

**Extended Mothering:
Maternal Influences in Daughters' Higher Education**

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Linda Cooper

Abstract

As part of the process of widening participation in higher education there has been an accelerated growth in women's access to undergraduate study. The main aim of this research is to understand generational differences in women's opportunities to attend university in England. The mother-daughter relationship is used to explore the role played by mothers in their daughters' education beyond compulsory schooling, at a time when transition from secondary education to university has become commonplace.

An investigation is made into the strategies mothers are employing to improve their daughters' higher education choices and prospects. Using a qualitative methodology, paired mothers and their adult daughters have shared their views through in-depth interviews that discuss education, class, feminism and mothering. The mothers' home and school backgrounds are examined in relation to their daughters' upbringings, to consider differences in social mobility between the generations. A Bourdieusian framework is used to provide a theoretical underpinning, including how middle class values are being reproduced through mothers' transmission of their economic, social and cultural capital.

Research findings reveal that mothers are providing their daughters with extended advantage to access a university education, often in contrast to their own backgrounds. Mothers are simultaneously maintaining their daughters' lifestyle during the study years, supporting their daughters during a period of extended adolescence. This enhanced mothering practice is promoting a transformation in familial outcomes and challenges the historical norm of fathers' class background determining women's imagined futures.

Overall the research found that despite significant social change the daughters' generation is failing to engage with feminist issues. The daughters' decisions to maintain stereotypical female roles challenge the continuing progress of equal opportunities for women.

Keywords: mother, daughter, higher education, class, Bourdieu, feminism.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Maternal involvement in education is recognised as powerful advocacy (Reay, 1998b; Vincent, 2010). The increase in the number of women accessing university suggests that mothers' supporting roles as financial, social and emotional gatekeepers in relation to their daughters' educational success may no longer stop at the school gates. In the last three generations more women have gone to university than ever before (Morley, 2010). This research will explore the changing opportunities for women to be able to access higher education more freely, but also the extent to which mothers are extending their mothering involvement into the higher education sector. Increased maternal involvement is widely considered normative, middle class practice (Reay, 1998b).

Traditionally for women, education ended with compulsory schooling and children followed; maternal care was subsumed into discourses of early childhood, echoing stereotypes of femininity (Ribbens, 1994). The feminist movement, equal rights legislation and changing social attitudes led to a substantial improvement in women's opportunities, including the right to higher education (Dyhouse, 2002; Burke, 2012). Bourdieu (2001: 90) recognised:

One of the most important changes in the status of women and one of the most decisive factors of change is undoubtedly the increased access of girls to secondary and higher education.

Historically, access to higher education was determined by paternal class, passed on through the male lineage. University attendance was for the sons of wealthy men who attended elite institutions (Roberts, 2012). Just as men educated their sons, currently women strive to educate their daughters. It is acknowledged that maternal involvement increases children's subsequent

educational attainment within the compulsory education years (Reay, 1998b, Desforges, 2003; Harris and Goodall, 2008; Sabates and Duckworth, 2009), but this research reveals how mothers take this support a stage further into the tertiary sector. Ball (2003: 107) and Brooks (2004) discuss middle class mothers' increasing roles as 'status maintainers' of social and cultural advantage. Lareau (2003) and Reay (2005: 113) further acknowledge the dramatic increase in mother's concerted cultivation of daughters. Mothers' practices in education are fundamental to their position of agents of cultural reproduction, enabling their daughters to be 'better able to exploit the possibilities' of education. The mother-adult daughter perspective allows consideration to be given to intergenerational class indicators of income and education.

This research will address the changing dynamic of women's studies by focusing on mothers and their adult daughters in the context of access to higher education. The use of intergenerational experiences of mother-daughter dyads allows an understanding of the temporal differences in women's choices and opportunities. How the mothers strategise their capital and experience in support of their daughters' subsequent choices is central to the originality of this work. Analysing access into higher education through the mother and daughter lens provides an insight into the transference or otherwise of available capital within the family, that would not be apparent by interviewing only mothers or daughters. The critical focus on the mother-daughter relationship enables an explicit examination of the social and educational changes for women and this leads to the research questions:

How can we understand generational differences in women's opportunities to access higher education?

In what ways do mothers support their daughters to have choice and access in relation to undergraduate study?

What are the strategies that mothers employ to improve the prospects of their daughters attending university?

Mother-daughter dyads are used to examine whether daughters are reproducing their mothers' educational experiences and to understand any perceived gendered or classed influence from the childhood home. The perspectives of both the mothers and the daughters allow both an individual and paired insight into changes in greater access or barriers to higher education. Further investigations can be made into whether mothers are extending advantage to facilitate their daughters' educational choices or compensating for any shortfall in their own educational background. By examining women's educational possibilities through a generational lens, it also allows a viewpoint into differing experiences and lifestyles to understand why women now have greater access to learning.

This research study considers two important domains that can be treated both separately and together, education and family. Whilst much research exists concerning parental engagement in higher education choices (Reay, 1998a; Brooks, 2004; Reay, David and Ball, 2005; Reay, Crozier and Clayton, 2010; David *et al.*, 2010), little exists concerning intergenerational narratives (for exceptions see Lawler (2000) and Thomson *et al.*, (2011)). This study adds new knowledge through the analysis and comparison of the experiences of mother-daughter dyads.

This qualitative study begins with the personal (Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Letherby, 2000). Within my own family and three generations of women, the learning trajectory has transformed significantly. My mother left school and went to work aged 13 years old with no formal academic qualifications and my own compulsory education ended aged 16 with O-levels and CSEs. Yet for my 13 year-old daughter there is an unquestioned expectation of undergraduate study, notwithstanding that both her parents are educated to graduate level. My own study as a mature student at Adult Education College and ultimately at university, aided by an access course as part of the widening participation programme in the tertiary sector, mirrors the transitional period when higher education was possible, but not assumed.

The overall design for this research is founded on Bourdieu's social theory of habitus, capital and field. I will be using these concepts to explore how the ownership of economic, cultural and social capital impacts on the class norms of the family and subsequently educational outcomes, particularly at the tertiary level (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu, 1977, 1984, 1988, 1996, 2001; 2005; Bourdieu *et al.*, 1999). These form the conceptual framework for this thesis and will be addressed in depth, in contrast to the frequent and superficial usage that prompts the discourse around the 'habitual use of habitus' (Reay, 2004b; James, 2012). These terms are discussed in-depth in Chapter Four, to frame these concepts in relation to the data analysis. Bourdieusian theory and social commentary is threaded throughout this work and will be considered in relation to the current economic and social climate, acknowledging that class is historically and socially situated (Passeron, 2013). The fields of education and wider consideration of class and its effects on higher education will be considered in light of the current neoliberal agenda.

The concept of habitus and the effect of the dispositions and class relations within the familial home on future outcomes are central to this research. Lawler's (2000) findings support how middle class mothers maintain their sense of class within their social locality. The knowledge of the mothers' possession of legitimated and valued cultural capital and its role in gaining greater knowledge and information for educational access is an important outcome of this research. The mothers' use of capital includes involvement in sourcing and securing university places and economic support throughout undergraduate experiences. Bourdieu's notion of the middle classes using disproportionate amounts of capital to 'play the game' of education is explored (Grenfell and James, 1998; Bourdieu, 1993; Reay, 2004b; James, 2012). Further, investigating how the ownership of capital is appropriated to access higher education is timely, given the rise of higher education tuition fees to £9,000 per annum from 2012. If mothers' involvement is significant leading into, during and after university, then habitus and capital are vested interests, particularly with the tuition fee rise, in the consideration of the ways mothers 'play the education game' (Cooper, 2013).

Acknowledging Bourdieu's (2001) evidence that there is a relationship between the ownership of capital and the field of higher education, I was prompted to explore the possible power dynamics that can occur when economic, social and cultural capital are used to access the tertiary sector. I consider how the escalating higher education tuition fees foster the need to provide ongoing financial support to daughters through their early adulthoods and into the university years. I examine if mothers are increasingly mobilising resources and knowledge for the social and educational benefit of their daughters, theoretically effecting change for future generations of women. The acquisition and use of capital has engaged more mothers into applying greater levels of support, whereby the middle classes fear downward mobility (Lareau, 2002; Atkinson, 2012; Bradley, 2013; Cooper, 2013; Perrier, 2013). Leathwood (2010: 20) argues that the increase in tuition fees will have little effect for the wealthier students who have options in their decision-making, but will impact on poorer students for whom debt 'may well be unthinkable'.

Class is a significant determinant of the primary education a child receives, based on parental income and the ability to spend time on support, along with cultural standing and locality (Reay, 1998b). During primary school years, children are unlikely to have a say in their own educational choices, as parents naturally enforce a guardianship role and take responsibility for such matters. At secondary level, schooling is still highly determined by parental decisions, but there is likely to be more input from the child, based on greater child voice, the child's social networks and crucially, school catchment areas (Taylor, 2002). However, I approach this research from the position that class is a major factor at higher education level, yet habitus itself is not deterministic in ultimate educational outcome (Grenfell and James, 1998; James, 2012). This standpoint acknowledges the multi-faceted way education can now be accessed through the transformation of vocational and educational options at further and higher levels.

The effects of lifelong learning and the introduction of widening participation are both a social and educational landmark (James, 1995; Burke, 2002, 2012;

Burke and Jackson, 2007). Choices revolve around employment prospects, earnings potential, a sense of self-worth and the possibility of return to education later in life as a mature student (James, 1995; Brine and Waller, 2004; Burke and Jackson, 2007). In light of widening participation and social justice initiatives, there is a further dimension of mothers returning to education as adult learners to be considered (Wright, 2011). Widening participation introduced under New Labour encouraged mature students to undertake vocational and academic study within their home locale (Burke, 2012). Further, expansion in higher education relates to differentiated learning, increased stratification and the potential for greater inequality (Stich, 2012). Changes in participation and expansion have significantly occurred between two generations of women. The development of women's rights to access education and careers creates a gap in knowledge within the changing cultural context of the participation in higher education. It is timely to consider the association between women's studies and education, given the rising number of women now going to university compared to previous years and the practical and economic issues that increased access raises (DfES, 2006; Callendar and Jackson, 2008). This is explored in further depth in Chapter Five. The effects of structure and agency, habitus and determinism in education are examined throughout this research.

Consideration will be given to the possibility of the unconscious pre-conception or what Bourdieu (1990) referred to as a doxic position, that daughters follow the educational path of their mothers, specifically during a time period of neoliberal, mass marketisation of higher education. Access for women into university has increased and changed dramatically in the last two generations, accelerated by the educational reproduction of dominant class structures and identities (Dillabough, 2006). Higher education is a common way of progressing a career trajectory more quickly, yet with the real possibility for women that work will be compromised at some point in their career if they have children.

The trebling of higher education tuition fees raises new enquiries into class reproduction, its effects on access to higher education and expansion

initiatives. However, the changing political climate in a neoliberal society has reduced higher education into an educational marketplace (Ball, 2008). Holmwood (2011) raises concern about the dangers of marketisation and how students will respond to what is effectively privatisation of the higher education sector. Burgeoning class inequalities and the importance of the cultural 'fit' are highlighted in Allen *et al's* (2013) exploration of higher education work placements. Further, the ongoing 'Paired Peers' project between the University of the West of England and the University of Bristol highlights classed comparison and differences in the student experience that continue to exist between a 'traditional' and 'new' university (Bradley and Ingram, 2012).

This study began with my understanding from an insider, interpretivist position (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998; Rogers, 2003; 2007). My own experience as a mother, daughter and higher education student informed my interest in this area of research. I am also a product of widening participation. I entered higher education when I was 36 years old and I have undertaken all of my study in a post-1992 institution. Robbins' (1998) use of the epistemological break, which Bourdieu (1988: 1) describes as 'the difficulties in breaking with inside experience and then in reconstructing the knowledge which has been obtained by means of this break' is a prime consideration within this study.

I do not attempt to justify my own personal position, rather to listen to the voices of others. In order to understand an individual, it is necessary to acknowledge that each of us have many 'selves' (Rogers, 2003). In considering the many roles of my participants I am able to relate to all of them as a woman, mother, daughter and student, all pertinent to this study. In this respect there is some shared understanding of their daily experiences and I can be an insider to their stories (Ribbens, 1994; Rogers, 2003). However, I still remain a complete outsider to their private, personal worlds. This insider status is considered critically, in relation to identification and an acknowledgement of understanding the context of the participants, to some degree, on at least one level. The data is used to situate the individual

experience, whilst acknowledging my own reflexive position within this research (James, 1995, 1998). It also allows the role of mothering to be explored through the lens of class and gender. The insider/outsider perspective will be used as a methodological tool to enhance the intrapersonal and relational nature of this qualitative research.

Generational differences or sameness of women's choice or opportunity to access university study are considered in this research. It is not my intention to problematise or pathologise individual stories. I have interviewed 18 mothers and 21 of their adult daughters (three families have two daughters involved). The data was used to consider the mothers' actions and if there was any involvement in their daughters' university attendance. I was interested to know if the mothers had the chance to go to university and, if they did, whether they took that opportunity. Family background provided a strong indicator as to the subsequent class identity of each family unit (Roberts, 2012). The mothers' background and whether or not they attended university is important in the context that only one in ten women attended university in the 1970s (Dyhouse, 2002). The approach of considering mothers' and daughters' different experiences both as individual women and through an intergenerational approach allows a comparison of whether the daughters reproduce their mothers' background. When daughters replicate maternal aspirations, this has implications for class-based discourse on the reproduction of family values within the structure of education. Learned behaviour and values are explored using Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*; the term *field* is also used to examine schools as sites of social reproduction (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu, 1988; Reay, 2004b). These concepts are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

The use of mother-daughter dyads has two specific functions in this work. Firstly, to consider generational shifts within a familial context that allows the participants' stories to be understood from an individualised, classed perspective. The mothers' stories of their experiences as young women themselves and the options they had to access higher education play an important part in setting both a social and cultural scene. The background

stories of both mothers and daughters allow an understanding to be gained of whether the mothers are extending advantage to their daughters, based on their own personal biographies. Secondly, any differences or similarities between mothers' and daughters' access can be analysed through both gendered and classed lenses. The rise in higher education tuition fees has provided an angle to consider the implications of class and wealth on accessing education. Diane Reay's (1998b) seminal work around middle class mothers' exhaustive involvement in their children's primary schooling was the academic catalyst for an exploration of mothering practices into the tertiary sector. The more common occurrence of the continuation into higher education study from compulsory schooling years, rather than the previously held norm of transference into the workplace, enables a further investigation into the familial aspects surrounding decisions to go to university. Using Reay's (*ibid.*) work as an indicator of the level of educational and emotional support mothers strive to reach, I consider the extent of involvement with younger children and whether the same application of mothers' support for their adult daughters exists in the higher education sector. It is important to consider whether maternal support remains an economic and emotional tie to adult daughters and if so, if there is a *cost* for this level of investment.

Women are now considered to have more options to experience the potential of greater choice through education, with women as 'active agents' and recipients of change (McRobbie, 2009; Thomson *et al.*, 2011: 161). The movement towards greater access to higher education and more equal opportunities in the workplace has subsequently delayed the age at which women have their children, changing the demographic trends of women's decisions regarding starting a family and higher education (Dyhouse, 2002; Thomson *et al.*, 2011). Changes in the wider social climate of women's increased opportunities in work and life is an area to open up for discussion, particularly when the daughters have transformed from their mothers' background and have had more options to go to university.

Continuing with the intergenerational theme, the dilemmas that women face during motherhood are also critically assessed. Life has changed culturally for

women, from an expected domesticated role into the notion of choice to be working mothers (Letherby, 2003; Bryson, 2007; Wright, 2011). Issues of income and childcare continue to be an integral part of the decision making process of whether to be full-time mothers and/or working mothers. The intergenerational perspective will explore both options. The discourse of mothering is analysed from two angles. Firstly, a comparative view of the mothers' own experiences and whether they attended university and secondly, the mothers' views of their daughters accessing higher education. Educational choices and styles of mothering were once considered private issues to be kept within the family, but these choices are now freely discussed in public spheres (Edwards, 1993; Thomson *et al.*, 2011). Higher education and familial relationships are regarded as interwoven in the decision making process when choosing universities (Brooks, 2004). There is much debate surrounding 21st century mothering, with increasing numbers of working mothers, single parent families and differing opinions on childrearing (Ribbens, 1994; Desforges, 2003; Rogers, 2007; Harris and Goodall, 2008). However, research around mothering beyond childhood and into adulthood is limited (for exceptions see Brannen *et al.*, 2004 and Thomson *et al.*, 2011).

This research explores whether women continue to compete against the different value systems of home, study and work. The role of education, alongside the work of the feminist movement, is significant in the changing women's identity of the self and subsequent life choices (McRobbie, 2009). Pressure to succeed in all areas of life versus gains in opportunity problematises employment success and potential earnings for imagined futures (Bradley, 2013). This stands in contrast to women who would have had no choice other than to fulfill the role of full-time mother. In examining the dualism of home and work, the conflict of competing gender roles and identities has assigned higher education as pivotal in women's improving life prospects in the feminisation of the labour market (Walby, 2011).

Yet the transformation of women accessing higher education following secondary school as a norm has left women 'running up the down escalator' (Ainley and Allen, 2013: 8). The gains of women with access to higher

education and subsequently improved futures often remain dichotomous to the reality of the modern mother. The pressures and commitments of a full-time mother are more widely understood than that of a woman in the same position thirty years ago. The economic climate and the value-laden ideals of choice have created the possibility for women to work both in the home and in paid employment (Oakley, 2005; McRobbie, 2009). However, the working mother often remains pathologised as a bad mother (Gillies, 2008). Conversely, full-time motherhood is frequently viewed as weakening the work of feminism at a time of the devaluation of domesticity (Sayer, 2005). Women commonly want to assume both familial and individual roles at some point in their life, but not for one to be at the expense of the other. To be a woman with dual roles as a mother and employee often remains a binary position, despite gains in gender equality.

The use of feminist thinking is a further methodological tool to explore the reality of women accessing higher education. I examine how feminist and equal rights discourses have created change, comparing experiences of mothers and their adult daughters, to understand any significant consequences for women's access to a university education. I explore women's educational opportunities and family experiences through their individual interpretations, alongside their knowledge of how society has changed for women. I specifically consider women's changing position within higher education and the impact on wider employment and lifestyle opportunities. The understanding of women as having both public personas and private everyday lives is considered using feminist ideology (Edwards, 1993; Ribbens, 1994; Ribbens and Edwards, 1998; Rogers, 2003). A feminist research paradigm will enable me to chart women's growing liberty during different social timeframes (Arnot, 2000). In Chapter Four, the mothers' identities as individuals are explored through their own education and lifestyle choices and their narratives highlight the impact or influence schooling selections have subsequently had for their daughters.

My decision to make this a female only study made it possible to directly explore the impact of feminism and social change on educational choices and

outcomes, as women reflected on their own lived experiences at both interpersonal and intrapersonal levels. This approach allowed the women to express individuality of the female self through personal characteristics such as choice of lifestyle, parenting and employment. The use of the mother-daughter dyad is useful here to demonstrate examples of the way women's choices and opportunities have altered between two generations. This allows a critical analysis of the political movement towards democracy for women and explores how improving social justice has increased opportunities between generations for women (Arnot, 2000).

The effect of mothers' support for their primary age children and how it can positively affect their educational outcome has been analysed previously (Reay, 1998c; Vincent and Ball, 2006; Sabates and Duckworth, 2009), but not through the lens of the mother and adult daughter relationship. A feminist methodology will be supported by family-centred discussion on education in society and an engagement with women's social consciousness of class, along with any effect they perceive it to have on educational results (Ball, 2008). The implications of class and the factors associated with social distinctions such as income, education and family background are important considerations in discussing undergraduate study as it demands, as a minimum, the academic aptitude to attain higher education and the ability to fund such study (Callender and Jackson, 2008).

I introduce the concept of 'passive feminism', a term used by one participant daughter and reflected in a number of the other narratives. Young women acknowledge the role of feminism in enhancing their educational opportunities equal to that of their male peers, yet suggest the post-feminist position that they do not need to engage with feminist activity as the 'work of feminism is complete' (McRobbie, 2009). McRobbie's tropes of post-feminism are critiqued in relation to a society that downplays the role of motherhood and are useful in reflection on the choices afforded to girls in school nowadays compared to their mother's experiences. Furthermore, the reproduction of opinion surrounding mothering and work is considered, despite changing social policies and attitudes between the generations. This is

in line with working mothers' discourse around the 'glass ceiling' of employment and family (Redfern and Aune, 2010).

This research aims to be transparent in its intentions. I do not moralise over who should and should not go to university. It is an exercise to understand the historical and ongoing barriers to education and what motivates people to attend. The different ways in which we can analyse how women come to be in a position to go to university through maternal support will be explored. Familial background is a significant part of understanding drivers or disparities in ways to education and becomes an important indicator of whether mothers continue to mobilise their capital into the tertiary sector.

My investigation begins with an exploration of relevant literature in Chapter Two, *Accessing Higher Education: Class, Gender and Changing Attitudes*. The main epistemological threads of class, feminism and the higher education tuition fees are analysed, to underpin both an historical and up-to-date comparison of social and educational positioning of the mothers and the daughters.

Chapter Three, *The Design of an Intergenerational Study*, explores the methodology employed in constructing and undertaking this research. My ontological position as both an insider and outsider to the research is explained, with discussion around the need for reflexivity within qualitative research (Bourdieu, 1988, 2000). My qualitative methodology and interpretative style of data analysis are outlined, together with a justification of the research methods I have used.

Four main data chapters follow. Chapter Four, *Framing the Study*, explores the understanding of significant Bourdieusian terms and their application to this research. Habitus and field are used as methodological tools to understand the participants' schooling backgrounds, subsequent educational choices and as Reay (1998b) found, as a focus of change and practices. The participants are divided into four different types, based on their dyadic

educational choices. The women's backgrounds are explored through their biographical narratives, holding firm the mother-daughter inquiry.

Chapter Five, *The Value of Higher Education*, investigates the shift into the mass marketisation of higher education and the impact of fees on women's options of accessing a university education. The notion of choice is examined and the effects of class and family background on options for women to attain a degree are considered using the understanding gained from the participants' educational background in Chapter Four. The data for this research was collected just prior to the 2012 tuition fee rise and highlights the mothers' anxiety concerning university access and rising fees (Cooper, 2013).

Chapter Six, *The Maternal Gift*, sets out the class-based arguments that are manifest within each family and subsequently inform whether higher education was achievable for the participants and the constraints and gains therein. The level of support the mothers apply is considered through an understanding of the families' habitus, the fields of education and the ownership of capital. Bourdieu's gift exchange (1977; 2000) is used here to consider the subjective and objective notion of passing on of familial support and how mothers 'play the (education) game' to gain advantage for their daughters (Cooper, 2013). The Bourdieusian concept of 'illusio' explores how the mothers engage in the process of higher education, bound by their emotional attachment and their belief in the value of the educational outcome (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Illusio is used to consider whether the mothers' aspirations are born out of their 'playing the game' to transform their daughters' education or an exercise to enable social reproduction within the family (Bourdieu, 1993).

Chapter Seven, *The Maternal Legacy*, brings the participants' stories full circle, exploring the inherent difficulties women have faced in education and work-based locales. The key focus for this chapter, through the use of a feminist discourse, is the change in prospects for women. The methods employed by the mothers to provide greater life opportunities for their daughters is examined, to consider whether those daughters who have entered

the workplace or have had children have gained longer term, positive outcomes beyond higher education. Chapter Eight draws all of the data and information together to form a conclusion.

The breadth of research available on higher education, class, gender and Bourdieusian theory is such that I acknowledge there are limitations to the areas that can be covered within this thesis. I have undertaken interviews to explore three major areas; (1) whether opportunities existed to access higher education (2) any awareness of class distinctions and (3) the effects of the feminist movement. Within these three areas, one thread for exploration repeatedly appeared. Mothers supporting their daughters through the higher education process became a significant theme. This research continues with an investigation of the literature relevant to the main topics of this study, namely higher education and associated access, class discourse and feminist methodologies. The exploration of such literature provides an understanding of how past experiences influence present decision-making and choices.

Chapter Two

Accessing Higher Education: Class, Gender and Changing Attitudes

2.0 Introduction

Sayer (2005: 1) describes class as ‘an embarrassing and unsettling subject’, as individuals’ life chances and opportunities are influenced by the ‘accident of [their] natal class’. Gendered inequalities could equally be described in similar terms of life chances affected by birth lottery. Social theories in relation to class and gender uncover both intersectional similarities and their own particular set of nuanced and evident dilemmas. Examining gender through a generational lens involves an implicit exploration of the social barriers and opportunities for women, both past and present, demonstrating an interwoven relationship with class. Changing attitudes towards women in education provide a foundation from which to consider how and why mothers offer increased and prolonged support for their daughters into and through university. Sayer (*ibid.*) offers the suggestion that blurred class boundaries have produced a broader middle class society and that widening participation in higher education, along with women’s greater liberty, have challenged and altered the traditional perspective of women fulfilling expected gendered and caring roles. Sayer provides significant reasoning to support the social developments between the mothers’ and daughters’ generations. Women now have the opportunity to be more individualistic, yet often remain constrained by choices based on popular culture and beliefs (McRobbie, 2009). Women’s ability to be ‘heard’ and an improved co-education system have an important bearing on the understanding of individuality and why daughters make different choices to their mothers, yet also highlight the constraints that continue to exist within families and society.

The transformation in gendered roles in school, home and work is evident in recent times. There have been significant social and economic changes that have impacted on changing gender reform and policy (Arnot, 2002). Dyhouse

(2002) and Burke (2012) identify four key areas affecting women's increasing involvement in higher education: (a) the introduction of contraception, affecting women's choice and timing of having children (b) the appeal of the 'new' universities to women (c) the feminist movement and equality laws and (d) changing employment conditions. The legalisation of birth control gave women the opportunity to consider longer-term goals and greater choices, including education and employment (Dyhouse, 2002). The evolving change in education as a worldwide community, along with more liberal, social thinking meant there was a growth in the understanding of female students as consumers of higher education (Ball, 2003; Marcucci and Johnstone, 2007).

The wider debate and main factors around access to higher education are explored to uncover what barriers constrained degree study and the changes that have occurred to improve women's opportunities to go to university. Three main criteria are used to develop these key themes and ideas in this review of research-based literature; (1) the historical context of the introduction of higher tuition fees, including the political discourse surrounding the neoliberal aspects of education and the necessity of economic capital to fund higher education; (2) class and the family, specifically the norms and values of the middle class within education and (3) women's greater liberty in the home and society, discussing opportunities through education and dilemmas in motherhood. Using this structure, these three areas of research can be critiqued on their individual characteristics and also synthesised through the lens of the mother-daughter dyad. Finally, the chapter concludes by introducing the Bourdieusian framework.

2.1 The Historical Context of Higher Education Tuition Fees

The introduction of students paying higher education tuition fees is comparatively recent. Prior to 1997, higher education was freely obtained in England. However, in 1996 John Major's Conservative government commissioned the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing, 1997) to report on university funding. Initially, the Dearing Inquiry

produced the government paper 'Higher Education in the 21st Century' (DfEE, 1996) and recommended that tuition fees be introduced. Concerns were raised over the lack of consideration for the social justice agenda and fears expressed that the fee of £1,000 per annum (pa) would 'unquestionably harm access'. Means testing, an assessment of family income, was subsequently introduced and students considered able to fund their own study through family support faced fees of £1,000 pa to cover the shortfall in university funding (Dearing, 1997; Morley, 2003; Barr and Crawford, 2005). Higher education tuition fees in England were contentious as they were inconsistent with many European higher education systems, many of which did not charge undergraduate fees (Barr and Crawford, 2005; Callendar and Jackson, 2008).

Similar debates have been raised in connection with the 2012 tuition fee rise (Barr and Crawford, 2005: 3; Lewis *et al.*, 2010). 1997 saw a change from a Conservative government to a Labour leadership. In 1998 the new government under the leadership of Prime Minister Tony Blair instigated the Dearing recommendations of means-tested tuition fees through the Teaching and Higher Education Act (National Archives UK, 1998). Despite recommendations in the same report that student grants of £1,710 pa should remain in place, the student grant was abolished in 1988 and replaced by student loans (Dearing, 1997).

In 2004, the tuition fee system changed once more. Labour deregulated the charging of tuition fees to allow individual institutions to charge up to £3,000 pa, instigated through the 2004 Higher Education Act (National Archives UK, 2004). The recommendations in the Act included variable increases in tuition fees up to £3,290 pa by the academic year 2010/11. Up-front tuition fees were abolished in the 2004 Higher Education Act and the repayment scheme was promoted as a fairer system for all (*ibid.*).

Gordon Brown succeeded Tony Blair as Labour Prime Minister in 2007. In 2009, two years into his administration, an independent body chaired by Lord Browne of Madingley was commissioned by the Labour government to carry

out a review of higher education funding. The Browne Inquiry provided an initial report, 'Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education' (Browne, 2010a) and their recommendations were sanctioned and implemented in the document 'A Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance' (Browne, 2010b). The Browne Report highlighted the need for investment to be made into higher education, achieved by removing the cap on tuition fees of £3,290 pa. Ultimately, this required institutions to treble their tuition fees to a maximum of £9,000 pa for undergraduate study (*ibid.*).

The current funding position of higher education in England, for both institutions and students, is turbulent. In 2010, David Cameron became the next British Prime Minister under a Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government and continued with the implementation of the Browne Report recommendations despite public concern. Leathwood (2010: 20) argued that the increase in tuition fees would have little effect for students from better-off families who could offer financial backing and support. She predicted, however, that raised fees would impact on groups of students marginalised by social background. As she stated, for many such students, large, long term debts 'may well be unthinkable'. Students saw the 2012 increase and the removal of the Education Maintenance Allowance as a threat and these plans did provoke social unrest. They prompted student marches and rioting across England (Lewis *et al.*, 2011), justifying Holmwood's (2011) concerns around the dangers of marketisation and his fears about student responses to what was effectively privatisation of the higher education sector.

That those in lower socio-economic groups are unable to participate in higher education due to financial concerns directly challenges social justice issues and government 'commitment' to reducing such difference (DfES, 2006: 5). The coalition government announced that universities expecting to charge the full £9,000 pa for study from September 2012 would be the 'exception and not the norm' (Number 10, 2011b). Yet most post 1992 institutions set their undergraduate fees for 2013/14 at just under the top threshold. For the academic year 2013/14, Anglia Ruskin University charged £8,300 pa (Anglia Ruskin University, 2013) and London South Bank University's fees were set

at £8,450 pa (London South Bank University, 2013). The University of East London set their fees at the maximum £9,000 pa (University of East London, 2013) which is in line with more than half the universities in England who decided to charge the full tuition fee (Public Accounts Committee, 2011). The effects of other changes under the Browne Report (2010a) are still filtering through the funding system.

2.1.1 Financing Higher Education

Financing access to university entry has become an individual problem to be solved within family, rather than a collective issue to be resolved through government policy. Barr and Crawford (2005) suggest that as families are the main source of student funding, parents may discourage their children from continuing in higher education due to the financial implications on the family. In line with Brooks' findings (2004), it is clearly acknowledged that in families where fathers are present, they are central to the financing aspect of higher education. Funding and repayment of fee loans assume that either financial or family support is in place or that the 18-year-old undergraduate will be willing to take on a minimum of £27,000 debt. This calls into question the value of recent government initiatives to widen university participation, only to be seen to narrow the gap through higher fees once again. Both Scott (1995) and Lunt (2009) agree that the widening participation agenda did not succeed in encouraging more working class students into the higher education sector, for which funding concerns were found to be a major factor. Undergraduate study can be funded through various sources, including grants, scholarships and student loans, but the high level of financial commitment means that low-income students are more likely to regard tuition fees as a debt rather than an investment (Reay, 1998a; Barr and Crawford, 2005; Callender and Jackson, 2008). The repayment of tuition fees commences post-study once the student begins to earn £24,000 pa (Directgov, 2012). However, funding the undergraduate study period, as well as re-paying the fees is a major financial responsibility to consider before decisions begin over the actual subject of study (Callender and Jackson, 2008).

A university degree has the potential to increase an individual's life chances (Barr and Crawford, 2005) but the increase in tuition fees in 2012 will impact on participation, particularly for those on lower income families and increasingly the middle classes, unable or unwilling to take on large debt (Cooper, 2013). Indeed, HEFCE (2013) figures from an early study into the effects of the tuition fee increase indicated an initial 12% decline in undergraduate entrants to universities and colleges in England in 2012/13. The prospective employment benefits to a graduate, including higher salaries, increased projected job status and the improvement in personal development is limited to those students from families on higher incomes or those who have the ability or personal motivation to fund a university education themselves (Reay, 1998a). The government website, Number 10, suggests intrinsic desire should be the key determinant of university attendance and higher education should be 'driven by individual learners' decisions' (Number 10, 2011b). Although many women do seem to be able to find a strategy to deal with barriers to attending university, the debate surrounding widening participation needs to be considered much further beyond the notion of subject choice. Widening participation and higher education institution expansion agendas may have enlarged the scope for more women to access higher education, both as young women and mature students, but ongoing, financial barriers to accessing education remain. Taking into consideration the level of income necessary to achieve higher education, widening participation does not provide a level playing field for all students regardless of social background.

Accommodation and the cost of living also need to be factored into the financial equation for higher education. Local institutions become more attractive if housing and day-to-day living costs away from home are too high (Reay, 1998a). The fee rise then impacts on the choice of university, whether to live away from home and study in traditional 'red brick' universities or live locally and undertake courses in post 1992 institutions, which may equally be indicative of family income and background (Ball, 2003). The narrowing of access based on wealth is in opposition to the initiatives of the previous government to widen participation within the higher education sector (DfES,

2006), but this remains a particularly sensitive issue at the time of increase in undergraduate tuition fees. Discussion surrounding economic status and capitalism through a neoliberal agenda can be tied explicitly to political discourse. Recent political administrations have been driven by neoliberal policy and social mobility, with the mantra of widening opportunities and greater life chances (Olssen and Peters, 2005). Neoliberalism is a driver to class divisions in the higher education system, a prime example being the 2012 increase in higher education tuition fees.

The characteristics of higher education in a neoliberal society are presented as choice, opportunity and the ability to exercise individual initiative. Moreover, the demise of social democracy and the rise of the free market economy generated competition and demand (Olssen and Peters, 2005). Alongside the previous Labour government's widening participation initiatives, the traits of the neoliberal model within higher education institutions means a rise in demand for access to university and creates an environment in which students compete for university places. The reciprocal arrangement between student and institution through the Student Charter places students as stakeholders in an educational market (Ball, 2008; HEFCE, 2011). Discourse surrounding the commodification of education magnifies the difference between families with low and higher incomes and the various choices available to them in the higher education sector (Callinicos, 2006; James, 2007). The effects of family norms and values are necessary indicators to consider and their place in respect of choice and knowledge of how to access a university education.

2.2 Class and Family

2.2.1 The Relationship between Class and 'Buying-In' Educational Advantage

The 2012 tuition fee increase re-ignited the debate surrounding the relationship between social class and associated capital to financially support a university education. Class barriers, including a lack of social, economic and cultural capital are drivers influencing educational choice (Savage *et al.*,

2001; Vincent and Ball, 2006; Reay, 1998b). The level of capital individuals can command places them within a particular class system in society, which is further reproduced through educational attainment and family background (Lin, 2001; Ball, 2003).

Class has long been analysed sociologically using various measures, including the original Registrar General's scheme (Roberts, 2012). This was later developed by John Goldthorpe to produce the Goldthorpe (Nuffield or Oxford) scheme, which was codified in the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) (Savage *et al.*, 2013). These schemes measured class based on occupation, with NS-SEC also taking into consideration subsequent income, benefits and job security (Roberts, 2012). NS-SEC and its conventional terms of working, middle and upper class, remains the most widely used terms to define social class (*ibid.*). However, a regular criticism of the NS-SEC is its lack of gender spread, being based on male median occupation (Roberts, 2012).

Savage *et al.* (2013) have developed a new model of social class, based on findings from a BBC survey, the largest survey on class ever conducted in the UK (*ibid.*). This research outlines a new seven-tier delineation of class divisions and recognises the importance of the ownership of all capitals, particularly cultural capital, in understanding classifications. This varies from the NS-SEC model, which understands class predominantly based on occupation and income (*ibid.*). Savage *et al.*'s model uses Bourdieusian theory of advantage through capital, to explore social reproduction and class distinctions, recognising the relationship between the collective power of the capitals in the classification process. This use of capital to understand class formations acknowledges the importance of Bourdieusian analysis in class-based discourse. The difficulties in accessing education due to a lack of economic, social and cultural capital requires critical engagement with the multi-faceted layering of relationships between individuals, family and society (Arnot, 2002; Walby 2011). Savage *et al.*, (2001) and Sayer (2005) acknowledge that economic inequalities between families extend the differences and disadvantages and widen class distinctions. Savage *et al.*'s

(2013) model has numerous connotations of differing income levels and occupations, making it problematic to place all individuals into a definitive category. Although widely received, it is a new venture in the discourse of social class that is necessarily quantitatively based (*ibid.*). This model of social class, which has received wide press coverage, has the potential to have a significant impact on class theory given the number of downloads from *Sociology*, the journal in which it is published. It is in its early stages of presentation to the academic community and has yet to be widely used in practice.

Between 1997 and 2007 the Blair Labour government moved social change in the UK towards thinking in terms of ‘blurred boundaries’ of class distinctions and towards middle class ideals (Ball, 2008). This was driven by the shift to a mass education system, reduced funding and the need for the UK to compete globally, through both increased knowledge and skills (Lunt, 2009). Yet neoliberalism, with its tenets of competition, individualism, laissez faire attitude and free trade has reignited the class paradigm and fragmented class barriers further (Olssen and Peters, 2005; James, 2011). Ball (2003, 2008) argues that the middle classes are fighting to regain their middle class nature through their social and economic advantage. Terms such as ‘affluent’ rather than ‘upper class’ or ‘socio-cultural’ in place of ‘class’ explore the subtlety of the use of language towards middle class values (Preston, 2007). Skeggs (2004) and Sayer (2005) agree that only those who have been privileged through social mobility and wealth creation are in a position to ignore class differences. While much is written around the middle class divide and the problematisation of access due to lack of income or education (Atkinson, 2012; Ball, 2003; Leathwood and O’Connell, 2010; Holmwood, 2011), the middle classes are increasingly showing ‘positional suffering’ and anxiety in times of austerity, based on their fear of downward mobility (Atkinson, 2012: 13). Reay and Ball (2008) explore middle class aspirations through students who do not make entry to Oxbridge institutions and consider themselves ‘losers’. Altruism is only afforded to those who have the opportunity to aspire to middle class ambitions (Bottero, 2004).

Preston's (2007) exploration into classed language examines how assumptions are made of an individual's class, based on their linguistic skills. The use of colloquialisms is a reflection of people's social identities, which also establishes class boundaries through the use of language (Bernstein, 1990). Bernstein introduced the notion that individuals communicate in restricted and elaborated codes, through which they are subsequently placed into social hierarchies (*ibid.*). Bradley (1996) argues that linguistic categories limit people and force them to accept identities through class and gender. Bernstein's sociolinguistic theory argues that members of the working classes are most likely to use restricted code where familiar, informal knowledge is shared, but the working classes will ultimately be controlled by the middle classes who use a wider, more complex language (*ibid.*).

The demarcation of the class of people who use a particular code has subsequently been tested and challenged by Reay and Ball (1997) who found that the two approaches of restricted and elaborated codes need not be mutually exclusive. Reay and Ball's 1997 study found that both adult and child participants in working class families communicated using restricted code, with the adults subsequently giving the children equal choice in decision making processes. However, in the middle classes, senior members of the family used elaborated code whilst their children used restricted code, with the adult taking the position of 'educational expert' and making choices for their children (*ibid.*: 435). Therefore the ownership of linguistic capital, along with class distinctions set by social agents within the family and education setting, act as a form of regulation to keep people in their roles both within the family and society (Bernstein, 1999).

Although there is not an immediate connection between language and higher education, this element of social class that affects decision-making can underpin familial aspects of educational choice (Reay and Ball, 1997). In terms of information acquisition, Bernstein describes this as 'invisible pedagogy' (1990: 80) where social, cultural and economic inequalities are drivers for individuals to interact on uneven levels. Bernstein (1999) also

used the representation of horizontal and vertical discourses to understand the powerful intersectionality between knowledge acquisition and social class.

The use of Bernstein's codes as a means to understand inequality in society and education is consistent with Bourdieu's theory that linguistic capital enables interaction and shared meaning between like-minded social classes and ultimately reproduces social stratification (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Linguistic capital, along with the reproduction of other capitals including economic, social and cultural capital within the family, brings many benefits in terms of higher education choice (Dyhouse, 2002). This is particularly important when advantage through ownership of cultural capital provides families with the ability to communicate and gain advantage into entry procedures for prestigious higher education institutions (Reay, 1998b). Students who have had parents or other family members attend university are able to mobilise this knowledge for their own benefit (Reay, 1998a). Reay's work has frequently drawn on Bourdieusian theory of habitus and social, economic and cultural capital to explore the implications of ownership on educational outcomes (Reay, 1995, 1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2004b, 2005). Her work demonstrates the extent to which the middle classes use their advantage through capital in the education system, which is discussed further in the following chapter.

