 5.5 Conflict about money.
- 5.6 Children/Money (university, nursery, children's social lives and school trips).
- 5.7 The importance of a pension.

6) Leisure

- 6.1 Treats and perks and attitudes to these.
- 6.2 Leisure time, getting leisure time, the importance of leisure time.

Appendix 8

Motherhood Analysis

The main themes that emerged from the data collected surrounding the women's attitudes and perceptions of being a breadwinning mother. These were:

- 1) Emotions and feelings of guilt.
- 2) Identities surrounding motherhood.
- 3) Control over issues with the children.
- 4) Transitions into motherhood and choices about breadwinning.
- 5) Gender and stereotyping surrounding motherhood (other people's views).
- 6) Role of the father.

1) Emotions and feelings of guilt

8 women talked about having feelings of guilt and negative emotions associated with being a breadwinning mother due to not having what they viewed as quality time with their children. In addition: (1) respondent expressed how '*sad*' she felt about not spending enough time with the children, whilst another (1) respondent expressed that she experienced '*stress and pressure*' due to her two competing roles. Another respondent (1) discussed feelings such as '*resentment*' towards her husband due to him being the main carer of the children. Whilst (2) respondents stated that they did not feel guilty about their roles as breadwinning mothers, with (1) stating that she had '*many neuroses but guilt was not one of them*'.

Feeling guilty

- Melissa
- Louise
- Natasha
- Sinead
- Linda
- Nicola
- Sarah
- Joanne

Why is this happening?

These findings suggest that due to the pull and the demands that these women experience, they recognise how stressed/overextended they are. Due to this, they are able to distinguish that there are times when they are therefore not able to 'be there' physically or emotionally (or as much as they would like to be) for their children. Some women discussed specific feelings and emotions such as guilt when they were unable to attend school assemblies or at the times when their children were unwell. Consequently, some then acknowledge that they could not always carry out the role of mother as well as they would like or want to. An example of this can be seen from one respondent, who states '*I'm constantly questioning my ability as a mother*'. This would suggest that the women began to have feelings of inadequacy, or an impression that they were sometimes failing short, when they discussed how they performed or behaved as mothers.

What does this mean?

These findings suggest that the women recognise the difficulties that they face as breadwinning mothers. For example, having competing demands means that these women are pulled in varying directions and therefore experience negative feelings and emotions about how they are then coping and functioning as mothers. An explanation for this may be linked to the difficulties that these women experience when switching between the breadwinner and mother/nurturer roles. For example, a definition of being a breadwinner is the person who 'wins the family bread' or who 'provides for' the family (Warren, 2007:319). As a consequence this can then make switching to the maternal and carer role quite challenging and difficult, leading to feelings such as guilt, inadequacy, stress and pressure developing.

* *Pressure they put themselves under – what it means to be a good mother/external pressures!?*

The data also suggests that a few issues arose that were not common to all of the respondents.

Oddity – not feeling guilty

The first issue was that (2) respondents stated that they did not experience any guilt surrounding their roles as breadwinning mothers. This would suggest that these women are quite clear on their role as breadwinner and what is therefore expected from them due to the nature of this role. An explanation for this may be linked to the decisions surrounding money within the home and who is best placed to take on the role of breadwinner. Consequently, these women may have therefore decided to succeed in this role and not associate negative feelings towards their breadwinning responsibilities, as their decisions were made to benefit the whole family due to their increased earning ability.

Oddity – resentment

The data indicates that (1) respondent talked about feelings of resentment she had towards her husband who was the main carer for the children due to her role as sole breadwinner. Although the decision had been made that he would be the main carer, she discussed feelings of resentment as people would often say to her *‘Oh isn’t he great for giving up his job.’* Hence she sometimes felt and experienced times when there was no acknowledgement or recognition about her contribution, i.e. *‘but nobody acknowledges the sacrifices I’ve made so he could do that . . . it’s a joint thing, whereas a woman would give up their job and nobody would think anything of that . . . that would be just the norm’.* An explanation for this may be linked to her still clearly associating and acknowledging that she is the mother, but at the same time also acknowledging that she is not the ‘main carer’ due to her being the family ‘breadwinner’, thus causing conflicting roles and emotions which in turn leads to resentment building.