2.2.2 The Extended Benefits of the Middle Classes

The educational advantage families can secure through the ownership of capital has been well documented, particularly through the observation of the middle classes, reflecting how habitus and capital are intertwined in the continuing class system (Reay, 1998a, 1998b; Ball, 2003; Reay, David and Ball, 2005; Vincent and Ball, 2006). Bottero (2003: 1000) argues classed discourses 'create perceptions of social identity and social division [...] creating positional inequality better described as social stratification'. Educational success can be further enhanced through networking, which engages individuals' social capital to gain information, to influence decision making, to increase social standing and to enhance identity (Lin, 2001).

Parents who have the knowledge of how to access the best education for their children are a valuable source of support for their children's schooling which could ultimately be reflected in higher education choices, both in terms of future occupation and choice of institution (Ball, 2003).

Croll's (2009) findings support Vincent and Ball's (2006) research that parents are increasingly becoming consumers of education, as families with larger incomes buy-in advantages to reinforce their children's schooling (Reay, 1998b). In terms of complementing schooling and 'buying-in' educational privileges, economic capital within the family is the most powerful asset to hold (*ibid.*). Vincent and Ball (2006) and Bagley (2006) argue that only families with the values and income of the middle and upper classes have the benefit of this luxury. Middle class mothers with access to higher levels of disposable income complement or 'top-up' with extra resources such as extra-curricular activities. Vincent and Ball (2006) suggest paying for additional academic support is one of the main ways mothers use their wealth to increase their children's educational capital.

Parents who are able to invest financially in their children's education do so as they aspire for their children to achieve well paid, desirable jobs (Devine, 2004). The aspirations of working class parents who want their children to be well educated as a means to accessing a better lifestyle in the future can be a very powerful motivator (Lucey *et al.*, 2003). However, an 'inseparability of home and school' (*ibid.*: 288) in the success and failure of working class children means there is no guarantee of educational outcomes in the same way that middle class families are able to aspire. These findings by Lucey *et al.* (2003) are supported by Croll's (2008: 243) longitudinal study into socio-economic status and employment, confirming 'children from occupationally advantaged families are more ambitious, achieve better educationally and have better occupational outcomes than other children'. This directly opposes New Labour's 'Third Way' agenda of combining equity, social justice and competitiveness, based on welfare, market and choice (Lunt, 2008).

Given the escalating costs of university attendance, this strategy of complementing or ‘topping up’ education can equally be applied to support for daughters through the tertiary sector. Enhanced economic support through the family is able to skew the future impact of the widening participation and social justice agenda. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977, 1979) referred to power exerted through the leveraging of capital, in order to create advantage, as symbolic violence. Middle class families who can effect change by applying their capital illustrate how to reproduce or enhance class distinctions, displaying symbolic violence and gaining control and influence over the lower paid classes (McNay, 1992). Sayer (2005: 87) considers the changing variables of wealth, ownership of property and associated class status, acknowledging that capitalism ‘both produces and depends on inequalities in the distribution of economic capital’. Sayer further recognises that neoliberalism has blurred the class boundaries in terms of earnings capabilities. This resonates with Giddens’ (1990) theory of class stratification through individual status and related increase in life chances.

The understanding of class and its groupings through social and economic means does not reflect the notion of individual agency and choice. The next section considers whether accessing university and subsequent career choice has improved for women. The notion of choice is debated further in respect of women who negotiate careers and childcare demands.

2.2.3 Shifting Roles: Student, Employee, Mother

The move to a free market economy and a neoliberal political model has been instrumental in generating a greater expectation of consumer choice and opportunity, both in terms of income and education. Negra (2009) suggests the more affluent consumption of goods and the influence of the media have created a dilution of many women’s social and political anger at the inequality between the sexes. Walby (2011) agrees that capitalism shapes gender differences and feeds inequalities in the system. Unlike previous social and economic indicators of class such as owning a home, lifestyle purchases and choices do not now accurately reflect educational or social

identity (*ibid.*). Women who can afford to be full-time mothers are seen as having an affluent lifestyle, as someone else (usually a partner) is earning enough money on one income to 'keep' the family. As the children's ages rise, so statistically does the increase in women's employment (ONS, 2008). The necessity for flexible employment conditions in order to accommodate childcare arrangements suggest that women's working hours in the home and workplace have the potential to be higher than their male counterparts, reflecting mother's 'slowly shifting present' (Wright, 2011: 141).

Cultural inheritance or transformation of education and class may be passed from mother to daughter and can be reflected through different trends and social standards. Social norms may ultimately reproduce themselves between generations of women (Fox and Murry, 2000). Reay (1998b: 56) argues 'implicit in modernist conceptions of the unitary (male) self is a denial of the social differences which produce inequalities, yet there is little evidence of parallel thinking within texts of parental involvement'. Mothers' involvement in their children's education is a paradigm shift towards the understanding of women as central to their children's education. David *et al.* (2010) found that in terms of gender differences, girls engaged their mothers in collaborative strategies to access higher education more significantly than boys did their fathers. However, Brooks' (2004) research identifies paternal involvement is much more likely when fathers have themselves been to university or have experience in the higher education system. The notion of parental involvement in the choice of school or higher education institutions revisits an ongoing debate surrounding the importance of the social class paradigm and access to the university market.

Successive governments from the late 20th century have begun to understand the importance of parental involvement in education. The Department for Education's website (www.education.gov.uk) now provides a plethora of advice, information, statistics and online guidelines of support that would not have been available to families in previous decades. Considerable research data exists into maternal engagement and the positive effects on their children's education (see Reay, 1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2006; Reay and Ball,

2008; Harris and Goodall, 2008; DCSF, 2009). These and many other research studies explore what it means to aspire to be a 'good parent' in the eyes of society and in particular, the positive impact of mothers' involvement on their children's learning (Reay, 1998b, 2000; Dyhouse, 2002; Feinstein and Sabates, 2006; Sabates and Duckworth, 2009). Educational decisions made in early years education affect or determine longer-term education choices (Ball, 2003). Findings by Reay (1998b) and Vincent and Ball (2006) illustrate that although mothers from different social classes can have shared academic values and aspirations for their children, middle class mothers exhibit the greatest use of making advantage through the ownership of capital. This advantage can then be taken forward into higher education.

As well as considering class-based discourses, the gendered debate of women's access to education includes widening opportunities and rights in the home, employment and society (Dyhouse, 2002). There have been many theories regarding the drivers for this paradigm shift, including more democratic, liberal thinking, government policy and the emergence of globalisation (Ball, 2003).

With high divorce rates throughout the late 20th century, women continued to lobby for more social and political freedom and working mothers were often accused of being at the root of social problems (Greer, 2006). Parenting, in line with social reform, has reappeared on the government agenda in response to the 2011 student riots, with Prime Minister David Cameron calling for 'a social fight back to fix our broken society' and 'to make a positive difference to the ways families work' (Number 10, 2011a). To provide an historical context to women's changing identities, John Bowlby's 1953 research highlighted the difficulty of women resuming their domestic roles in the home when men returned from World War II, having successfully covered previously male dominated jobs in their absence (Smith, Cowie and Blades, 2003). Maternal deprivation theory kept women in housewife roles, as Bowlby (1953) claimed that women who were separated from their children for prolonged periods, such as the working day, would cause the child behavioural or emotional difficulties. Burman (1994: 80) lays out this

discourse around motherhood and explains how problems in society were seen to be 'caused' by working mothers as the 'maternal presence functions as the essential feature in the maintenance of the social-political order'.

The discourse of innateness, that is, the physical connection and maternal bond between mother and child, has long kept women as primary carers for children, despite advances in co-parenting in more recent years (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011). The perception that only the mother has emotional attachment with her child is an essentialist standpoint, often reconstructed from understandings of the traditional norm of the stay-at-home housewife and mother (Belenky *et al.*, 1997). In the 1960s, women who wanted to work, let alone to be working mothers, carried a social stigma (Dyhouse, 2002). Women's rights to have a career, or at least be given the choice to consider this, did not come into fruition as more of a social norm until after the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (legislation.gov.uk). The Equal Opportunities Commission under the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) was implemented to tackle sex discrimination in workplace legislation and allow women greater access to more equal employment rights (legislation.gov.uk). Regardless of previous norms and stereotypes of childcare practices, being empowered to choose how to raise your children came to be seen as the best decision for the women, her partner and the child. Single sex relationships further challenged the essentialist views that women were innately maternal and would instinctively want to have children with a male partner (McRobbie, 2009).

Post structural feminists reject the idea that all women are biologically programmed to be carers. Oakley (1974) suggested women's roles as housewives and domestic labourers within the home are culturally and socially constructed. Oakley's research showed that the division of the sexes is manipulated by parents, whose behaviour socialises their children into masculine and feminine roles through their choice of clothes, toys and language (*ibid.*). Oakley directly contested the characterisation of women as needing to be seen as primary providers of physical and emotional support

within the family. Oakley's argument is brought up-to-date in Fine's rejection of women's 'hardwiring' as primary carers (Oakley, 1974; Fine, 2010: 84).

Social perceptions support conformity and gendered norms, placing women into culturally expected domestic and child rearing roles (Oakley, 2005; Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011). In the 1970s and 1980s, women's liberation fought for the advancement of women's welfare and individualism during second wave feminism (Oakley, 2005). Feminism was seen as 'an attack on the traditional forms of thought' (McNay, 1992: 1), as feminism recognised the identity and desires of the self as paramount when discussing gender (Wright, 2000; Fox and Murry, 2000). In terms of mothering, feminism upholds the right for women not to feel constrained by maternal or stereotypical feminine traits (Negra, 2009).

Acknowledging the limitations of deterministic behaviour, women still choose to be mothers, homemakers and to raise their children, but aspects of mothering often revolve around other decisions including children's safety, well-being and educational outcomes (Reay, 2000; Gillies, 2006). Vincent *et al.* (2010: 131) refer to this as 'gendered moral rationality', where mothers stay at home to raise their children and forsake personal opportunity rather than 'run the risk' of using childcare. This gives consideration to both 'caring for' and 'caring about' children (Noddings, 2003; Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011). It also supports Gilligan's (1982) theory that men care about 'ethic of justice' and women 'ethic of care'. Regardless of government policy, the feminist movement and changing social attitudes, the psychosocial argument of innate attachment is one explanation for why women remain primary caregivers and emotional gatekeepers to their children, despite feminist advances for women in the home and the workplace (Vincent *et al.*, 2010).

Gordon (1980) explores how dominant groups exert influence and power over others to create social governance. From a historical perspective of the rise of feminism to combat the female gender as an oppressed group, there has been a definite shift in women's social identity, as most western women no longer

experience oppression in their day-to-day lives and many exert power over other people (McNay, 1992). The individual's freedom of choice means power relations are not fixed structures. Governmentality can be used to explain how autonomy can act as a driver for social actors to exert power, whilst maintaining individuality and identity (*ibid.*). The idea of modern women eschewing a career to be homemakers and stay at home to raise their children brings into question whether caring is a conditioned role designated by gender (Oakley, 2005). McNay (1992) recognises this was a post structural argument, that women were dominated by patriarchal constraints and assumed a subordinate role of primary carer. Issues of gender inequalities can be challenged and modified through improved self-governance, provoking new ways of thinking through a revised feminist discourse (Walby, 2009).

Negra (2009) uses choice dilemmas to describe the emotional and logistical burdens women face in trying to achieve a work/life balance. Women continue to find that careers remain constrained by childcare commitments (Bryson, 2007; Negra, 2009). Wright's (2011) research found working mothers actively choose to find a balance to manage paid work and family commitments. Decisions have to be made regarding childcare or school arrangements, perhaps involving reduced working hours and thereby a lower income. The detachment for the women seeking an individual identity away from being the child's primary carer is often placed under the critical judgement of others, including unsolicited advice from other women in relation to what constitutes 'good mothering' (Ribbens, 1994). Women are also far more likely to make the decision to take unpaid childcare responsibilities than men (Bryson, 2007). Childcare arguably remains an emotive issue for feminists. There is much written about the rise of equality in child rearing, yet women still remain the primary caregivers (Vincent and Ball, 2006).

Asher (2011) talks both ironically and honestly about her loss of identity as an individual on becoming a mother, drawing on her personal experiences and her research data to support the difficulties inherent in twenty first century mothering. Asher's key point is that women remain primary carers

for their children and that co-parenting remains far from equal for heterosexual parents, despite often having equality in their relationships prior to parenthood. Crucially, mothering or caring for another can often be to the detriment of everything else in life, including a career or a social life (Noddings, 2003). Asher (2011) argues that in this respect the role of motherhood has changed little from previous generations. The diversity of choice for women surrounding their careers and childcare arrangement is a change, Walby (1999) suggests, that has affected women more recently, rather than women of previous generations.

2.2.4 Identity in Early Motherhood

The notion of choice, such as whether to start a family or raise children, implies agency in the decision making process of the individual. The concept of personal choice makes no allowance for the differences in the ownership of economic, social and cultural capital and its subsequent effects on the provision for opportunity. McNay (1992) suggests that the concept of gender and identity of the self is an active and never completed process. McNay (*ibid.*) further argues that women's identities are malleable and change subject to specific consequences and influences at certain times in their lives or in their formative years.

Identity within society has now become highly individualised (Beck, 2002). The importance of women wanting to reconstruct their identities through education after becoming mothers intersects in both Brine and Waller (2004) and Wright's (2011) research around mature women students embarking on access or childcare courses. The emerging struggles and conflicts of 'risk, confusion and contradiction' and the (re)construction of identities (Brine and Waller, 2004: 97) are particularly pertinent in considering the voice of mothers. This may ultimately result in an antagonism or a desire to address their own fulfillment, often accompanied by a need to improve their educational background (*ibid.*). It is important to consider women as individuals with personal aspirations and free will, as well as their potential roles as mothers and carers. In this respect generations of women did not

have the opportunity to have a career and the social norm was to undertake the role of housewife (Oakley, 1974). Women who experienced the homemaker lifestyle through social expectation of the times may want their daughters to experience life through choice rather than determinism (Oakley, 1974; Reay, 1998b).

In relation to mothers trying to attain their ambitions with young children, Feinstein and Sabates' 2006 longitudinal study for the Department of Education and Skills (continued by Sabates and Duckworth, 2009) found that the beliefs and aspirations of mothers had a significant effect on their children's learning outcomes. Although the mothers in their research were women who returned to education to support their children's learning, their increased knowledge subsequently encouraged the mothers to review their own educational background. The mothers began to understand how their lives were enriched by their new found skills and the work possibilities that opened up for them, which directly addressed their sense of identity and worth (*ibid.*).

The gendered discourse around parenting and the transformational effect on children's schooling is significant in women's and gender studies (Dyhouse, 2002). The exploration of whether any benefits and gains achieved by mothers for their children at primary level can equally be applied to the tertiary system. Harris and Goodall's (2008) study of engaging parents in their children's learning drew on Feinstein and Sabates' large volume of data to give reliability to their own quantitative and qualitative findings, which claims that positive role modelling influences children's attitudes and behaviours. Despite greater gender equality in parenting, it remains the mothers who predominantly complement, compensate or modify their children's schooling to gain educational advantage (Reay, 1998b).

Whilst thinking about the role of mothering and how women position themselves as individuals within this role, the work of Bell Hooks (1984) is useful in suggesting that the feminist movement alienated many women because of its attack on the significance and value of choosing to be a

homemaker. She further states that white, middle class women considered motherhood as an ‘obstacle to liberation’ and a trap to keep them tied to domesticity (Hooks, 1984: 133). Hooks’ commentary reflects the differences in the importance to some women of remaining a homemaker and the enforced cultural norms of another. The notion of choice becomes significant in the context of this study, particularly given the advances for women in the workplace and the common necessity of a second income within a family.

McCourt supports the view that working class women up until the 1990s were ‘without voice’ (McCourt, cited in Reinhartz, 1992: 242). Belenky *et al.* (1997) explain that women need to value their intuition in order to develop their self-concept and self-esteem, which ultimately brings their sense of liberation. Belenky and colleagues believe that this subjective knowledge or ‘inner voice’ changes women’s ways of knowing and understanding the world. Personal experiences and narratives need to be acknowledged as crucial in understanding the uniqueness of an individual. Personal identity can be transient through life, and women often have to re-negotiate who they are and their changing roles, particularly if they become mothers (Walshaw, 2006).

Research undertaken using a feminist framework inherently addresses researchers’ duty of care for their participants, as the research process is a reciprocal relationship (Birch and Miller, 2002). Noddings’ (2003) ethical and moral dilemmas of ‘caring’ specifically address the difference between being a feminist and being feminine. Noddings (*ibid.*: 2) suggests the view of mothers as inherently feminine is ‘rooted in receptivity, relatedness and responsiveness’. This essentialist theory of women is a tension for mothers wishing to stay at home and raise their children, whilst not solely fulfilling the domesticity role (Negra, 2009; Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011). Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards (2011) also raise the issue of motherhood being a core identity for many women, determined by their moral and social standing. This philosophical argument of mothers’ positioning interplays with the discourse of caring and its changing role between the generations. This is particularly pertinent to consider for mothers who automatically assume

caring roles for their children. Further, the increase in life expectancy means many women are now part of the ‘sandwich generation’ (Apter, 1995) where they are caring both for their children and elderly relatives.

2.3 Women in Society

2.3.1 Public Versus Private – Women’s Participation in Society

Birch *et al.* (2002: 3) suggest that the use of a feminist methodology enables reflection on aspects of women’s lives ‘from a particular theoretical and methodological perspective’. They also talk of the ‘interplay’ between public debates and women’s private experiences. Ribbens and Edwards (1998) specifically highlight the complications, both of women’s private experiences of public issues and the sensitivities required to remain faithful to the domestic, personal and intimate narratives of their participants. This supports Wright Mills (1959) problematisation of the translation of private troubles into public knowledge to further the understanding within social research. Skeggs (1997) researched women’s experiences of the intersection between gender and class, which Walby (2009: 256) criticised for its tendency ‘to prioritize subjectivity and lived experience’.

The philosophical position of whether we can ever really know the difference between ‘truth’ and an individual’s ‘reality’, particularly difficulties and implications of juggling work, motherhood and achieving personal goals, is examined through feminist methodology (Ribbens, 1994, Ribbens and Edwards, 1998; Rogers, 2003). The use of the private and public model is displayed in many feminist theories to examine the notion of what is ‘seen’ and ‘unseen’ (Arnot, 2002; Walby, 2011). This can also be considered in terms of ‘myth’ and ‘reality’, where sociologists seek to find what the participants’ perceive as their reality, but the different life experiences for each and every woman means that one person’s reality may be another person’s myth. Belenky *et al.* (1997: 3) explore this in a similar way and consider the ramifications of women’s ‘public and personal personae’ of ‘how we see the world and ourselves as participants in it’. Foucault’s (1980)

model of the Panopticon, the hidden guard surveying unknowing prisoners, can be used to illustrate that an awareness of being watched often changes human behaviour; it is the unseen that can demonstrate the truth. In his self-writings, Foucault's (*ibid.*) description of the *exchange of the gaze* is similar to the way feminism was central to exposing women's hidden lives and truths. It is the exploration for the participant's understanding of their truth that is the basis of non-positivist, qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) and real life accounts are an essential component of this research.

Like all forms of discourse that encompass the political, feminism has not remained static. Feminism has seen many developments and has been shaped by social and political change. As women's educational and political potential has improved, so assumptions about women's choices around family and motherhood have been challenged (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011). McRobbie (2009) argues that postfeminist idealism of 'having it all' is fed by a consumer culture, driven by neoliberalism. This has occurred primarily in the last three decades, aided by capitalism and the sudden distribution of increased wealth (*ibid.*). Women's rights have moved away from fighting for and winning political rights for all women, towards an introspective notion of the self (Negra, 2009).

Discussion surrounding the changing face of women's choices and identities needs to include how economic drivers are often the main factors in decision making processes, whether related to mothers returning to work or choices surrounding educational funding options. Such considerations address how social, cultural and economic factors are inherently tied together. Alongside the cultural image of women's changing social position is the shift to women as productive workers within the economy (McRobbie, 2009). Economic discourse draws on the capitalist notions of markets and competitiveness, which subsequently introduced social differentiation (Giddens, 2009; Ritzer, 2011).

Sen's (1999) capability approach is an economic model that addresses the needs of free market policy, whilst providing individuals with choices

(Wright, 2011). The capability approach affects people's choice of relationships and practices that hold value beyond income or wealth inequalities (Sayer, 2005). Sen argues that despite great wealth and liberty in Western society, individuals remain constrained by the lack of options to suit their own needs and ultimate satisfaction (*ibid.*). Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) bring this argument up-to-date with their case that inequalities in wealth bring unhappiness for both ends of the economic spectrum, demonstrated through the financial crisis and 2012 tuition fee protests.

Nussbaum's (2000: 5) capability approach 'provides basic principles, values and respect for human dignity ... of what people are able to do and to be'. Adapted from Sen's (1999) original economic framework, she addresses disparities and divisions of cultural relativism. Nussbaum explores the area of identity, human capital and capability from a cross-cultural perspective, but her welfarist position can equally be applied to all cultures. To use Nussbaum's capability approach in the context of education in England, students in families without the cultural capital to understand the higher education system may forego the opportunity to attend university, even though they may aspire to attend university and be academically capable, due to a lack of knowledge of what they could 'do and be'.

Nussbaum's theory resonates with other feminist literature where women are seen to have a rising consciousness of the need to be able to have personal and career aspirations, and to achieve a certain level of socio-economic status (McNay, 1992; McRobbie, 2009). McNay (1992) suggests John Locke's description of the human being as a 'tabula rasa' or a 'clean slate' anticipates Nussbaum's capability theory of being 'what we want to be'. However, the reality by the time women reach adulthood is constraint through external forces such as money, negative experiences or a lack of options.

However, many women have become more socially and upwardly mobile than previous generations within their families (Ribbens, 1994; Walkerdine *et al.*, 2001; Olssen and Peters, 2005; Fine, 2010). Bryson (2007) contends that women do have far greater equality with men in accessing professional and

executive careers, albeit whilst combining employment with family responsibilities. She further argues that in a capitalist society women work longer hours with reduced leisure periods and increased financial pressures, leaving little free time and that this is subsequently reflected in women's lack of interest of engaging in social justice issues.

2.4 The Bourdieusian 'Toolbox'

The theoretical framework for this research has been constructed using Bourdieusian theory, to explore how progress through social and cultural reproduction has changed identities and social consciousness, and influenced political change, specifically in relation to education (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). In Chapter Four I consider the effects of families' possession of social, cultural and economic capital on accessing higher education, highlighting the importance of capital in maintaining social structures (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, 1979; Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu *et al.*, 1999). Alongside income, the ownership of cultural capital supports participation in higher education through the understanding of funding options and the defined level of knowledge needed to negotiate the examination and entry process. The background to the introduction of higher education tuition fees is considered in the context of how families perceive the importance of higher education in relation to the cost that is now associated with achieving degree level study. The division of labour and social order have long been theorised in relation to educational knowledge (Arnot, 2002).

'Status' and 'class distinctions' are terms synonymous with the ownership of economic, social and cultural capital (Reay, 1998a; Vincent and Ball, 2007). Bourdieu (2000: 189) explains that those who extend and maintain privilege 'blur perceptions and evaluations of the self and others'. In this respect, personal narratives through qualitative research inform how beliefs, judgments and families' financial situations dictate outcomes and decision-making (Ball, 2003; Reay, 1998a; Dyhouse, 2002). The area of agency and structure become fundamental to this debate, to discuss the notions of

opportunity, barriers and advantage in the home and ultimately the education system. The suggestion of blurred class boundaries implies that class should not delineate or exclude individuals as it did for previous generations. Bourdieu refused to disassociate the educational context from the social, but did not concur that the relationship between educational attainment and social class was static (Robbins, 1993, 1998). When applying the thread of social phenomena to education, the identification of class within the family or individual context becomes important as a possible factor for exclusion when accessing higher education (Ball, 2003).

Bourdieu has been instrumental in the interpretation of intersectionality between education, class and society (Laberge, 2010). He wrote extensively in all these areas, including key literature with his main collaborator, Jean-Claude Passeron. Passeron (2013) did not share Bourdieu's orientation towards the political platform as a positioning for his work, which ultimately led to the end of their writing alliance. Bourdieusian theory has stood the test of time, despite criticism from the academic community for oversimplifying the complex area of class and its potential deterministic position (Giroux, 1983; Nash, 1999). Examples of historical and social conditions are sociologically embedded in Bourdieu's writings, significantly his own period of military service in Algeria (Bourdieu, 1977; Robbins, 1993, 1998).

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) built on the interpretation of society as a body of social relationships that reproduce themselves. This supports the argument that social order is imitated over time and replicates and preserves power relations and inequality (Grenfell, 2008). Class 'is a marker by which people relate their life histories' (Savage *et al.*, 2001: 875). The reproduction of norms and values becomes important when considering the impact of class on higher education. Students' educational choices can reflect their home background and strengthens the argument that the ownership and power of capital leads to the possibility of greater educational achievement (Ball, 2003; Dyhouse, 2002). Capital refers to the transmission of financial wealth, knowledge or social connections between agents for individual gain (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Therefore, the ownership of financial,

cultural and social capital encompasses attitudes, behaviour and goods that can be transferred from parent to child, thereby reproducing the class system in all aspects of society, including the education sector (*ibid.*). Like Giroux (1983) and Nash (1999), Lin (2001) looks beyond the use of Bourdieu's theory of habitus to explore inequality within societal structures, including the education system. Lin's findings are that class systems and divisions occur within society as people interact and maintain relationships in similar social and economic groups (*ibid.*). New Labour's (1997-2010) suggestion that widening participation in higher education is 'sound economic sense' (DfES, 2006: 5) blurs the social justice and access through lifelong learning into the monetary agenda, rather than being the core issue of debate.

Nash (1999) and Tooley and Darby (1998) have criticised the use of the theory of habitus as having a causal effect on educational attainment. Yet despite opposing opinions and objections, Nash concedes 'to struggle to work with Bourdieu's concepts [...] is worthwhile' (1999: 185). Furthermore, Laberge (2010: 776) concludes that Bourdieu's contribution to the sociology of education is 'almost immeasurable'. It would be easy to dismiss Bourdieusian theoretical perspectives of habitus, field and capital as being 'too obvious' for this study. The interwoven nature of the individual, family and income explicitly reveal the complexities of accessing education, including the privileges and inequalities associated with class. The extensive and ongoing use of Bourdieu's theories of habitus, field and capital offers an understanding of why the home is a critical site of economic, cultural and social reproduction. The explicit application of habitus, field and capital to this study will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

2.4.1 Agency, Structure and Reflexivity

If the implications of familial, institutional and societal decisions that affect education and our understanding of its purpose are to be examined, it is necessary to assess how single decisions make up the collective voice. As individuals, or social actors, the capacity to have a sense of ownership of the decision-making process provides us with a sense of agency. Agency is the

ability to exercise individual choice, thus allowing personal motivations and ideas to be mobilised. Agency activates independent choices that trigger actions to produce a particular end result (Scott, 2012). Reflection on personal knowledge and experiences, both past and present, inform the options we have and the subsequent reasoning we make. The consideration of previous experiences is part of the process of understanding and controlling future situations (Scott, 2012). Giddens (1979, 1990) describes agency as necessary to constantly adapt in modern life in an ever-changing world. The effects of generational change for women, in social and educational terms, can equally be explored through women's experiences of their own lifecourses, changing from traditional and conformed expectations to undefined futures (Jones, Bradbury and Le Boutilier, 2011).

From an educationalist's perspective, the placement of an individual in the centre of a regulatory, educational model can usefully be applied to Bronfenbrenner's model of Ecological Theory of Development (Smith, Cowie and Blades, 2003). Bourdieu explores how habitus and the ownership of capital affect practice (Bourdieu, 1993). In a similar way, Bronfenbrenner places the individual within the micro system at the centre of a concentric circle, with all external forces in a set of systems, from school (meso system), society (macro system) and historical, life events (chrono system) that affect eventual outcomes (Smith, Cowie and Blades, 2003). This developmental model is an education-based alternative for viewing how cultures and societies influence conditions for learning, but with the need to understand the individual at the heart of the process.

Giddens' (1979) structuration theory examines the relationship between agency and structure. Structuration is 'a two-way process by which we shape our social world through individual actions, but are ourselves reshaped by society' (Giddens, 2009: 1134). Agency is constrained by structures, particularly in relation to access to education. Study at university requires individual motivation, yet educational desire is often overshadowed by the cost of higher education study. The increase in tuition fees is a barrier to education, but remains an institutional requirement or structure - such a

structure implemented by the actions of individuals. Structures are therefore the outcomes of the actions of people (Roberts, 2012). Agency is influenced by existing structures and equally structures are affected through agency (Roberts, 2012). Structuration theory reinforces the reflexive and relational nature of human action and the social outcomes.

The monitoring of actions, both individual and those of others, is an important dual function of reflexive action (Scott, 2012). Reflexivity is a useful tool to examine the relational aspects of the conscious and unconscious factors that influence decision-making processes. Reflexivity questions the relationship between positions, dispositions, practices and relations (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Hodkinson, 1998). A reflexive approach to research is an engagement with the ability to reflect on one's own preconceptions, subsequently making decisions based on a full awareness of circumstances and the consequences of acting on that knowledge (Roberts, 2012). The relationship between people and the ways in which they access education can be explored as a reflexive and relational process of individual actors with agency to exercise choice and options, within the disposition of the habitus and structures of the fields of education (James, 2011).

Bourdieu insisted that reflexivity is necessary within sociological studies to make transparent the researcher's own position and practice within their research, which needs as much scrutiny as any other research discipline approach (Robbins, 1998; Bourdieu, 1988, 2000; Deer, 2008). Bourdieu implemented a reflexive approach to his writings throughout his career, from his early ethnographic work in Algeria through to his later literature (Bourdieu, 1977; 2000). The reflection on the nature and our understanding of research informs our perceptions and ways of gaining such knowledge (Grenfell and James, 1998). Reflexivity is therefore a necessary process for the researcher in the construction of knowledge (Deer, 2008).

A reflexive approach does not separate the researcher from the researched (Reinharz, 1992; Ribbens, 1994; Rogers, 2003, Corbin and Strauss, 2008). In analysing the many roles of my participants with whom I have a shared

understanding, such as mother and daughter, I am an insider to many aspects of this research. The engagement with participants' agency and an understanding of the structures within which their decisions were made in relation to higher education is explored in depth in Chapter Three. The use of agency and structure is a useful tool to enhance the relational and reflexive nature of subjective research areas.

In order to develop an understanding of the structures implicit in higher education, it is important to contextualise the introduction of higher education tuition fees and the associated institutional and legislative framework. Agency and structure are implicit in relation to family and class-based discourses surrounding access to education. The inherent benefits of financial stability and other forms of capital become evident in the discussion surrounding the ways of gaining educational advantage, particularly giving consideration to transition to an era where students now pay higher education fees.

2.5 Conclusion

The wider literature in relation to this research has been examined using three major themes: the historical context of higher education tuition fees, class and the family and women's greater liberty in society. Each can be intrinsically linked to the other in relation to accessing higher education. These themes continue to be relevant in understanding how society has changed and using Bourdieusian theory, their ongoing application in positioning women's changing social role has been explored.

The historical context of the introduction of tuition fees and the political discourse that has underpinned the higher education funding agenda has been examined. Widening participation and social justice agendas have not encouraged families from working classes to engage in higher education; rather middle class norms and advantages continue to prevent equality in university attendance. Political Acts and policies show a progressive move

towards better opportunities for women, but class barriers still prevent true, equal involvement.

The wider discourse of class in society has clear social distinctions that continue to reproduce themselves within the family, particularly through mothers' involvement in education (Reay, 1998b). Social reproduction is pertinent in considering the intergenerational nature of the mother-daughter dyad and how class reproduction allows particular women to support their daughters through higher education. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977, 1979) highlight the advantage of parental involvement that continues to be most effectively negotiated by the middle classes with social, cultural and economic capital, as well as indicating how those without capital are disadvantaged in the education system.

The importance of wealth, in relation to class and educational reproduction has evolved through capitalism in the 1980s and has blurred class boundaries and embedded the notion of social inequality further. The ideals of choice and free market competition, has spread to the education system and encouraged middle class mothers to gain further educational advantage and to become consumers of education (Vincent and Ball, 2006).

Expansion objectives have been met with higher numbers than ever attending university, whilst widening participation has increased greater diversity within the student population. The social justice agenda remains fragmented and continues to harbour social and financial difference (Munday, 2012). Funding remains a significant factor when considering undergraduate study. Whilst neoliberal supporters would argue that expansion policies are encouraging more students from working class backgrounds to remain in education, it could equally be argued that the same policies are encouraging debt through education to become an accepted norm.

Applications for university places for the academic year 2012/13 fell by 8.9%, at the same time higher education tuition fees increased to a maximum of £9,000 pa (UCAS, 2012). Future patterns of access to higher education will

be an indicator of whether there will be a shift back to the vocational and if the escalating tuition fees prohibit inclusion in the higher education sector, reversing the trend back to vocational and skill based training.

Women are now able to represent themselves as social agents of choice and with the ability to express their own identity. Women have the opportunity to access both education and careers, yet despite advances in co-parenting and gender equality, women predominantly remain emotional gatekeepers and primary carers once they become parents (Vincent and Ball, 2006). The dilemmas and choices facing women have been examined, both as individuals in the workplace striving for equality and as mothers coping with childcare issues.

This literature review represents a cross section of academic discourse and research into the major themes of tuition fees, class and the family. The intergenerational timeframe revolves around class, mothering, education and the shift through the various feminist ideologies. This includes women's greater consumption of cultural ideals, their ability to express themselves more openly and to challenge their identity as individuals.

It is acknowledged that women's choices have improved significantly and there has been positive progression in women's rights. However, women's lack of equality in the areas of feminist debate continues, predominantly around the sharing of parenting responsibilities and the continued lack of women in high earning careers. Women are now beginning to take up the fuller opportunities offered to them, which aim to bring men's and women's career paths and earnings potential into line in time.

Women have greater liberty to access higher education and careers, with the caveat that class distinctions through wealth and knowledge continue to prohibit some women from continuing in education beyond compulsory years. Walby's (2011) view remains that feminism is far from complete, despite contestations from academics such as Negra (2009) and McRobbie (2009) that we are now in a postfeminist era and the need for further equality

is obsolete. In relation to criticality around women's greater social independence, the use of the changing structure of society is helpful in exploring the role class and the family has played in women's life choices.

The literature referenced here supports the view that women have greater liberty and opportunity to assert their identity in society. There is also clear evidence that ownership of capital remains important to access higher education with greater success, and familial support increases this advantage. Women may have more options to realise career paths and self-actualisation of ambition, but the emotional tie of motherhood and childcare still constrains some women's ability to access career choice. Whilst this thesis will show progression and improvement for women's rights and choices in education and employment, it will also reveal that many things have yet to change.

Educational and economic barriers are tangible and significant in shaping tertiary education choices. Crucially though, little evidence exists to show how despite these hurdles, women are still able to attend university in larger numbers than ever before. Part of the objective of this research is to consider if mothers now complement and compensate their daughters' university choices based on their own experiences at the same age. There are many strategies that women now employ to support their daughters' educational goals and reasons why mothers retain such involvement in their adult daughters' lives. On balance the discourse around maternal, middle-class ideals is stronger than that around class distinctions and social inequality.

In the process of undertaking this review I did not find any literature that explicitly addressed mothering into the tertiary sector, which established that a gap in knowledge exists in this field of research. The consideration of mothers' and daughters' higher educational backgrounds provided the foundation for a social critique of the changing support mechanisms for women within the family, highlighting the subsequent practice of extended mothering. The next chapter will look specifically at how this research has been constructed to provide an original contribution to this area of knowledge.

Chapter Three

The Design of an Intergenerational Study

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative research, explored through the narratives of 39 in-depth interviews, is to gain an understanding of the personal, lived experience of women's access to higher education in the south of England. The unique nature of each participant's story necessitates an emphasis on understanding the implicit and explicit meanings of their accounts (Huberman and Miles, 2002). This allows consideration to be given to the factors and drivers that affect access to a university education, through understanding several narratives in depth, rather than considering the general consensus or a numerical account (Merriman, 1998; Barbour, 2008). The understanding of power for those with money and knowledge, along with the effect of familial expectation and encouragement can best be measured qualitatively (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

An intergenerational approach has been adopted, one of interviewing mothers and their adult daughters to consider the reality of the changing views and opportunities between two generations of women. The use of a feminist methodology enables a further understanding of women's lived experiences and how their background affected choices surrounding education and employment (Ribbens, 1994; Letherby, 2003; Walby, 2011). Additionally, feminist thinking offers another perspective on why women may not be educated to their full potential, other than their own levels of determination and personal decisions. Consideration will be given to the extent to which women's options or choices are constrained, replicated or transformed through influences from within family and also wider policy frameworks (Reay, 1998b, Walby, 2011).

This chapter details the design process that has been followed from conception of the research ideas, including the way participants have been

sourced, to the collection, handling and processing of data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest interviews are the most direct way of gaining personal, in-depth information. As the sole researcher and author of this project, I was able to manage the entire process from beginning to end, from contacting the participants through to conducting the interviews, undertaking the transcription and disseminating the raw data. Other than one set of field notes and interview transcripts, no further data were collected. All the steps in the research process are explained within this chapter.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest the potential for difference to emerge between method and eventual interpretation when using the qualitative paradigm. I have attempted to be as transparent as possible in addressing how the interviews were constructed, undertaken and the subsequent synthesis of the findings (Mauthner *et al.*, 2002). This has included addressing criteria such as an acknowledgement of my familiarity with the topic and outlining the challenges and constraints experienced during the process. I have sought to demonstrate rigour and credibility in the way the investigation has been constructed and undertaken, including the interpretation of the academic texts used to support my theoretical claims (*ibid.*). My trustworthiness as a feminist researcher is evident in the inclusion of the excerpt on page 76 that acknowledges that I momentarily strayed into more personal discussion, something that another researcher might have chosen not to disclose. I have sought to provide a variety of perspectives and present them in as clear a manner as possible.

3.1 Research Methodology and Methods

This research is structured around a qualitative paradigm, to enable us to see the world from the participants' perspectives (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). This approach supports my aim of understanding women through their gendered knowledge, experiences and any related implications for their access to education. My research method of in-depth interviews allows me to explore individual stories and to gain meaning and insight into

peoples' educational journeys, which are different for each and every person. The qualitative approach allows an engagement with rich, personal narratives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). The intergenerational nature of this study 'seeks to locate experiences on a chronological continuum in relation to an individual's biography' (Barbour, 2008: 123). By keeping the research within a gendered context, any reported changes between two generations of women can be used to understand why social processes and decisions 'are made and enacted' (Barbour, 2008: 11). The personal narratives collected for this research will focus on the unique life experiences and stories, personal to each individual, but which, when interpreted collectively, begin to reflect bigger issues and social phenomena (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

The stance for this style of research enquiry falls within the interpretative paradigm, which involves looking at the issues surrounding reality, beliefs and feelings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). It is important to emphasise that whilst the findings and experiences hold meaning for each individual, there are clearly many women who have not been interviewed who will hold different values, experiences and opinions that may not be expressed here.

This research was specifically designed to gain both female perspective and inter-family insight into the experiences and beliefs surrounding higher education, taking into consideration the effects of the home environment. The main purpose of using mother-daughter pairings was to examine inter-family experience and any change for women's opportunities in education over time. Initially I had anticipated a working class sample, but as explored later in the chapter, access was difficult which necessitated working with those women willing and available to participate. From a temporal perspective, the use of the mother-daughter relationship has meant that the participants were able to comment on explicit instances of their lived experience, bound by constantly changing familial and social contexts (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). The subsequent sample that was produced therefore fulfilled my criteria of mother and adult daughter couples, without being constrained by specific socio-cultural groupings. This is small-scale, exploratory research and my opportunistic approach to finding participants is

therefore not generalisable, but the responses of each participant are important to them personally. This reveals an understanding of internal validity for each individual, which is identified as an important component of working within the interpretative paradigm (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

The interpretivist approach of delving into people's past experiences can be blurred due to the socially constructed nature of the world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008), while the process of making sense of research data and unpacking individual voice and identity can be problematic (Arnot and Reay, 2007). However, obtaining individuals' points of view and capturing the day-to-day constraints they encounter gives consideration to how individuals construct their own meanings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). In this way, the women's own ways of knowing (Belenky *et al.*, 1997) help to form social understandings, both past and present. The analysis of the participants' understandings of their family backgrounds are pivotal in order to explore classed narratives and the influences that governed any decisions or choices in relation to schooling and education.