2) Identities surrounding motherhood (also consider jealousy/resentment towards full-time mums)

The data indicates that some of the women discussed their reactions and attitudes towards being a full-time mother with (2) respondents stating that they could not see themselves as full-time mothers. *‘nothing in common with a fulltime mum,’ ‘I’m not a baby person’, ‘not really me’, ‘their all muesli mums that feed their children organic food and go to jabber jacks and sign songs’, ‘Sad bitches. What are they doing singing the wheels on the bus go round and round?’*

Why is this happening?

This data suggests that some of the women breadwinners who were interviewed have clearly indicated that they view themselves as being different to full-time mums or have a separate identity. The data suggests that they see themselves as not having much in common with full-time mothers, which may be due to them viewing themselves as having a separate work identity/outlook. In addition, these breadwinning mothers also knew that they were returning or continuing to work due to their financial breadwinning commitments. As a result, these women may not have wanted to, or had the time to participate in, child-related social activities, i.e. mother-and-toddler groups. A possible explanation for this might be due to the fact that the breadwinning mothers knew that they would not be able to continue with these social groups once they had returned to work (the majority of the breadwinning women questioned were also working full-time).

What does this mean?

These findings suggest that the breadwinning mothers interviewed view themselves differently to full-time mothers. This may be linked to issues about having a work identity and also seeing themselves as more professional working mothers, i.e. having other aspects to their identity and character which gave them some form of distinctiveness when compared to a full-time mother.

3) Control over issues with the children

Mother is best person to maintain control over the children:

- Nicola
- Melissa
- Rebecaa
- Cassandra
- Linda
- Sinead
- Sarah

The data indicates that (7) respondents talked about the mother being the person who has control over aspects concerning the children, especially if the children were sick. *'yeah they need their mum', 'I would have actually really liked to have like today been on the settee with her. She's got a streaming cold and I know that she is teething', 'as a mum I feel I should be there.'* In addition some of the women also said that if they were not with their children when they were sick that they would check and maintain some form of control *'I do trust [. . .] don't get me wrong, but there is that "Make sure you do this. Make sure you do that. Have you done this? Have you done that?" . . . there is a constant checking going on all the time.'* Another respondent had similar experiences and stated *'I would be ringing up saying "has he had his next lot of Calpol?"'* The data also highlighted that (1) respondent had discussed issues about control and having the final say over the children and what happens on a daily basis: *'in the first couple of weeks when I was at work Matt had a minute-by-minute breakdown of this is what you need to do at this time, and where and when and what. What he has to wear. I always put Fin's clothes out'*. This would suggest that the respondents feel that their role as mother means that they are best placed to care for the children and recognise what the children need, therefore suggesting that the breadwinning mothers have a prerequisite to have control in the children's day-to-day lives.

Why is this happening?

A possible explanation as to why this is happening may be linked to the maternal instincts that these mothers possess, and also them seeing their role as a mother to be the carer and nurturer. This in turn has links to gender stereotyping, and also them wanting to be involved and have the final say over issues related to the children. Another possible explanation could be linked to feelings of guilt that these women experience, as they are not always able to 'be there'. They may adopt this approach as a way of gaining and maintaining some form of control in order to stay involved.

4) Transitions into motherhood and choices about breadwinning.

The data indicates that (4) of the women talked about how they did not have a 'choice' about being the breadwinner and that this was just what would happen, i.e. most of the women were already breadwinners prior to having children or were single breadwinning mothers with no alternative. In addition, the data also suggests that these woman recognised how hard it is to be a full-time mother and they also acknowledged the difficulties linked to the transition into motherhood, i.e. *'not an easy ride', 'boring', 'not looking at four walls', 'unsupportive', 'sleep deprived', 'nursery have their job cut out don't they', 'I would have just been sitting on my own with the babies'*. **Also, could discuss the transition from maternity leave and work?**

Why is this happening?

With regard to the choice of being the breadwinner as discussed above and also highlighted in (Table factual information) a lot of the women interviewed were already breadwinners prior to having children. As such, the women have therefore continued to be the breadwinner due to their household financial commitments making any alternative not viable. In addition, due to their breadwinning status, these women are also in well-paid jobs, and have established careers that they do not want to give up (academics, solicitor, dentist, NHS director, bank manager). A possible explanation about their choices surrounding motherhood and breadwinning is that they may also place importance on their work identity in addition to their home identity, i.e. they have two separate identities – (1) mother and (2) professional working woman.

5) Gender and stereotyping surrounding motherhood (other people's views).

Negative comments concerning working mothers:

- Sarah
- Zara
- Samantha
- Rose
- Abby

Negative comments concerning working mothers from traditional/older generation:

- Linda
- Melissa
- Natasha

The data indicates that (10) respondents also discussed the negative comments that they had received from people as they were breadwinning mothers. Some of the comments could be viewed as being more general attitudes and statements towards working mothers. However, as the respondents were all breadwinning mothers, these comments appear to be more relevant and pertinent to the respondents as they are all adopting the 'breadwinner' role. The data also suggest that some of the negative views had a tendency to come from people who were older or had more 'traditional' views. Comments such as '*why have children if you can't look after them*', '*oh my wife's just given up work. Best thing we ever did. You should do it*', '*can't believe that you go to work you should be spending more time with Jaden*', '*my mother-in-law is quite a traditionalist and she said to be before, "oh you're not going back to work full-time?"*', '*I do have friends who don't work and I think there's a slightly moral kind of judgement that their doing parenting better than me*', '*I think men are totally ill-equipped for looking after children . . . or maybe men of my generation*', '*well I could never just dump my child in a nursery. For me the most important thing is the children . . . oh well not for me. For me the most important thing is my own ambition (laughs)*'. These quotes are all indications of the attitudes that people have towards working mothers and breadwinning mothers, which suggests that some form of gender stereotyping is taking place. In addition, (1) respondent discussed problems she had experienced from a female boss who did not have children: '*I had a female boss who had no kids and she couldn't cope with the fact that I couldn't work every weekend, that I had to go home and look after my children, that sometimes I wasn't in the office in London until 10 o'clock*'.

Why is this happening? Explanation!

A possible explanation as to why these findings have emerged is that some of the comments surrounding childcare and motherhood have come from people who are older, and may therefore have 'traditional views' concerning motherhood and raising children, whilst other comments may have been shared from people who have made different 'choices' (when compared to the respondents' situations) about how they will or how they have raised their own children. As a consequence, they may feel that their 'choice' is right, as it is what they viewed as the most beneficial for them and their family. However, from the data collected it is evident that individuals make different choices for different reasons. Hence, there is not always a one-size-fits-all approach. ***What about the parenting skills and attitudes that have been passed down via parents and what people therefore view as effective parenting***

Why did the respondent who had the female boss feel as though she was being treated unreasonably? Was this imagined by the respondent or was it because the female boss did not have children and therefore did not understand or sympathise with the respondent? For example, is it the case that you do not know what it is like to work and balance having children unless you actually experience it first-hand?

6) Role of the father*

(8) of the women talked about the role of the father in relation to motherhood and how it makes them view their current circumstances of being a breadwinning mother. (2) of these women talked about the positive aspects of having involved fathers: '*I think the children are really close to him now, it's lovely to see*' (Linda); '*he actually gets up with him more often than I do . . . he knows him better*' (Zara). There was an acknowledgement from the respondents that the fathers were spending more time (physically) with the children. They felt that this had then enabled the fathers to build strong bonds and relationships with the children due to them being so centrally involved (but does more time = better parent?).