3.1.1 Sourcing Participants and Gaining Access

The identification of potential participants began through connections with friends, family and colleagues who knew of mothers who had an adult daughter. Inquiries were made while networking at research conferences, most successfully at a conference in the south of England and a writers' retreat. Word of mouth and snowballing brought further introductions (Coolican, 1999). The process of securing both mothers and their daughters as pairs of participants differed, depending on whether I met the mother and asked her daughter to become involved and at other times this was reversed. In practice, snowball sampling became the main strategy for gaining participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Coolican, 1999). Snowballing has widened the geographical area of the participants significantly from what was originally going to be an Essex only study. However, the research has remained based in the south of England.

Participants have been interviewed in seven regional counties. The few regions in which interviews took place means this research can be categorised as a small study. This broader geographic sample has had positive benefits for the research. It has meant that a greater range of participants' knowledge within a wider age band and area have been sourced, rather than, say, if one sixth form college of 18 year-old daughters had agreed to take part. Snowballing also gives access to participants who would not have otherwise become involved (Standing, 1998). However, the large number of participants in the study who have attended private school is a reflection of the affluent areas in which a large proportion of the women lived. It has also shown that similar findings, such as mothers' support for their daughters moving into higher education are not limited geographically to one region.

Snowballing is a useful method for collecting participants, however, introductions do inevitably come to a natural stop due to a saturation of available participants (Bertaux, 1981). This occurred in my sample once 39 interviews had been collected. By this point in the data collection, each new interview narrative became a variation on the previous one, highlighting the theory of the saturation of knowledge, where a pattern of sociological relations begins to emerge to form an overall representation (Bertaux, 1981). This is not to underestimate the overall emergent and interactional knowledge provided by the use of this method (Noy, 2008).

Sourcing women's groups to contact in order to find participants was problematic. Internet and local newspaper searches invariably identified women's support groups focusing on abuse or problems related to ethnicity or sexuality. Women's networking groups were all business related, particularly promoting income generation. Mothering groups were completely dominated by information around mother and toddler sessions. One more general group, a local women's group, was unwilling to put me in direct contact with its members.

Three state funded secondary schools in Essex were approached to try to find upper sixth formers and their mothers who would be willing to discuss their

plans for the future. There was no success with this approach. Two of the schools were considered due to their geographical closeness to my home. The other was a faith school whom I had previously contacted when carrying out observations for another research project, following common practice of obtaining contacts through existing networks (Miller and Bell, 2002). Despite Cohen *et al.*'s (2007) suggestion that snowball sampling is a useful way of gaining access to schools or educational institutions, the two local schools did not reply to any correspondence or the subsequent follow up mail or telephone calls. The faith school consistently replied that they were willing to help but never gave any dates to secure a meeting. Rigorous gatekeeping through school secretaries and administrators meant a lack of direct contact with the Heads of either Sixth Form, by telephone or e-mail, to discuss possible access to their students.

3.1.2 The Participants

The women who eventually participated in this research consist of 18 mothers and 21 daughters, with a diverse cross section of ages and backgrounds. All names used are pseudonyms. The intention was to interview one mother and one daughter, but if more than one daughter volunteered, their willingness to participate was welcomed. There are three incidences of family interviews with one mother and two daughters, Rose with Rosalind and Rosanne, Sue with Suzanne and Suzie and Leigh with Leanne and Leona. This has added to the depth of narratives surrounding social and cultural capital within the family.

The mothers range in age from 41 to 76. Three are full-time mothers, ten are in paid full-time employment and one in part-time paid employment, three are retired and one is a part-time student. The mothers possess a great deal of educational experience and their qualifications are varied. Four have PhDs, two have Masters degrees, four are postgraduates, three are educated to A-level standard, four are educated to O-level standard and one has qualifications from her compulsory education in Jamaica. Two of the mothers are in the process of upgrading their studying, one from Masters to PhD and

the other from postgraduate to Masters study. The mothers also hold a variety of vocational qualifications, including Nursery Nursing Examination Board (NNEB) and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) in childcare and various career specific diplomas.

The daughters are aged 18 to 44. Ten are currently in full-time employment, one is unwaged, seven are in full-time undergraduate study, two are A-level students and one is a full-time mother. In terms of education, one daughter holds a Masters degree, nine are graduates, seven are currently undertaking undergraduate study, two are finalising A-levels in anticipation of undergraduate study, one is educated to A-level standard and one is educated to GCSE level. Of all the daughters, two have not and do not wish to embark on undergraduate study.

Due to the migration of people away from the family home to find work or settle with partners, most of the mothers do not live in the area in which they were born. Of all the mothers interviewed only Steph has remained in the same town in which she was born and raised, with her daughter Stephanie going to the same primary school as she did. All the daughters, with the exception of five, still live in the family home either permanently or during holidays outside of university term time. The three oldest daughters in the sample and are aged between 38 and 44 and have lived away from the family home for some time. Only two other daughters, aged 23 and 24 respectively, have permanently moved away from the family home, both to set up their own homes with their partners. The variations in the women's ages and subsequent educational choices are explored in further depth in Chapter Four.

3.1.3 The Under-Representation of Ethnic Diversity

The majority of my participants are white British, with the exception of six: Tia and Tiana who are Asian British, Leigh who is black Caribbean, Leanne and Leona who are black British and Taruh who has a British mother and Palestinian father. Any lack of non-white participants is not a reflection on the criteria for participation in this research. Neither did my search for

participants target white respondents; it is predominantly only white British women who replied. This reflects the social and ethnic demographic within the areas that the research took place. More ethnic diversity was sought by widening the participant search to upper sixth formers from three different schools, but as explained, this approach proved unsuccessful.

The lack of diversity within the sample is a reflection of how snowballing reproduces social and ethnic conformity and a lack of variation within the sample. Vincent and Ball (2007) argue that like-minded people socialise and stay within their own communities and the sample here reflects their findings. The subsequent similarity of some of the pairings may be restrictive in nature and possibly reflect on the outcome of the study, due to the lack of randomness within the sample selection (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The mothers who responded initially and those who participated as a result of snowballing all identified themselves as the same social class. Hence introductions through middle class families have brought further middle class families forward, rather than a diversification in social strata. This is also the cause of a lack of ethnic diversity, as all the white participants have introduced other white participants, with the exception of one family. The replication of this study with a greater ethnic diversity highlights a potential area for future research.

3.2 Interviews

Andrews (2003) identifies that interviews capture and make sense of the rich nature of individual stories. Interviews also allow dual roles to be understood within the same interview, for instance, mother and daughter, daughter and student (Allmark *et al.*, 2009). Once participants expressed an interest in taking part, a copy of the Summary of the Research, Information for Participants in Research, Participant Consent Form and University Ethics Approval documentation was sent to them for perusal only (Appendix II). All participants were offered the option of face-to-face meetings prior to the interviews, which were taken up by two daughters. All other participants were happy to agree a date for interview straight away. All participants were

offered a follow-up meeting after the interview, but no participant took up this offer.

Following approval of the proposal and ethics documents from Anglia Ruskin University, the interviews took place during 2011 and 2012. As part of the ethics submission a Risk Assessment Form was completed, confirming that I understood the Lone Worker and Safety Policy. This included conducting the interviews in a perceived safe environment. I also was aware of the need to inform someone of the location of the interview for all off-campus meetings, providing contact telephone numbers, addresses and telephone numbers for my location. Interviews were held at times most convenient to the participants and therefore took place at different times and on different days of the week, one interview was held at 8.00 in the morning and another lasted until 11.00 in the evening. Full regard was given to both my own safety and that of my participants.

The interviews have mostly been undertaken in the participants' homes or for some participants where introductions came through university contacts, interviews were held on various university campuses. Four interviews were conducted in public venues at the participant's request. The use of a public space for interviews did not cause any difficulty other than background noise on the interview tapes that made transcription much more difficult and time consuming.

Interviews lasted between 40 minutes and 1 hour and 40 minutes. The only exception to this was the joint interview with Leigh, Leanne and Leona, which was over 3 hours long. The possible reasons for the disparity in interview length have been considered. The amount of information shared is firstly a reflection on the participant's lifestyle and experiences. Three of the daughters, Christina, Helena and Jennifer followed the 'traditional' route of GCSEs, A-levels and university, with little experience outside of this pathway, which was reflected in their transcripts. However, all the mothers' transcripts are longer than the daughters, revealing the extra years of education, work, relationships and parenting choices. Tia and Jenny's

interviews were the fullest, in terms of talking about life experiences and varied working and personal roles throughout their lives.

Furthermore, although I continually tried to make sure the participants were comfortable and the interview process more of a social experience (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007) the speed at which the participants spoke varied enormously; some respondents were very relaxed and others were nervous about the interview being recorded and spoke very quickly. A good rapport was established with all of my participants, as I was aware that a poor relationship between the interviewer and interviewee can lead to misinterpreted information (*ibid.*). All interviews have been audio taped to ensure that their comments were transcribed verbatim.

Pseudonyms have been used to protect the participants' anonymity, as outlined below in the discussion around ethical issues. I chose the pseudonyms myself. Initially I took the participants' real names and gave them an alias one letter ahead of their own name, for example 'Linda' to 'Margaret'. However, with 39 names this led confusion in matching mother to daughter. The system was then changed again so that the beginning of the name of both mother and daughter was the same, for example 'Anne and Annette' and 'Chris and Christina'. In this way the mothers and daughters could be matched immediately, the mothers identified by short names and the daughters by longer versions. This system has the added benefit of adding another layer of anonymity away from the participants' real identity. Tia, Tiana and Taruh were asked to choose their pseudonyms to ensure their names correctly reflected their Asian and Palestinian cultural and religious identities.

3.2.1 Interview Structure

As the interviews have been conducted using an in-depth strategy, the questions were open-ended to allow discussion to be as fluid as possible and enable the participants to define and demonstrate their own understanding of the world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Interview questions revolved around

family and educational background, mothering, views on feminism and equal rights, thoughts on the class system and ideas on how the 2012 higher education tuition fee rise will affect future university applications. The responses to the questions determined whether further inquiry was made on a particular point or if the discussion was taken in a different direction.

The interviews were broadly unstructured, to enable the participants to speak openly and without interruption on areas of their education, work and life experiences that were important for them to share with me. All of the interviews started with an 'ice-breaker' such as 'Can you tell me a little about yourself and your family?' to encourage a comfortable, flowing conversation. Some of the participants were pre-prepared with information prompted by the introductory letter (see Appendix II). This included their views on education, university and family. For instance, in response to the ice-breaker, Victoria's (daughter) reply was: *'OK, my name is [...], I'm 23 years old, education ... I went to a private primary school and an ordinary secondary school. I have a degree in Classics. At the moment I am unemployed and looking for a job. That's me at the moment'*. Victoria's answer allowed me to respond to her schooling background from the beginning of the interview. In contrast, Suzie (daughter) did not pre-empt any questions and began our discussion with *'I'm 21 and I've got a Mum, Dad, sister and dog'*, necessitating a different approach by starting our conversation about her family background.

All interviewees were asked questions covering a range of topics, which kept the process 'fresh'. The conversations for each participant differed from one interviewee to another, depending on their life experience and subsequent answers. As an example, the women who have worked or who are currently working were able to elaborate on their past and present employment and working conditions. In contrast, the daughters who went to university straight from school and have never worked would have been unable to answer such questions. These daughters needed more nuanced questioning, based on their perception of work in the future. In parallel fashion, women who have children commented on motherhood from experience and from a different

perspective to women without children, some of whom discussed aspects of mothering from a speculative stance.

Not surprisingly, the women who had experience in particular areas of their lives were able to discuss their viewpoints at length. Chris (mother) shared with me her background and the reasons why she was a feminist and her transcript in this area ran into several pages. By contrast, Jenny (mother) did not engage so easily in this area of questioning and her response to the question ‘Would you consider yourself a feminist?’ was ‘*No, I wouldn’t consider myself a feminist or I’d be out there making a point, wouldn’t I?*’ Although I was able to discuss feminism with all the participants, the questions were posed differently to allow for personalised starting points and importantly, to respect each participants’ individuality. In the introductory letter (see Appendix II) I had stated that I was hoping to address the areas of higher education, family, social class and feminism or equal rights. I went into the interviews with a mental note of those subjects, prepared to prompt a response if the topics were not addressed spontaneously.

Bertaux (1981) suggests a good interview is where the interviewee is able to speak openly and fluently, allowing the respondents as much time and space as possible to reply. This technique avoids leading questions. Bertaux’s approach suggests the respondent should not be led or coerced into giving a particular response. After reading Becker’s *Tricks of the Trade* (1982), consideration was given as to ‘why’ in a research interview context can appear to prompt the participant into feeling the need to justify their answers and sometimes make them guarded in their replies. My questions subsequently changed from ‘*Why would you say that?*’ into ‘*Can you explain that further to me?*’ which was much less confrontational and appeared to make the participants more comfortable in their responses.

All participants, with the exception of three, answered the questions around class and feminism, sometimes with difficulty or great thought. Suzanne, Samantha and Taruh declined to put themselves into a category. Some participants queried the question they were asked, responding with questions

like ‘*How do you define middle class?*’ [Jenny] or ‘*What is a feminist then?*’ [Steph]. This enabled me to open up further discussion about what it means to them to identify with a certain class or to be a feminist. It also gave the respondents time to reflect on their answers. Due to the use of an inductive method of analysing and organising the accumulated data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), the option was left open to be able to return to the participants for further information or if a new theme emerged that needed further exploration. The participants were also left my full contact details in case they wished to discuss any issues that arose before, during or after the interview. The participants’ knowledge that part of my identity was as a mother meant that the interviews were often informal and conversational and this brought a new perspective to the research when participants regarded me, the interviewer, as a ‘friend’ (Rogers, 2003). This allowed some participants to immerse themselves in a conversation more readily as they knew that my first-hand experience of their role made me receptive to their stories.

During analysis of the data, I recognised that the welcome I received from many of my participants often meant that researcher/participant relationship became a personal one, albeit on a short-lived and superficial level (Rogers, 2003). Rogers (2003) experienced this blurring of the researcher/friend first hand, when a participant from her research called six months after their interview to ‘catch up’. In this way, the participant had re-positioned herself as an insider to the researcher’s life. Such interpretations and understandings are often inherent in qualitative, narrative enquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

As discussed in Chapter Two, while I was writing this thesis, Savage *et al.* (2013) published research findings that identified new class rankings based on economic, social and cultural capital. The new model of class moves away from the widely used National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) that had established the most commonly acknowledged groupings of working, middle and upper classes (Atkinson, 2012). Savage *et al.*’s (2013) new social class model has not been applied to this research for two reasons. Firstly, one of the measures of class under Savage *et al.*’s (*ibid.*) ranking

system includes a knowledge of income levels, a question I did not ask my participants. I was interested in their educational outcomes rather than their employment terms. Secondly, as outlined above, the participants self defined their class position, i.e. working or middle class etc., in line with NS-SEC classifications. The notion of class within this research is therefore operationalised using class-based references based on the original NS-SEC bandings, in order that any analyses made are concurrent with the method in which the information was collected. There was insufficient data collected on the participants' occupation to have accurately used Savage *et al.*'s (*ibid.*) seven-tier model.

3.3 Experiences and Ethical Considerations

In the early months of my first year of PhD study an e-mail was received through my university account. The e-mail invited me to become a participant in research via a telephone interview, researching mothers who were in full-time, higher education. E-mail contact was made and I asked the researcher if it was possible to meet face-to-face once, as it was important to know with whom I was sharing personal information. The researcher refused, saying it was too far to travel even if we met halfway and that I could take or leave the offer to take part in her study. No correspondence was received outlining research information, ethical clearance or the chance to view consent forms prior to any interview. Nothing further was heard. This lack of respect and reciprocal engagement has made me more conscious of the comfort and safety of my own participants.

Ethical principles have been drawn from guidelines outlined by the British Educational Research Association [BERA] (2011), British Sociological Association [BSA] (2002) and from literature including Denzin and Lincoln (2008) and Mauthner *et al.* (2002). BERA (*ibid.*) and BSA (*ibid.*) guidelines, which commonly inform ethics and research governance, include gaining informed consent from every participant, respecting confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms and keeping the participant fully informed with

explicit details of the research. BERA (*ibid.*) and BSA (*ibid.*) guidelines have been followed for each and every participant. Where participants have come from within the academic community, I have reiterated that matters discussed are considered completely confidential, particularly when I may be conversing with mutual colleagues about my research. The only discussions that I may have had in respect of known participants will have been solely within the boundary of my confidential supervisory meetings. In one instance a participant chose to tell other colleagues that she was involved in my research, but she made this information public and I have continued to maintain total confidentiality. In the wider sense of ethical considerations, it has been made clear, both in conversations and going through the forms with participants prior to the interviews, that the right to withdraw remains available at all times.

All of the participants in this study are over the age of 18 years and able to give informed consent. This means that they were given sufficient information on which to base their decision, were mentally competent to make that decision, were free of pressure or coercion and understood that they could withdraw from the research at any time (BERA, 2011). Participants were made aware through the Participant Information Form given prior to each interview of the areas in which I intended to ask questions. This discussion included the subsequent use and purpose of the collected data. By following these guidelines, any potential risks to the participants were minimised and their rights were protected as far as possible, whilst remaining mindful of the need to protect my own safety as a lone researcher in the field and the reputation of the institution, Anglia Ruskin University (BSA, 2002).

Mauthner *et al.* (2002) also consider ethical implications in relation to using a feminist methodology. There was a danger of unearthing emotional responses and vulnerabilities that in-depth interviews and dealing with personal narratives and lived experiences can bring. Here literature around feminist ethics of care and Noddings' (2003) 'caring-for' and 'caring-about' the participants' well-being can be applied to researching within the feminist paradigm. This research is not only looking specifically at women's access to

higher education, but also a wider understanding of women's roles as individuals, females, daughters and/or mothers. The data aids identification and analysis of whether their female identities grounded their educational experience, important in addressing essentialist theories of women as carers and ultimately drawing on feminist ethics of care (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998). Consideration is also given as to whether women continue to seek equality in the home and workplace and remain the primary caregivers in childcare (Vincent and Ball, 2007). I engaged an active awareness to observe both verbal and non-verbal communication, in order to detect any emerging distress (Parr, 1998). This recognition maintained a constant re-negotiation of the consent of the participants (Miller and Bell, 2002) through interpreting nuances and cues to keep the participants at ease. I made a commitment, as far as was possible, to helping them to feel in control of the research process.

As an illustration, the eldest participant, Leigh, aged 76, requested her interview took place with her daughters present. It was initially hoped to speak to each of the mothers and daughters separately in order to gain as much insight into their narratives as possible without the influence or constraints of someone else listening to their answers. However, the interview with Leigh, Leanne and Leona took place at the same time to ensure Leigh's comfort during the interview process. It may be possible that some personal detail was missed or not elaborated on, but the interview was secured and all involved commented on it being an enjoyable process. However, Leigh often allowed her daughters to answer questions and agreed with their answers, rather than expressing her own opinions. Leigh's responses confirmed my belief that the interviews were best undertaken individually, supporting Rogers and Ludhra's (2012) identification of the need for safe and confidential spaces in which to undertake research interviews.

Cairns (2009: 321) suggests that voice is only the entry point to disseminating research narratives and using a feminist methodology remains problematic due to the liberation of 'shifting authority to those less powerful', articulating the onerous responsibility on the researcher to interpret others' voices to further knowledge production. Therefore, within the scope of this research, to

interview only daughters and not their mothers, or vice versa, would only provide a 'here and now' analysis of women's access to higher education. The use of interviewing as a qualitative method has enabled a picture to emerge as to whether there are any similarities between the generations, in respect of access to higher education and subsequent familial support.

Early in the data collection process a further e-mail was received at my home address from a woman who was running a women's support network for local businesswomen and professionals, inviting me to become a part of her group. The woman had obtained my details from a friend. After her initial e-mail, a statement had to be submitted outlining what I was hoping to get from the group. The woman was informed that I was a first year PhD research student and the intention was to get feedback from the all female group about my research ideas and subsequently provide support to the other members of the group with their activities. A curt reply was received, saying there was no place for 'covert research' within her group and the offer to join was no longer available.

An extract from my field notes explores the conversation that took place and the subsequent concerns over her apparent opinion of me:

'I explained that there must have been some misunderstanding, that I had made her aware of the fact that my day-to-day life was as a doctoral researcher, and not that I wanted to research the women in the group in a covert way. I became aware of her defensiveness and the fact it suddenly became 'her' group and 'her' decision not to involve me. She also said that she had carried out research when she had undertaken her own Masters study and 'understood' my position. I was really concerned by the fact that she felt threatened by my potential presence, as I have always tried to make my intentions for my research as transparent as possible and she was implying a sense of mistrust that has never been leveled at me. I offered to meet with her, in order to make sure some sense of trust was established and discuss the ethical

procedures I was bound by, but again she declined, thanking me for taking the time to contact her, but a meeting was not necessary. I still feel I haven't been vindicated for whatever was causing her to be anxious. I spoke with [friend], who had given the group leader my e-mail address in the first place, who was shocked at the response I'd received. She told me that the leader runs it very much as 'her' group' and didn't really consider it a women's group at all, more of a networking for local businesses'. [Field notes, June 2011]

This scenario highlights the confusion and misunderstanding that often surrounds the topic of research and the difficulty of interpreting human responses (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Rogers and Ludhra (2012) explore the issues of hearing participants' voices and incorporating their views to develop the research process in a way that is ethical and understanding of the participants' well-being. I learned first-hand of the cynicism that often accompanies research and the need for personal contact to avoid the scenario I encountered. My belief is that the participants should maintain sufficient control within the research process to ensure their comfort and trust is maintained as far as is possible (*ibid.*). This e-mail interaction has been used to conceptualise more clearly my personal understanding of the research process (Silverman, 2000). This exchange is included to show how my own experience mediates my actions. The experience remained at the forefront of my mind as a reminder of how necessary it is for the researcher to develop a trustworthy relationship with her participants. Generally my field notes were a tool for personal reflection and do not form any part of this research.

Ethical considerations came to the fore during the interview with Anne. An excerpt from Anne's narrative reveals the emotionally charged and intensively personal nature of her interview. Anne was a widow with a young son when she met her second husband. After they married, she adopted his children from his first marriage, including Annette, whose birth mother had died of cancer. Anne has been a teacher since leaving university, and began early retirement due to her illness. Anne's narrative surrounding the period when her daughter Annette was looking at potential universities was

overshadowed by Anne undergoing treatment for cancer at the same time. She felt she had 'let Annette down' during this important period. This recollection caused her some upset and the offer was made to stop the interview immediately, but Anne was keen to keep going. This also highlighted how subject areas arise which are not connected to the research questions and to which the interviewer has to be responsive.

'Anne: I actually came in as her Dad's girlfriend. She was just looking for secondary education and I went around all the schools and I gave my opinion. I did not want her to go to that school because I didn't think it was the right school for her and that she wouldn't perform well there and [husband] said 'she's my daughter and she's lost her Mum and she's going with her friends'.

[...] Linda: So the transition to university, how did that work? Was there more listening to you at that point?

Anne: Right, that was very unfortunate because I had cancer. I spent a lot of time talking to her about different unis and she was, when I got cancer I went into school and talked to them ... [starts to cry]

Linda: Are you alright, do you want to stop?

Anne: No, I'm OK, I just feel I've let her down [crying] ... Those children have lost one Mum and my son who lost his Dad and then I put them all through it again. It has affected things, the biggest thing it has affected was the fact that my education, my years in education and my following education has all been closed door mostly, as far as [Annette] is concerned'. [Anne, mother]

Notwithstanding the obvious distress of re-living her period of cancer treatment, Annette's interview is an example of the level of emotional capital inherent in the transition year to university. Emotional capital is bounded by the personal involvement and instinctive response to support those with whom you have an affective relationship (Reay, 2004b). Although he never referred specifically to emotional capital, Bourdieu (1998: 68) acknowledged

that the affective relation ‘falls more particularly to women’. Nowotny (1981) describes emotional capital as a commonly used tool with which to understand partners and children. Such personal and innate support for family or friends lacks the transferability of other forms of capital and therefore makes it difficult to measure (Reay, 2004b). The many references made by mothers of their help and support made it necessary to consider in depth the ways in which they supported the daughters towards their ‘process of becoming’ (Colley *et al.*, 2003: 474, Vincent and Braun, 2013).

The intensive involvement exemplified through emotional capital in choices for children’s schooling highlights the contentious debate of the social construction of emotion as highly gendered. Illouz (1997) suggests that gendering women’s emotions in childrearing acts as a form of domination, to restrain women in the labour market. Yet studies find that men’s involvement in educational choices remain limited (including Lareau, 1989; Allatt, 1993; Reay, 1998b, 2004b). My own, brief findings in respect to fathers’ involvement in their daughters’ higher education choices are discussed in Chapter Six. Reay (2004b) argues that emotional capital does not differ by class, but reveals specific and personal instances, known only to each individual family. Allatt (1993: 143) and Lareau (1989) support Reay’s findings that irrespective of the possession of mothers’ economic, social and cultural capital, the emotional capital that mothers possess is amplified in the schooling process through a range of ‘emotionally valued assets and skills, love and affection, expenditure of time, care and concern’.

Anne’s narrative highlights many areas around her ownership of capital. She emphasised her husband’s dismissal of her cultural capital and her distress at not being able to support her daughter’s choice of schooling, but also the fraught and emotional labour encompassed with finding schools and universities. These important areas would not have been discussed if I had not encouraged Anne to expand on her experiences. Anne remarked after our interview that she had found it a positive experience to discuss something so

personal with someone who would '*understand*'. This highlights the importance of reflexivity within this research process and how the outcomes become beneficial in studies that embrace a feminist methodology, in the interests of both the researchers and the respondents.

3.4 Exploring Alternative Means of Recruiting Participants

Through the use of the snowball strategy, two of the participants, Rosalind and Rosanne, introduced two friends as possible informants. However, both women said that they would only participate by telephone interview or on Facebook. Livingstone and Brake (2010) outline the importance of social network sites to young people as their main means of communication. However, Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 793) note that technology based information will 'change the research scenario ... and have the potential to shift sensemaking'. Therefore to interview some participants in one way and others in another could potentially alter my understanding of the subject meaning and subsequently have a bearing on my research findings. I am aware of the need to be faithful in the interpretation of research transcripts and observed gestures can provide a prompt for further exploration of the research subject (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998). Communication by social media lacks the benefit of face-to-face personal interaction and possibly all the nuances, emphases and emotions would be lost (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Further, recording a telephone conversation is not an easy process and as a method this lacks the ability to register facial expressions or gauge the thinking time or pauses necessary for each participant. I subsequently took the decision that telephone interviews would not be used, unless there was a need for a follow-up after full, in-depth interviews. Skype was also considered for one participant only who agreed to be involved and then moved to Sydney, Australia, but she subsequently declined to be interviewed following her relocation. This one participant was the only attrition in the sample.

I acknowledge that if I had chosen to use questionnaires as a method for this research I could have gained substantially more responses. However, the intention of this research is to increase depth and understanding of the individual story. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) argue that discussion and appraisal of personal narratives brings both conscious and unconscious influences, which could affect the research findings. Each memory has some bearing or meaning to the individual and personal, subjective experiences that raise 'recurrent themes, challenges or discrepancies' which become the backbone of research (Barbour, 2008: 124). Thus the sample collected for this research is small, but nonetheless important. It allows me to capture the complexity and judgements of the individual to appreciate past experiences and use this inquiry to build on current knowledge (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

3.5 Data Transcription and Analysis

An initial search using thematic headings enabled me to begin to code my data manually, noting nuanced meanings as they became apparent. Richards (1998) highlights manual coding as necessary for having closeness to your own data for familiarity, whilst providing distance to synthesise and identify abstract characteristics of the data. Manual coding allows the researcher to move between the general and the specific, to bring a more rigorous search to the coding process. The use of thematic analysis involved highlighting common threads to make sense of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Emergent codes for this research included education and educational influences, opportunities, tuition fees, feminism and mothering, reflecting my areas of interest. These are broadly relationship and social structure codes (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). The data was then simplified further into clearly focused groups. Meanings, patterns and possible conclusions and explanations were drawn from the narratives and critically analysed (Silverman, 2000).

Each of the 39 transcripts was hand coded with a highlighter pen, to identify recurring issues. The more distinctive concepts of class, feminism and capitals were readily apparent. A simple spider diagram outlining my

conceptual framework significantly aided the way I approached the initial phase of coding as it enabled a clear identification of the hierarchy of sub-headings. For instance, the subject of feminism produced narratives surrounding mothering and personal values, which subsequently made me question my standpoint as insider/outsider to the process. Importantly, the theme of mothers' support and recognition of their investment in their daughters' higher education became very apparent and an overriding theme that began to shape the overall discourse of this study.

Once all of the scripts had been highlighted by hand, I produced a set of coding patterns for all participants. I used the headings I had produced through the hand coding, but this time I made a separate document for each topic and cut and pasted the appropriate text into each file. This produced a full and thorough record of every participant's viewpoint on a specific topic. This tranche of the process also produced additional and relevant sub-headings. Subsequently mothering and mature studentship became necessary groupings within the coding process.

At the time of collecting the data, I prepared a pen picture of each of the participants, which provided an overview of generic personal data such as age and family set-up. It also gave a brief synopsis of educational background. This information was then set up as tables representing each mother and daughter family to allow easy identification.

All interviews were collected on mini cassettes and have been transcribed using an audio transcription machine. Transcription was a time consuming exercise due to the large number of participants that have been interviewed (65 double sided, 60 minute mini cassettes).

The process of coding the data involved the use of recurrent themes and nuanced observations (Coolican, 1999). Basit (2003: 143) considers coding 'a dynamic, intuitive and creative process of inductive reasoning'. My original intention was to use the software tool, Nvivo 9, to assist with analysis of the data. As I had amassed a large quantity of transcripts, the use of Nvivo might

have supported the interpretation of the data in a more methodical and effective way than coding by hand (Bazeley, 2007). Ultimately the University's lack of a licence for Nvivo for Mac restricted any use of this package. However, I understand that using a software package to support the analysis of the data is as time consuming as coding by hand and the overall results are still reliant on the skill of the user (Basil, 2003, Bazeley, 2007).

3.6 A Female Gendered Study

A feminist methodology is appropriate for this study, not only because it is an all female study, but also to address my own moral and personal position as a female researcher who is a mother, daughter and a university student. However, there are many different forms of feminism that encompass commonalities, contradictions, compromises and alliances (Letherby, 2003). Scott (in Letherby, 2003) provides useful guidelines for feminist research. These include the value of the personal and the private as worthy of investigation and the significance of gender as an important aspect of this study. This research has been conducted using a feminist methodology, to explore family, individuality and mothering and the impact on educational choices (Ribbens, 1994; Ribbens and Edwards, 1998; Rogers, 2003).

The use of a feminist underpinning in this study is necessary to consider the foci of this research, that is, generational change in women's status and the place of any maternal support within this process. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence is pertinent to the crossover between feminism and his work in respect of this study. The understanding of symbolic violence as the leveraging of status through an unwritten resource or power advantage, has kept women in particular roles and maintained a socially constructed, gendered society (Bourdieu, 2001). Lawler (2008) notes that such symbolism can only be powerful if it is recognised as sufficiently legitimate, which has historically been the case for the oppressive positioning of women. Bourdieu (1998, 2001) points to the historical reproduction of the masculine order within families, that has played its part in bounding women into gendered roles. The divisions between the sexes would have previously been

compounded by an established, unconscious agreement to the biological or natural order that maintained an effective and functioning society (Bourdieu, 2001).

Atkinson (2012) agrees that the ownership of capital creates conditions of possibility for power to exist through the use of symbolic violence. The historical norm of men as breadwinners and therefore the agents of social, cultural and economic capital placed men as symbolically and subsequently socially more powerful. Bourdieu (2001) suggests that women were compliant through obedience in undertaking domestic labour due to acknowledged dispositions of what constitutes masculine and feminine, that subsequently reinforce gendered differentiation in society. Members of society construct principles, visions and divisions that form structures that become embodied and ultimately a social reality (Bourdieu, 1998).

The interplay between gender and class is also a powerful force, both in the oppression and liberation of women's place in society. Adkins and Skeggs (2004) note that Bourdieu's work does not engage with the nuances of gendered symbolic violence between working and middle class distinctions, but such research has been undertaken in Skeggs' (1997) ethnographic study of white, working-class women and Reay's (2002b) study of working-class boys. Whilst Bourdieu's conceptual tools are central to the theoretical application of this research, it has been necessary to also apply a feminist methodology to understand the lived reality of each participant and the place of feminism, class and generational differences to women's rights in a changing social environment. However, like all forms of social change, it is necessary to challenge the understanding and appearance of feminism and femininity and how they have developed, as such concepts are constantly changing and unstable (Adkins and Skeggs, 2004).

Feminism has played a visible role in addressing and changing the way women are viewed in society, with various strands of feminism having developed over time, each with their own differences (Oakley, 2005). There are many forms of feminism, but two areas of feminism repeatedly recurred

in participants' narratives. I have used second wave feminism and post feminism as markers to demonstrate shifts of opinion between two generations of women. The participants broadly experienced the opportunity to access higher education between the 1980s, which was the beginning of second wave feminism, and the 2000s, when there has been a shift to post feminist discourse. Consideration of second wave feminism provides an opportunity to explore recollections of participants' life events and incidents of the revolutionary feminism of the 1970s and 1980s. Post feminism is used to explore how society has changed to position women in more equal decision-making situations and allowing women to have greater gender equality and improved options for both careers and child rearing (Wright, 2000; Negra, 2009).

Emerging themes from the research data suggest that many of the mothers identify with the second wave of feminism, supported by their recall of feminism of the 1980s with its radical tones of 'anti-men, anti-family' (McRobbie, 2009: 31). This contrasts with the daughters' general view of feminism as an outdated notion and their alignment with post feminism attitudes that it has 'done its job' and everybody is equal (Tasker and Negra, 2007). This duality necessitates a critical engagement with both forms of feminism to consider what has instigated these changes and why. Merrill (1999) argues that women who witnessed the feminist movement of the 1970 and 1980s may be more vehement in their support for women of future generations if they did not have access to higher education or a chosen career path themselves. Therefore it is important to explore whether this was any of the mothers' experiences and to capture any narrative.

Birch and Miller (2002: 3) suggest that the use of a feminist methodology enables reflection on particular aspects of women's lives 'from a particular theoretical and methodological perspective'. A feminist research approach specifically highlights the complications, both of women's private experiences of public issues and the sensitivities required to remain faithful to the domestic, personal and intimate narratives of their participants, whilst translating them into public knowledge in an academic sphere (Ribbens and

Edwards, 1998). The feminist approach is central to my research design of wanting to hear the personal and the public facets of women's narratives around their education.

3.7 The Researcher as Mother and Daughter

Following analysis of the data, I accepted that there were further resonances between some of my participants' lifestyles and my own, as in Leanne's example of not accepting extra childcare help or Vicky's position of caring for children and an older mother. This has enabled me to consider more deeply my own position within this research.

Whilst there is much literature on auto/biography (Stanley: 1992), auto-ethnography (Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Rogers, 2009) and less conventional ways of writing research, there is still relatively little on the actual practicalities of the problem of managing the self when close to the research material, including how the researcher negotiates the more personal aspects of the research process. I have moved away from the impersonal methods of interviewing. My research has been carried out within a feminist reflexive process.

By virtue of my biographical interlude (Rogers, 2003) I am included within the reflexive process. Some of my participants have reacted not only as interviewees, but also as confidants. I sometimes shared experiences and my role as researcher blurred into that of parent-researcher. The nature of my insider understanding gave rise to reflexivity with the participants and their narratives. This encouraged the research to become a two-way process and required me to maintain a duty of care to my participants as a feminist researcher. My involvement as an insider meant I was often welcomed into people's homes and life histories and some of my participants have placed themselves as 'friends' (Rogers, 2003). An excerpt from Tia's narrative as a higher education student with a family demonstrates this co-understanding:

'It's the juggling the kids, which I'm sure you've been through. It's getting them from one place to another, to get to university, do your essays in the evening and try to be superwoman at home'. [Tia, mother]

Here Tia included me in her conversation to acknowledge her experiences, whilst capturing this memory of her understanding of the pressures of studying with a young family. Beckwith (1999) discusses the unrealistic goals women often set themselves in relation to fulfilling their ambitions of high expectations and achieving individualisation. Tia expressed very clearly how she tried to 'do it all', but like many of the other narratives, with no sense of support or collaboration to meet her ambitions. Lynch (2008) highlights the conflict that exists for mature women with families trying to find an academic identity and their need to rely on significant others in order to succeed in a university context.

As discussed on page 50, I acknowledge that by virtue of the interpersonal nature of this research on one occasion my researching skills digressed to the personal. Elle's narrative is perhaps the most poignant example of this:

'Linda: I just couldn't have put it on my Mum to come home and say oh I'm going to university [...] I just don't think I could have done it. You know I went straight out to work at 16 ...

Elle: Like me.

Linda: [...] You know, it's really uncanny.

Elle: ... and my Dad wasn't around.

Linda: No, neither was mine'. [Elle, mother]

The conversation with Elle has been added to show transparency within this research and demonstrate that insider research often brings to the fore parallel accounts from two different perspectives. Whilst some researchers would

regard this as straying away from the professional, I would argue that with certain participants, personal interaction was necessary to relax them and to enable them to understand that I had an empathy for their position. This was particularly true for those who had not been part of an interview process before or at times when I needed greater elaboration on issues relating to participant well-being. Other participants regarded me purely as a researcher. Each participant was given the individualised approach they deserved, to give them as much control and comfort as possible during the interview process. The insider/outsider role provided a useful and insightful perspective during dialogue with the participants, but played no part beyond addressing participant comfort during the interview process. When empathy encouraged deeper responses this was fortuitous rather than planned.

Writing from an insider perspective does bring its challenges. Letherby (2000: 4) discusses her auto-biographical narratives surrounding her difficulties in conceiving a child as being received by some academics as 'sloppy sociology'. Ribbens (1998) discusses motherhood autobiographically where she considers the difficulties of hearing her voice amongst other numerous narratives and supports the reasons to use reflexivity and autobiography in research. Stanley (1992) puts it more simply, that the use of 'I' indicates the personal, contextual and specific autobiography. This makes the researcher's position within the research as transparent to the reader as possible. The drive to have autobiographical studies that are personal to the researchers' 'self' recognised as academic is examined through a plethora of work that supports a claim that understanding and theorising personal experience is valuable (Letherby, 2000; Oakley, 2005; Ribbens and Edwards, 1998; Stanley and Wise, 1993). It also supports feminist epistemology that to ignore subjectivity in research 'is to downgrade the personal' (Letherby, 2000: 94).

The insider role also allows an alternative dynamic to exploration of the changing role of motherhood. Many women's backgrounds are modelled on the perception of women as innate caregivers, who conformed to the

expectation of child rearing rather than having a career (Negra, 2009). This straddles both Ribbens-McCarthy and Edwards' (2011) description of the gender constructed view of stay-at-home mothering and the paradigm shift to a post feminist position of choice (Negra, 2009). Although researchers are able to identify as insiders around certain aspects of mothering, it is necessary to understand that there are boundaries around how much information participants are willing to share during an interview. Ethically and importantly, participants have the right to withhold any information they deem too sensitive or personal to share (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Knowing how far to pursue the insider role is an important aspect of researching within a feminist framework (Letherby, 2003).

By observing the research through different analytical lenses (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), participants' narratives can be considered from both insider and outsider perspectives, by moving in and out of both roles (Rogers, 2003). This includes the need to be reflexive and engage with the messy nature of qualitative research, contextualized by listening to personal experiences in order to understand individual agency (Hoskin, 1990).

It is also understood that the unique nature of individual life stories makes it impossible to truly be an insider and in a professional sense the researcher will always remain on the outside, looking into other people's lives. By observing the research through different analytical lenses (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), the participants' narratives can be considered from the insider/outsider perspectives, by moving in and out of both roles (Rogers, 2003). Clear boundaries were enforced, along with complete ethical transparency. Ultimately I am an outsider to all of my participants' experiences, yet my insider status has enabled my participants to share detailed and personal stories with a sense of reassurance. In turn, despite often engaging with highly emotive subjects, my participants felt confident sharing this information with me.

The 'outsider' role of researcher will be informed by my interviews and research data, by listening to and disseminating others' experiences. Many of the participant mothers gave real consideration to the questions and were often rhetorical in their answers, suggesting that the insider has an understanding of 'where they were coming from' or that I 'had been there', including studying whilst raising young children or aspects of understanding their concerns as mothers. There is an assumption here that participants do not explicitly say what they mean and due to a shared identity, researchers assume 'sameness', giving the potential for misinterpretation (Sanger, 2010). This perception of empathy may have informed my ability to secure participants quickly and early in the research process (*ibid.*). Like Rogers (2003), I was able to explore my research through being able to switch roles as mother and researcher and this perhaps gave a sense of reassurance to those in my study who were not familiar with the research process. This personal knowledge enabled engagement on some personal level rather than just as a professional researcher, to reassure those who were nervous of being interviewed.

3.8 The Use of a Feminist Discourse

Contemporary history reveals women's growing liberty in the home, workplace and society (McNay, 1992; Arnot, 2002; Walby, 2011). Dyhouse (2002) acknowledges in making a comparison to women's opportunities even twenty years ago, women have greater choice in their work and personal lives, but inequality still remains. Whilst Bryson (2007) agrees with this, she contends that women still take the lead in balancing work with family and childcare responsibilities and this maintains inequality in the workplace. Women are still striving to have domestic labour and childcare within the home recognised as 'work', despite the role of feminism to improve opportunities for women through the generations (Reay, 1995; Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011).

Whilst all of the mothers interviewed agreed that parenthood was a choice, a common theme through many of the interviews with the mothers was the suggestion that marriage and having children was an automatic expectation entered into unconditionally. The only three daughters interviewed who had children, Maya, Leanne and Leona, presented the notion of much more choice and decision making around the time they chose to become parents once their careers were established, albeit with restrictive factors. They also discussed the negotiation involved in being working mothers.

This research also gives equal attention to the daughter as a younger member of the family and as such, potentially one of the most silenced voices of the family (Arnot and Reay, 2007). The immediate assumption is that mother and daughters share a reciprocal, supportive bond, yet the dyadic mother-daughter connection, like all relationships, can be complex and often difficult. The nature of family relationships allows an exploration of the extent to which educational or employment choices were determined by the freedom of individual will or if maternal guidance constrained any decisions (Gregor, 1997).

This study is a valuable way to explore generational shifts in life chances and employment prospects for women (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998). Reflections upon the lived experience of having to make choices surrounding education, work and family as a female could only come from mothers and daughters, as suggested by Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2001). Walkerdine *et al.*'s (2001) argument that the hopes and ambitions of women are driven by the class system adds a further dimension to my exploration into the inter-family relationship and whether economic and social changes have affected educational diversity during the time period between mother and daughter accessing higher education.

This research began from the viewpoint that class and gender is inextricably linked, particularly in terms of academic outcome (Arnot, 2002). The possibility of accessing higher education is reflected through the interwoven

nature of familial dispositions and aspirations, alongside the change in women's roles in society. This is in addition to addressing the practicalities of having the academic and financial ability to attain a university degree.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has evaluated the process that was followed to bring this research to the data collection stage, beginning with the research purpose and the research question, formally submitted and accepted by university ethics and arriving at the interview process. Narratives from field notes have also been used to highlight how personal experiences have also informed my understanding of being 'the researched'.

Through the interview process and understanding people's actions and past experiences, an important aspect of this research is to make meaning by 'connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 656). This is particularly relevant to the generational theme of this study. Using narrative enquiry, the participants' stories can be used to reflect on their emotions, thoughts and actions, which will inform the study. Narrative analysis can be envisaged as too tidy and refined through the process of disseminating life histories and making them 'fit' into the theory, yet the autonomous stories and experiences also allow a 'continuous redefinition' and renegotiation of the theoretical basis of this research (Becker, 1982: 58)

Arnot and Reay (2007) consider that family and social identity have a strong impact on young people's lives, choices and pathways. This style inherently brings subjectivity to the study, with myself as both a mother with a daughter and as a mature research student. I have considered the research from an insider/outsider position and this has brought positive aspects of being able to engage with participants with a shared sense of understanding, whilst respecting my outsider role as researcher. Researching with an outsider perspective still enables in-depth conversation with the participants, but recognises that there are clear boundaries on conversation and levels of

understanding. This allows the participant to retain their agency with the choice of the level of information that they choose to share, aware that insider research is always partial (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998).

Ethics were a key consideration in both the research design and the interviews themselves, strengthened by the use of a feminist methodology as a strategy for gaining the most appropriate narratives. The use of a feminist framework, both philosophically and ethically, has raised the necessity to be conscious of engaging in a sensitive manner with the participants in understanding their different voices in private and public debates, in order to create as valid and honest responses as possible (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998). This research is not only looking specifically at women's access to higher education, but also a wider understanding of women's roles as individuals, females, daughters and/or mothers. This data will aid identification and analysis of if, how and why their identities grounded their educational experience. An overview has been provided of the participants themselves and the strategies employed to gain and support their involvement in this research. A critique has also been given of the difficulties of finding the correct sample and the issue of gatekeepers at various educational institutions.

The way in which this study has been approached and the influences that have helped shape its design have been critiqued here, highlighting both the positive and more difficult aspects of creating the best possible research framework. Despite much planning, discussion and brainstorming, things have not always gone to plan or, in some cases, materialised at all. The 'contradictions, pleasures and satisfaction' is what Craib (1994: 84) regards as 'messiness' in familial, qualitative research and why its insight into real life makes it an invaluable methodology.

Chapter Four

Framing the Study

4.0 Introduction

The biographical narratives of the 39 women who have taken part in this study are examined collectively to provide a sense of their educational histories. Like Denzin and Lincoln (2005), I believe this approach enables deeper exploration of their stories in later chapters. An understanding of the mothers' and daughters' upbringings allows subsequent data analysis to be situated. This takes account of its historical position, informed by political change, and its more contemporary social and economic locale. The information will serve as a generational overview of the participants to understand more clearly their familial habitus, including their ownership of cultural, social and economic capitals. These terms are introduced in depth later in the chapter.

Like all qualitative research, the process of understanding the women's backgrounds in relation to their family and to each other becomes 'messy' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Craib, 1994). As an example, Leigh is the oldest participant at 76 years old and was born in Jamaica. The youngest mother, Tia, is 42 years old and was born in England. The 34-year age difference means that there is also a generational gap between mothers. Leigh was born before the Second World War and Tia was born in the progressive 1970s. Despite the age gap, both of these women are mothers with adult daughters and life experience that enables them to articulate what they understand of the higher education system. It is not my aim to attempt to find similarities for these two women in terms of their own childhoods. What is important, however, is their own stories and any shared or disparate experiences of accessing higher education, either for themselves or their daughters.

The women's schooling is explored through a chronological framework around the mothers' stories, contrasted with their daughters' histories.

Consideration can then be given to any familial patterns in access to compulsory education and subsequently to higher education. The information derived from these typologies enables deeper analysis and individual interpretation of changing norms and values in the forthcoming chapters, particularly relating to class distinctions and the effects of feminism on women's changing opportunities. In terms of cultural capital it is possible that mothers' educational background may have implications for, or impact on, their daughters' and their own university options.

It is firstly necessary to understand how I have interpreted Bourdieu's terms of habitus, field and capital, in order to authenticate my argument that the mothers use their agency within the structures of the home and educational institution, to transform outcomes for their daughters. The comparison of mothers' and daughters' educational backgrounds opens up the discourse of social and cultural reproduction through the habitus and fields of education. The terms habitus, field and agency are central concepts in this study and definitions are provided to contextualise their use in the data chapters that follow.

4.1 The Bourdieusian Framework

4.1.1 Habitus

'It expresses first the result of an organizing action, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination'. (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977: 214)

Habitus explores the customary ways of behaving and believing, formed through regular social encounters. Habitus is a set of unconscious dispositions embodied through family and education (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu, 1994; Reay, 1995; Maton, 2008). Habitus generates perceptions or practices, acquired through past, present and future experiences (Robbins,

1993; Grenfell and James, 1998). Structure is important in understanding habitus, as it is the space where people primarily learn social and cultural behaviour. The relationship between individuals or groups as social agents and the experiences they encounter in the world comprises a 'structured and structuring structure' (Bourdieu, 1994: 170; Grenfell and James, 1998; Maton, 2008). Habitus is ingrained behaviour that socialises individuals to a specific structure (Bourdieu, 1994).

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) concluded that habitus, field and capital are relational, so the field or social space in which an individual lives and learns, together with his/her available capital has implications for both the individual and the collective in which he or she socialises. The pre-dispositions through habitus, along with the conditions of the social site, or field, crucially influence families' choices or opportunities within the education sector (Bourdieu, 1988, 1989; Sayer, 2005). Habitus reinforces all experiences, including class and gender consciousness, providing a 'feel for the game' when having to make rational choices outside of the home (Sayer, 2005: 25). Children absorb and reinterpret meanings learned in the habitus, which include social and cultural norms, values and knowledge (Hodkinson, 1998).

Life prospects can be influenced and interpreted within the habitus, as longer-term decisions surrounding education and employment can be constrained or legitimised through our understanding and belief of our sense of perspective and what we understand to be possible (Hodkinson, 1998). Ball, Maguire and Macrae (2000) suggest the perception of our identity is formed within our social landscape and the habitus to subsequently inform the demarcations we construct in our values and choices. The disposition of the habitus is based on what is familiar and necessary and therefore sets expectations or limits on the reality of our social and temporal opportunities (Hodkinson, 1998).

Habitus is a site of social inheritance, where perceptions and class distinctions are formed before entry into schooling, affecting subsequent learning and experiences in the differing fields of education (Robbins, 1993; Grenfell and James, 1998). Experiences that change the life course throughout adulthood

suggest that the habitus is not deterministic (Grenfell and James, 1998; Sayer, 2005). Habitus has a temporality that is built over time (Atkinson, 2010b). Determinism of the habitus will be considered in this chapter in respect of the mother-daughter experiences.

4.1.2 Field

‘Social reality exists, so as to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it finds itself ‘as a fish in water’. (Bourdieu, 1989: 43)

Field can be referred to as a symbolic arena where an interchange between structural relations and forms of power and relative capital are held (Grenfell and James, 2004; Thomson, 2008). Habitus exists in ‘an unconscious relationship’ relative to a field (Bourdieu, 1993: 87; Maton, 2008; Thomson, 2008). Field is the space, or a field of forces where social interaction is defined and forms of power are held, meaning that fields maintain their own sets of rules (Grenfell and James, 2004; Bourdieu, 2005; Thomson, 2008; James, 2011). Bourdieu referred to these relational spaces as a field, the social interaction within the field as a game, and the individuals as players who play the game (Thomson, 2008; Colley, 2012).

Habitus interplays with field, as individuals bring change through their own agency, meaning that field does not remain static and no field exists in isolation (Grenfell and James, 1998; Hodgkinson, 1998). Field therefore becomes a site of social and cultural reproduction, where meanings and values, along with power and control lie beneath the surface of practice (Bourdieu, 1990; Grenfell and James, 1998). For example, the matching of the school ethos to the familial habitus, such as the middle class child attending independent school with like-minded children in the same social circles and similar income bracket, is likely to produce a successful educational outcome (Ball, 2003). This is notwithstanding the purchase of a

personalised education and smaller class sizes (James, 2011). The child is then ‘as a fish in water’ (Bourdieu, 1989: 43).

There are fields within fields of education (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Therefore education is a field, higher education is a sub-field and these connect to other fields, such as the workplace. Each field has its own set of behaviours that are distinctive and provide common rules for individuals within the field (Hodkinson, 1998; Thomson, 2008). The different structural positions between the various fields becomes important in considering the multi-layers of this research in respect of childhood home, school, university and adult home.

4.1.3 Capital

‘It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognised by economic theory ... the most material types of capital, those which are economic in the restricted sense, can present themselves in the immaterial form of cultural capital or social capital and vice versa’. (Bourdieu, 2006: 105-106)

The term ‘capital’ encompasses a product or economy that has legitimate value, yet all capital is symbolic (Grenfell and James, 1998; James, 2011). The ownership of these products or values can be used to improve or increase an individual’s financial and social standing. Capital, through its value or benefit, can create social inequality (*ibid.*). The premise that parents continue to actively support their children into and beyond early adulthood is an indicator of the power of social and cultural capital.

Economic capital demonstrates the ability to produce, maintain or increase wealth through income received from employment, investments or inheritance (Devine, 2004). Economic capital is the most powerful asset needed to ‘buy-in’ middle class privileges and to gain educational advantage over less wealthy families (Reay, 1998b).

Cultural capital includes an understanding of information regarding the wider world through knowledge transference (Devine, 2004). Reay (1998b) examines how cultural capital is utilised by mothers to improve their children's educational success and the contrasting experiences of mothers who were not in a position to access such levels of capital. Similarly, Devine (2004) explores case studies of parents who had the choice of either one of the best state schools in the country or a private school, but still chose the private system. Her conclusion from the responses of her participants was that the private education offered better security and prospects. Devine (*ibid.*) considers that the social and cultural networking was as important to these parents as academic achievement. Here, parents are exercising their understanding of social and cultural capital beyond academic, creative or vocational success within the school setting, to consider the child's future achievements after compulsory education.

Social capital is a term to define the expectation of receiving intangible benefits derived from co-operation with other members in a group (Grenfell, 2008). Social networking is more prevalent among the middle classes (Vincent and Ball, 2007; Reay, 1998). Middle class mothers are able to influence their children's network of friends through their own choice of adult friendship.

The relational nature of habitus, field and capital and the conditions for differentiated outcomes can be expressed through the conversion between capital and class. The ownership of capital produces power in different fields through an exchange of investment (Bourdieu, 1986). For example, educational qualifications are only valuable if converted successfully into the labour market, with subsequent personal and financial reward. Social and economic exchanges promote power relations, differences in social mobility and class distinctions. All are affected by income levels and associated lifestyle choices (*ibid.*; Bourdieu, 1998).

The concepts of habitus, field and capital can be applied to the participants in this study and explored through the women's educational and familial backgrounds. This line of enquiry provides an understanding of the mothers' childhood habitus and their educational fields of compulsory schooling and higher education. The mothers' childhood habitus can then be considered in relation to the potential capitals they bring to their own daughters' educations, which highlights further the relationship between agency and structure in educational choice.

4.2 Mothers' and Daughters' Compulsory Schooling

The large array of schooling options of the mothers reflects the changing tide of education reform in the 1960s and 1970s and subsequently the mothers' and daughters' backgrounds do not always neatly coincide. Table 1 below shows seven different varieties of the mothers' secondary schooling. By contrast, the daughters attended three different types of secondary school.

Table 1

Mothers' Secondary Schooling Background	
TYPE OF SCHOOL	MOTHER
Convent School	Jenny
Grammar	Anne, Chris, Rose and Sam
Independent School	May
Secondary Modern	Vicky
State Comprehensive	Debbie, Elle, Fran, Helen, Jess, Steph, Sue, Tara and Tia
State Comprehensive and Independent School	Kathy
Government School (Jamaica)	Leigh

Age is a major determinant of the schooling system in which all of the participants were educated. Three of the mothers, Leigh, May and Vicky,

reached the age of 16 before the introduction of the comprehensive school re-organisation in 1965. Recommendations of the 1963 Newsom Report (CACE, 1963) for a differentiated examination system in schools in the United Kingdom included the raising of the compulsory school leaving age to 16, greater support for children of less academic ability, an accelerated building programme and the need to address social factors to support equal educational opportunities for all (Maclure, 1973; McKenzie, 2001; Kelly, 2009).

Leigh was educated in a government school in Jamaica, where schooling was seen as the responsibility of parents and the local community (Morrison and Milner, 1995). In England, Vicky attended a secondary modern school. The tripartite system, which was the availability of grammar, technical and secondary modern schools as state options, fuelled marginalisation of gender and fragmentation of social class, manifested through academic achievement or otherwise by the outcome of eleven plus examinations (McCulloch and Sobell, 1994).

Of all of the mothers, May is the only mother who was independent school educated. May and Maya are the only pairing where both mother and daughter share a continuum of independent schooling. Few women would have received an independent education during the 1950s (Miller and Davey, 2005). May's schooling reflects the argument made by McCulloch and Sobell (1994) that the tripartite system delineated and increased cultural and social differences. May considers her mother's reason for providing private education was not for employment possibilities, but to enhance her future marriage prospects, or in her words *'to educate me for the altar'*.

The mothers revealed different and varied class stereotypes through the norms and values of their upbringing. Unlike May, whose mother was trying to increase her daughter's chance of a 'good' marriage, Jenny was educated in a convent school and denied a private school education that was instead offered to her brother:

'My sister went to a very good grammar school. My brother went right the way through [private school]. I was the one who was piggy in the middle, which I was erm, and I don't blame my parents for that at all, erm, but my brother came along later and there was no way he wasn't going to go to a decent private school, but that's still the philosophy of the boy who's got to have a good education I think. Had I gone to a different school, a good school, maybe my path would have been different'. [Jenny, mother]

The example here of institutional masculinity was commonplace and Jenny's response demonstrates how personal practice is bound by institutional contexts (Connell, 2006). The previous norm of boys' education overriding girls was not seen as a crisis of femininity, yet the response to girls outperforming boys is a crisis of masculinity (Bradley, 2013). Jenny's negative memories of her school days were a critical factor in her decision to send both of her children, boy and girl, to a private school. Three other mothers chose to educate their children in independent schools - Fran, Helen and May.

Four mothers, Anne, Chris, Rose and Sam went to grammar school. All these women studied O-levels and A-levels and all four went on to university. Nine of the mothers, Debbie, Elle, Fran, Helen, Jess, Steph, Sue, Tara and Tia, attended comprehensive schools. Their descriptions of mixed abilities and feelings towards education reflect the breadth of differing opportunities within the comprehensive system itself. Seven of the nine (all but Helen and Steph) went on to go to university, but importantly, all went as mature students and not directly from school. This is elaborated on later in the chapter, where the role of widening participation in their learning journeys is disseminated. By contrast, as set out at Table 2, fifteen of the daughters went to comprehensive schools and all except two of these went to university, straight from compulsory schooling.

Table 2

Daughters' Secondary Schooling Background	
TYPE OF SCHOOL	DAUGHTER
Grammar School	Christina and Tiana
Independent School	Francesca, Helena, Jennifer and Maya
State Comprehensive School	Annette, Deborah, Eleanor, Jessica, Katherine, Leanne, Leona, Rosalind, Roseanne, Samantha, Stephanie, Suzanne, Suzie, Taruh and Victoria

The majority of the daughters have been educated since 1988, when the Education Reform Act introduced the National Curriculum and subsequently the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) into the state comprehensive system in the secondary sector (Blundell, 2012). Comparing the mother-daughter dyads, seven of the mother-daughters attended State Comprehensive, specifically, Debbie/Deborah, Elle/Eleanor, Jess/Jessica, Steph/Stephanie, Sue/Suzanne, Sue/Suzie and Tara/Taruh. May/Maya both attended independent school and Chris/Christina both attended Grammar school.

For the other twelve pairings, mothers and daughters experienced different school type attendance to their daughters. Helena and Francesca were educated in independent schools, but their mothers had state school educations. Jennifer was also independently educated and her mother went to a convent school. Tiana went to a grammar school although her mother went to a comprehensive school.

4.3 Typologies

I have arranged the mother and daughter pairings accordingly to a descriptive typology in Table 3, and these provide a unit of analysis to consider the

reproduction of the patterns of university attendance or work pathways between the couples. Identifying the mother-daughter replication of university attendance or going into the workplace builds on from the Bourdieusian framework of discerning the habitus (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). The range of different home and educational backgrounds in relation to these women's eventual higher education choices and options strengthen the argument that the habitus is not deterministic of future outcomes (Grenfell and James, 1998).

The intergenerational similarities and differences in mothers' and daughters' pathways at the point of leaving compulsory education have been analysed and all of the couplings were placed into one of four groups, which I have labelled as either congruent, if their pathways were similar, or divergent, if their choices differed. If both mother and daughter attended university directly from school they are a '*congruent study dyad*'. The congruent group are further sub-labelled, as several of the mothers, eight out of eighteen, delayed their access to university and attended as mature students. I have called this group '*deferred congruent study dyad*'. In cases where the mother did not attend university but her daughter has, I have called this group '*divergent study dyad*' and the final group, the '*congruent work dyad*' is for the two pairs where neither mother nor daughter attended university (see Table 3).

There are no pairings within the sample where the mother went to university but the daughter did not. This is an important point, as it acknowledges the power of reproduction of educational habitus within both a familial context and a classed boundary (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). All of the mothers in the congruent and deferred congruent study dyads have had the opportunity to study at university, either from school or as mature students and have passed on a study ethic from mother to daughter.

Table 3

PAIRED TYPOLOGIES	
Typology Type	Participants by Category
CONGRUENT STUDY DYAD Mother and daughter both attended university from school	<i>Anne/Annette, Rose/Rosalind, Rose/Rosanne, Sue/Suzanne and Sue/Suzie</i>
DEFERRED CONGRUENT STUDY DYAD Mother attended university as a mature student and daughter attended university from school	<i>Chris/Christina, Debbie/Deborah, Elle/Eleanor, Fran/Francesca, May/Maya, Sam/Samantha, Tara/Taruh and Tia/Tiana.</i>
DIVERGENT STUDY DYAD Mother did not attend university, daughter did attend university	<i>Helen/Helena, Jenny/Jennifer, Jess/Jessica, Leigh/Leanne, Leigh/Leona and Vicky/Victoria.</i>
CONGRUENT WORK DYAD Neither mother nor daughter attended university, both entering the workplace from school	<i>Kathy/Katherine and Steph/Stephanie.</i>

The six daughters in the divergent study grouping highlight the transformation of the daughters' educational pathways beyond that of their mothers. In the case of Helen and Jenny, mothers have used their economic capital to purchase private school educations for their daughters with its enhanced educational opportunities, in order for their daughters to pursue a university education that was not afforded to them.

Conversely, the two daughters who have not gone to university, Katherine and Stephanie, have mothers who also did not attend university. Social class standing and the ownership of high levels of capital were historically pre-

requisites to university access (Robbins, 1993). During the time period when the majority of the mothers were leaving secondary school, only one in ten women went to university (Dyhouse, 2002). The effects of widening participation, university expansion and social change supporting more gender equality means there is now a commonality of many women attending university as a progression from A-level. Higher education has contributed to social mobility for women (Reay, David and Ball, 2005).

The pattern for the daughters in the congruent study and deferred congruent study vary considerably. Nine daughters are in undergraduate study. Of the ten graduate daughters, five are in professional posts. The other five are either in semi-skilled work or unwaged. The two daughters in the congruent work pairing who have not attended university are also in unskilled and semi skilled positions. The belief that going to university elevates job prospects to professional status is not being borne out by the daughters in this study, rather my research findings are in line with Corver's (2010) commonly acknowledged viewpoint that predominantly students from advantaged backgrounds continue to progress onto professional employment positions (Smith, 2011).

The seven mothers in both the divergent work/study pairings and congruent work group are all employed in unskilled or semi-skilled work, with the exception of Helen who is a full-time mother.

I return to Bourdieusian theory again to draw conclusions as to the most useful way to make sense of this data. In all of the dyads, with the exception of the congruent work pairing, either the mothers have improved their lifestyle through their own education or their daughters have altered their familial learning trajectories through university attendance. Transformation of educational capital has taken place during the mothers' generation or in the main, for their daughters. Transformation here is given to mean the Bourdieusian sense of an improvement or upward mobility increase in life chances and opportunities through the transmission of capitals, either as an individual or within a group (Bourdieu, 1986). [The Bourdieusian

interpretation of transformation is different to that of Mezirow (2003; Mezirow and Taylor, 2009), whose transformation model is a reflective, action-based pedagogical tool used to understand how adults learn].

Using Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977: 257) '*system of determinations*', class membership can be restructured, dependent on ownership of capital and the field of education. An increase in the higher level of educational knowledge can be retranslated into different social and cultural circles, with this new, internalised knowledge transformed away from the determination of the original class membership (*ibid.*). Retranslation is an improvement in expected educational outcome, different to that which would normally be expected or determined by the social class of that family. This model represents the notion that habitus is a mechanism for reproduction of educational achievement. However, the hierarchy of lifestyle can be a misrecognised retranslation of class (Grenfell and James, 1998; Wacquant, 2006).

Using the example of mothers' providing opportunities in education, the ultimate interest is to maintain middle class advantage, an example of misrecognition in relation to an outward display of 'doing the best' for their daughters (Bourdieu, 1977; James, 2011; Burawoy, 2012). Misrecognition is cultivated as superficial social practice, different to the internalised desired outcome. Bourdieu (2000: 189) asserts misrecognition is '*complicity and the blurring of the self*'. Yet the field of higher education, along with personal agency is a two-way process that can transform the educational outcome and the subsequent class membership of the individual, as demonstrated in the remaining dyads.

Significantly, retranslation is also considered in terms of the number of women who are first-generation in their families to go to university. Fourteen of the participants, seven mothers and seven daughters, are the first people in their families to go into higher education. Only Rose and May (mothers) had parents who were postgraduates and both discussed an expectation of their studying at university, with May delaying her '*inevitable*' route to higher

education. Eight mothers also followed their daughters as mature students into study.

To show the diverse ways in which these women have come into their groupings, the biographies of each mother-daughter couple are given. This also provides valuable information on income, background, funding and social status on which to base the idea of reproduction, transformation and retranslation of the education process.

4.3.1 Congruent Study Dyads

Congruent study dyads show the reproduction of similar educational routes between mother and daughter, as both had the opportunity and subsequently attended university straight from completing their compulsory schooling. The congruent study pairs show a matching of support in the habitus and a desire for study. There are five pairings in the congruent study dyad group.

All three mothers in this grouping attended grammar school and went on to become educators or academics. All of the mothers in the congruent study pairings and deferred congruent study pairings with the exception of Fran, who is a dentist with a Masters degree, went on to either become teachers, early years professionals or university academics at some point in their career. These findings support the historical, stereotypical position of teaching as a middle class, respectable career for educated women (Skeggs, 1997). Anne remained a teacher until she was retired early from teaching due to ill health. Chris, Rose and Sam went on to become university academics and all three have completed PhDs.

These mothers and daughters follow the norm of the understanding that university attendance heightens access to professional levels of status within employment. For these five pairings, the habitus is aligned with the field, which provides the daughters with some certainty of educational trajectory (Reay, Crozier and James, 2011; James, 2012).

Anne and Annette

Anne is 58 years old and has taken early retirement from teaching. Anne was widowed with a son many years ago. She has re-married a widower and Anne adopted her husband's two daughters four years ago. Anne was grammar school and university educated. Anne recalls that when she went to grammar school '*most of the children there had been in private primary education ... then the girls went into the grammar school and the boys stayed on in private education, which was common at that time*'. Dyhouse (2002) acknowledges the cynicism of the value of educating women at this time, due to the norm of women and mothers remaining in the home and not in the workplace. She lives with her husband and three children.

Annette is 20 years old and was educated in a state comprehensive school. She started a Film Director's course and transferred onto a three-year Teacher Training course. Annette's change was driven by the current condition of the employment market '*I'm going into a degree that's more likely to get me a job than the other one*'. Annette works during term time in a bar to fund her living costs and Anne and her husband top-up any shortfall. She lives between her rented accommodation at university and the family home with her Mum, Dad, brother and sister.

Rose, Rosalind and Rosanne

Rose, 50, is a university lecturer and academic. She is married with two daughters, Rosalind and Rosanne. Rose attended grammar school. She trained as a teacher and later followed this with a Masters degree and PhD in education. Both of Rose's daughters have gone to university and Rose and her husband have financially supported their daughters' tuition fees and accommodation costs.

Rosalind is 22 years old. She followed her A-levels by starting an undergraduate degree, but she suffered a serious illness and following her recovery, changed courses. Rosalind has a student loan for her £3,290 per

annum fees. She is funding her study with a part-time job, full time in the summer. Rosalind moves between her parents' home and a rented flat close to the university.

Roseanne is 24 years old. Roseanne attended state primary and secondary schools. Following her A-levels, she studied Philosophy at university and did a conversion Masters in Computer Science. Her tuition fees were £1,000 per annum for which she took out a student loan that she is still repaying. She is currently working full time for an Internet provider. She lives with her parents.

Sue, Suzanne and Suzie

Sue is a 49-year-old teacher and Head of Department at a secondary Academy school. Sue was grammar school educated and followed this with university study. Her first class degree led her straight into a teaching post and she has stayed in the same school ever since, stopping only for maternity leave. Sue and her husband have provided their daughters with a lump sum of money to fund their university educations.

Suzanne has just completed her A-levels and is due to go to university to study a four-year course in Spanish and Portuguese in the next academic year. She is 18 years old and the youngest participant in this study. She attended the same school as her sister and where her mum, Sue, is a Head of a Department. She will live in Halls of Residence for the first year of her study, but she currently lives with her parents.

Suzie is 21 years old. She began her undergraduate study at an elite university, having gained 12 A*s at GCSE and 4 A grade A-levels. Suzie was unhappy at that institution and transferred to another university, where she is now in her third year of a five-year veterinary science course. She has a tuition fee loan. Suzie lives in rented accommodation during term time and with her family during the holidays.

4.3.2 Deferred Congruent Study Dyads

This typology explores the mothers, who after various timescales returned to higher education as mature students. The mothers and daughters ultimately share similar educational values, despite differing individual habitus in their teenage years. All of their daughters attended university. There are eight pairs in this grouping.

The deferred congruent study pair grouping is the biggest in the participant sample. This is significant, as it highlights the impact of widening participation of the women in this generational age band. The importance of widening participation to the mothers in this research is polarised by the fact that seven out of eight of the mothers in the deferred congruent study dyads attended ex-polytechnics or post-1992 institutions. Robbins (1993) explores how the rise of the post-1992 institution questioned the need for social class background to be the most dominant factor in university entry. Prior learning and skills became indicators of educational equivalency and assisted university access with a recognition of students' previous experience (James, 1998, Robbins, 1993).

The freedom of traditional studentship that Bourdieu and Passeron (1979: 29) remark as '*an undemanding pattern*' does not reflect the lifestyle of mature students with work and family commitments. However, the time actually spent in university '*momentarily frees them from family life and working life*' (*ibid.*) away from the competing value systems of home, work and family (Sayer, 2005). Widening participation was introduced to address under-representation of certain social groups, including those such as mother Debbie who did not fulfill her potential in the compulsory schooling years (Burke, 2002). Constraints existed for many of the student mothers, primarily financial cost and the need for childcare or to cover school runs. Two mothers, Debbie and Tara, are keen to continue their studies up to Masters level, but the 2012 increase in tuition fees makes this impossible for them. However, attendance at a local institution provided the accessibility necessary

to gain an education, whilst concurrently attending to their parental responsibilities.

Mature students often face a challenge due to changing learner identity and different class characteristics emerge (Brine and Waller, 2004). Middle class aspirations often compete with working class realities (Burke, 2012). Bourdieu is useful here when considering the relationality between the subjective personal and the more objective social patterns (Bourdieu, 1977; James, 1995). In Bourdieusian terms, the students' disconnected position can make them feel like 'a fish out of water', known as the hysteresis effect (Bourdieu, 1977). The lack of access to a traditional student social life and the visible age gap can add to mature students' alienation from their fellow students. However, the commitment necessary to return to study can mean a more determined approach to undertaking and completing education. The benefits of the mothers' increased capital can potentially affect the daughters' subsequent future academic choices. For four of the mothers, this was the case. Fran and Tia were state comprehensive schooled and sent their daughters Francesca and Tiana to independent and grammar schools respectively, a transformative situation. Chris and May's daughters reproduced their mothers' schooling by attending grammar and independent schools respectively.

Fran is the only mother to have attended a traditional 'red-brick' university as a mature student, prior to having her children. In every other case, the mothers talk of juggling children, work and/or study in various measures and at different junctures in their lives. All of the deferred congruent mothers negotiated difficult and often demanding schedules, their purpose was to find either new challenges or recognition through educational involvement (Wright, 2011).

Debbie and May both attended university when their daughters were adults themselves. May did her first degree as a mature student and subsequently her PhD later in life. Her daughter, Maya, influenced her mother to go to

university in a revival of her normal pattern. As outlined below, mother and daughter have a shared dyadic experience of accessing university:

‘One day she [Maya] got on her bike and she cycled across [city] to [university] and came back with all the details and she actually explained to me how the whole thing works and what I should look at and who I should contact and I got in touch’. [May, mother]

This was also true of Debbie and Deborah:

‘Eventually I left work and went and did a full time degree at the same time as my daughter’. [Debbie, mother]

Despite the significant variations in age and experience of these mothers, they have all completed undergraduate study and have encouraged their daughters into higher education. The rest of this section explores the relationships between the mothers and daughters in their differences and similarities of access to university.

Chris and Christina

Chris is a 49-year-old university professor. Following a period of clerical work she began to build an academic career in the healthcare sector. Chris was the first person in her family to go to university and acknowledges the intergenerational social mobility her education brings to her family (Dyhouse, 2002): *‘I suppose I feel it has been different for Christina [...] she grew up with people who had just been to university so her aspirations would have been very different to my own’*. Chris and her ex-husband are funding Christina’s university accommodation costs and repaying her maintenance loan. Chris lives with her long-term partner and daughter.

Christina is 21 years old and attended grammar school. She is studying French and Spanish and will be spending the next academic year studying abroad. She travelled extensively in her gap year. Reay (1998b) explores the

power of the transmission of cultural capital from mother to daughter, explained by Christina *'My Mum has always travelled a lot and I think I've sort of caught the bug from her [...] I've always been quite taken with different cultures'*. Christina has tuition fees of £3,290 per annum. Christina lives at home with Chris and Chris' partner.

Debbie and Deborah

Debbie, 45, has a son and daughter. Debbie was badly bullied during her state schooling, which led to her truanting and moving out of her family home at 15. She entered the workplace at 16 with few qualifications and married at 17. She began to re-build her education through childcare practice following the birth of her children. She achieved an undergraduate degree. Debbie works as a training consultant in the early years. Debbie and her husband of 28 years supported their daughter's living costs through university.

Deborah, 23, has benefited from her mother's compensation for her own lack of formal study (Reay, 1998b): *'I think she always wished she'd could have gone further in education when she was younger and that she probably might have instilled some of that on to me'*. She studied Classics at university. Deborah is currently working as an Estate Agent. Deborah had a tuition fee loan for her £3,000 pa fees, a maintenance loan and a bank overdraft following her undergraduate study. She lives with her partner.

Elle and Eleanor

Elle is 46 years old and has four daughters, all of whom have attended or are currently attending university. Elle was a nurse and later she re-trained as a child construction minder. Elle's personal history follows women's stereotypical pattern of work, marriage and raising children (Fine, 2010): *'I would say the priority was that it [career change] fitted in with the family'*. All of Elle's children attended local universities and all lived at home during their undergraduate study. Within this study, Eleanor is the only daughter in the participant sample to have lived at home during her undergraduate study.

Elle currently works as a self-employed child minder. Elle lives with her husband and three of her grown-up children.

Eleanor is 22 and followed the ‘traditional’ A-level and university route to graduate as a teacher two years ago. Eleanor works as a primary school teacher. Eleanor used savings to pay for her tuition fees for the first two years of her course and took out a tuition fee loan for the final year, whilst also saving for her wedding. Eleanor worked in a supermarket during her study. Eleanor has recently married and left home.

Fran and Francesca

Fran, 58 years old, is a Dentist with three children. She attended state school. Regretting her diminished earnings capability, Fran later took A-levels at college, going on to complete her undergraduate degree in Anatomy and Physiology. Fran then trained as a dentist and took her Masters degree in Dentistry. All of Fran’s study was fully funded and grant aided. Fran lives with her husband and three children.

Francesca is 20 years old. She attended a private secondary school on a full scholarship. Francesca began a BA in Business Management, but aged 18, Francesca suffered a stroke which required several months’ rehabilitation. Now fully recovered, Francesca has now gained a place at a university nearer to home to start in the next academic year, changing her subject choice to Law. She will be taking out a student loan to fund her undergraduate study. Francesca lives with her family.

May and Maya

May, a retired independent expert in the Family Court, is 70 years old. She had a private education in a prestigious school, where *‘the expectation at school was that everyone should go to finishing school or university’*. However, May did not attend university until into her early twenties. Later in

her career she went on to complete her PhD to become a university academic. May has been married for 46 years and has three children and seven grandchildren. All of her children have been to university, at a time when higher education was fully subsidised. She lives with her husband.

Maya is 44 years old and the oldest participant daughter in this study. She was educated at a private school. She went to university, graduating after a four-year course in Psychology, French and Russian, followed by a PGCE. Following a period of employment, Maya made the choice as a single person to become a mother and her children were conceived by donor conception. She has made motherhood her full-time role and home educates her children. Maya lives with her twin six-year old children.

Sam and Samantha

Sam, 58, is a university lecturer and academic. She has two children. Sam attended Grammar school and went to university after a period in the workplace and between having her children, progressing to PhD level. Sam believes there is dyslexia running through her family, which has only formally been assessed in her daughter Samantha. Sam acknowledges she has developed '*strong compensatory strategies*' to advance her education and career despite her learning difficulties. Sam lives with her long-term partner.

Samantha is 25 years old. Like many of the women in Rogers' (2007) research, she struggled at school until her mother identified her dyslexia: '*They never tested me at school [...] I wasn't tested until I went to uni*'. As discussed further in Chapter Five, her mother found her an access course that would allow her to attend university without the need for A-levels. Samantha is currently in an unpaid internship, alongside evening and weekend bar work. Samantha has a £36,000 debt to repay. She lives with her partner at his parent's home.

Tara and Taruh

Tara is 53 years old and a current part-time Masters student. She completed her early childhood undergraduate study when she was 51. Tara has been married twice, both times to foreign men, so she has lived abroad for a substantial period of her adult life. Tara is currently unwaged. Tara's two eldest daughters have attended university and her youngest daughter is due to go in September 2012. Tara is separated from her second husband and lives with her youngest daughter.

Taruh, 23, works for a Non-Government Organisation, having completed her undergraduate study in International Relations. She is dual heritage, her Mother is English and her Father is Palestinian. Taruh is the only daughter in this study to have funded her university education without any financial support from her parents, working and receiving a maintenance loan. She carries a substantial debt from tuition fees and living costs. Taruh lives with friends in a shared, rented house.

Tia and Tiana

Tia is 41 years old and the youngest participant mother in this study. Tia entered an arranged marriage at 19 with two daughters following shortly after. Tia began undergraduate study as a mature student, progressing to become a university lecturer. She is due to be completing her PhD shortly. Tia's parents were first generation Indians to the UK. Tia and her husband are fully funding their daughter financially through university. Tia lives with her husband and two daughters.

Tiana is 20 years old. She was educated at a grammar school. She achieved 7 A*s and 4 As at GCSE and 4 As at A-level. She is studying a four-year joint honours in English and Spanish. Tiana has a holiday job in a local clothing store. Both Tiana and her mother, Tia, are very conscious of the social and cultural aspects of their Asian culture and spoke of the value that is placed on education. Tiana lives with her Mother, Father and 17 year-old sister.

4.3.3 Divergent Study Dyads

Divergent study dyads represent the pairings where the mothers did not go to university, but their daughters did undertake undergraduate study. The divergent dyads represent a change in the educational outcomes between the mothers and daughters in this study, as the mothers went into the workplace and the daughters went into higher education. There are six pairs in this grouping.

The daughters in this group have fully capitalised on the conversion between capital and class, as this group of women strongly represents the middle class mothers complementing and compensating their daughters' schooling experience (Bourdieu, 1998; Reay, 1998b). Two mothers, Helen and Elle, make reference to this concerted cultivation: *'I've supported them more where I wasn't supported, it's just that I didn't get the support I needed and I've put it into them 100%'*. (Elle, mother). All of the mothers have provided substantial support for their daughters to have maximum opportunity to a full educational experience and subsequent university attendance. The mothers' support included financial help during the study period, repayment of fees and optimum chances to acquire the best possible start to adult life. The exception to this is Leigh and her daughters. By virtue of their being two of the three oldest participant daughters, Leanne and Leona present as much more financially independent than the other daughters in this grouping, although Leigh continues to provide domestic help and childcare for Leanne and Leona. All the divergent pen pictures are outlined below.

Helen and Helena

Helen, 45, is married and has three children. She attended sixth form college, but did not finish her A-levels. She continued in the workplace until she stopped to have her children. She remains a full time mother to her teenage children. Helen suggests an over-compensation in her parenting style (Reay, 1998b): *'I've gone completely the opposite way to what my parents did [...]*

I've gone over the top'. Helen and her husband have put all of their children through the private education system. Helen lives with her family.

Helena is 19 years old. She was privately educated. She is currently in the second year of her degree in Art and Design. Helena acknowledges her mothers' full support: *'Part of the reason is that she wants the best for us and part of the reason is, hold on, I didn't go to university, but you can'*. Hays (1996) explores this aspect of intensive mothering and the different interpretations of what constitutes worthy and valuable beliefs within the mothering ideology. Helena lives with her parents and two younger brothers during the holidays.

Jenny and Jennifer

Jenny, 55, feels her own education was disrupted due to the introduction of the 11+ system during her year of secondary transition: *'I decided I didn't want to carry on studying because I think on reflection that I had a rotten two years'*. Despite this, she achieved highly at school and went on to have a successful management career before stopping to raise her children. Jenny and her sister were state educated, but her brother was privately educated, going on to study at Oxford. Historically it was commonplace for families to educate the son and not the daughter (Miller and Davey, 2005). Jenny is now working as a volunteer and lives with her husband.