Although there was a recognition about the importance of the father's role, (2) of the respondents discussed aspects about them feeling they (the women) were still better at looking after the children – relating to the previous findings discussed in item (see above – 3: Control) '*. . . make sure you do this . . .*' (Nicola); '*He'll never think "well the girls' hair needs washing"*' (Melissa). This highlights the differences that some of the couples had and how they viewed their own individual parenting – i.e. what aspects they viewed as priorities and the varying approaches they took towards dealing with situations that they adopted.

(2) of the women talked about the role of the father in relation to other people's views and attitudes. '*Over the years it has changed a lot . . . over the last 10 years*' (Joanne). Whereas another comment such as '*Andy is the primary career – the first line of defence . . . but sometimes the school rings me coz I'm the mother*' (Joanne) and also '*Lee probably feels like an oddity when all the mums are collecting kids at the gate at school*' (Louise) therefore highlight that some form of (attitude) towards gendering is taking place – relating to the previous findings discussed in item (see above – 5: Gender and stereotyping).

Other issues that emerged from the motherhood OSOP in relation to the role of the father

- A respondent talking about her husband needing ‘*me-me time*’ which she called time to himself to lie on the sofa – would this fit into leisure time and how the women manage it and what aspects they consider?
- ‘*he doesn’t want people to think he is lazy and doesn’t want to work*’ – would this fit into other people’s views and gender stereotyping?
- ‘*I’m looking after the money . . . his bit’s a lot with Harvey [child]*’ – would this fit into identity and what she sees as her ‘role and identity’ due to her breadwinning job?

*** Although some of the issues discussed above relate to other findings discussed in this OSOP I wanted to look at the ‘role of the father’ because it seems interesting and central to how these women function . . . But would the ‘role of the father’ be more relevant in the childcare OSOP or can it be looked at in varying OSOPs?**

Oddities in findings

- (1) respondent talked about women who are too career minded and go back to work after a few months and jet off around the world, therefore suggesting that this was not a good thing.
- (1) respondent discussed how she would like to be a stay-at-home mum: ‘*I’d like to be a stay-at-home mum but its not going to happen for me its never going to be my life*’. She was the only respondent to state this feeling, therefore suggesting that she experienced real conflict in her two roles and her identity towards being the breadwinner and being a mother.

Synopsis – Motherhood

Emotions and feelings of guilt (also consider the feelings of jealousy/resentment towards full-time mums) – some of the women discussed experiencing feelings of guilt due to not spending enough time with their children or not being able to ‘be there’ as much as they would like to. From looking at the data the difficulties arose from the ‘switching’ that was taking place between their two roles (mother versus breadwinner) that in turn led to feelings of guilt and inadequacy developing. However, the findings also suggest that some of the women were not experiencing guilt with regard to their mothering role. These respondents acknowledged that the choices that they had made with regard to being the ‘breadwinner’ were in the interest of (and benefited) the whole family; as a consequence, they did not associate any negative feelings towards their motherhood role.

Identity – some of the women discussed their identity and viewing themselves as being different from full-time mothers, i.e. not having much in common due to their work identity and outlook.

Control – some of the women discussed having a say over aspects that are related to the children, i.e. having the final say, and also saying that they were better at looking after these needs. This may have links to maternal instincts, but it may also be a way for these women to maintain some form of control.

Choice – some of the women talked about not having a choice about being the breadwinner as most of the women were already adopting this role prior to having children. They also acknowledge that being a full-time mother was difficult. In addition, they also placed some form of importance on their professional identity.

Gender stereotyping – some of the women talked about people’s views and opinions of breadwinning mothers and full-time carer fathers etc. Some of these negative views had a tendency to come from people with more traditional views, or from people who had made different choices to the breadwinning mothers who were interviewed.

Role of the father – some of the women discussed that, due to the fathers being involved, they had developed strong bonds and relationships with their children. However, more time with the children = better father/parent? Other aspects related to the role of the father had links to gender stereotyping and the mothers (wanting to) maintain control.

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