Jennifer is 24 years old and is working in PR. She went to a private school before going straight to university to study Business Management and Psychology. Jennifer's tuition fees were £1,000 per annum. Her parents funded her tuition fees and living costs. Jennifer travelled for a year following university: *'I've gone and worked for a skiing resort and I've gone and taught kids football out in Africa'*. She has recently set up home with her partner.

Jess and Jessica

Jess, 50, works as a laboratory assistant in a secondary school. Jess left school at 16 to go into the workplace. Jess works solely to support her two eldest children through university *'I took on extra hours at work to help them out because obviously we are paying both their rents, so I took that on'*. The pressure of parents paying their children's tuition fees is an increasing burden on families' wealth (Bradley and Ingram, 2012). Jess has been married to her husband for 28 years. Their three children, aged between 20 and 25, live at home during university holidays.

Jessica, 21, is in her third year of a Psychology degree. She was educated in a state secondary school where she completed her GCSEs and A-levels. She was a high-level basketball player, but following an injury that meant she was unable to compete competitively, she changed institution following a gap year. Jessica is aware of the financial support her mother provides: *'My Mum works now purely to pay my rent at uni so that I don't have to get a job'*. She lives with her Mum, Dad and two brothers during the holiday period.

Leigh, Leanne and Leona

Leigh, 76, is a retired dressmaker and the oldest participant mother. Leigh was educated in a government school in Jamaica. She came to England from Jamaica with her husband when she was 27. Leigh did not have the opportunity to stay in higher education in Jamaica *'I had a family at home where some of them were dependent on me to help them out there so I had to work'*. She worked as a shorthand typist until she had her children and later in her working career she was a seamstress. Leigh's daughters were born and raised in England. Leigh currently helps with domestic support and looking after her grandchildren. Leigh is a widow.

Leanne works in marketing and is 38 years old. She is currently on maternity leave and she also has a seven-year-old son. She was state educated, went to university to undertake teacher training and changed mid-course to History.

Leanne's fees were means tested, so her parents made minimal contribution towards her costs. Leanne's parents came over from Jamaica in the 1960s and so she is first generation black British, which she was keen to emphasise as an important part of her heritage and culture. Leanne lives with her husband and two children.

Leona is 42 years old and works in the public sector. She was state educated and left school at 16 to go to work. She went to university as a mature student to study Law, working for several Law firms before changing her career path after the birth of her son. Leona's university fees were means tested, but financially she was able to support herself with minimal help from her parents. Leona lives with her 13 year-old son.

Vicky and Victoria

Vicky is 62 years old. She has been married to her husband for 36 years and they have two daughters. Vicky's primary education took place in the local village hall and later at a secondary modern. McCulloch (2011: 66) argues that 'working class children were consistently failed' by the secondary modern system, borne out by Vicky's lack of any academic qualifications. Vicky describes her schooling: *'you just fumbled through and you just did the best of what you could and if you couldn't pick it up it was just tough luck'*. She left school at 15. Following the birth of her daughters, Vicky remained a full time mother until her children left secondary school, caring also for her elderly mother. Vicky now works as a part time receptionist. She lives with her husband and Victoria.

Victoria, 23, had a private primary education and a state secondary education. Victoria began her career as a nurse, but returned to study Classics. She began Masters study, but has chosen not to continue. She is currently unwaged. Victoria had a tuition fee loan, which was repaid in full by her parents. Victoria lives with her mother and father.

4.3.4 Congruent Work Dyads

Congruent work dyads show the reproduction of the mother and daughter pairings going into the workplace from compulsory schooling and neither going to university. There are two pairs in this group, Kathy and Katherine and Steph and Stephanie. The two daughters, Katherine and Stephanie, share similar educational outcomes to their mothers, ceasing education at the end of their secondary schooling.

It is noteworthy here that in identifying their classes, Kathy self identified as middle class and Katherine as working/middle. In attempting to '*read class in a range of practices of distinction and reproduction*' (Reay, David and Ball, 2005: 16), Kathy's middle class values conceal a dilemma for Katherine, as she was raised within a middle class environment, but is currently in working class employment as a shop worker. Although Kathy was completely supportive of Katherine's decision not to go to university, her narrative suggests an unfulfilled desire for her daughter '*I'm slightly disappointed that [Katherine] hasn't decided to [go to university], we're not saying she's never going to, she's not ready yet*'. Kathy is in effect 'looking away' from Katherine's choice to enter the workplace, a sense of 'not letting go' of the possibility that her youngest child could eventually attend university. Her sense of disinterest, yet emotional investment in her daughter's possible higher education future demonstrates *illusio* (Bourdieu, 1993). Kathy's two eldest daughters are the first in their family to go to university, an indicator of Kathy's working family background. Katherine has made different choices from her two sisters, who both studied at undergraduate level. Katherine has followed her mother's pathway into employment rather than education. The different outcomes between the siblings support the suggestion that the *habitus* is not deterministic (Grenfell and James, 1998).

Both Steph and Stephanie self identified as working class. Their backgrounds and current employment as a dog walker and cosmetics retailer in a department store respectively place them in a working class category. Other than one nephew, nobody in Steph's family have been to university.

All four of these women demonstrate a strong desire to work and earn money. The women show little interest in the long-term benefits of higher education, with the possibility of increased employment and lifestyle aspirations (Burke, 2012). Their lack of greater earning potential subsequently perpetuates their financial status quo. Both Steph and Kathy made positive comments of their daughter's financial independence, at a time when many students or their families are carrying large financial debt.

Kathy and Katherine

Kathy, 51, has been married for 28 years and has three daughters. Katherine won a grant, aged 11, to go to private school. Following her A-levels, Kathy went into the catering industry until she had her children. She has been back in employment for 15 years as PA to a Director. Two of Kathy's daughters went to university and she and her husband are paying off their student loans to reduce their debt. Kathy lives with her husband and Katherine.

Katherine is 18 years old. She attended state secondary school and a sixth form college. She works as a full time sales assistant in a department store. Katherine is ultimately hoping to have a career as a photographer. Katherine has shown a positive rejection of higher education, citing work experience and putting together a portfolio as more important for her future career prospects. Katherine currently lives with her parents.

Steph and Stephanie

Steph is 52 years old. She has two children and one grandson. Steph left school at 15 to go into silver service waitressing like her grandmother and mother. She continued with this career until she had her children. Neither of Steph's children has attended university. Steph works as a dog walker and groomer and studied for her NVQs in dog grooming as a mature student at a local college. Until recently she was a full time carer for her grandson. Steph lives with her second husband and her daughter.

Stephanie, 27, works as an assistant manager for a well-known cosmetics company. Stephanie went to state primary and secondary schools. She missed a large section of her compulsory schooling due to a long-term illness. Stephanie left school at 16 and undertook a hairdressing apprenticeship. She remained a hairdresser for six years before re-training as a make-up artist. Stephanie lives between her Nan's home and the family home with her Mum and stepfather.

4.4 Conclusion

There are class inflected experiences and identifications that are inherent in all of the narratives surrounding educational background. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) theory of the 'system of determinations' has been used to explore the axes of reproduction, transformation and retranslation of educational outcome between mother and daughter.

This chapter began by reviewing the schools attended by the mothers and daughters and reflected a large assortment of school types. Schooling background varied and included state secondary modern, comprehensive and grammar provision, faith schooling and the independent sector, as well as one mother who received a state education in Jamaica. None of the mothers reflect on their schooling as a time to build qualifications for a future career, although the mothers in the deferred congruent grouping re-dressed this consideration and returned to education later in their lives.

The eight mothers who went to university as mature students are an important group of women in this study. Seven of them went to post-1992 institutions, following the expansion of polytechnics to university status (Burke and Jackson, 2007). These women are products of the widening participation agenda, which was to include more diverse social groups, including women (Archer *et al.*, 2003). This again is indicative of the changing face of women in the workplace and the greater acceptance of the mature student, often with children.

The mothers who attended grammar school all went on to become teachers or lecturers. All of the women in the deferred congruent study group, with the exception of one, embodied their learning experiences and became teachers or university lecturers. In this regard, access to university has supported women to be both educated and educators.

The exploration of congruent and divergent dyads demonstrates the relationship between mothers' attendance at university and its positive effect on daughters' attendance. There is evidence here of positive role modelling, of daughters following in their mothers' educational footsteps. This line of thinking also channels further discussion in later chapters regarding concerted cultivation of mothers' desires for their daughters' futures (Lareau, 2003; Bradley, 2013; Perrier, 2013). The mothers' wish for their daughters to have better futures is not diminished within the congruent work dyads, rather they shared a strong, collective sense of work ethic, with all women positively rejecting further study and going directly into the workplace.

The necessity for specific qualifications at secondary education level in order to access university entry is much more visible in the dialogues with the daughters than the mothers. With the exception of the two daughters in the congruent work group, all of the daughters, except Samantha, needed A-level qualifications to continue into higher education. Samantha's story of university entry without formal qualifications is discussed further in Chapter Six.

Corver (2010) acknowledges that students from middle class, advantaged backgrounds have a better chance of progression onto professional employment positions, although many of the daughters in this study are not realising increased work status and income through university study. The choice of job sector for many of these women remains largely public sector or service/care related, which is automatically placing these women into lower paid positions. Many of the graduate daughters are in low paid employment, voluntary internships and one daughter remains unwaged. In this regard much remains unaltered in earnings terms between the generations.

This chapter has placed all of the pairs into typology dyads based on their compulsory schooling choices and provided a framework within which to view the participants. Chapter Five will consider the women's family backgrounds. Exploration of the mothers' and daughters' social and economic context at the time of making decisions around university education will provide a better understanding of the myriad of ways in which women support their daughters through the education process. I will explore the daughters' suggestion of a greater commonality of university attendance as a necessity in order to gain future employment, regardless in many cases of the lack of future career choice or ambitions.

Chapter Five

The Value of Higher Education

5.0 Introduction

Despite a substantial rise in higher education tuition fees in 2012, the large numbers of students continuing to want to go to university suggests that a degree remains a valued asset. The younger women in this research have suggested there is an increasing commonality of higher education as the 'next step' in the education process for many, rather than a degree as an educational extension only for the more academically minded. University has become more than a seat of higher learning; it has transformed into a driver for intrinsic, individual ambition as well as for extrinsic, financial return (Marcucci and Johnstone, 2007). Alongside the prolonged period of education, the creation of widening participation, expansion programmes and lifelong learning agendas have adapted the possibility of access to higher education. The introduction of these schemes has been significant in attempting to reduce class barriers in higher education (Burke, 2012). However, in class terms, recruitment figures for higher education can be attained through middle class and mature students, without the need for working class involvement (Archer, Hutchings and Ross, 2003). The coalition government (2010 - present) is actively targeting students to remain in education and the 50% benchmark set for students to enrol in undergraduate study was not reached in 2012 (Number 10, 2012b).

Issues surrounding access to higher education are explored through a generational context of gender and class differences between the mothers and daughters and the value they place on accessing such education. The concept of habitus provides a way to view class from a temporal and historical context (Lawler, 2000). This includes the tensions surrounding the prospects of greater life outcomes and conflict in relation to barriers to learning. The mothers' narratives will be used to explore whether or not they attended university and even if this was a feasible option for them. Discussion will

include their diverse choices: post-compulsory education or subsequent employment prospects. Using intergenerational analysis, the mothers' educational experiences can be explored to consider any subsequent effect their learning backgrounds had on the future provision for their daughters' choices. The daughters' recollections will be concurrently examined, giving consideration to social reproduction or transformation of educational outcomes (Reay, 1998b).

The impact of the widening participation and expansion policies will be explored through the experiences of the women in the deferred congruent pairings who went to university as mature students. The incentives for going to university become important considerations in the face of changes to the access and conditions of widening participation, significant factors for women in recent generations. I will consider the mothers' comments on jobs being more freely available when they left school, at a time when university was less widely accessed by women. The mothers' experiences will be examined in relation to their daughters' choices, many of whom, unlike their mothers now consider as routine the entry into higher education from compulsory schooling. The notion of going to university as a *choice* is considered from the perspective of families who have the economic and cultural capital to support a university application and those who do not. I will explore whether the mothers had the opportunity to go into higher education and if their daughters subsequently followed. Mothers' tensions surrounding their daughters' options are considered, including their concerns that women's choices are now more micro-analysed than ever. As shown in Chapter Seven, the balancing of future motherhood with employment is still very much in their thoughts.

The social shift from university for the elite to a mass education market will be explored (Naidoo, 2003, 2004; Burke, 2012). The relationship between class and the tuition fee rise is particularly pertinent, due to the necessity to self-fund a university education. Financing access to university is now considered an individual problem to be solved within family, rather than a collective issue to be resolved through government policy and group, political

action. The option on whether university attendance is feasible based on high-level fees is distinct from the wider benefits to society of an educated workforce. As highlighted in Chapter Six, access remains more easily achievable for the middle classes with their related higher incomes and subsequent access to additional educational support (Croll, 2009, Burke, 2012). The current economic climate of austerity is also raising tensions for families in higher financial brackets who have expressed concern at the high level of tuition fee debt. I argue that if the middle class participants are concerned about the level of the fee rise, those from disadvantaged backgrounds will feel the effects even more harshly. I will also explore whether the participants consider the rise in tuition fees is likely to result in a shift back to more vocational based subjects and study. The extent to which mothers utilise their capital beyond their daughters' compulsory education and the contribution this has made to their daughters' university success will be considered in light of Bourdieu's (1977) theory of 'playing the game' in Chapter Six. Here I consider the ways in which mothers actively supported their daughters and the impact this has had on their route into higher education.

5.1 Reproduction of Educational Pathways

Eleven of the 18 mothers interviewed went to university, three went directly from A-levels and the other eight attended university as mature students. However, 19 of their 21 daughters have attended or were attending university at the time of the interviews. I have stated already that only two daughters, Stephanie and Katherine, chose not to go into higher education and we can usefully look at their stories in more detail. Stephanie always wanted to become a hairdresser from a young age, a vocation that she realised when she left school at 16. Neither Stephanie nor Katherine's mothers (Steph and Kathy) attended university, although Kathy did stay on in further education and complete a vocational diploma in hotel management. Stephanie went on to re-train as a make-up artist and is currently working as a manager for a high-end cosmetics company. She describes her reasons for going into the workplace from school:

'From about six I always said that I wanted to do hairdressing. I didn't really look into further, higher up education because I knew what I wanted to do anyway'. [Stephanie, daughter]

Stephanie's mother, Steph voiced a strikingly similar response to the same question despite being interviewed separately:

'What I wanted to do I could do without going to university anyway, because I always wanted to do silver service which I done [...] I was dead lucky in what I done because it was what I always wanted to do'. [Steph, mother]

The reproduction of habitus is clear in Steph and Stephanie narratives. Habitus provides a lens through which to see class through the forms in which we embody the surroundings of the social location (Lawler, 2000). Both Steph and her daughter left school at 16 to pursue careers that had been thought about for many years before they left school. This active thought process from a young age around career choice is in stark contrast to many of the other respondents who attended university out of sense of following the norm or their peers:

'I guess it was my own decision whether or not I wanted to go, but it was very much that's what my friends were doing'. [Jennifer, daughter]

'Everyone in my social group of friends went along the same route. You kind of get, kind of carried along by it, it was like I very much got pushed along with everyone else, because everyone else was going to university, so why would I not go?' [Victoria, daughter]

This almost 'taken for granted' attitude to attending university is a complete reversal from previous generations when male participation in elite, higher education was significantly higher than female involvement and prior to the shift to mass higher education (David *et al.*, 2010).

One of the few daughters who remarked on a deeper thought process around the decision to attend university was Samantha:

'I needed to be ready. I know a lot of people that have dropped out from their first year and only went to university to have fun [...] I didn't want to do that. I wanted to go and get a degree'. [Samantha, daughter].

Katherine is the other participant not to go to university. Katherine's long-term ambition is to become a photographer. She has been working full-time in a department store since leaving school at 18. Katherine explains that she does not want to go to university at this time, as she believes her career would be better facilitated by the production of a photography portfolio:

'There's no point, I've found, to go to university, do a degree in photography, come out with a big debt and realise that you are just stuck on the same course as everyone else where you haven't had much experience in other areas [...] I've seen a lot of people that have spent one or two years doing their degree and found out that it's not the right degree and then you've got to come back to square one and get even more debt to find a career that you really want to do'. [Katherine, daughter]

Katherine has two sisters and her mother, Kathy, has fully funded her other two daughters through university. Kathy and her husband have made it clear that they will also completely fund Katherine through university if she wishes to go. However, the important point to note from Katherine and Kathy's narratives are the many references to the debt surrounding higher education:

'We've had to support them and we still are, y'know, we are actually paying off elements of their student loans because, y'know, it's going to be such a big chunk and to be earning £15,000 and find the government are taking, y'know, your student loan repayments out of it, then £15,000 ain't gonna get you very far these days'. [Kathy, mother]

Kathy's support of her two eldest children through university (not interviewed for this research) emphasised the importance of parental support and the mobilisation of economic capital to finance higher education. Kathy's story is one example cited of the use of social, cultural and economic capital as critical resources for scaffolding educational outcomes. Hutchings (2003) highlights the inequality in distributions of information, both within families and schools, which have a significant effect on financial arrangements.

Like Reay's (1998b) study of cultural capital in middle class mothers, all of the mothers in this research exhibited traits of compensating and complementing compulsory schooling through extra curricular activities such as music, sport and academic top-up. What my research has revealed is that mothers continue this practice during the university years and in Kathy's example, beyond and into the workplace. This is my interpretation of 'playing the (education) game', discussed in Chapter Six, where mothers gain the greatest advantage possible for the daughters to access and continue in higher education.

5.2 Enjoyment in Education

Enjoyment in education is frequently considered a contradiction in terms. The idea of finding pleasure whilst being educated is generally associated with early childhood socialisation, implicit in frameworks such as the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2012). Education in the adult education sector is often considered in terms of learning for employment purposes (Essex County Council, 2013). Therefore learning in childhood and adulthood are wholly differentiated (Miller and Davey, 2005). Yet little research exists in the area of enjoyment in schooling in the secondary sector. Butler (1997) suggests the level of regulation in compulsory education often renders students as exploited and subordinate, leading to adverse memories. The time of compulsory schooling as a positive or negative experience needs to be considered to see if it has any bearing on why people do not continue into higher education.

The daughters in this sample are suggesting that they had good schooling experiences, culminating in 19 out of 21 daughters going into higher education. It was noteworthy that 10 out of 18 mothers spoke of an unequivocal dislike of school, as enjoyment in school was not directly asked of all the mothers. The nature of using broadly unstructured interviews required questions to be differentiated from participant to participant (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Only three mothers, Anne, Rose and Sue went to university straight from compulsory schooling. In particular, one mother, Debbie, had a difficult time in school due to her being bullied, which ultimately led to her truanting. Kane (2011) suggests that children who truant are exercising self-exclusion through limited agency, further affected by structural factors that increase barriers to participation. Although Debbie did not wish to elaborate on her unpleasant experiences in any depth during her interview, she was keen to share her positive experiences as a mature student and more particularly, her daughters' educational success.

Ten of the mothers made direct references to a dislike of school or education, including:

'I didn't really like school, I can't say that I enjoyed it'. [Tia, mother]

'I left at 16 because I hated school'. [Fran, mother]

'I can't stand it. Teaching, everything like that, I wanted to walk away'.
[Vicky, mother]

Despite their strong memories, both Tia and Fran did go on to achieve academically as mature students. Their learning pathways as two of the deferred congruent pairings are discussed in depth in Chapter Four. Tiana and Francesca, their daughters, attended grammar and independent schools respectively. Despite neither of the daughters commenting specifically on their school years in terms of enjoyment, access to such privileged schooling would be an important factor in their academic success, as both daughters went to university straight from A-levels. Vicky, however, never returned to

study, but insisted on her daughter being educated in an independent primary school and ultimately at university, to compensate for her lack of educational support, placing them as a divergent study dyad.

Three of the mothers had an apathetic attitude towards their school days. Helen and Kathy, spoke of '*not being bothered to work*' at school, and Steph comments on a lack of interest to study:

Linda: Did you like school?

Steph: No.

Linda: Why?

Steph: I just wasn't interested in it'. [Steph, mother]

Helen and her daughter are a divergent study dyad. Kathy, Steph and their daughters did not attend university, the two congruent work pairings. Therefore none of these mothers went to university, either as teenagers or mature students, suggesting that their disinterest in schooling was an important factor in their overall lack of engagement with education. As discussed later in the chapter, the wider availability of jobs further reduced the need to go into higher education for employment prospects.

Only one mother-daughter dyad, Rose and Rosanne, spoke of their 'love' of education:

*'I went to several different primary schools, always loved school'.
[Rose, mother]*

'Universities are being pushed into being a place where you train for a job rather than doing the subject because you love and are fascinated by it'. [Roseanne, daughter]

Notwithstanding the economic and social barriers discussed in Chapter Four and earlier in this chapter, university was historically the gateway to deeper study of a particular subject or subjects, although ultimately for occupational

gain (Power *et al.*, 2003). Rosanne also recognises the neoliberal attitudes of institutions themselves as a ‘knowledge economy’, driven by funding policies and market forces (Holmwood, 2011: 6).

Rose and her daughters are congruent study pairings, all going into university straight from A-levels. Rose’s other daughter, Rosalind, did not mention learning for enjoyment, but did make a comment in relation to her mother’s choice of her primary school:

‘I’ve achieved in schools that aren’t high achieving, like no offence (laughs) to Mum and Dad, but they weren’t exactly maximizing (laughs) – the school around the corner, the primary school that happens to be pretty much the worst one in the area’. [Rosalind, daughter]

‘I kind of consciously made choices about their education that went with, I suppose, my politics and my philosophy of how society should be [...] I was a governor at that school because I think that the only way we will get a really good state education for every child is if everybody connects 100% to the state system and to their catchment school’. [Rose, mother]

Like many of the parents in Reay, Crozier and James’ (2011) study, Rose’s school choice for her daughters was driven by her own political and social justice agenda, including her active participation in school governance. However, unlike many of the participants in Reay, Crozier and James’ study, Rose’s involvement has no hidden agenda, her values and choices are legitimate in relation to her chosen field of education (James, 2012). Sue (mother), however, made her choice of schooling in relation to her understanding of the ‘best’ school, wanting to match her middle class values to the school habitus (Ball, 2003):

‘[Husband] and I were very pro-active, we wouldn’t just send them to the closest school, we would look for the best school in the area and I think that would probably be the main difference in attitudes, where my

parents would have just sent us to the local school, which was not a good school'. [Sue, mother]

As a teacher, Sue holds strong values around teaching and academic outcome, demonstrated through two high achieving daughters who ultimately attended the school where Sue teaches. Sue's choices relate to Sayer's (2005) preference and commitment theory, that preference is a straightforward choice between two options, but commitment requires a deeper level of engagement and practice, affected by personal attachment (Reay *et al.*, 2011). Both Rose and Sue have had significant input into their daughters' educations, but their school choices involve very definite class-inflected practices. Other than memories surrounding feminist activism in Chapter Seven, no comments at all were made regarding political motivation as a driver for choices in schooling. Ball (2003) suggests that parents historically saw institutions as places of authority that were not to be challenged, so it could be argued that the parents placed their children in catchment schools, without recourse to other external factors.

Other than Rosanne, two other daughters made direct comments on their enjoyment of school or learning:

'I went to a really good school and I was pleased I was able to go there'. [Deborah, daughter]

'I did love learning, but I did feel isolated [...] I was an academic person, but I did love learning'. [Maya, daughter]

Deborah, Maya and their mothers are deferred congruent dyads. The daughters' recollections of study in a '*good school*' or as '*an academic person*' could be a reflection of the importance their mothers placed on education, particularly as both mothers returned to higher education as mature students. Alongside the increasing commonality of the necessity of a degree for work, women's willingness to continue in education could reflect the

changing environment of schools and the wider co-education and availability of subjects for girls as discussed in Chapter Four.

Only one daughter, Samantha, spoke directly of not enjoying school. She explained this was due to her dyslexia, which remained un-recognised throughout her school career and subsequently caused a very difficult period in her life:

'It was just, just a horrible few years of my life really where I didn't really have any motivation and I didn't think that school was important'. [Samantha, daughter]

Samantha did not carry the stigma of being labelled with a learning difficulty, but conversely a lack of formal diagnosis also meant she did not receive the education or support to which she was entitled. Labelling is contentious in the sphere of special educational needs, particularly in the way individuals are regarded by others (Rogers, 2007). For Samantha, this was problematic by virtue that her teachers did not identify her learning problems and this unsurprisingly reflected in her total lack of engagement with education. Despite her unsupported schooling, Samantha made a return to education with the help of her mother, as discussed in Chapter Six.

Enjoyment of a subject is often enhanced by the influence of a significant other. All of the daughters without exception named their mothers either as role models or central to their support network. This is perhaps not entirely unexpected, given the nature of this research and the need for both mother and daughter to participate in the research process. In three instances, teachers were cited as key people in their educational decisions or positive role models:

'I think probably her RE teacher was partly responsible [for her choices], she encouraged her interest in philosophy'. [Rose, mother]

'My favourite teacher was in RE, Miss W and she was like a really brilliant role model because she did the same subject, she did philosophy as well, what I went on to do and she really helped me'.
[Roseanne, daughter]

'I said 'I want to leave and take a year out and then decide what I want to do' and she said 'if you need a personal statement just come back to me because I'll still be here, I'm not planning to move'. So she didn't put me under any pressure'. [Katherine, daughter]

'I had a huge admiration, personal admiration for her, erm, which I kept for many, many years because I had seen her as a shining light [...] she was a very excellent teacher and guider of young women'.
[May, mother]

Grandparents were also included as a regular source of support and influence on educational opportunities. Grandparents are often common sources of practical support and can provide knowledge within a trusted, family network (Thomson *et al.*, 2011).

'I'd been telling my family and everyone that I want to be a pharmacist [...] the person I felt most sorry for [when she changed courses] was my Granddad because he was a pharmacist and y'know, he was really chuffed when I wanted to do it [...] he was really excited and asking me about what I was doing all the time'. [Rosalind, daughter]

'Grandmothers on both sides influence me, but, whenever I've heard that they've not gone to university I've always thought that's a shame, because they've got so much potential'. [Tiana, daughter]

'I spent a lot of time with my Gran who I was very, very close to. [...] She was a big influence on me and my life and she'd always say to me 'Don't talk with a Geordie accent' [...] Listening to my Gran and

following her advice and her telling me to do things, that was a big influence'. [Helen, mother]

5.3 Opportunities to Attend University

Seven of the mothers went to university as mature students and it is therefore useful to consider the effects of the introduction of widening participation and lifelong learning policies on their higher education choices. The New Labour government (1997 to 2010) introduced widening participation to increase the representation of minority social groups in higher education (Burke, 2012). The upgrade in 1992 for polytechnics to have university status increased the consciousness of widening participation in higher education institutions. Students undertaking vocational education or training could study skills at university at degree level instead of college (*ibid.*). The 'gender agenda' of increasing women's inclusion in the higher education sector also fell within the widening participation category (Arnot, David and Weiner, 1999). Higher education became more accessible for those with sufficient academic or equivalent qualifications (Burke and Jackson, 2007). The widening of higher education participation through targeting social groups by race or disability aimed to encourage greater inclusion, but did not address participation from a gendered perspective or low socio-economic groups (Archer *et al.*, 2003).

Political catalysts for more democratic, liberal thinking included the Equal Pay Act 1970 (HMSO, 1970) and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (HMSO, 1975). The neoliberal, globalized approach to higher education meant universities had to be accountable to students as the consumer (Ball, 2003; Marcucci and Johnstone, 2007). The move to mass marketization of the higher education system extended participation and lifelong learning (Burke and Jackson, 2007). The polytechnic system created more local participation and was particularly successful in recruiting mature female students (Ross, 2003). Polytechnics enabled women with families who remained tied to school 'runs' and child related commitments to undertake higher education. This introduced an alternative perspective of university study that was different to the norm of 'going away' to university.

Lifelong learning became a featured policy alongside the widening participation agenda, giving adults the chance to re-engage with education to upgrade basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well as re-train and acquire vocational or academic skills for employment purposes (Burke, 2012). Lifelong learning also enabled women to change career direction or begin a career after having children, particularly in vocational areas such as childcare (Wright, 2011). Access and foundation courses allowed women to regain a sense of individuality after starting a family, whilst subsequently gaining a learner identity. University also gave women a public space to disseminate private issues (Edwards, 1993; Ribbens and Edwards, 1998; Burke and Jackson, 2007). Bhopal (2010: 123) regards this physical location for women's intellectual engagement as 'the third space'. The move from the polytechnic system to university status successfully enabled mature women to translate into university students when the two sectors merged (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998; Burke and Jackson, 2007).

Aside from the gendered considerations of widening participation, students from working class families remained 'hard to reach', as marginalised groups often lack the resources to compete in the marketplace (Reay and Ball, 1997; Ross, 2003; Gillies, 2007). Social class segregation and the gap between women's and men's opportunities supports Naidoo's (2004: 469) assertion that Bourdieu viewed the field of higher education 'not as a product of consensus but the product of a permanent conflict'. Reay, David and Ball's (2005) findings suggest that agency and structure remain problematic for working class students entering the higher education market, as difficulties endure in translating a working class habitus into a middle class field.

The mothers in the congruent study dyad group - Tara, Chris, Fran, Debbie, May, Sam and Tia - went to university as mature students over the age of 21 and following some paid employment. These mothers went into courses in childcare, early years teaching or social care except Fran, who trained as a dentist. These career progressions support Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2010b) figures, which show that women still dominate vocational training in caring sector professions. Arnot *et al.* (1999) argue that from a

gendered perspective, women are not taking their educational advantage beyond university into the higher tiers of business. In school, girls continue to out-perform boys at GCE A-levels (ONS, 2010a), yet in business men continue to earn more money than women (ONS, 2010b). As reflected in the mothers' narratives, many women enter highly qualified, yet low-paid professions such as childcare, teaching and nursing, which reflect this disparity in women's differing financial status. Many vocational professions now require degree status in order to continue on these career paths. Therefore women can now achieve higher education status, but work immediately in lower paid employment (OECD, 2006).

By contrast, Fran (mother) entered higher education after she discovered that the workplace did not offer her sufficient earning opportunities without a degree. She began her higher education ten years after leaving school:

'I realised the error of my ways when I couldn't earn very much money and I went back to university in my late twenties'. [Fran, mother]

Fran's daughter, Francesca, suffered a stroke shortly after starting a business management course at university when she was 18. Fully recovered and thinking she would be unable to continue in university, she took a course in beauty therapy as a 'back up' plan. Francesca has re-thought her future options and is awaiting the start of the new academic year to study Law:

'When I wanted to drop out of university Mum said that's fine, but I've got to do something with my life, which is why she sent me on the beauty therapy course, because that's what I wanted to do when I was younger. So she said to just do something that I enjoyed doing for a while and work out what I wanted to do with it'. [Francesca, daughter]

Francesca's situation of re-making choices based on intrinsic motivation and enjoyment of a vocational course is very different to that of her mother Fran, whose decision to go to university was driven by extrinsic, financial reasons. The position of making a choice based on enjoyment, without the concern of

financial arrangements is an indication of middle class advantage (Reay and Ball, 1997). Fran insisted on Francesca's 'back-up' plan, indicating the level of organisation Fran is engaging to support her daughter's future career planning.

May (mother) '*did recognise that there were no interesting jobs at all for me unless I went to university*'. However, May's narrative is an exception, in that she is the only mother who identified that when she left school '*there was no expectation that any girl just left to go to work*', by which she means she did not immediately want to go to university, but subsequently attended after a number of years. May acknowledges that when she did go to university she was living up to familial expectations rather than following her own volition, which along with her own parents' capital embedded her educational choice. Her daughter, Maya, has a similar narrative of assumption and displays a reproduction of educational capital (Reay, 1998b):

'There was always the expectation of going to university, there was never another option [...] It wasn't even talked about, it was just assumed. There was never another option'. [Maya, daughter]

The two issues of a dislike of studying or school and earning money were recurring themes in the narratives of the mothers who did not go to university. These stories are in contrast to their daughters' experiences and show a transformation of class behaviours (Reay, 1998b):

'All my friends left and we all just went and got jobs. Jobs were plentiful then, so you just applied for jobs and everybody, well most of my generation went out to work at 16'. [Jess, mother]

'I've known since, well ever since I can remember that I wanted to go to uni and I suppose they just locked in on that, remembered it and supported me [...] I enjoyed learning really and I'll always learn, even when I finish uni'. [Jessica, daughter]

'I did A-levels but didn't do very well at them because I couldn't be bothered to work [...] I started work because I didn't want to stay in education [...] I wanted to go out and start earning money'. [Helen, mother]

'When we were at school we basically just thought going to university was the thing to do. There was a lot of stuff about UCAS deadlines and career support at school, so I just got my form in'. [Helena, daughter]

The retranslation of educational opportunity is embedded in both sets of these narratives. The congruent work dyads (Kathy and Katherine, Steph and Stephanie) did not go to university. There is a reproduction of educational and occupational experience here, with a caveat. In Chapter Four the daughters explain that they had the choice to go to university, but had positively rejected the idea of undergraduate study. Kathy and Steph do not use descriptors surrounding choice in their narrative. The mothers and daughters both described their decisions as follows:

'I went to an all girls' school in (north of England), probably didn't make the most of it [...] What I wanted to do (catering) wasn't offered at degree level. Whether that was looked down upon, I can't remember'. [Kathy, mother]

'I've always said from (sixth form) that I'm not very keen ongoing to university, just because I don't really like doing exams, I don't like the pressure of them'. [Katherine, daughter]

'The main thing in your head was to go out, get a job and earn your own money [...] I always said I didn't want to go on from school anyway, I wanted to leave'. [Steph, mother]

'...because I wanted to do hairdressing I went straight from school into an apprenticeship. I did apply for college but I decided I didn't want to

go through that, so I went straight into a salon and did an apprenticeship from there'. [Stephanie, daughter]

The wide availability of work or the opportunity to earn money were key factors for the mothers not wishing to go to university. This is a vastly different situation to the daughters, who have entered the job market at a time of economic austerity and limited employment opportunities. With the exception of Katherine and Stephanie, all of the daughters have gone to university and apart from Taruh, have been funded in part or totally by their parents. In the main for the daughters, there appear to be greater external forces at play, with both family and society pushing towards educational outcomes, in a way that the mothers did not experience.

The remaining mothers (Jenny, Leigh, Vicky and Jess) did not attend university and all went into the workplace between 16 and 18 years old. Jenny, Vicky and Jess all worked in clerical or secretarial positions and all of their daughters have attended university.

Following her school years, Leigh worked as a dressmaker in Jamaica prior to her emigration to the UK, at a time when the black civil rights movement in America opened up the discourse of social stratification for ethnic minorities (Franklin, 1999). Bradley (1996) argues that older women have not received the benefits of feminism, growing up in an age with limited educational and employment opportunities. Yet Leigh has instilled in her daughters, Leanne and Leona, a work and study ethic '*we were always encouraged to do things and better yourself or to study hard and to help people*'. [Leanne, daughter]

By contrast to the mothers' diverse routes in adulthood, the vast majority of daughters attended university, albeit by either following the norm of the significant number of others in their year groups as discussed above or with a planned strategy. The UCAS (Universities, Colleges and Admissions Services) form, which is the registration point for students, has added a further layer of distinction as class can be apparent from the form, visible in subtle and nuanced ways. Opportunities can be gained and lost in the way

students approach their applications (UCAS, 2013). In the competition for university places, the personal statement on the UCAS form has become a critical factor as part of the sifting process around student intake. Extra curricular activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and voluntary work are increasingly seen as a necessary addition to personal statements, as a mark of differentiation from other students (Bradley and Ingram, 2012). The ability to access award schemes or work on a voluntary basis for no pay reflects the inequalities that exist at the entry stage of university application. Entry processes such as matriculation, the entry process into elite institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge, also differentiates students by social background (Ball, 2003).

Other, subtle approaches can make distinctions on UCAS forms. For example, International Baccalaureate examinations carry higher UCAS points (UCAS, 2013) and the appearance of Latin on the students' list of qualifications suggests a grammar or private school education. Rosalind (daughter) worked on clearing at her university between changing courses and found this out for herself:

'We had a big spreadsheet with all the courses on and all the entry requirements. I looked at it and went right, so I actually have enough UCAS points to do any course at this university (laughs). My university doesn't go by separate subjects and grades, it goes by the number of UCAS points you have and I have, from International Baccalaureate, because you do so much you get lots of points from it [...] so I could have done literally anything'. [Rosalind, daughter]

Taruh (daughter) explains the pressure of finding voluntary work, something she felt was a necessity to put on her UCAS form in order to differentiate her application from others:

'In my sector, in Development, like you really need to be overqualified a lot of the time because they just want absolute experts in the field and

they want you to work for no money [...] I can't afford not to work. If I don't go to work, I don't have an income' [Taruh, daughter]

Samantha (daughter) found the problem of gaining all-important experience continued after leaving university. This snapshot of her story explains why she carries substantial debt on top of her tuition fee loan repayment:

'I've got a kind of internship that pays me on a contract basis with an events company so the office work I do is free [...] It's like you can't get a job without the experience and vice versa, but I've got the experience and I still haven't managed to land a job'. [Samantha, daughter]

Similar to the findings in Bradley and Ingram's (2012) research, the daughters who have economic support are able to engage in finding work experience to enhance their UCAS and subsequent employment applications considerably, in a way that is not possible for self-funding students like Taruh above:

'In February I went to Costa Rica for three months and lived with a family there and worked as a teacher in a primary school and a university [...] I'm going to Paris for four months and then after Christmas I'm going to Madrid for five months'. [Christina, daughter]

'I knew someone who had a contact in a PR agency and I emailed them and they gave me two months work experience [...] so when I came out of uni it was actually PR that I got into and I think mainly because I had that experience on my CV'. [Jennifer, daughter]

Sayer (2005: 14) argues that jobs with different pay reproduces class, therefore job opportunities are unequal: '*children will still inherit their new class advantages or disadvantages, with lasting objective effects that would strongly influence their fitness for particular jobs*'. Using Sayer's example, Taruh's and Samantha's experiences of being asked to work for free creates an immediate class inequality in relation to their co-workers who will be

doing the same job, yet for a wage. Taruh explains the necessity for an income, in contrast to Christina's and Jennifer's stories of gaining voluntary travel and work experience.

Support for students to pursue work and travel opportunities such as Christina's and Jennifer's are very much grounded in a middle class habitus. As explored in Chapter Four, there is very much a 'taken for granted' feeling towards attending university which is facilitated by maternal support. James' (2007) study was important in finding that mothers were more likely to be drivers of their daughters' education if they were not supported to go to university themselves. Tara (mother) was not able to financially support her daughter through university, but her positive influence is explicit in her own and Taruh's narratives:

'Pushy mother, pushy mother. Laying the seeds. I didn't have any pushing growing up'. [Tara, mother]

'Mum's always said to us you're going to university, it's not an option [...] I didn't do very well and Mum was like no, you're just going to work harder next year and then you will go to university [...] there was never an option not to go to university'. [Taruh, daughter]

The drive from both mother and daughter reflects the trend in this study that university was the main option post-school for the daughters. For those who went straight to university from school, paid employment, work-based or vocational college training was not considered the best option. The next section considers the move away from manual skills training as an accepted step from schooling to the now more commonly taken undergraduate study route.

5.4 The Vocational Debate

Colley *et al.* (2003: 471) reiterate the centrality of habitus to the engagement with vocational training, the need to 'orient to a particular set of dispositions

– both idealised and realised’. Colley *et al.* (*ibid.*) also highlight that vocational habitus ‘may reproduce social inequalities at the same time’. The identification by the mothers of vocational training and less ‘academic’ courses as inferior to a university course in a pre-1992 or ‘red brick’ institution was a repetitive thread during my interviews. For the two daughters who have not been to university, their mothers support their decisions to enter the workplace, yet for Kathy (mother) there is an attempt to justify Katherine’s decision:

‘There is an influence on the negative publicity that comes through the press on the value of a university education, y’know, if you’re not going to one of the top universities from the Russell Group or y’know, if you don’t get a good degree it’s going to be worthless anyway’ [Kathy, mother]

Leathwood and O’Connell (2010: 612) discuss the perception of ‘*the denigration of the ‘new’ students and their studies*’. They cite an article from The Guardian newspaper by historian David Starkey and examine how the public continues to differentiate post-1992 and Russell Group universities, shaped by media perception:

The problem is, that, following the idiocies of the Dearing Report, we pretend that all universities and all degrees are the same. We have got ourselves into a situation where we’re pretending that a degree from the London Metropolitan University is the same quality as a degree from Cambridge. It’s not. There are Mickey Mouse students for whom Mickey Mouse degrees are quite appropriate.

It is articles like Starkey’s that compound the public view that post-1992s are inferior to traditional or elite institutions. The neoliberal marketing of universities uses such branding to argue the misrecognition of the quality academic output (James, 1998). All universities have to meet local and global measurable outputs and reach standardised performance measures (Naidoo, 2003; Olssen and Peters, 2005), dismissed under Starkey’s argument for a

return to a binary system. Taylor (2011) recognises that elite institutions are in the unique position of being able to claim to be both exclusive and diverse.

Comments from two of the mothers implied that the expansion of higher education institutions has diluted the importance of a university degree. Helen's opinions around the return of vocational learning are not dissimilar to Starkey's:

'I also think now that you've got so many people that are waving around a piece of paper saying 'I've got a degree' that some of them aren't even worth the paper they're written on, so I think by doing the tuition fees is probably going to stop those people going out and getting Mickey Mouse degrees and getting themselves into so much debt over three years. You know, some of the people would be better off going and doing apprenticeships and getting out into the workplace'. [Helen, mother].

Ball (2003: 107) and Brooks (2004) explore how the middle classes continue to enact roles as 'status maintainers' of educational advantage. Helen's daughter, Helena did not specifically discuss the merits or otherwise of red-brick and post 1992 institutions, but she did offer her boyfriend's view on the effect of tuition fees on certain groups of students and reiterated his view of symbolic domination over the working classes (Bourdieu, 1999): *'He thinks that the higher tuition fees is good because it will deter the chavs and only the bright people will get in'. [Helena, daughter]*

Another mother, Jenny, also expressed her feelings about the effect of increasing university attendance:

'I think it's wrong what the government are doing, encouraging everyone to go to university, I think it's wrong. I think there's a hell of a lot of rubbish courses out there. They come out, they can't find work, but they expect to start at a certain level and I think they've made a big

mistake. They should be and they're trying to do it now, promote apprenticeships'. [Jenny, mother]

Both Helen and Jenny made direct reference to the weakening of a degree based on the difference between post-1992 universities and elite institutions, citing some as 'Mickey Mouse' and 'rubbish'. They both also highlighted the importance of vocational work and their understanding that university is, in their opinion, *not* for all:

'I mean, going off to university be a plumber or whatever, it just seems a bit silly. You know, hands-on experience is far better. Three years getting your hands dirty would be better than three years writing it in a book'. [Helen, mother]

Despite their contestations of the dilution of the degree, neither Helen nor Jenny went to university, both going straight into employment following their A-levels to 'get their hands dirty'. In both families, their husbands and all of their children have been independently educated. Helen and Jenny's opinions reflect the notion of the position of the capital that they now possess and the habitus in which they currently exist. They both support the worth of higher education, but both suggest a 'dumbing down' of some subject areas to 'Mickey Mouse' levels. Helen and Jenny's viewpoints reflect the symbolic domination that they exert in relation to their children acquiring higher education through their economic and social capital (Bourdieu, 1999), although neither undertook higher education themselves. It further highlights the transformation of their daughters' opportunities (Reay, 1998b) and the different habitus in which the mothers were raised.

A key point that emerged from the mothers' stories collectively is that vocational options were much more widely accepted as good choices for the mothers during their youth and in the main, there was no 'expectation' of having to go to university. Steph undertook her National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in silver service waitressing and Kathy completed her Higher National Diploma (HND) in hotel catering and management. Tara and

Elle qualified through the National Nursery Examination Board (NNEB), although both subsequently went on to study for further qualifications at university as mature students.

Sue, a Mathematics teacher, has noticed a change in choices her A-level students are making in the academic year 2012, leading up the tuition fee increase:

'You have some students that do come from more hard-up families and a few of them have decided to start training as an accountant with day release, in other words, not going to university but still getting a degree or some kind of accountancy qualification and I can see that happening more and more [...] I think people will be looking at apprenticeships and getting, like the accountancy, getting a job and getting day release. I think they will be looking at alternatives, definitely'. [Sue, mother]

Her daughter, Suzanne, who attended the same school that her mother Sue teaches at, also made a comment regarding vocational training. Sophie highlights here Sayer's (2012: 163) 'unequal recognition' in the vocational-educational debate.

'I think that it's gone too far in this country, like the whole equal opportunities for everyone. I think it was better when there was more variety, like, if you want to go into a job it is possible, people don't look down at you, like it's gone too far these days'. [Suzanne, daughter]

Vicky (mother) remembers the generational change in the options beyond school other than university:

'When I was a young girl people went to college, with less going to university and I think they'll only get those people that can really, really afford university to go there'. [Vicky, mother]

Many of the daughters picked up on their mothers' lack of opportunities to go to university and the choices that they have subsequently received. Debbie (mother) had a traumatic childhood that included school bullying and her parent's divorce, but she met and married her husband aged 17. They started a family straight away, which along with her broken education meant that university was not an option when she was 18. Roberts and Evans (2012) describe how the choice to have children at a young age and forego higher education clashes with middle class ideals. Having worked in childcare during her children's early years, Debbie progressed through various childcare courses, ultimately gaining her degree as a mature student. Her daughter, Deborah, picked up on these lost opportunities:

'I think she always wished she could've gone further in education when she was younger and that she probably might have instilled some of that on me'. [Deborah, daughter]

Jennifer (daughter) echoes similar views regarding her mother Jenny's background:

'I probably regretted not going to university. The regrets that I had I took care of and now I've got absolutely no interest in doing any other qualification at all, none at all'. [Jenny, mother]

'I think Mum wanted to go to university but didn't so she was obviously keen for me to go'. [Jennifer, daughter]

Like the women in Archer and Leathwood's (2003: 188) study, the daughters are articulating their mother's 'hidden and wasted potential', the mothers wanting their daughters to 'escape from their working class lives'. Leigh and her daughters are a useful example. Leigh migrated in the 1960s to the UK from Jamaica with her husband in search of '*a better life*'. Leigh was unable to study once she was settled in the UK as she continued to support her family who remained in Jamaica. Leigh instilled a sense of improvement and opportunity in her daughters through education:

'I had a family at home where some of them were dependent on me to help them out [...] we didn't have higher education, but we tried to help them to succeed'. [Leigh, mother]

Leona: We saw our parents working hard, so that was always ...

Leanne: ... they worked very hard ...

*Leona: ... the expectation was to do as well as you can academically'.
[Leona and Leanne, daughters]*

The participants' accounts challenge whether the workforce of the future will be divided by the life choices afforded through education and whether there may be a return to class based divisions of previous generations (Roberts, 2012). This idea can be explored through the 2012 tuition fee increase and the concern around the debt involved in pursuing higher education.

5.5 Daughters and the Debt

The value of education is made visible in the concept of parents paying for education, either at compulsory or tertiary level, both as an investment and cost in their daughters' education. Of the 16 mothers with daughters at or through university, only one mother, Tara, was not able to provide any payment towards either tuition fees or living/accommodation costs. Eight mothers part-funded living costs or accommodation – Anne, Debbie, Elle, Fran, May, Jess, Leigh and Sam. Seven of the mothers fully funded all aspects of their daughters' higher education process, including paying off their tuition fee loans – Rose, Sue, Chris, Tia, Helen, Jenny and Vicky.

Marcucci and Johnstone (2007: 26) suggest the rationale for free higher education is based on four principles; that an educated population provides high return to society; education should be a fundamental right; tuition fees may discourage the participation of students from low-income families and the cost of student living is beyond the reach of most families. As well as the the four tenets for free higher education put forward by Marcucci and

Johnstone above, Reay (1998a) and Reay *et al.* (2011) also concur that the improvement in life chances through enhanced employment and personal development opportunities will be more limited to those students from families on higher incomes. This also includes those who have the ability or personal motivation to fund a university education for themselves (Reay, 1998a). The normalising of debt has increased the opportunity to attend university on a loan scheme to be repaid after the period of study, the level of loan required may deny others higher education access through an unwillingness to commit to a high level of debt.

Lunt (2009) addressed the question of who would pay for the continued expansion of higher education, answered in the Browne Report (2010b) with the tripling of fees through the loan repayment system. The perception of women in this study is that HE tuition fees are not being regarded as a 'loan' or investment that requires repayment, rather they are broadly being accepted as long term 'debt' or a financial cost that will be carried throughout adulthood, with repercussions on life chances. Fran (mother) contextualised in her wider narrative in Chapter Four how her fully funded undergraduate study gave her a financially stable start in early adulthood. Her understanding of the repayment system for her daughter Francesca's loan is much more in line with the government's expression of the fees as a loan:

'In this household we don't view student loan as any problem at all and there is a lot of publicity about it now, a lot of articles that support that everybody is panicking over what they are owing. It's going to be written off after a certain number of years, it will be a small extra tax for most people and it is of absolutely no consequence and should not, in my opinion, be a consideration as to whether you go to university or not'. [Fran, mother]

Fran has instilled through the family habitus her understanding that the tuition fee loan is a 'means to an end' in accessing education and should not be seen as a barrier to attending university. Fran and Francesca's opinions are notable, as every other participant raised some level of concern about the debt

incurred and to be repaid. Francesca's identical comments to her mother exemplify reproduced dispositions and behaviours (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977):

*'I think the student loans and everything make it so much easier for anyone to do it [...] the loan is just nothing, because you are going to pay it back only when you are earning a certain amount of money and it's going to be such a small amount of your income anyway. I think everyone should just go with it [...] it will just mean everyone is a bit more educated in the country. I think that would be a good thing'.
[Francesca, daughter]*

Generally, however, like Callendar and Jackson (2008), I have found that women, particularly the mothers, are opposed to carrying debt. Mothers are financially supporting their daughters' university fees and living costs as part of the investment in their daughters' futures (Cooper, 2013). With the exception of four daughters, Maya, Leanne and Leona, who went to university as mature students and Taruh, whose mother was not in a position to fund her education, all of the daughters are or were supplemented financially by their parents for their living costs or tuition fee repayment. All of the mothers, with the exception of Fran, mentioned some level of worry about the repayment of the fees.

Alongside her anxiety around her daughter's debt, Sam (mother) is linking emotional involvement with her daughter's education. On page 184 I provide an example of how Sam has been able to apply her cultural capital to help her daughter into university, yet she articulates how she still carries the burden of emotional involvement beyond her daughter's undergraduate years.

'They are coming out with a big debt, which is horrible when you are just starting out, so the thought of increasing that debt must put people off. I still see it as a debt I suppose, you are living beyond your means all the time'. [Sam, mother]

Sam's daughter, Samantha, echoes these concerns for future students, given that she is now carrying a £36,000 debt. This figure has been accrued based on three years undergraduate study at £3,290 per annum, plus substantial city accommodation and living costs. She is currently working full-time in an unpaid internship:

'It's like, am I going to take on this debt that's going to last me my whole life if I can't even get a job guaranteed at the end of it?'
[Samantha, daughter]

The large numbers of people entering the job market with degrees has, over time, diluted the access to more high-status roles that were previously filled by graduate recruits and is explained by Grenfell and James (1998: 21) as 'qualification inflation'. In many cases, the imposition of tuition fees is making women reassess the attitudes they themselves were raised with and still hold. To carry debt often goes against the family disposition of 'living within your means'. For many women this is an abandonment of their working class values and increases concern over the lack of provision for a 'good start in life'. This is explored in other instances in the next section.

5.6 Maternal Aspirations

To contextualise the shift in thinking around maternal support, it is important to note that none of the mothers voiced any instances of their own mothers providing extended support for their educations or future careers. To the contrary, in Chapter Four, Sue explained how her parents chose to privately educate her brother, but not Sue or her sister. Equally May's mother wanted her to be well educated in order to make a good marriage, but not for career purposes. For many of the mothers, notably Helen, the lack of support from her own mother growing up has led to her over-compensation towards her daughter's education.

Many of the mothers suggested that the most appropriate way they can give their daughters the 'best start in life' is through financing and/or emotional

support into higher education. Significant emotional capital has been invested in the daughters' wellbeing (Reay, 2004) and like the women in Wright's research of women studying childcare, 'an abnegation of self' (Wright, 2011: 14) promoted transference of caring from mother to daughter. Anne's narrative is perhaps the most explicit example of the emotional cost carried by mothers during their daughters' study:

'These children are going (to university). They still need to be subsidised by their parents, they still need money from other places and it becomes overwhelming, the whole thing becomes overwhelming.'
[Anne, mother]

Practical support strategies range from paying for travel costs, to topping up students' part time earnings. In four cases, parents have completely funded their daughters' undergraduate study period. Helena (Daughter), an art student, explains the support she receives:

'Mum and Dad pay for everything, so I started the year with loads of canvasses. They give me money each week and I know they are good and will help me out if I need something. Mum stocked up my cupboard and freezer with food at the start of term and I bought what else was needed, but there was so much I haven't had to top up much at all. I know I'm lucky to have a car and phone and things which they pay for.'
[Helena, daughter]

As well as providing direct economic capital, this example eludes to embodied cultural capital, where the provision of specialist equipment is giving Helena direct access and exposure to the Arts (Moore, 2008). As well as the full financial support she receives, her mother, Helen, is also providing practical support too, by stocking up the food supplies, reaffirming her domestic role as a full-time mother. Reay (1998b) acknowledges the enormous amount of time mothers invest in maintaining middle class educational advantage. Helen's volume of investment in time to enhance

Helena's educational advantage has been transferred into providing the best possible living arrangements for her daughter.

Another mother, Tia, discussed the tensions she had experienced with her own friends in relation to her being able to support her daughter Tiana financially through university:

'We've had discussions with friends and things, they do sort of say 'oh you're lucky that you've got the money to support your kids or this, that or the other and we're having to do loans for this or loans for that' and I've seen how some of them haven't got a university education, they do talk to me and say 'yeah, but you know these things because you're educated' and they draw on me for social capital and friendship capital'. [Tia, mother]

Her daughter, Tiana, similarly expressed her awareness of how her parents support her financially through a four-year undergraduate course:

'Yeah, they're supporting me with that. I said to them, I was really adamant I wanted to take a loan out and I spoke to my Dad and he said 'I don't want you to be in debt afterwards. Once you've got a good job and if you feel the need that you want to repay us go ahead' but he didn't want me to take out the loan. They've supported me, yeah'. [Tiana, daughter]

Brooks' (2004: 496) research shows that when both mothers and fathers are involved in the decision-making process surrounding university, they assume different roles. In line with Brooks' findings, both Tia and Helen were involved with the 'searching and refining' and their husbands with financing and confirming their 'choices'. Tia and Helen's narratives reflect how they were able to strategise through their possession of financial, social and cultural capital to support their children and consider their daughters' positions beyond university. The issue of the repayment of fees is discussed further in the next section. Tia articulated how her friends placed her in a

position of symbolic domination, or supposed superiority through her own education (Bourdieu, 1999) and further rationalised her own understanding of the capital she possesses.

5.7 The Repayment of Higher Education Tuition Fees

Many of the daughters, indicated a level of denial in order to cope with the level of tuition fee debt. Samantha has accrued the highest level of debt of all the daughters during her undergraduate study:

'I just don't even think about it, which is probably like a lot of people [...] I know I owe the bank this much money or I owe my Mum this much money, but I don't feel like I owe the student loan [...] I feel no pressure to pay them because I don't feel like my education has given me enough to stand on yet and I don't think that's my fault'. [Samantha, daughter]

Samantha was not in a position to fund her education without financial support through the tuition fee scheme and further loans for day-to-day living. Samantha's current unpaid internship means there is little possibility of her beginning to repay her loan. Narratives from the daughters indicated a commonly shared viewpoint, that the loan becomes real only at the point of repayment, by which time the debt and the interest has already accrued (Cooper, 2013). Helena's (daughter) comment is a further example of the apathy that surrounds the repayment of the debt: *'If you want to go badly enough you'll just take on the loan, it'll just take longer to pay off'. [Helena, daughter]*

Another daughter, Deborah, explains the pressure of coping with high overheads:

'I'm only just coming out of my overdraft now and that's something you really feel hanging over you, knowing the bank could ask for it back at

any moment and like always feeling like you are in debt'. [Deborah, daughter]

Bradley and Ingram (2012: 51) explore how the rhetoric of 'free at the point of delivery' has provided open access to university, without consideration of the burden of the debt post-study. As postgraduates, neither Samantha nor Deborah are working in the areas that they studied, with a high level of debt and currently, without work satisfaction.

It is noteworthy that with the exception of Rosanne, discussion about attending university with the daughters did not revolve around motivations of education such as opportunity, self worth or career advancement. However, Rosanne did interweave her narrative with concerns about debt repayment:

'I have to say I was lucky because I was the last year when it was only, like £1,000, so as long as I stay in work I will be able to pay that off within 10-15 years, then poor old everyone else is going to be paying for the rest of their lives [...] I think it will be a barrier [...] You have to do the balance sheet before you go'. [Rosanne, daughter]

All interviewees, with the exception of the narratives shown earlier from Fran and Francesca, raised some worry over high fees and the possible academic and vocational divisions that could occur based on familial income, rather than individual merit. This has highlighted class-based, income-derived narratives that were both implicitly and explicitly expressed around the payment of fees.

As well as recognising the extent to which mothers become involved in their daughters' higher education, it is important to explore if any of the mothers were not able or did not wish to engage in supporting their daughters. Tara is the only mother in the study who was personally unable to fund her daughter Taruh through university. As a single, unwaged person in part-time Masters study, Tara was struggling to pay for her own study as well as her daughter's

entry to university. Tara frequently referred to her childhood habitus and working class values, which included being self-sufficient and without debt:

'You were always told once you leave school you would work and contribute to the house [...] I don't have any debts. I've made it so I don't have any debts except the student loan [...] I don't want other people to be supporting me, I want to be supporting myself'. [Tara, mother]

Tara's desire to be financially independent is instilled in her daughter, who also insisted on being self-sufficient before and during her university years:

'I've worked the whole time. I've been working since I was 15. I've always had a job'. [Taruh, daughter]

Despite being unable to offer Taruh any direct form of financial help, Tara used her social capital to gain waitressing work for them both through contacts at her university. Tara was not in a position of choice to offer financial help to Taruh. Debbie, Rose and Jess discussed the understanding and perception of choice and all included a level of social commentary in their replies:

'Certainly academically she had a much better basic education than I did to start with and her options have been better than mine. I think socially sometimes it's harder for her than it was for me and the expectation if you have children that you still continue to work'. [Debbie, mother]

'I think she'll find it hard actually, compared job wise, I think they find it hard. I feel sorry for the children now. Education wise I think they're lucky with the opportunities like university and things like that, so education wise I think they're lucky. But going out into the world I don't think they are very lucky'. [Jess, mother]

'Rose – I think I have always thought that my generation was a very privileged one, because we had more choices, but we didn't have some of the pressures and constraints that I think now the current generation have.

Linda – So are you saying that you think you had more opportunity?

Rose – Definitely! Nobody, nobody questioned like, my choice of work part-time, parent part-time, do further study. All the choices that I made I think were just accepted, y'know by my family, by my partner, by my friends. There was a kind of ... not typical, but a very accepted way of acting, whereas I think now people's choices are more questioned and justified. If you work full-time you feel guilty because you are compromising your parenting, if you parent full-time, you are judged because you're not maximising your career potential and I think there are a lot more challenges now, perhaps'. [Rose, mother]

Rose very succinctly analyses the tension for women justifying work, career potential and parenting. Despite contestations that women now have equality and opportunity, these women argue that their daughters will continue to face increasing challenges. Kathy agreed with these statements, but offered an explanation:

'I don't think they've had better academic opportunities, I think they've made more of it and maybe that's because, erm, we've encouraged it more'. [Kathy, mother]

Kathy places maternal encouragement at the heart of choice and aspiration. Although timidly expressed by Kathy, her point is extremely important. Maternal support has played a significant role in daughters' opportunities, visions and choices. Mothers' capital, whether economic, cultural, social or emotional, is a powerful indicator of advantage within the education process. I would argue that based on the findings outlined in this chapter, mother's influence, both inferred and unequivocal, adds appreciably to the weight of ownership and possession of capital in the decision-making process around higher education.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explored different experiences and personal principles associated with accessing higher education. Examples of motivation and influence, expectation and active participation, enthusiasm and ambition were cited, countered with stories of a lack of educational support, the want or need to earn money and in some cases, a simple choice to work or have children instead. The change in access to university from an elite to a mass higher education system has provided participation opportunities for all of the daughters in this research, in many cases beyond that of their mothers. All daughter participants, with the exception of two, aspired to undergraduate study. The two daughters not in university made a conscious and informed choice not to attend.

The emergent picture from the mothers is one of having had options, to work or study with both being seen as entirely acceptable options, particularly in an era where jobs were freely available. The notion of choice remains contentious, as I have highlighted a very different spectrum of situations from May who was expected to go to university, to Jess, who had no notion of studying at university whatsoever. I would argue that the tuition fee increase means that this situation remains similar for women in low-income families. The mothers in this sample all unconditionally supported their daughters to attend university and with the exception of one daughter, Taruh, provided partial or full financial support through the undergraduate process. Mothers Jess and Rose support the view that women have more opportunity now, yet women's decisions are more judged than ever.

The daughters indicate that undergraduate study is the normal route straight from school. University transition straight from A-levels has become the conventional pattern and the two daughters who have not gone to university are seen as breaking the trend. This change in educational norms contrasts with the mothers' narratives, where progression straight into the workplace was seen as an unquestioned option, taken by many of the women. The increasing shortfall in jobs for applicants is suggested as fuelling the need for

students to attend university to provide further education and skills to give them a competitive edge in the job market. The mothers articulated that jobs were plentiful when they left school, negating the need for qualifications for clerical or administrative positions.

Despite discussion that the repayment scheme opens up university attendance to a wider audience, choice to attend university only remains available to those who are willing to sustain financial debt in early adulthood. I have highlighted several cases where families have funded the entire higher educational process, alleviating their daughters of all debt. In Chapter Six I suggest this is how mothers 'play the game'. The mothers who attended university in previous years were all fully funded through their study and examples have been provided in Chapter Four of how this system gave students a 'good start in life', with the financial pressure being on the state rather than the family. This supplements and develops Reay's (1998b) research that mothers undertake the same strategies in the primary sector and I have been able to present findings that confirms that women are continuing these tactics for their daughters into the tertiary sector. Furthermore, I consider how those with cultural capital are able to use their financial knowledge to profit from the investment of the student loan. Tara was unable to financially support her daughter Taruh through university, but used her social capital to help her find casual work opportunities.

The shift of the University from a place of elitism to mass learning has allowed more women to consider careers that would previously have been the domain of men. However, many women feel that a degree is now necessary to get onto the job ladder. Mothers' recollections of their opportunities at school suggest positive improvements through changing social policies and attitudes, as young women say their educational opportunities have been equal to that of their male peers. Yet some of the mothers feel their daughters have less opportunity than they did, as women are having to justify every aspect of their lives based on their gender, including career, personal and parenting choices.

Importantly, mothers' involvement suggests that the daughters are now living in a period of extended adolescence. The themes of class and capital remain important in the discussions of whether mothers' aspirations coincide with their daughters' visions of the future and whether this reproduction continues throughout the education process.

Chapter Six

The Maternal Gift

6.0 Introduction

The process of analysing access to higher education through the mother and daughter lens provides a classed insight into the transference or otherwise of available capital within the family. This chapter explores if the daughters' decisions whether or not to go to university are an indicator of the educational norms and values of their families as a social and cultural inheritance (Robbins, 1993). Skeggs (1997: 9) states that 'we inherit ways of understanding; we inherit the meanings associated with social positions and positions in knowledge'. Familial inheritance incorporates the ownership of various capitals and where applicable, the passing on of privilege and power. The middle classes aim to protect, maintain and reproduce their gains to ultimately determine academic success (Skeggs, 1997; Reay, 1998b).

The roles and patterns of mothering are often shaped by memories of one's own mother and subsequent upbringing. Family background and class status, past and present, are significant factors to be considered in forming an understanding of why mothers are making such a concerted effort to support their daughters into university. The ways in which the mothers are engaging such support and the underlying causes of their actions will be explored. Familial values and maternal involvement in compulsory schooling inform educational pathways for children and thereby influence the decision-making process into higher education. The trend of mothers engaging in their daughters' university experiences is examined through the areas of social reproduction and educational choice, key factors in a class-based discourse. Social factors that affect educational beliefs and experiences are considered in relation to whether daughters have inherited the same dispositions as their mothers or transformed their educational and social milieus.

The daughters' aspirations beyond compulsory schooling are also examined, to understand their motivations for education or whether they entered higher education out of a sense of expectation and conformity to peer pressure. Women's broader opportunity to access a university education is enhanced further when economic and emotional support from parents is available (Reay *et al.*, 2010). The mothers' available capitals could provide far-reaching effects for their daughters and their subsequent choices in higher education. The ownership of capital is central to positioning the families within a social class framework to discuss how the mothers are supporting their daughters to pass them an educational legacy.

The nature of mothers exploiting their capital to extend and pass on the benefits of their support is further examined through Bourdieu's notion of gift exchange (Bourdieu, 1977). Gift exchange is used to explore the reproduction of educational choice and the underlying thought processes behind the subjective, emotionally attached choices of the mothers for their daughters. Individuals involved in gift exchange must recognise the act of giving as irreversible, without an expectation of giving in return (Grenfell and James, 1998). The interval, or time lapse between giving becomes a space in time to reveal the truth of such practice (Bourdieu, 1977). Maternal motivations for daughters' educational outcomes can be revealed during this interval. Gift exchange therefore becomes an additional tool to consider the individual choice of mothers, who are providing a scholastic gift in the form of education to their daughters (agency) within the rules and fields of education (structure). Schubert (2008) recognises that gift exchange reproduces social structures and identities. Gift exchange and the action of participation takes the form of a game, discussed later in this chapter. Like all aspects of capital, education is not a tangible product and I am therefore also using the symbolic notion of the passing on educational opportunity as a maternal gift from mother to daughter. This idea is developed in this chapter and reviewed in Chapter Seven, to explore if the daughters take advantage of such support beyond university.

Furthermore, the role of field, the space where actors assimilate their social class, will be examined in relationship to the choice of educational institution to family norms and values (Bourdieu, 1977; Ball, 2003). Field is an important determinant in understanding the relations of power and control in education, which lie beneath the surface of individual and institutional practice (Bourdieu, 1977; Bathmaker, 2012). School as the principal site or field of taught education becomes pivotal in the correlation between the learning structure and individual agency. Within the binaries of dominant and dominated social groups, educational success is most likely to happen when there is a matching of the school ethos and familial capital (Ball, 2003).

The relationship between class and education are frequently interwoven, particularly when developing an argument for social inequality in the education system (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu, 1984; Sayer, 2005; Reay, 2006). I use class and education to explore family values and to consider the extent to which mothers' support has implications for their daughters' access to higher education. Discussion will extend to the understanding of aspiration and changing perceptions of middle class norms and ideals. Alongside the analogy of gift exchange, I also consider how mothers apply their capital to provide advantage to gain or maintain a positive educational outcome for their daughters, to 'play the game' (Bourdieu, 1977: 78; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bathwater, 2012; Colley, 2012; James, 2012). In order to achieve undergraduate success, the educational game is often played within the fields of education.

If educational outcomes at compulsory level are affected by familial habitus (Ball, 2003), it is important to question how women from working class backgrounds transformed their lifestyles and extended their educational horizons. The mothers' narratives come to the fore in this argument, as many cite examples of how their lives have altered due to changing societal views and opportunities in the school, workplace and subsequent relationships. The participants self-identified their class during the interviews, however, two of the participants dis-identified with their class status (Bourdieu, 1984; Grenfell and James, 1998; Reay, 2005; James, 2012). Dis-identification refers to the

process whereby an individual identifies with a social group that is different to the one in which others would place him or her, often based on perceived educational background and lifestyle.

Lastly, I will consider how the possession of economic capital continues to fuel inequalities, resulting in families having unequal levels of advantage in providing the gift of education. As in most aspects of life, wealth is a key indicator of power, authority and greater choice. I will explore if the mothers have transformed their lifestyles from their childhood upbringing to their adult home. The implications of their increase in capital and its applicability to their daughters' education are discussed. I consider how the participants show their class values and beliefs in the ways they describe themselves and others, through their understanding of financial acquisition and possession and how class distinctions are inevitable in 'playing the game'.

6.1 Generational Context of Norms and Values

All of the mothers in this study were born between 1935 and 1970, years when the social pattern for females was marriage, children and home making (Dyhouse, 2002). I have already stated in Chapter Four that the age gap between the mothers is not significant to this research, but their collective viewpoint is important. The mothers grew up at a time when the accepted norm was for women to have sole domestic and child rearing responsibility (Ribbens, 1994). This is reflected unanimously in the mothers' narratives, despite prevalent feminist activity to challenge women's position in the home during these years. In all cases, the women were stay-at-home mothers and in heterosexual marriages. Men occupied the role of breadwinner and only in a few cases did women have careers to return to following motherhood. This is reflected in the mothers' narratives, where the social norms in which the mothers were raised run parallel to Tara and Kathy's:

*'You grow up, you go to work at 16, you get married and eventually stop going to work to have children, that's how we were brought up'.
[Tara, mother]*

'I mean (name of eldest daughter) is 25 now. I was married by then and the thought of her being married and settling down and having kids is shocking! (Laughs) I can't imagine any of my girls settling down anytime soon [...] when you were in your mid twenties, then you did get married. When I was that age, that's what you did'. [Kathy, mother]

The ingrained social behaviour of the habitus is evident here, for the mothers' unconscious practice through marriage and subsequent motherhood is self-regulated by a set of unwritten rules (Bourdieu, 1990). Ribbens (1994) develops the argument of the sequential nature of marriage and having children, suggesting that the husband and wife relationship becomes absorbed by prescribed family values as soon as they become mother and father. In this regard, all of the mothers' relationships followed the norms of the social construction of parenting, in the same way that Kathy acknowledges that getting married was *'what you did'* in your mid-twenties.

Taruh (daughter) made the connection between feminism and the importance of choice, showing a generational perspective on whether to remain a homemaker or return to work: *'If you choose to take on the traditional housewife role ... that is entirely your decision ...it doesn't mean you are anti-feminist, it means you are making the choice for yourself'*.

Steph also reveals an understanding of 'how things worked' when she was young, but she shares her habitus more explicitly:

'We done it the right way, we got engaged, we got married, we still worked, then we had our children and we stopped working, but now that side of it is all different, definitely'. [Steph, mother]

Steph talks of doing family (Morgan, 2011) *'the right way'*. For Steph, the family is her 'structuring structure' (Bourdieu, 1990: 53). Having grown up as the eldest, helping her Mum care for her six brothers and sisters with little

money, her habitus reflects the importance she places on her family values. Steph continues with her caring role as a grandmother with adult children:

'As regards a mother, I mean I've always, I would give up everything for my children and even now I would do the same thing. If (son) said can you look after (grandson) seven days a week I would do it and if it meant giving up all what I'm doing for myself I would do it, because the majority of my life has been aimed at the kids'. [Steph, mother]

Elle also acknowledged that she is working as a child-minder to fit in with her daughters' needs, despite them being aged between 18 and 23 *'If I didn't have a family I probably wouldn't have done it'*. Eleanor, her daughter interviewed for this research, is already married and has set up her own home.

All of the mothers followed the traditional and stereotypical transition from single women to married mothers. Tia, the youngest of the mothers, had a similar yet culturally different experience, as she entered an arranged marriage. Tia's recollection of *'drifting into marriage'* is in contrast to Bhopal's (2010) discussion of arranged marriages in the UK, which are frequently viewed as enforced and exploitative:

'I got a temporary job in customer services. I loved it, did that for six months. During that time my Father started looking for a man for me to marry, I had an arranged marriage and just drifted into marriage. Got married, I officially got married at 19 and my Asian wedding was at the age of 20. Got married, lived in the extended family for four and a half years [...] Had my first daughter when I was 21 and second daughter at 24'. [Tia, mother]

Leigh also experienced cultural differences as she was raised and married in Jamaica, but had her daughters after she had migrated to the UK. Leigh and Tia faced multiple inequalities due to the intersectionality of their gender, religions and ethnicities (Walby, 2009). Despite cultural differences, for both Tia and Leigh, the social pattern of leaving school and going to work,

followed by marriage and children remained the same. For all of the mothers, class distinctions were inherent in factors that had a bearing, significant or otherwise, on their past options and future choices.

6.2 Class Distinctions and Self-Identification

The mothers' understandings of class provide important perspectives and reflections on class distinctions that enable their choices. All of the mothers self-identified as middle class, with the exception of Tara, Fran and Leigh, who identified as working class. Chris and Tia did identify as working class, but I discuss this later in the chapter as dis-identification, given their education to PhD level, professional employment status and associated lifestyle. All of the mothers who identified as middle class spoke of the transience from working class upbringings or 'struggling' financially during their early lives. Many of the respondents found it a real effort to identify class. Their self identified answers ranged from working (8), lower/middle (3), working/middle (4), middle (20), middle/upper (1) and three who were not willing to identify. This tension between current lifestyle and family background in respect of identification of class was frequently problematic for the participants. Two sets of mother-daughter responses exemplify these women's sense of wrestling with conflict in self-classifying:

'We're middle class, we're definitely middle class. But then would all the people who have lots of money, they're middle class. How do you define middle class? Do you define middle class by money? [...] If you are looking at middle class in terms of, erm, manners, your heritage, it is, it's often manners. But then you'll have people who are working class with fantastic manners, won't you? [Jenny, mother]

'I would say upper/middle? I'm not sure, but now in terms of the money I'm earning, I don't know. Lower/middle, middle/lower? I don't know, because I don't know the definitions between the two [...] I would say middle'. [Jennifer, daughter]

'I suppose it all depends on how you define it, doesn't it? I mean, is middle class more upper class end, sort of thing? I wouldn't say we were lower class, that's unfair, that sounds snobby doesn't it? That sounds awful. Yes, so no, I would say working to middle class, but I don't like to say that, it sounds odd, doesn't it? [Jess, mother]

'There seems to be this new class of not doing a lot of work really, so that wouldn't be working class would it, because working class work? So I don't know, I'm not posh, so does that mean I'm working class? But then I have been given money wise every opportunity I could possibly have, so we're not poor y'know [...] I would say middle class was still quite posh and well-to-do [...] We really don't go by class as much anymore so maybe there isn't a class system. But I would probably put myself between working and middle. I don't really know'. [Jessica, daughter]

Sayer (2012: 163) recognises that class is 'not merely a matter of unequal distribution of economic resources, but of unequal recognition'. In all cases, education, hard work and for some, financial uplift through marriage, have changed or improved the mothers' situations. This goes some way to understanding the difficulty these women found with classification, as many explained that they grew up in working class conditions, but now consider they live middle class lifestyles. Chris, a Professor, is a prime example of a transformation of income through her educational opportunities and subsequent employment status in comparison to her working class background:

'We are in very different life circumstances now and have different opportunities I think and that's what I feel is different, having perhaps gone through education [...] I'm the first and [Christina] is the second only ever in the family to go to university'. [Chris, mother]

Chris' daughter, Christina acknowledges the advantages gained through her mother's educational knowledge and status:

'I think people my age, it's actually quite unusual for someone not to go to university and particularly coming from a grammar school. There were like three or four people out of my whole year group who didn't go to university and that was seen as unusual, erm and I think people actually expect to these days'. [Christina, daughter]

All of the mothers spoke of their childhood with a sense of things being financially more difficult, of things 'being hard' or 'just how it was'. From the narratives, there appear to have been little conscious thought or expectation except to follow the norms of a traditional, nuclear family. The norm, however, was dependent on the social class into which they had been born. Staying at home with children, however, appeared to be a common desire for all of the mothers and was not indicative of class values. Debbie pointed out the generational change that is taking place within her family:

'In my Nan's day there would have been no expectation for her to go to work, but for my daughter, the idea of her being a stay-at-home mum for good is alien, so she will expect to go back to work when she has a child [...] I think there's societal expectation that women work and y'know, if you don't work when you've got children then you're lazy [...] If you have children then you go without things, but they don't see why you should. Y'know, when we had our children we didn't go out for meals, we didn't go on holidays and things, we had the children'. [Debbie, mother]

Debbie expresses the paradigm shift in the notion of mothering, explaining how for her, becoming a mother meant accepting a downsizing in the family's social and economic position. Debbie considers her daughter will have a different opportunity cost, with the 'expectation that women work' to maintain the now common two-income lifestyle. The women in Thomson *et al.*'s (2011) study of modern motherhood identified that for many women,

organising financial responsibilities was a key consideration in the decision about when to start a family.

Vicky (mother) explains that for her, university was not a consideration:

'University never entered any of our heads or our minds, my parents, mine, never. In those days, university was for those that could really afford it and that was people who had their own homes, had their own cars, erm, really the most elite people had that. It never, ever came across. It was something to be able to go to grammar school in those days'. [Vicky, mother]

Vicky has transformed her class in adulthood beyond her childhood habitus. Vicky now self identifies as middle class, her children went to an independent primary school and both of her daughters attended university, fully funded by their parents. Her daughter, Victoria, holds a very different view of class that takes university attendance as a norm:

'I would say I'm middle class. I suppose I've always thought that, not working class. All my friends, all my social groups are all the same as me, we all live in the same area, same 4 or 5 bedroom house and area that we live in, I suppose we wouldn't class ourselves as middle class, we just associate with that. I went to school with what I would call working class people, but I'm not sure about upper class [...] Everyone in my social group of friends went along the same route.' [Victoria, daughter]

In her interview, Vicky articulates that university 'was never an option' for her. She did not initially return to the workplace after having her children due to her lack of formal qualifications and a feeling she was not able to compete effectively for jobs. Roberts and Evans (2012) suggest that the rhetoric of 'low aspiration' extends to those who pursue full-time work in favour of higher education. Archer and Leathwood (2003) note that women who argue against participation in higher education blame a lack of formal qualifications

and family responsibilities, identical to the response that Vicky had given. Vicky has internalised the academic disparities acquired in her formative educational years (Bourdieu, 1999; Sayer, 2012). Fran (mother) also explores her transformation to middle class:

'I would say we are middle class, because we, in my opinion, have a reasonable income and we can afford to give the kids most things that they request if we think they are reasonable requests [...] My parents were both what I would call working class. We didn't have a car, we lived in a council house and we didn't have a lot of money and my mother had to struggle really just to do very ordinary things and she very much wanted us to be educated. She could see that it was the route to a better job, which it is'. [Fran, mother]

Vicky and Fran's narratives explore the class distinctions that existed at the time they were 18, portraying how the middle classes dominated the advantage into university under an elite, classed system (Power *et al.*, 2003). Fran's daughter, Francesca also expressed lifestyle similarities to Victoria. Both Francesca and Victoria went to independent preparatory schools. Victoria went into the state system at 11 and Francesca remained in the private sector via a full scholarship.

'I would probably say middle class, but other people might say upper class [...] we do have, like, a fairly big house in [area] which is an expensive area and we've got two cars and we've all been to private school, so that's probably upper class, but then I would say middle class because we've all had scholarships to go to school. Mum and Dad work hard, it's not like Mum's been a kept woman or anything'. [Francesca, daughter]

Victoria and Francesca show how they equate education to class and the ambivalence about whether you have to 'pay' for private education to count as upper class, with Francesca acknowledging her mother's independence and input to the family's income. In line with Walkerdine *et al.* (2001) and Reay's

(1998b) findings, mothering work is the link between class and children's performativity in the classroom. This idea is exemplified by Victoria and Francesca who outline how their mothers supported extra curricula activity, giving their daughters extensive social and cultural capital in the process:

*'Music lesssons, my Mum and Dad paid for those or dance lessons, ballet, whatever I wanted to do, but if I needed extra tutorage, I'm just trying to remember if I did, I think I did Maths maybe, they would obviously arrange that for me and pay for it and I didn't really think twice about it, it's just what the other children were doing as well'.
[Victoria, daughter]*

'They got me my violin, got me my violin lessons and sent me to the Royal College of Music to play the violin. Anything that I wanted to do they always supported'. [Francesca, daughter]

The narratives above demonstrate that Vicky and Fran have raised their daughters in a very different classed lifestyle and habitus to that in which they themselves were raised. They are subsequently able to give their daughters social and cultural advantage to which they did not have access. Vicky and Fran demonstrate how children's leisure time and education is merging through maternal involvement (Gillies, 2007). Exposure to the arts provides cultural and educational capital and preserves class hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1984). Reay (2005: 113) explores cultural reproduction through mothers' exploitation of their capital, using Bernstein's positioning of the middle classes as 'better able to exploit the possibilities of public education'. These findings mirror Reay's (*ibid.*: 114) view that 'acting in their child's best interests inevitably means middle class mothers are simultaneously acting against the interests of the children of other, less privileged, mothers'. Such behaviour, whether conscious or otherwise, is an example of the fractures that exist within different socio-economic groups.

6.3 Class Consciousness

The transformation of lifestyle from childhood to adulthood during a period of free marketisation has been a key feature of many of the mothers' narratives. The sale of council housing in the 1980s established chances for families to become homeowners for the first time and through the neoliberal shift, the opportunity to become entrepreneurial and increase their earning possibility on a self-employed basis (Roberts, 2012). This enabled many of the mothers to transform their class from their working class upbringings to their contemporary self-identified middle class lifestyles. Helen's early years were spent in the north east of England, where she considered she lived a working class lifestyle and where her sister still lives:

'I mean, my sister is, y'know, she's got four kids, two different fathers. Her idea of social is going out to bingo and that's it. They don't strive to do anything more'. [Helen, mother]

Helen's move to the south of England and subsequent marriage has been instrumental in her self-identified transformation to middle class status:

'We live in a nice house, drive nice cars, can afford to go on nice holidays, there's money in the bank, food on the table so yes, as far as I'm concerned, that's middle class. But I think I was probably on the way up the ladder before I met him, but he accelerated it a bit more'. [Helen, mother]

Atkinson (2010a: 4) argues that the NS-SEC classification of the broad, three classes is no longer a valid measure of class, as it negates 'quantifiable indicators of class identification of consciousness', listing these as 'life chances, history, culture, subjectivity and identity'. Atkinson (2010a) and Burawoy (2012) examine the theory of blurred class boundaries, discussing how the possession of economic capital no longer equates to belonging to a specific class sector. The relationship between class and income can be explored through the ways in which some of the women in this student dis-

identify with their improved income and lifestyles in adulthood, instead of relating to their childhood habitus. Chris, a Professor, dis-identifies with her current middle class lifestyle and embodies Bourdieu's notion of 'cleft habitus'; a mismatch between behaviours learnt in the home and the social situation in which people find themselves as adults, evoking the feeling of the abandonment of the original habitus (Bourdieu, 1999). Despite Chris' achievements and extensive academic career, her position as an academic sits in contrast to her family background. For Chris there is a personal struggle when she tries to move forward from her working class roots:

'I kind of feel like I'm lower/middle class. I mean, I wouldn't deny that I've a middle class lifestyle if you want and income for that matter and the kinds of things I do [...] I can't deny what my lifestyle, education and experiences have done for me, but I am still very aware of those roots and it comes back, it sometimes comes back as a lack of confidence and sometimes the reclaiming of the value base is good, really good'. [Chris, mother]

Tia, a university lecturer undertaking a PhD, also disassociates with her middle class lifestyle:

'I don't know if I position myself as middle class. Although people would look at me and say you are from the clothes you wear, the house you've got, the car you drive, the holidays you go on, people would, but I think deep down I position myself as working class. It's really weird. People would find that strange, but I think in my heart I feel it's about my working class rootedness and my roots are from my parents and I'm rooted in them'. [Tia, mother]

Both Chris and Tia are referring to the habitus they embodied during their upbringing as their understanding of their class (Bourdieu, 1984; Reay *et al.*, 2009; James, 2012). Here they are taking a reductionist view of class as a mindset, rather than as the advantages manifest in their daily, lived experiences. They also underestimate the chances and choices they have

produced for themselves through their hard work, both through education and in the workplace. Jones (2011: 98) suggests that those who remove themselves from their class backgrounds 'disqualify those who remain in them'. Chris and Tia are inverting this argument, placing their families and their upbringing at their very core. Ribbens (1998) shares class and gender tensions she encountered as an academic stopping work to raise children. The influence of the feminist movement on women's opportunities, both socially and in the home, is a significant factor (Arnot, David and Weiner, 1999) and will be considered in depth in Chapter Seven.

Chris and Tia have both evolved financially and culturally from their working class roots, yet simultaneously remain tied to them. This resonates with early work surrounding tensions, education and class struggles, including two male gendered studies, Willis' (1977) seminal work, *Learning to Labour* and Reay's (2002b) *Shaun's Story*. In both Chris and Tia's cases, they have middle class lifestyles, but remain embodied in their working class roots. Chris pronounces herself '*a bogus [academic]*' being the only person in her family to go to university and subsequently become a professor, because '*you've moved into such a different realm that you are not part of your roots or family anymore*'. Reay *et al.* (2009) explore this cleft-habitus tension of belonging in two class camps, engaging in middle class higher education, but coming from working class backgrounds.

The transformation of class for many of the mothers from their working class upbringing into middle class adulthood provides a dualism in experience and different factions of class identity. For many of the mothers there remains a guilt that the academic and personal success they have achieved equates to abandonment of their origins. Women who have surpassed the expectations of the norms and values of the family home have experienced hysteresis, the discrepancy between the habitus and the change to a different social field (Bourdieu *et al.*, 1999; Hardy, 2008). For two of the women with high academic profiles they embody the notion of cleft habitus or imposter syndrome, of being *found out* through education (Reay, 2002a).

Educational identity can be thrown into flux when institutional habitus matches that of student ability, but is at odds with family background (Reay *et al.*, 2009). Ingram (2009: 422) describes this as ‘misrecognition of working-class culture’. Yet despite this tension, both Chris and Tia’s class transformation, in part due to their education, has provided a higher platform in terms of economic and cultural capital, from which their daughters have derived benefit to progress in higher education. Christina and Tiana, their daughters, live in very different geographical areas and have no connection whatsoever, yet both are coincidentally studying four-year language degrees and at the time of their interviews, both were due to be spending a gap year in Spain. These travel and education opportunities are in contrast to the working class lifestyles in which Chris and Tia were raised and where they remain emotionally grounded.

Two daughters, Jennifer and Rosalind, provide narratives that summarise Sayer’s (2005: 163) ‘unequal recognition’, revealing not only how the habitus has a powerful effect on educational outcomes, but also the importance of input of ‘significant others’, including teachers:

‘You are geared up to that choice (university attendance) by being in the school system, so although I say yeah, it was absolutely my choice, it’s kind of the way you are taught to think, that this is the right route for you and you must go to university [...] you’re also going to be massively influenced by what your family think and if they encourage you to do it’. [Jennifer, daughter]

It was made clear to Rosalind that she would be dissuaded from going down the ‘hair or care’ route:

‘I went through the stage of ‘I want to be a hairdresser’, but I actually had teachers at school that said ‘you can’t be a hairdresser, you’re too clever’ [...] what’s to say that I couldn’t have been a very successful hairdresser and run my own salon? You know, to an extent I think that the teachers were being restrictive. I think they had in their heads they

had the people who were intelligent and went onto higher education and then there were then the people who didn't really pay attention at school and went on to be beauticians'. [Rosalind, daughter]

Rosalind's sister, Roseanne, also had a recollection of a careers day at the same school:

'They went around the class and nearly every single girl just wanted to do the girly thing, you know, hairdressing, nails and things like that and there was only a handful of people, a tiny handful of girls who wanted to work in education'. [Roseanne, daughter]

The insistence from their school to achieve academically, driven by stereotypes, was counteracted in the habitus by their mother, Rose, who gave her daughters the space to make her own choices. This was particularly clear when Rosalind changed undergraduate courses following a period of illness:

'She could make that change for herself and that is striking out into something quite different probably, nothing anyone in the family has done. Neither of them went down the teaching (laughs), caring route (laughs)'. [Rose, mother]

In this regard, Rose has made a value judgment, to support her daughters' desires to engage their own agency over and above the possibility of 'more academic' choices.

6.4 Family Values

Family values and judgments on what is considered to be 'of value' is often lost in the more positivist approaches to research, as values are judged on an objective level, rather than based on familial and cultural values (Ribbens, 1994). Values are deeply personal, rooted expressions that derive from many sources, including family, religion and personal experiences. Values are driven by family practices that provide meaning in everyday life (Morgan,

1996). The understanding of value returns to feminist research approaches of reflexivity and hearing women's voices (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998; Standing, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Values and 'setting a good example' are frequently bounded to class distinctions and moral boundaries.

Religious teachings remain central to many of the women within their lives. In Leigh's narrative, she talks frequently of church and reading the Bible, stories that resonate with her daughters' discussions:

'We were Christian, so we looked on the bright side [...] we set a good example and live a good life, a decent life that our children could follow'. [Leigh, mother]

'Going to church, being brought up in church, I started going when I was about four and even in church you would be reading Bible texts and learning [...] education within church was something which was encouraged [...] we were always encouraged to do things and better yourself and study hard to help people, there were lots of opportunities and our parents were a very good example'. [Leanne, daughter]

Devine (2004: 86) found that the participants in her study who discussed their religious beliefs also identified these within middle class boundaries of 'behaviour and morality'. These are moral indicators that emerge regularly in other narratives around religious choice, class or education. Suzie (daughter) discusses her religious upbringing and later relates the values back to a negative experience she had at a prestigious university, prior to her now settled university life at another institution:

'My Godmother looked after me and Mum made sure she came to see me every lunchtime from school [...] a primary school where it was church based, erm, and had good beliefs that Mum wanted us to have'. [Suzie, daughter]

'One woman who was my tutor [...] she said that having her kids was the worst decision of her life and that's really ruined her career (laughs) [...] like, I am a career woman and that's all I wanted to be and I think that, again, the family values that I've been brought up with, it's not me and I'm proud it's not me'. [Suzie, daughter]

Family values are merged with Suzie's religious upbringing, which clashed in her exchange with her university tutor. Alongside religious beliefs and indicators of moral teaching within the family, culture became a factor for sharing values and 'fitting in'. Tiana explores her Hindi background in settling into school:

'I felt integrated at my secondary school because ethnically it had a really high percentage of Asians there, as in Indian. I'm Indian, I'm Hindu Indian and there were Indians, Muslims [...] I felt more integrated, because sometimes in my primary school it was a drastic change because I was like the only Indian in the class [...] so I felt different, but at the same time I felt integrated, but in a different way'. [Tiana, daughter]

Her mother, Tia, noted cultural differences in her secondary schooling experiences too:

'I didn't feel that I really, sort of, fitted in. It was a predominantly white area. I didn't feel that I could connect with other friends very well [...] they were going out and hanging out in the streets at night and all of that. Culturally, it wasn't acceptable'. [Tiana, mother]

Bhopal (2010:26) explores the concept of 'cultural familiarity' and the importance of belonging in a group that is socially considered as being 'othered'. Tia emphasises the value of a shared identity within her secondary school, in opposition to her mother's recollection of being an outsider. 'Otherness' and the attached values are frequently measured against

difference and a lack of tolerance from the social norm (Weiner, 1999; Rogers, 2007; Sanger, 2010).

Value recurred many times in the participants' narratives, but not always from a religious or culturally diverse perspective. Steph (mother) discussed the classed ways her values were shaped by her working class background:

'When we were growing up there was seven children and we lived in a council house and a lot of parents didn't want their kids to play with us [...] a lot of the parents when I was a child at school would say 'oh don't go around there, they're council house kids' [...] (Family) was brought up well. Although they didn't have a lot, they were still brought up well'. [Steph, mother]

Steph's narrative was framed by many anecdotes of working class barriers and prejudices, but she poignantly reminds me that her family 'was brought up well'. Along with economic and social exclusion, her work also reveals the deep symbolic domination that existed during her childhood (Bourdieu, 1999). Goldthorpe (1980) argued for an understanding of time and space in relation to advantages and barriers surrounding class and social mobility. Discussion around the changing of social boundaries and blurring of the classes is explored further.

6.5 The Blurring of the Middle Classes

Using Goldthorpe's NS-SEC scale, class would previously have been measured by the occupation of the male head of household (Roberts, 2012). However, class distinctions have become fuzzy, as monetarism and subsequently neoliberalism under New Labour (1997 - 2010) enabled some from working class backgrounds to sharply increase their economic and social capital. This blurs the description of middle class and bears no relation to the social classifications drawn by Goldthorpe (Roberts, 2012). To explore this change in class-consciousness, I refer to May, who self identified as middle class:

'The expectation at school was that everybody should go to university and those that didn't were the ones that peeled off in year six. Many went to finishing schools either in England or Switzerland or went to the very top nursing training schools or went to very posh secretarial schools and ended up with jobs with the Prime Minister or Buckingham Palace, those sorts of posts. Erm, there was no expectation that any girl left just to go to work'. [May, mother]

Given May's privileged background, her class identity as middle class could be described as blurred, given that her narratives and my brief understanding of her lifestyle suggest she could be identified as professional or upper-middle class. Maya explained how class was recognised during her youth and the changing factors affecting class variables:

'I've got used now to speech being very variable, because as a child it was very distinctive, speech as a class indicator, but I would still be surprised if someone who was very posh and might be considered because of other indicators to be sort of upper/middle class read The Sun or the News of the World [...] I think there is a new class too, celebrity. I think it's a new class that goes straight through the whole world'. [May, mother]

May suggests that the popular media perpetuates the notion of class within society. Tasker and Negra (2007) and Jones (2011) discuss the cultural phenomenon of celebrity and reality television in relation to class. Jones argues that working-class reality show 'celebrities', who often go on to accumulate large volumes of wealth with a perception of little or no talent, are stereotyped as 'chavs'. This resonates with Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualisation of how lifestyle is often misrecognised and translated into a hierarchy of classes. In this respect, the exertion of financial domination over others demonstrates symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1988). Class inequality equally involves domination, resistance and struggles (Sayer, 2005). Schubert (2008) suggests that Bourdieu indicated language and speech can be adopted

as a form of symbolic violence, in the same way that May recognised speech as a class indicator. In a similar vein, Jenny considered the private school that her children attended, her symbolic markers of class being celebrity and ‘Essex money’:

‘I mean (husband) probably wouldn’t want to send his children to (school) anymore because of the sort of parents sending their children there [...] Good luck to them, but they are different to him and I, but they are sending their children because they now have the money to do so’. [Jenny, mother]

In considering how the participants came to self-identify their class, it became necessary to understand what ‘class’ means to them. Whitehead (2004) considers that indicators of middle and upper class include heritage, good manners and clear speech. Jenny (above) suggests that these attributes cannot automatically be ascribed to someone who considers themselves to be middle class, based on the ownership of economic capital. Bottero (2004) explores the distinction between hierarchy and class. She argues that ‘class’ relates to collective terms around social identity and division and ‘hierarchy’ are best described as individual positioning to create inequality. Jenny’s description of the parents who now attend her children’s previous school reinforces Bottero’s view. All of the parents who have placed their children in independent schools are chasing the privilege and maintenance of advantage (James, 2011). This is explored in Bourdieusian terms as ‘playing the game’.

6.6 Playing the (Education) Game

Bourdieu (1977, 2000) uses the analogy of gift exchange to consider the subtleties in the experiences and meaning attached to the interest in giving and receiving. The internalised social structure learned in the habitus such as perception and behaviour, along with the agency of the mother as a game player, reproduces patterns that lead to unequal privilege (Burawoy, 2012; James, 2012). Grenfell (2007) acknowledges that democracy is inadequate as a medium for aspiring to equality in the education system, as power relations

remain in the grasp of the dominant middle classes. The ways in which the mothers are extending their daughters' advantage, such as paying for private tutoring or activities to increase the security of accessing university is an example of gift exchange, an irreversible act that also serves to maintain inequality and privilege (James, 2011). The mothers' behaviour is driven by the motivation of gaining a university place for their daughters, yet bound by the rules of the game of education. Bourdieu (1984: 384) acknowledged that the *'education system is one of the fundamental agencies of the social order'*.

The metaphor of passing on of a gift is here used to illustrate how mothers are applying their capital to support their daughters' educational advantage. Bourdieu's concept of the gift reminds us that there may be hidden reasons for our actions that could be examined. In the context of this study this implies the need for a retrospective reflection of the mothers' motivations. Later I consider if the mothers' involvement in their daughters' continuing education is altruistic or unconsciously self-serving (Bourdieu, 1977). The strategies of the mothers' game play are often based on personal histories, with mothers trying to transform their daughters' academic outcomes away from their own experiences. Personal motivations and ambitions can inform game playing (Grenfell and James, 1998). The appropriation of capital and the stakes of the game, such as access to higher education, are part of the process of the gift exchange. For the middle class mothers, maternal support is a value-laden stance, where they engage in maintaining the normative position of middle-class achievement (Bourdieu, 2005; James, 2012). Giddens (1990) and James (2012) explore this layering of behaviour as a double hermeneutic or misrecognition that for the purposes of this research provides the mothers with a certainty of academic trajectory for their daughters. Bourdieu *et al.* (1999: 511) reiterate this disposition as *'a double perception of self, to successive allegiances and multiple identities'*.

In a similar vein to gift exchange, the concept of *illusio* describes participation in an act due to an emotional tie to a person, whilst concurrently giving the appearance of disinterestedness. This conceals the reality that there is a motivation for involvement (Bourdieu, 1977; 1993; James, 2012). *Illusio*

is the belief in the value and investment of social action as a game, with stakes and a level of emotional input that ensures we take part (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Colley, 2012). Once people have a 'feel for the game', such as financing extra educational activities, they can extend power relations through the ownership of capital, tangible belongings and practices (Sayer, 2005: 25). Sayer suggests that individual agency promotes a relationship between social preference and class commitment. Illusio suggests the actors or players of the game take on an appearance of objectivity, different to misrecognition where there is an underlying element of some conscious effort in all behaviours (*ibid.*).

Only one mother, Tia, used the term 'playing the game' with reference to her own schooling. Tia was questioned on how she achieved so highly at secondary school, despite her comments that she was bored:

Tia: I was bored at school. I never really, nothing really sort of enthused me at school.

Linda: Well obviously academically you thrived, because you've done very well ...

Tia: ... I knew how to play the academic game.

Linda: Was that driven by you?

Tia: I suppose it was my parents [...] They both worked in factories, both wore overalls. I suppose they came as early pioneers from India and they knew what they had given up [...] me, my brother and my sister had that push, that 'if you want to make something of your life in this country you've got to get qualifications and that's what's going to get you out of this'. [Tia, mother]

In discussions around Tia's decisions for her own daughter's education, Tia engaged her own cultural capital to play the game, but describes the process as much more relaxed. However, despite references to luck, Tia, a former schoolteacher and university academic provided teaching materials in preparation for her daughter's 11+ entry. She is ambivalent about whether or

not she actually coached Tiana for the examination, suggesting there was an element of *illusio*, or ‘looking away’:

‘We just thought OK, we’ll try for the 11+ and if they pass, they pass and if not, there’s a comprehensive around the corner which seemed OK. So we didn’t really get stressed out about schools to be honest [...] It really concerns me the stress that parents go through and I sort of think maybe luck was on my side and they just passed the 11+. I didn’t coach them, I just got the packs from WH Smiths and marked them. But they only did a couple of weeks coaching’. [Tia, mother]

As well as class behaviours involving mothers forcefully seeking advantage, it was equally necessary to ascertain if there was any sense of *illusio* from the mothers supporting their daughters. These narratives are the only examples that reveal any sense of being seen to be ‘pushy parents’ and an avoidance of active participation in their daughters’ schooling:

‘I do feel for them and as I say if she did go [on to do a Masters course] we would help her out again. I think she’s actually ‘uming’ and ‘ahing’ but I would encourage her to do it, but then I sound like a pushy parent’. [Jess, mother]

‘I think when you are a teacher you are always very conscious of teachers’ children in your class [...] my instinct would be not to be that stereotyped, typical sort of pushy parent and I think even now, especially [Rosalind], would like me to be a bit more of a ‘tiger mum’. [Rose, mother]

With the exception of these two examples, all of the mothers stated openly that they are actively and consciously engaging in their daughters’ education. There is no sense of ‘looking away’; to the contrary, all of the mothers are supporting either some or all aspects of their daughters’ university entry. Atkinson (2012) explores how the middle classes defend their influential position within fields of power. Purposeful behaviour through applied agency

explain how habitus, capital and field lead to the maintenance of hierarchy within education (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu, 1998; Atkinson, 2012). However, habitus and field are constantly changing. Reay, Crozier and James (2011) have highlighted alternative strategies evident among the middle class. They explore parents' counter-intuitive secondary school choices, namely, placing their children in 'low performing' schools. The parents in their research do not follow orthodox, middle class schooling choices based on competitiveness and advantage. Parents stated that they made against-the-grain choices based on political or egalitarian beliefs, yet had the cultural capital to provide back-up options against the reality of their imagined social justice.

My own findings are in line with the normative behaviour of middle class families seeking advantage through the possession of capital. In one instance, Fran supported her three children through private school primary educations. Fran used her cultural capital to give her children the necessary tools for Francesca and both of her brothers to all win 100% scholarships into prestigious independent and specialist music secondary schools. Fran did not send her children for music or arts teaching in local village groups or school settings. In Francesca's words *'they sent me to the Royal College of Music to play the violin [...] I wanted to do dancing so they sent me to the Italia Conti ... I've done everything'*.

The provision of economic capital is a significant indicator of class, particularly in regard to repayment of tuition fees, which in 2012 tripled in cost from the previous year. This is the only area of higher education sourcing and funding where narratives more generally included fathers. Economic support is paramount and like the findings in Brooks' (2004) research, paternal input appears vital in providing financial support. Two dyads have indicated that grandparents have also contributed to tuition fees. In two additional instances, monies bequeathed through Wills have funded higher education. For many of the mothers, however, this fee rise has had little or no impact on their daughter's decisions to attend university, as they have paid for all associated costs surrounding university life. For example:

'Linda – In terms of financial support for Tiana, has she got a student loan or tuition fees?

Tia – No my husband has paid all that [...]

Linda – But in terms of tuition fees ...

Tia – They've all been paid for.

Linda – And when she was in halls in the first year?

Tia – That was all paid for too'. [Tia, mother]

'We decided that if that's where they wanted to go, university, we would pull out all the stops to provide them to go and pay all the money that was required [...] We've actually paid off all fees that she owes so she's a free girl now'. [Vicky, mother]

'They paid off my student loan, which is fantastic. The student loan basically became my bank account, that was my spending money at university [...] so when I came out of university I wasn't in any debt, which is brilliant [...] Mum and Dad really helped out to make sure I had the best possible start following uni'. [Jennifer, daughter]

The narratives from Tia and Vicky reflect the economic capital within their families and the financial investment they have made into their daughters' educations. Financial support was one of the few exceptions when women included men, and explicitly their income, in discussions around their daughters' university access. The possession of economic capital reproduces class distinctions in all aspects of society, including the education sector (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). This helps to explain the continuity of social order through time and how social class preserves privileges and inequality (Grenfell, 2008).

In four cases, parents have completely funded their daughters' undergraduate study period. One mother, Helen, explains why she and her husband made this choice:

'I think at the moment in the education system money talks. So she's going off and having an education. She's not paying any fees at all, y'know (husband) is funding her through uni so she's fortunate that when she comes out of uni she's not going to have any debt whatsoever [...] she has had her fees paid for her, she has her accommodation paid for her, she has an allowance every week [...] It's her choice if she gets a job at uni, but she doesn't need to'. [Helen, mother]

Helen also speaks of Helena's choice to earn an extra income. The luxury of choice, being able to decide whether or not to work, is considered here to be a middle class indicator (Reay *et al.*, 2005).

Helen and Vicky have used their economic capital and subsequent symbolic domination to 'play the game' and gain educational advantage for their daughters. Helena and Victoria received private educations, ultimately resulting in the matching of individual and institutional habitus to 'red brick' universities and fully funded undergraduate experiences (Ball, 2003; David *et al.*, 2010).

In two of the interviews, Jess and Rose used the term 'playing the system', referring to examples of those who were unable to provide for their daughters' educations. As middle-income-bracket earners, Jess and Rose's daughters are not entitled to any form of financial benefit:

'This is going to sound terrible about how people play the system [...] they have parents who have split up and they are getting it paid for them [...] they are playing the system where they know they'll get things paid for them [...] I wonder whether it will be people who will get it free will go and the people who won't get it free won't go [...] it's not fair and you just think society, it's wrong isn't it? [Jess, mother]

'It will be people who are good at 'playing the system' who maybe have some temporary economic disadvantage who are best at getting the places that are available for students. I have a friend who is a single

parent whose health isn't good, she'll be brilliant at getting her children subsidised places at a top university'. [Rose, mother]

In the earlier examples, I demonstrate how mothers are using their economic capital to support fully all aspects of their daughters' university experience. Jess and Rose above are suggesting instances where families are actively using their cultural capital to gain as much advantage for their daughters as possible, yet are not in the position to fund any education. Jess' daughter Jessica compounds the point raised by Jess, telling me that in her rented house the variance in financial support and her need to work '*causes quite a lot of, er, discussions*'. Rose's daughter, Roseanne also suggested '*the people in the middle are going to have a hard time*'. 'Playing the game' is inherently a term which can be applied to mothers as a positive support mechanism in the access to higher education. 'Playing the system' implies beating or cheating the system. These different activities explore the awareness that the mothers have of the forms of 'benefit', without direct identification to these labels. In all of these examples, the ownership of economic or cultural capital has bought extensive gains for those 'playing the game'.

One of the daughters, Suzie, has a very different approach to her student loan. Although she has taken out a tuition fee loan, she has used her financial knowledge and cultural capital to her advantage. Sue, her mother, explains her strategy:

'Everyone does it differently, but we gave her a lump sum at the beginning. She has chosen to still take the student loan because we were well aware that the loans are repaid back at a very low interest rate and she's a bit canny. She's put it all in the building society and what not, but yes, we have supported her and she's taken out a student loan, but she didn't necessarily need to cover the cost'. [Sue, mother]

Here both Sue and Suzie have used economic capital and applied their financial astuteness to profit from the student loan. This is an example of 'playing the game', which has elements of beating, rather than cheating the

system. However, Suzie argues that this financial gain is purely to support her living costs:

'It's not sort of divided into 'that's my money'. I think I would have enough to live on with what Mum and Dad gave me and my tuition fee loans and I think in loans each year I think I get about £9,000, hang on, £7,500. I think the cost of living is just under £10,000 a year so I think it does balance'. [Suzie, daughter]

Suzie has used the interest from her lump sum as an investment and a means of 'earning' money, to allow her the luxury of not having to work during her term-time university life. In the same way as Ball (2003) suggests that matching the school and family habitus provides educational success, this example displays how the matching of financial and cultural capital also brings lucrative results. As a veterinary science student, Suzie has five years of undergraduate study to fund. Often during the university holidays she is on compulsory rotation in settings, for example lambing at Easter, meaning work during the holidays is problematic, although she does babysit sporadically. Sue provided the initial lump sum of money for Suzie to give her a 'good start'.

Sam and Samantha's interviews offer a unique take on using maternal cultural capital to advantage to access education. Sam is educated to PhD standard, although now acknowledges that this has been alongside an awareness that she has dyslexic tendencies, but she has never sought support for this. Samantha has been diagnosed as severely dyslexic. Samantha did not consider she would be able to access a university education due to her learning difficulties and subsequent lack of formal qualifications, but Sam used her considerable social and cultural capital in this instance:

'She'd had enough and wanted a change of life and then I found her the access course that she could apply for in London that would get her an immediate place on a degree course that would be like a shortcut for

*her. So I had the knowledge to help her find something that fitted well'.
[Sam, mother]*

Samantha acknowledges this support:

'She found this access course that accepted people who didn't have A-levels and I just did it [...] I always thought I would never be able to get into uni because all I had was GCSEs [...] I wouldn't have a degree unless it was for my Mum, that's 100%. She helped me so much that it would have been impossible without her support and academic knowledge'. [Samantha, daughter]

Cultural capital is a particularly important asset in brokering routes through academia, including applying for school or university places. Sam's illustration supports this argument. Subsequent schooling outcomes, qualifications and life chances can be affected dramatically by the ability to access educational opportunities (Devine, 2004). Within this sample there are a number of mothers who are educated to degree standard. The mothers' ability and willingness to support their children, alongside their possession of cultural and economic capital has produced a highly supportive group of parents. As an A-level mathematics teacher and notwithstanding the girls' hard work, Sue has supported her daughters Suzanne and Suzie through to impressive examination results in the school in which she also teaches. Suzie commented *'I have probably benefited from her support in terms of ... she's really gone through it with us'*. Suzie gained 13 A* GCSE results and 4 As at A-level and Suzanne is anticipated to have a similar academic outcome. Both have subsequently gained university places at Russell Group universities. In contrast, we saw in Chapter Three how Anne felt her cultural capital through her teaching was undermined when her husband took the lead in her daughter's university admission during her illness.

Encouraging children to engage in extra curricular activities is an important component of 'making-up' in the middle classes (Vincent and Ball, 2006; Reay and Ball, 2008). Parents use their economic capital for their children to

become known as achievers through classes, both academic and sporting. Activities could include tutoring, sporting clubs or music lessons. Children often compete for high financial level scholarships to independent schools or schools known to have a 'good' reputation and high examination results. The decisions that parents with social and cultural capital take during the compulsory schooling stage create advantage and this has the potential to have a positive effect on their children's access to higher education. This is both possible through enhancing examination results and as a determinant of access to particular higher education institutions.

6.7 Conclusion

The symbolism of a gift has been used in this chapter to explore mothers' involvement and provision of additional sources of support, to pass their daughters the maternal gift of education. Middle class indicators, including the ownership and mobilisation of economic capital remain a powerful facilitator of choice. The mothers able to afford privileges such as topping-up activities or private education used their capital to access more elite educational institutions. This matching of the educational field to the home habitus has provided the most advantageous educational outcomes (Ball, 2003).

The key finding of this chapter is the ongoing maternal support beyond compulsory schooling, into and beyond university years. Mothers with disposable income continue to fund their daughters' undergraduate lifestyle, tuition fees, living costs and social expenses. I highlight examples where parents have paid for every aspect of undergraduate study and in the case of Katherine, continue funding their daughter in full-time work, due to a low income.

The mothers' backgrounds have been key indicators of the ways in which they have complemented and compensated their daughters' opportunities (Reay, 1998b). I have provided narratives of mothers who dis-identify from their current middle class status and remain tied to their working class values

and family habitus. Yet all of the daughters have claimed they have wider educational and social opportunities than their mothers had at the same age. I have shown that habitus is not deterministic and that many daughters have transformed financially and socially from their mothers' childhood backgrounds.

The family values of the mother-daughter pairings have been explored in several contexts, to understand how mothers ground their moral and behavioural boundaries within religious beliefs, cultural understandings and class distinctions. The participants' discussed how each of these shaped their childhood habitus and instilled the ingrained practices that they continue to uphold today. These women's values have been developed over time and show the reproduction of class differences and of advantage and disadvantage.

I have explored the notion of 'playing the (education) game'. As well as the use of income to create financial advantage, middle-income families substitute cultural capital to access benefits and grants in order to get to university. Within this research, the mothers have found alternative strategies to support their daughters, independent of financial status. Reay (1998b) has shown that mothers have knowingly 'played the game' of education for some time, whether to meet criteria for school entrance or enhance educational opportunities through extra curricular activities. This research shows that mothers continue with this support and 'play the game' through to university. In some cases, mothers are using their cultural capital to secure their daughters' advantage within higher education and subsequently into employment.

Most daughters in this study were raised in two parent families, but the findings from the participants strongly suggest that mothers make an extended commitment beyond the fathers' involvement. This statement is supported by the daughters' lack of discussion of fathers' roles beyond financial support. However, this view is expressed without any desire to diminish the significant ways that fathers can engage in their daughters'

upbringing and education. The mother-daughter relationship was chosen as a gendered study seeking to understand the generational changes and lifestyle improvements for women as social trends change. It is noticeable, however, that for all the advances experienced by women, the economic capital provided by the father remains significant in relation to financing university access. Fathers have been found to be more pro-active and involved in the financial arrangements of the university process.

Continuing the discussions around the relationships within the family, women in the workplace and motherhood are discussed in the next chapter. The mothers saw stopping work to have a family as entirely normal and only those in professional careers were expected to return to the workplace full time. Given the shift in social demographics, the views of the daughters are considered in relation to the notion that women can now have careers and families. The daughters' narratives will highlight the decisions that women face once they decide to start a family and consider if things have really changed that much for women who want to work and have children.

Chapter Seven

The Maternal Legacy

7.0 Introduction

In this chapter I am extending the exploration of the mothers' efforts to play the (education) game, to understand if the daughters have mobilised such opportunities. The two previous chapters have drawn on the experiences of mothers' and daughters' financial, cultural and educational inheritance, to explore class reproduction or transformation and subsequent motivations for education. The mothers presented a normative, classed approach with predominantly middle class homogeneous choices for educating their daughters, reflected in their university options and lifestyles. This chapter delves deeper into the mothers' and daughters' histories to consider whether the mothers' extension of their support into higher education has translated into good employment options and whether the daughters turn the advantage they received into a reality once they leave university.

Despite the generalisation that women have the option to have a family, a career and individual ambitions, tensions still remain, predominantly around the concept of the working mother. The dualism of the employed mother continues to be problematic for women (McRobbie, 2009). Importantly the participants' narratives highlight different norms and values of mothering between the mother and daughter dyads. Complexities emerge in the context of the mother who wants to stay in the home and raise her child, in relation to the changing social construction of motherhood and the commonality of the working mother. Women have to actively negotiate their 'consciously endorsed values' and traditional gender association of full-time mother (Fine, 2010: 84). Despite a social shift and acceptance of men being emotionally and practically involved as fathers, it remains women who predominantly renegotiate their home life or compromise their career progression in order to accommodate childcare arrangements (Crompton, 2002; Wright, 2011). I

consider whether there has been a re-drawing of the private sphere and if women are taking advantage of the maternal legacy.

For the women in this research who have started a family, more heterogeneous approaches and experiences are demonstrated through childcare, employment and home dilemmas. By considering the generational changes between the participant mothers and daughters at age 18 respectively, the discourse of feminism is used to explore the greater options and prospects for women as a collective during this time period. The gains women have made in social and career prospects are easily identified, but narratives also reveal ongoing individual difficulties, despite the premature celebration of post-feminism as the battle of equality 'having been won' (Walby, 2011: 20). Many of the women presented as post-feminists, who declare the work of feminism as complete whilst acknowledging its historical successes (Walby, 2011). The post-feminist position provides an antagonistic position for the daughters who want to work and have children. The daughters in this study exhibit greater post-feminist tendencies than their mothers through their educational experiences and ambitions around future work prospects. For many of the participant mothers, the home is central to the site of family cohesion and the stability of the family unit is compromised by work outside of the home. Paradoxically, many of the mothers held a shared view that their daughters will have every work and personal opportunity in life, yet remain opposed to their daughters working with a young family. This presents a within-family dilemma of opportunity and choice for the daughters in this research who want or need to return to work, particularly in the current economic climate of austerity, which in the main is reliant on a two-income family.

Looking beyond university, an overview is given of the women's experiences of work and whether attendance at university has affected progression in the workplace. Age specific patterns emerge concerning university attendance for the mother-daughter dyads. Age is significant in differentiating the opportunities and barriers women have had to overcome to attend university, with younger women benefiting from greater equality to gain qualifications

and employment (Walby, 1997). In this study there are observable generational differences between job prospects and the role of a degree as a threshold qualification for future professional careers. Ultimately the daughters' life gains stemming from their mothers' interventions disappear when the daughters start a family, as childcare becomes a significant factor in their career progression.

The nature of social change for women and the progression of women's equity are considered in the light of more liberal approaches to attitudes to marriage and equality in relationships. Feminist theory is used to understand how activism through collective groups has improved life opportunities for women (Walby, 1990). The generational aspect of this research is useful for pinpointing key feminist movements and thinking, by considering the mother's memories and experiences of feminist events and if they shaped their subsequent choices when they became mothers themselves.

I will be making a claim to an interpretation of post-feminism and I propose that many women in this research identified as passive feminists. Although much has been written around post-feminism (McRobbie, 2009; Negra, 2009), the participants are not engaging in a dismissal of feminism. Passive feminism recognises that women acknowledge and often celebrate the work and changes created through the feminist movement, yet make an active choice not to engage with feminist activity. Moreover, many of the women show a lack of visible and voluntary support for ongoing feminist causes, but equally a clear acknowledgement of the social and political freedoms more readily afforded to women. Examples of passive feminism are explored later in this chapter. Walby (2011) acknowledges that post-feminism exhibits a denial of feminism, whilst concurrently celebrating its successes. Passive feminism will be shown as the more dominant position of the participants than those who clearly identify as feminists. Passive feminism has evolved in response to the highest vocal period of feminism in history. There has been a transition away from the radical, feminist campaigning of social democracy to the current neoliberal society. Post-feminism is often bound up with

neoliberal discourses of consumer culture, freedom and opportunity (McRobbie, 2009; Fraser, 2009; Walby, 2011).

I also examine a link between those women who identify as feminists or have taken part in feminist activism in relation to their educational background. Stanley and Wise (1983) discuss the relationship between theory and practice in the experiences of radical feminists. I argue that the lived experience and the social and political content gained during university life and study encourage the exploration of feminist issues. The convention of academic language expresses shared understandings, values and assumptions not accessible to lay women (Standing, 1998), so women who have attended university are more likely to express a feminist identity and engage with activism than those who are otherwise unsupported.

Discourse surrounding the return to work following childbirth is explored specifically through the narratives of three of the daughters, Maya, Leanne and Leona, who have subsequently become mothers themselves, occupying a unique space that justifies the label 'daughter-mothers'. The telling of their stories gives consideration to the role of motherhood from the position of daughters who are now mothers themselves. The intergenerational approach of this research allows an exploration of social and biographical locations (Thomson *et al.*, 2011). Despite the greater commonality of men's increased roles in co-parenting, Maya, Leanne and Leona's understandings of modern mothering reflect an ongoing burden of both working mother guilt and the right to remain in the home raising children, without being judged on their decisions. Ribbens' (1994: 163) description of the 'balancing act' of motherhood continues to be relevant, as the daughter-mothers wrestle with the tension of retaining their identities as individuals, as well as the practicalities and emotional work of mothering.

Dyhouse's (2002) argument that gendered discourse is significant in the transformational effect of women's studies is firstly explored by charting the mothers' recognition of women as a collective who instigated change. The daughters' viewpoints complete the generational cycle and explore how the

feminist movement was successful in breaking conformity of women in relation to education, employment and motherhood. I then consider how women as individuals exercise this freedom of choice and highlight the barriers that still exist for mothers, working mothers and women who work inside and outside of the home.

7.1 A Feminist Identity through Higher Education

Walby (2011) asserts that discourse of social relations revolves around class, with little reference to gender inequality. In terms of collective women's actions providing greater women's liberty, feminism has played a key role (Arnot, 2000). Many forms of feminism exist, but two areas, second wave and post-feminism, repeatedly recurred in participants' narratives. I have used these two periods of feminism to provide a structure with which to understand the generational changes in the lifespan between the mothers and daughters. Walby (2011) acknowledges the need to understand ongoing difficulties with gender relations as distinctive to classed outcomes, with particular regard to the notion of opportunity between England's transition from a social democracy to a neoliberal society. Many of the daughters exhibit post-feminist traits of competitiveness and choice, in line with neoliberalism (Olssen and Peters, 2005). The findings in this research reflect the viewpoint of women from a British context of women's growing opportunity and not from Walby's (2011) exploration of feminism from a wider, international perspective.

The timeline from the second wave to current feminist thinking is a useful barometer of generational difference, as the second wave was prevalent during the formative years of many of the mothers, particularly in relation to a changing position of individuality and choice. The purpose of the telling of the participants' stories is not to conflate the ideals of the second wave as complete through a post-feminist exploration. The understanding of women's experiences of second wave feminism provides an opportunity to consider recollections of participants' life events and incidents of the revolutionary feminism of the 1970s and 1980s. Incremental changes can be charted

through historical challenges from second wave feminism through to women's opportunities and post-feminist comments concerning the retention of the feminine (Noddings, 2003; Salih and Butler, 2004).

Salih and Butler (2004) interpret women's symbolic and actual constraints of social and political involvement through a history of exclusion and the changing of ideals to norms (Jagger, 2004). It would be credible to suggest that women who have attended university are more likely to engage with feminist activity, due to greater freedom from constraints within the habitus (Lawler, 2008). I can reveal that all of the mothers in this study who identified as feminists (4) had been to university. However, the majority of the participants, whether mother or daughter, did not actively identify with feminism (see Table 4). This finding was unanticipated, as the social and political content afforded through university study encourages the dissemination and action of feminist issues.

Table 4

Responses to 'would you identify yourself as a feminist?'			
	Yes - feminist	No – not a feminist	Unable to identify definitively
Mothers (18)	4	10	4
Daughters (21)	5	10	6

Women who attend university are in a location that provides them with the space to transform their identity away from the gendered norms and values of the familial home (Bhopal, 2010). The narratives from the mothers who have been to university yet are not identifying as feminists offer a further explanation for the daughters' lack of engagement with feminist issues. If educated women who have knowledge and an academic voice are not reproducing feminist identities this will lessen the likelihood of feminist discussion outside of academia. To understand if the mothers and daughters

are discussing or actively engaging with feminism, each of the participants, who were interviewed individually (with the exception of Leigh and her daughters Leanne and Leona), were asked ‘would you identify yourself as a feminist?’ Across the whole sample, eight out of 18 mother-daughter responses were the same, as highlighted in Table 5.

Table 5

Comparison of mother-daughter responses of identification as a feminist			
Both* responses ‘yes’	Both** responses ‘no’	Both unable to identify definitively	Mixed responses
3	3	2	10
<p>* In one instance, one mother and her two daughters were interviewed, one agreed with her mother and answered ‘yes’ and the other was unable to identify</p> <p>** In another instance, one mother and her two daughters were interviewed and all answered ‘no’</p> <p><u>Intergenerational consideration</u>: reproduction of opinion from mother to daughter – eight out of 18 pairings gave the same response.</p>			

Across the mother-daughter dyads in this research there are both pro-feminism and post-feminism attitudes identified in the data. All nine women who identified as feminists are graduates. Four of the mothers who have been to university identified as feminists and all are educated to or studying at PhD level. Their narratives indicate politically motivated justifications for their engagement with feminism in a way that is largely absent from the daughters’ viewpoints, suggesting this is a facet of education. This is revealed in excerpts from two of the mothers and their daughters. The similar responses between the pairings suggest a level of within-family determinism in respect of their feminist identity.

'I think I would have called myself quite a staunch feminist at one time, certainly by the time I got to university as a mature student I would have done and partly I picked that course because I knew it was quite a lefty course I suppose [...] I think gender was absolutely at the forefront of the way I thought about things and I felt fiercely feministic in the sense of, y'know, I will be economically independent'. [Chris, mother]

'Linda: Would you identify yourself as a feminist?

Christina: Yes I definitely would.

Linda: Why would you say that?

Christina: (laughs) I think I've always been brought up to be one and obviously going to a girls' school it's definitely a very feminist environment [...] they tried to, kind of, give us the idea that there's no reason why we shouldn't do anything just because we're female, that it's unnecessary for us to feel, er, inferior to anyone'. [Christina, daughter]

'I remember reading a lot of Germaine Greer and I was probably an activist in a lot of different senses, kind of quite involved in the Green movement and I suppose from those people who were perhaps just a generation, well perhaps slightly older than I am who were more involved in effecting change, but their influence I think would have probably influenced my thinking and my attitudes. [...] There are different types of feminists, it's quite nuanced, but of course I would say I am'. [Rose, mother]

'Linda: Would you consider yourself a feminist?

Rosanne: Yes I would, because I think if I lived in another time I would have had a bit of an uphill, more of a struggle to do what I want to do'. [Rosanne, daughter]

Chris and Rose highlight the influences of various political forces of the day, active at the time of the Thatcher government (1979-1990). This was a time of growing neoliberalism and activist movements, including the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), when strikes and political confrontation over a changing society were at a high level (Arnot, David and Weiner, 1999). Other than those who identified as feminists, none of the daughters described any involvement or acknowledgement of any political interest, mirroring the general decline in the interest in politics reported by Žižek (2006). The study, in its use of inter-familial, dyadic responses also reveals the importance of exploring issues through two different viewpoints or lenses (Žižek, 2006). This absence of political motivation confirms Bryson's (2007) view that in a capitalist society women work longer hours with reduced leisure periods and increased financial pressures, and consequently lack interest in becoming involved in social justice issues (*ibid.*). Women are engaging in work without a sense of 'civic' ethic.

Unusually, Tiana's narrative offers an explicit example of a mother instilling feminist reproduction:

'I might to the outside world be a passive Asian woman, but I think in a way I'm possibly more feminist than some of the white, middle class women'. [Tia, mother]

'If we as women don't even support our own gender, then who else? We need to respect ourselves otherwise we won't get any respect. The situation is inequality still exists and we can't fuel it [...] I think my Mum, I didn't mention it, but my Mum is really kind of, she encourages me to read feminist material as well [...] She's instilled values in us that we're women and we can do anything and that's always made me feel empowered in that sense'. [Tiana, daughter]

In Tia and Tiana's narratives, there is a clear acknowledgement of inter-relational feminism. Of the four mothers who are feminists, three of their daughters, Tiana, Christina and Rosanne identified as feminists and are all

themselves current undergraduates or postgraduates. All seven feminist narratives provide examples of both individual empowerment and equality supported within school and the family. They are also a reflection on the more liberal approaches to choice and competition instilled through the neoliberal market introduced by the Thatcher administration and continued by New Labour (Arnot, David and Weiner, 1999).

Two of the daughters of mothers who identified as feminists, Rosalind and Samantha, did not themselves identify as feminists. Rosalind is discussed later in the chapter. Samantha exhibits a post-feminist attitude and her comment is particularly useful as it stands in such contrast to that of her mother Sam's personal recollection of her time as a CND supporter:

'I supported the women's peace movement, I went to Greenham Common, yes. It was quite an amazing thing. It's not something I explicitly say in anything, but I think it's a very integral part of me [feminism], yes and it has been since I was a young woman'. [Sam, mother]

'I don't think there's any, like, limits or barriers and I've never really seen there being [...] I guess I just completely missed all of that and was born into a generation that girls and boys can do whatever you want to really [...] I don't know that much about it and I don't really see it [feminism]. It doesn't really affect my life'. [Samantha, daughter]

Like Samantha's narrative, many of the daughters in this study discussed feminism as a historical concept, adopting the perspective that McRobbie (2009:60) regards as 'feminism undone'. The large variance in responses to the question of feminism makes it necessary to explore Walby's (2011: 1) statement that 'feminism is not dead. This is not a post-feminist era. Feminism is still vibrant, despite declarations that it is over'. The need for active feminism remains crucial in places in the world where women still suffer persecution and danger due to their gender. In the context of this study, feminism appears to be active in certain pocket of women's lives, particularly

in academic circles. The low incidence of activist feminism in my research and the overall responses in the interviews suggest a visible post-feminist discourse. Very few of the mothers and daughters in this study are engaging in feminist discussion.

Twenty of the 39 women interviewed said they were not feminists. Narratives suggest a negative identification with second wave tendencies and radical feminist traits of 'bra burning' and 'anti men' from mothers and daughters, rather than the second wave movement as a necessary development in response to feminist goals (Walby, 1999). The remarks below from Sue and Debbie differ substantially from Chris and Rose's earlier feminist views of left wing, second wave feminism as empowering their choices and attitudes. Both mother and daughter show signs of alliances with post-feminism, with the mothers recalling second wave memories:

'I don't consider myself a feminist because rightly or wrongly I think my most important job is to be a wife and a mother and I'm not all career, career, career and therefore I wouldn't really class myself as a feminist. I'm not going to chain myself to the railings [...] I think it has changed because me being more old fashioned I see feminism equals militancy and it's probably not that now, but that was the concept further back, wasn't it? [Sue, mother]

'I think it's pretty equal nowadays, there's no real discrimination. If a girl says she wants to do engineering or a man says he wants to do nursing, which is obviously typically the other way around, there may still be prejudices but the opportunities are there for them to do it if they want to [...] I don't think gender should come into it actually'. [Suzanne, daughter]

'Germaine Greer was a feminist and it was all about burning your bras and being macho and that was how feminism came across to me'. [Debbie, mother]

'I don't think we need to be [feminists] anymore [...] I don't feel like I have to particularly push as a women. I feel like I have to push as a person to be my best and beat everyone else. I don't feel like it's because I'm a woman'. [Deborah, daughter]

Sue acknowledges the socio-cultural change for women between the generations, supported by Suzanne's argument of the individualistic discourse (McRobbie, 2009). In considering aspects of a 'looking away' from feminism, Walby (1997) explores the cultural shift in norms and values and the unconscious, historically patriarchal values passed on in the home from generation to generation. The similar within-family responses, both pro and post-feminism, suggest that for some of the daughters in this study, maternal viewpoints are valued and considered. Brooks (2004) researches fathers' positive involvement in educational choices, but highlights the norm of mothers' active engagement in the decision-making process. The daughters are exhibiting much more generalisation of feminism as an historical concept, a central principle of post-feminism (Walby, 2011). The mothers personalise the discourse of feminism to gender and family, with little mention of pay or career equity. Jess and Steph and the similarities of their daughters' responses support this idea further:

'I'm happy with my life and the relationship I have with my husband, erm, things like that don't bother me at all [...] so I wouldn't say I'm a feminist, no'. [Jess, mother]

'I think I've been born into a society where it's all been established now and that people are equal'. [Jessica, daughter]

'I would say no, I'm not a feminist then, because I do think there are jobs that women are not as good as, as men are, more physical, y'know'. [Steph, mother]

'I just sort of think everyone's the same'. [Stephanie, daughter]

Steph displays what McRobbie (2009: 79) sees as a ‘conventional feminine vulnerability’. Noddings (2003) argues that as women we create agencies to provide the necessary caretaking of specific roles, which Steph contextualised in a gendered way. Interestingly many of the mothers made references such as Elle’s (mother) reply: *‘I’d like for them [daughters] for things to be equal, but for me it’s a bit different’*. Some mothers suggested they are happy to be treated ‘differently’ as they are happy with their ‘place’ in life, which has echoes of the norms that the feminist movement fought against. However, all of the mothers expect their daughters to have equality, despite their lack of verbal support for feminist values, showing their post-feminist stance (McRobbie, 2009; Walby, 2011). This further acknowledges that the mothers are seeking social and educational improvement for their daughters.

There was a very definite shift in opinions from the mothers’ and the daughters’ experiences in the secondary school sector. In terms of equality in the school classroom, every daughter without exception made comment that they felt they had the same opportunities as the boys and that no restrictions were placed on them based on their gender *‘I think I did a term of rugby (laughs) I mean I tried everything’* [Victoria, daughter]. This was in contrast to many of the mothers who had experiences of gender segregation by subject *‘we still did cookery and needlework and the boys’ school did woodwork and CDT’* [Rose, mother]. As discussed in Chapter Five, women are not yet fully converting gender-neutral opportunities in school into equal pay earnings beyond university (Purcell, 2002; Reay, David and Ball, 2005). Walby (2011) examines the relationship between equality and difference in relation to pay, suggesting equal pay legislation is a contribution towards equality, rather than genuine equal gender treatment.

Other than those who definitively self-identified as either feminists or not, another group began to emerge from the data. These women did not wish to call themselves feminists, yet to me, on deeper reflection of their transcripts, exhibited feminist tendencies and narratives. These are explored through the idea of passive feminism.

7.2 Passive Feminism

A large proportion of participants exhibited a sense of latent or subliminal feminism through both the nuanced and explicit responses in their interviews. Despite various strands of feminism adapting and developing over time, it seems that some women remain nervous of the language of feminism. Many women in this study exhibited a broad understanding of feminism as having second wave political resonances and for modern women who have been raised in a capitalist society with few barriers to choice, this is prohibiting their engagement with feminist issues (Bryson, 2007). Many of the women in this study did not self-identify as feminists, yet their narratives frequently demonstrated feminist thinking. Duncan (2010: 498) refers to these as ‘weak feminists’, women who lack the commitment to a feminist identity. I would argue that many women are engaging in passive feminism. My interpretation of passive feminism is women unwilling to be actively vocal in feminist activity, but displaying the benefit of attitudes and dispositions gained from previous feminist campaigning. This is separate from Ringrose’s (2013: 147) theorising of ‘passive feminine sexuality’ that is specifically embedded in the discourse of sexuality.

My idea of women displaying passive feminism emerged directly from a participant’s comment. During our interview I asked Francesca if she considered herself a feminist, to which her reply was:

‘When somebody says feminist I imagine people burning bras [...] I wouldn’t say I was like an angry feminist, more of a passive feminist’.
[Francesca, daughter]

Francesca explicitly offers the idea that feminism has radical attitudes and dispositions of ‘people burning bras’ gained from previous second wave feminist campaigning. Ringrose (2013: 142) had ‘rabid responses’ from the British press to her research that girls should be taught feminism in schools. I would argue that this is a core reason that women now shy away from identification as a feminist, for ‘fear’ of appearing masculine or having to be

actively involved as a protestor. Kinser (2010) and Maushart (1999) concur that some women want to remain outside of the feminist ideals to avoid its conflicts and contradictions. I applied this thinking to women displaying feminist thinking, yet unwilling to identify as a feminist for these reasons. Despite her answer that she is not a feminist, I use Leanne's narrative to present a further example of a passive feminist:

'I wouldn't say that I'm a feminist, maybe because in my mind I do have a lot of negative problems with the label [...] I think that sometimes those militant type behaviours are necessary to get you to a different platform [...] I think it afforded us more choice and the chance to do more things'. [Leanne, daughter]

Here Leanne states that she is not a feminist and her difficulty with the label of feminism, yet articulates a need for feminist activism. Walby (2011) suggests post-feminism is often branded as a celebration of successful feminist campaigning, rather than a potential to continue to open up new feminist debates. Leanne's narrative is in line with Noddings' (2003) view that campaigning can be seen as militant and produces a loss of femininity when engaging with gender-related issues.

I would argue from these experiences that some daughters have aligned themselves as passive feminists. There is hesitancy for women to present themselves as feminists for fear of suggestion that they are 'anti-men' (Noddings, 2003). From a positive perspective, women's experiences of gender equality in school show a marked improvement in choice and opportunity. However, any lack of reproduction of feminist inquiry between mother and daughter adds a further dimension to the reduction in feminist activity. If women are seeing equality in school and are not discussing feminist issues in the home, there remains little public or private space for women to engage in such conversations.

Whether or not these women identified as feminists or post-feminists, their overall experiences of gender equality in school and positivity are shown to

change once women find work and subsequently take a career break to have children. The following section highlights the similarities and changes in motherhood between the mother and daughter's generation, including the notion of choice and the individual interpretation of increasing the opportunities provided by their mothers at the tertiary education stage.

7.3 Mothering and Employment: Past Experiences and Future Expectations

Despite many identical topics and concerns associated with child rearing, mothering remains to be seen as an individual *problem* rather than a collective issue (Asher, 2011). The notion of mothering is considered particularly problematic when discussing the return to work after having children, especially for low-income families, as maternity pay and leave in England are among the worst in Europe (*ibid.*).

Of the 18 mothers interviewed, May and Leigh are retired and Anne has taken early retirement with long-term ill health issues. Helen is at home full-time. The other fourteen mothers are in voluntary, part or full-time employment. Tara, Debbie and Tia are also studying part-time for Masters and PhDs at the same time as working.

Ten of the 21 daughters are in full-time employment: Rosanne, Stephanie, Jennifer, Samantha, Taruh, Leona, Deborah, Eleanor and Katherine, as well as Leanne who is currently on maternity leave. Nine daughters are currently in full-time A-level, undergraduate or postgraduate study: Jessica, Rosalind, Christina, Annette, Suzie, Francesca, Suzanne, Tiana and Helena. Maya is a full-time mother and Tara is unwaged. Three of the daughters, Maya, Leanne and Leona are introduced in this chapter as daughter-mothers and their experiences regarding mothering follow. The other daughters do not have children and were therefore not asked about issues surrounding motherhood. Yet five of the daughters, Suzie, Jessica, Eleanor, Samantha and Taruh, did independently articulate they would become full-time mothers when they start a family. Daughters Eleanor and Samantha raised the issue of returning to

work after children and are already negotiating a relational sense of choice around their impending futures. Their narratives return to the notion of being homemakers and do not suggest any home/career balance, reflecting Thomson *et al's* (2011: 118) findings of the reproduction of 'thwarted ambitions' even before they have children.

'Some people don't have the choice and they think oh, I've got to go back to work and who knows, we might be in that position but at the moment I feel like I'd like to be a stay-at-home mum'. [Eleanor, daughter]

'You can't really have a full time job with young children and I guess all this will change when I decide to have children and maybe my career won't feel that important anymore'. [Samantha, daughter]

Eleanor and Samantha have an awareness of their future position in the home as work and like the women in Maushart's (1999) study, suggest an impending sense of sacrifice of their careers for motherhood. Eleanor's narrative is in line with her mother's choice of staying at home 'for her children'. When I met Eleanor, she was newly married and the subject of starting a family had already been discussed within her family. Samantha, however, does not replicate her mother Sam's background, as Sam became a working mother when Samantha was young.

Eleanor and Samantha are already identifying the potential issues of both being at home and earning money as modified breadwinners (Asher, 2011). Both of the daughters here are acknowledging that their employment may have to change and they will choose for their working hours to become more transient in order to accommodate their families, whilst providing an income (Wright, 2011). Vincent (2010) explores Hay's (1996) ideology of 'intensive mothering', where childrearing is an all-encompassing regime that supersedes and takes precedence over any other aspect of the mother's life.

It is important to consider how the post-feminist position is negotiated in light of the commodity culture (Negra, 2009). Of the rhetoric around equality, employment choices remain limited or constricted by culturally constructed economic and moral decisions. Women have gained the right to work, parent and retain individuality, yet are also driven by consumption patterns, both inside and outside of the home (*ibid.*). When women choose to stay at home and raise children, tensions still reflect Hay's (1996: 132) descriptor of 'mommy wars', where stay-at-home mothers are 'lazy' and do not contribute to the family purse, despite their contribution to the family through a myriad of mothering dilemmas. In Maushart's (1999) study, raising children was often seen as 'time out' from a career, rather than a career in itself. With the exception of Jessica below, none of the daughters discuss co-parenting or the father as having any choice in the decision to stay at home with children. The social construction of the mother as the decision maker in child rearing decisions is implicit in many of these narratives (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011). Co-parenting has not been fully embraced and women assume they will remain the main carers for their children. These findings reflect a paradigm shift in the notion of choice away from home and work equity, back to the mother with sole caregiver responsibility (McRobbie, 2009). However, not all of the narratives reflected this position of 'burden' and for Suzie and Taruh, they were both open to the idea of full-time mothering:

'I think I would quite happily be a stay-at-home mum [...] I think women of Mum's generation, it would absolutely have been an acceptable career option [full-time mother] and now it would be laughed upon if that's what you wanted to do'. [Suzie, daughter]

'I'm quite a traditionalist even though I've always seen my mum working. Ideally for me I don't want to have to work full time [...] I wouldn't sacrifice my family life for my career'. [Taruh, daughter]

Both Suzie and Taruh are progressing in potentially high achieving careers. Suzie is in her third year of a five-year veterinary science course. Taruh is a

graduate working for a Non-Governmental Organisation. Yet both express a willingness, in theory, to stop their careers for their family. Suzie and Taruh are already investing emotional capital into their future motherhood. Reay (2004: 71) acknowledges the power of emotional capital as ‘investment in others rather than the self’. Suzie’s argument that her mother did not have to justify her decision to be a homemaker, is compounded by the experiences of one mother, Debbie:

‘I think socially sometimes it’s harder for her than it was for me and like I say with the expectation, if you have children that you’ll continue to work, the expectation that her and her partner have that they will contribute 50/50 to their finances [...] she’s going to have to go through life expecting to pay 50/50, whereas I didn’t have that’.
[Debbie, mother]

Whilst all of the mothers acknowledge that their daughters have greater educational chances than they did, a thread emerges here of an inversion of opportunity. Debbie suggests that her daughter will have a lack of choice due to the expectation of both financial contribution to the household and mothering, yet there is an acknowledgement that women have access to more opportunity than ever. The desire to be a full-time mother was consistent in all of the mothers’ narratives:

‘I didn’t want to work, I wanted to bring up the family [...] I’ve been happy to be a Mum and if I had my way now, I wouldn’t work now. I’d be happy to stay at home’. *[Jess, mother]*

Jess’ words particularly emphasise her feelings of traditionalisation (Gillies, 2008), moving back to her homemaking values. Yet her daughter, Jessica, is the only daughter to express her understanding that childcare will be a shared option if she starts a family.

‘If I have children I’d like to stay at home with them [...] I’d like to think that the man would say ‘right, if you want to go out to work you

can and if you want to stay and look after the children it's more of a shared thing'. [Jessica, daughter]

Despite the huge change in women's rights, equality and more gender equal parenting, only one narrative from 39 reflected this sense of possibility of joint participation and collaboration for childcare. Thomson *et al.* (2011) consider the position that fathers who work full-time and do not fully co-parent are missing out on family life. Children lose the input of the paternal viewpoint and in many cases there is a loss of the women's earning potential. Brooks (2004) also raises the point that many fathers would actively wish to be involved in the education process. Bourdieu (2001) argued that women's changing status through access to higher education has re-positioned women in the division of labour, yet concurrently men are also making progress, meaning '*the structure of the gap is maintained*'.

7.3.1 Childcare

I have separated out the three daughters who are already mothers themselves to explore their realities and lived experiences as young mothers. In particular, I want to consider Noddings' (2003: 128) view that 'mothering is not a role but a relationship'.

Ribbens (1994) explores the interpretation of the societal transition from children's learning and play predominantly in the home, to early childhood socialisation in childcare and nurseries. Ribbens (*ibid.*: 21) suggests that women's experiences and perspectives are underestimated and places 'maternal childrearing as increasingly irrelevant'. This is in line with Debbie's narrative '*They're my babies and I want to look after them [...] but staying at home with a baby ... it's not a rated occupation, is it?*' In her later work, Ribbens (1998) extends this argument using Hochschild's (1979) framing rules about childcare, which shows culturally constructed notions of motherhood to be in conflict with the realities and experiences of current day-to-day mothering trends. As such, many of the mothers expressed their feelings of wanting to stay at home and raise their babies and young children.

Whilst many of the mothers did begin to return to work as their children became older, either to return to careers (i.e. teaching) or for income, the mothers' viewpoints generally reflect homemaking as the social trend of a particular era, that Negra (2009) argues is outdated. Mothers who work now are more likely to reflect the possibility that they are balancing childcare arrangements alongside fulfilling their own personal goals, whilst adding to the family income (Wright, 2011).

Of the 21 daughters I interviewed, three, Maya, Leanne and Leona are mothers themselves. Maya remains a homemaker with her children, whilst Leanne and Leona, sisters, have returned to the workplace after having their children. Leanne was on maternity leave with her second child at the time of our interview. Leanne's narrative is an explicit example of the complexity of childcare. She describes the mammoth juggling task when she returned to work after the birth of her first child when he was seven months old:

'What I did was compressed a week where I worked four days a week but I did my full week's hours. So I did nine hours a day and I had one day off. Mum would look after (son), I'd have him on the Wednesday and Mum would have him Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. After he was about two and a half, he went to nursery a couple of days a week and Mum had him two days, then he went full time and I would have him on the Wednesday until he got to school age. In the summer he had to stay in nursery for that much longer but yes, I had Mum to help me a lot. I'm not sure exactly what we are going to do this time around'. [Leanne, daughter]

When I explored these difficulties with Leanne, she explained quite clearly *'It was never, you know (husband) would stay at home, I assumed that role. We didn't even talk about it really. I wouldn't want it any other way to be honest'*. Deeper investigation of why Leanne felt this way was due to a sense of moral panic over placing her children in childcare, reflected in Furedi's (2001) work on paranoid parenting. She said *'the thought of my baby going to a nursery makes me want to cry. As good as the care may be, I don't know*

them'. This is in line with Vincent *et al.*'s (2010) reference to mothers who consider placing their children in nurseries or childcare as 'running a risk'.

Maya's narrative further reflects the moral panic around the use of childcare. Her decision to be a homemaker is as much a decision based on her political and social values as her emotional ties. Maya makes an argument for her choice of parenting lifestyle:

'The government needs to take on board that being a parent is the most important work you can do and if necessary, why not pay mothers to do that? You're paying professionals to parent children and bring them up, why can't you pay the mother to do it? [...] Why have you got to go to a complete stranger to have your children brought up?' [Maya, daughter]

Maya presents a very traditional view of mothering, yet lives a very modern lifestyle. This is in contrast to the habitus in which she was raised, a traditional two parent, two children, middle-class family. Maya modifies her family in relation to her own childhood background, both in terms of lone mothering and her reliance on benefits to support her alternative ways of raising and schooling her children.

7.4 Daughter-Mothers

Maya was privately educated and following university she subsequently enjoyed a successful career for a government agency, involving worldwide travel. Maya stopped work to have her twin children six years ago and she is now 44 years old, the oldest participant daughter. Maya's lifestyle is the most atypical of the three daughters who have children and her decision to conceive alone is far from typical, yet conversely she holds the most traditional values:

'My children are also rather unusual, erm, they were conceived by donor conception so I decided as a single person to have children, so

they don't have a father. Having done that, I decided that I wanted to have that life, so at the moment I home educate my children, so I don't work [...] I have very much gone back to our grandparents. But that's what I want'. [Maya, daughter]

'I'm quite happy to stay at home and bake bread and make jam and raise babies [...] I really believe that it is difficult to ... I think it's not fair on children to have two parents who work. I think within a family, a couple, one parent should be dedicated to childcare'. [Maya, daughter]

Maya's lifestyle is an explicit example of intensive mothering (Hays, 1996). Her narrative spans both the orthodox and the modern; sole parenting with diversity in her childrearing perspective (Ribbens, 1994). Interestingly her interpretation of a traditional lifestyle reflects her upbringing within a stable family unit, but does not reflect her mother May's experience of wanting or raising young children:

'I went back to work with three small children against my family's wishes, my husband's wishes, but I did it [...] [Maya] and I are at the opposite ends of the spectrum. I got married not wanting children, but I was terribly stupid, it never occurred to me that I would get pregnant [...] the difference between me and [Maya] and many, many mothers who wait until they are well into their thirties, almost forty, is that I never wanted children, I don't know what it's like to want a child'. [May, mother]

Maya was raised in a nuclear family with her mother, father and two siblings, but she talks of her mother returning to work when she was 'very young' and 'being looked after by au pairs in a very middle class lifestyle'. It may be the case that Maya is searching for the traditional mothering role that her mother May was fighting to avoid. When I asked Maya if as a single parent she would at some point educate her children in school in order to return to work she shared her personal vision:

'People say I have to go back to work for financial reasons. Well, you don't, you can live off of benefit. There are ways of doing it [...] you have to make a decision about the kind of lifestyle you want [...] I do feel society has got it wrong at the moment. I'm quite angry with the government's expectation that people should get back to work. I'm being pushed back to work, I'm being told that I have to work and I feel that's wrong, that surely bringing up my children is the greatest job I can ever do and if we want two adults who are going to add to the economy and do well and be good citizens then that should be my priority'. [Maya, daughter]

Lone mothers have historically attracted negative press around irresponsible behaviour in order to gain social benefit (Standing, 1998; Gillies, 2007). As she pointed out, Maya does claim social benefit, yet her decision to conceive alone and become a single parent was intentional and she takes full responsibility for her choices, going beyond most women's expectations of the role of mothering. Standing (*ibid.*: 193) also acknowledges the term 'lone mother' as an academic construct, claiming that the women in her study did not consider themselves 'being alone'. Maya has made an independent bid to reclaim motherhood and describes here the lack of acknowledgement of parenting as a bona fide career (Hays, 1996; Maushart, 1999):

'I think as a society we have lost the importance of raising children. I think we seem to think that it's the school's role or the government's role to raise our children. I think we've forgotten that actually children need a parent, a good role model at home, they need stability at home and I think the government is just pushing parents back to work and to put their children into childcare earlier and earlier'. [Maya, daughter]

Motherhood is at the core of Maya's identity (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011) and Maya expresses her opinion that parenting has become undervalued in society. Maya pathologises the working mother, relying on psychosocial evaluations of what she considers is 'good mothering' that cannot be substituted by another (Hays, 1996; Ribbens, 1994). A key point of

Maya's narrative surrounds the ability to make decisions as an individual and her lack of financial independence as a parent wishing to choose sole parenting and home schooling for her children. This is line with Asher's (2011) argument of the need for the overhaul of maternity pay and leave and the right to flexible working and subsidized childcare.

The theme of working hours and childcare are critical in the experiences of the other daughters who are mothers, Leanne and Leona. Sisters Leanne and Leona were raised within a traditional family with their mother, Leigh and their father. In her interview, 76 year-old Leigh talks of the support she continues to give her family despite being widowed seven years ago and in deteriorating health:

Leigh: I'm kept busy with the grandchildren and with the housework. Thank God I'm able to do my own housework, support my daughters and grandchildren, cooking for them [...] I help with all the chores [...] the shopping, the house, so I'm kept busy.

Linda: So you're looking after everyone, that's your job now, looking after everyone.

Leigh: Yes'. [Leigh, mother]

The emotional and domestic support provided by Leigh is intrinsic to the running of her daughters' day-to-day lives, particularly for Leona as a single parent. Theirs is a close-knit family and to her daughters Leigh is the lynchpin of the family, with their maternal thinking learned from her experiences and opinions (Kinser, 2010). Leigh was a first generation migrant to this country from Jamaica and expressed the need to provide her daughters with the support that she did not have as 'an outsider' by race and cultural differences in the 1970s. Leona and her sister Leanne value and respect their mother's involvement in all family decisions, the cohesion of the family unit being central to all of their families' choices.

Like Maya, Leona has raised her child as a single parent. However, unlike Maya's concentration on her autonomy over decision-making, Leona's narratives reflect the responsibility of single parenting:

'I had [son] when I was 29 and I was off work for about three years, so I was glad for those three years. I was living with Mum and Dad so I was able to manage, but financially it was a struggle. I'm single, not married, not with anyone so all of the responsibilities for [son] are mine. I get a lot of support from my family but all the decisions are mine'. [Leona, daughter]

Leona's description as a responsible working parent with strong familial support stands in contrast to the pathologising of lone mothers as social benefit claimants. Thomson *et al.* (2011) reiterate the permanency of the mother-child relationship and its irrevocable nature over traditional or romantic partnerships. The stories of Maya and Leona take a feminist stance of challenging complicity with stereotypical viewpoints of the lone mother, in the same vein as Standing's (1998) findings.

Despite the traditional family arrangements in which all three daughters were raised, Leanne, Leona and Maya's experiences as mothers themselves are very different. Leanne and Leona have continued to retain the support of their mother as their children have grown older, also illustrated through the discussion around the intricate juggling of childcare support in Chapter Six.

Leanne is married and has two children, her youngest child being three weeks old at the time of our interview. Since leaving university Leanne has worked full-time, with only breaks in her career for maternity leave. Leanne stated she enjoys her work, but would prefer to stay at home with her children if finances allowed. Hays (1996) explores mothers' concerns over the quality and quantity of time they afford their growing children, alongside the rewards of paid employment. Leanne and Leona both self-identified as working class and said that they wanted to stay at home with their young children. However, if they had wanted to return to full-time employment at that stage in their

children's lives, their incomes would not have been sufficient to pay for all-day nurseries and childcare without the support of their mother. This is in line with Walby's (2011) point that a middle class income is necessary for families to be able to afford full-time childcare provision. Both Ribbens (1994) and Thomson *et al.* (2011: 17) suggest that motherhood and work is a 'conflicting project that must be balanced'.

Although Leanne's describes a strong partnership with her husband, she and her sister Leona were both only able to return to work with the support of their mother as a non-paid carer. Leanne's narrative reflects an opportunity foregone through her choice to not include her partner in the responsibility of childcare (Asher, 2011). She co-parents with her husband, yet she takes the lead on all decisions with regards to her children and subsequently carries the sole burden of her choices, including the home, childcare and the return to work:

'Leanne: Mum brought us up to be very independent, you know, you don't rely on a man to provide for you, you can be equal partners whether you are at home or at work but you work hard together. Women are now afforded a lot more opportunities [...] but we still have our hands tied in the home, so we run the home still, I would say now. We make the decisions pretty much, I would say we're responsible for furnishings, what colours and what happens with the kids and what clubs they attend and sorting out their dinner money and uniforms and clothes and we still do all of that and we work full time as well and we have careers [...] but you know, I would actually just like to be at home. I have the choice to be at home.'

Linda: So it's the choice that's the important bit?

*Leanne: We've got choices but, erm, I think we've made a lot more work for ourselves and made it hard as well [...] we've got a lot more pressure on our shoulders just because of the choice or expectations'.
[Leanne, daughter]*

Despite her presentation of her marriage as an equal partnership, Leanne still takes full control over childcare and child-centred decisions. This extends McRobbie's (2009) argument that women have undone any gains in co-parenting and instead reconfigured femininity by accommodating all responsibilities in both the home and work themselves. Whilst I acknowledge that there is much discussion of men's broadening attitudes to co-parenting (Redfern and Aune, 2010) I did not interview any partners in the process of this research. Leanne's narrative is a one-sided view of co-parenting and is a snapshot of thinking in relation to her perspective on male involvement in modern parenting.

Maya, Leanne and Leona have identified that their individuality has been compromised since becoming parents, either through reduced income or the weight of responsibility as a parent. They have also expressed the view that greater choice was available to them than in their mothers' era, although in Leanne's case acknowledging that she does not take advantage of possible support from her partner. Lack of support is a continuing issue with regard to retaining identity and individuality when caring for others, young or old.

7.5 Caring: Children and the Sandwich Generation

A feminist methodology is useful in exploring how retaining the identity of the self is problematic for women who take control of the caring aspect of their family (Noddings, 2003). For other mothers, there is a further layer of giving of themselves for those who are part of the 'sandwich' generation (Apter, 1995) supporting both children and elderly parents.

As well as acknowledging the need for support in childcare terms, some of the parents were also caring for elderly parents. Vicky's story is the most poignant:

'I was also looking after my elderly parents, erm, and then, well, I lost my Father when I had my first daughter and then after that I was really looking after my Mother. She didn't live with us, she had a residential

home, but I had an awful lot to do for her because they didn't do much for them, so it was full time looking after my home, husband, my children and my mother and I just couldn't fit in anything else'. [Vicky, mother]

Vicky illustrates the time constraints and the loss of the self when caring for everyone around her, an aspect that is often lost when considering the person in the middle of the sandwich generation (Apter, 1992). A strong kin system reinforces the dependence and/or interdependence of the mother-daughter relationship (Lawler, 2000). Despite a cultural variation, Tia also articulates the point of looking after elders and her husband's family when she lived with her husband's parents in her extended family following the early stages after her arranged marriage, with little consideration of the self:

'I know that I don't want my daughters to live in an extended family. I don't want them to have to dote on their in-laws [...] not about first of all please your in-laws, your brother-in-laws, your sister-in-laws and you're actually having to keep face with everyone else [...] It was pleasing everyone else and coordinating their voices'. [Tia, mother]

In Vicky and Tia's cases, they talk about giving so much of themselves to their families that they lose perspective of their own wants and needs. Conversely, in Jenny's narrative around raising her children, she opened up dialogue regarding caring for possible future grandchildren. Jenny has a different approach to the sandwich generation. She does not focus on the concept of future support for her daughter, rather on the loss of her own social space:

'I'd have them [future grandchildren] maybe one day a week, no more than that [...] I would do it for pleasure rather than to help her out [...] I wouldn't do it so she could go back to work, but a hell of a lot are [...] It's often to maintain a lifestyle that they want. Y'know, that's the reason they're going back to work, to maintain a lifestyle'. [Jenny, mother]

Whilst it is acknowledged that some women do return to work to support the lifestyle built prior to having children, more and more families are returning to work to fulfill day-to-day financial obligations (Asher, 2011). Further, Jenny's position is hypothetical at this stage, and does not consider that her daughter Jennifer may want to return to her '*cool job*' as a PR consultant for a multinational company or that Jenny may embrace the role of grandparent, should it materialise.

Having considered the role of women as carers for their children and the practicalities of organising childcare, I now turn to explore generational differences of women in the workplace.

7.6 Equality in the Workplace

Given the huge social changes between the generational timeline of the mothers and daughters entering the job market for the first time, it becomes important to examine the understanding of employment conditions and the shift in the changing levels of 'acceptable' social behaviour in the workplace.

All the mothers have worked in full-time positions at some period in their lives. Of the daughters, Katherine and Stephanie have worked since leaving school and another eight daughters have worked full-time since leaving university. Rosalind works part time around her Masters study and Suzie works in the holidays between her placement rotations. Three of the daughters, Jessica, Annette and Tiana are currently undergraduates and work in temporary positions during the holiday periods. One daughter, Samantha, is working unpaid in an internship and supplements her income with part-time bar work. Maya is a full time mother and Victoria is unwaged. Four daughters, Christina, Francesca, Suzanne and Helena have never worked.

Examples of more equality and changing work conditions are understood through the participants' lived experiences and are notable between the mothers' and daughters' generations. To establish the social landscape that

existed when the mothers were young, I include excerpts from the narratives of five mothers to demonstrate the commonality of chauvinism at the time. Each story is littered with examples of sexism and discrimination:

'Anne - If you wanted to get on in that school you had to sleep with the Head and I wouldn't.

Linda - You were aware of instances of that, were you?

Anne - Yes and I wasn't going to be chased around the office'. [Anne, mother]

'I worked in this exclusively male office and found it incredibly difficult. I just remember the sexist comments and The Sun being open and people talking about topless women'. [Chris, mother]

'I was keen to have some sort of training to progress beyond being a basic clerk and you had to pass exams and the men had time off work and the college and the exams paid for and the women had to do it themselves, so I couldn't do it. That's before the equality laws came in. It wasn't illegal what they did and that was the way it was'. [Fran, mother]

'When I was pregnant with [Helena] and there was a promotion being offered at work and I kept quiet about the fact that I was pregnant for a while because I knew that it would have an impact on whether or not I got the job [...] I then said, well, actually, if I got the job I would only be around for six months because I was pregnant and they actually told me that I was the one that they wanted for the job, but in light of what I had said they couldn't do it because they didn't know if I was coming back or not'. [Helen, mother]

'There were remarks in the office from men of a low level, sexual nature. They way they thought they could make comment and get away with it, y'know, about your physical appearance or you're a young girl

in your early 20s etc, erm, but I didn't feel I was in a position of power to say anything'. [Tia, mother]

I have provided many examples here to highlight the regularity of sexism, harassment and discrimination in interviews and employment that women faced in the workplace. Helen faced adversity based on future maternity plans and childcare arrangements. Fran found direct discrimination in funding training between men and women. Anne and Tia experienced first-hand physical and verbal harassment. Chris also highlighted the issue of sexism as an everyday experience in her office.

The daughters present a very different image of women in the workplace. Given the largely unstructured nature of the interviews, discrimination was not explicitly raised with any of the working daughters. None of them spoke of any incidents of discrimination, with the exception of Stephanie, discussed below. She explains how her line manager only employed men. Stephanie suggests the manager is showing discrimination based on her own social construction of attitudes and values from previous generations (Redfern and Aune, 2010):

'She said 'people will respect a man more' [...] she said that a man would be more powerful so yeah, it still exists in my job [...] she employed a guy and he was absolute useless. He was only there for three weeks and now she's got a woman [...] It's interesting because that women who said that to me, she's a lot older, she's in her 60s, so maybe she's still in the mindset of how it was. Perhaps she still thinks men are more dominant'. [Stephanie, daughter]

In a complete role reversal Rosalind, Leanne and Taruh suggested that women have positive discrimination over men in their workplaces as they are in media and PR industries with high levels of achieving females: *'If I suffer any discrimination it will be positive, because it's such a female dominated industry' [Rosalind, Daughter]*. This is in line with Hill's (2012) study of

women who work, that some women have identities that are defined by their occupations and others have jobs that define their identity.

The 12 daughters not in employment all suggested that they expect to be treated the same as men in the workplace and implied that they do not foresee anything except equality, which was important to note as the broadly unstructured nature of the interviews meant that these responses were not prompted from direct questioning. Several of them made inference that financial discrepancy does still exist between men and women in the same roles, but nobody provided first-hand examples. This supports McRobbie's (2009) argument that in neoliberal terms, financial reward follows those who actively pursue careers. Redfern and Aune (2010) suggest women demand equal pay for the chance to be financially independent. However, 'the motherhood penalty' continues to keep disparities between men and women's earnings, as women take time out and alter working arrangements to raise their children (Thomson *et al.*, 2011; Asher, 2011). Bourdieu (2001) stresses that women continue to inhabit the private, domestic space of society, sustaining the reproduction of women as characterised through their position in education, care and the service sector.

The narratives in this chapter illuminate the fact that women have greater access and equality in the education sector; social change and practice has freed women from obvious everyday discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Habitus and ingrained behaviours continue to play their part in the reproduction of segregation and differences between the genders (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). As identified earlier in the chapter, the fact that all of the daughters found complete equality in school life suggest this could produce greater equality in future generations. If changing attitudes and policies permeate into schools we can perhaps anticipate even greater advancements in equality in the workplace in the future.

7.7 Conclusion

The approach of analysing women as both individuals and as a collective has been used to highlight how women as a gendered group have enabled female progression and change, bringing increased mobility and choice for the individual. Women's engagement with feminist activity has demanded and created greater opportunity and lifestyle choice for women, yet conflict still remains. In terms of intergenerational analysis, issues have been raised of vast improvements in women's opportunities at work. However, in many cases, narratives are identical to the recurring feminist dilemmas of childcare, employment and identity from over twenty years ago (Hays, 1996; Walby, 1997; Ribbens and Edwards, 1998). Hay's (1996: 132) descriptor of 'mommy wars' draws parallels between the intergenerational differences of mothering styles and preferences for the mothers and daughters. All the mothers raised their children in their early years with no significant paternal childcare support. Yet many of the daughters are already negotiating how they will juggle work and mothering, despite acknowledging they are not ready or in a relationship where they would consider starting a family.

Any pre-conception I may have brought to this work would have been that the daughters would express a clear vision of wanting to build their careers after becoming mothers. However, my data shows that women still want to remain in the home and raise their children, yet are aware they will probably have an economic responsibility to return to work. For the mothers, there would have been an expectation for them to stay at home and raise their babies and children, which they all remember with some level of positive emotions. The mother-child bond appears to remain high and still carries an emotional burden for women choosing to work with a young family. This does not negate the choices women have when they to return to work with children, but instead highlights the emotional forces and stigma at play that deter women from greater involvement in careers with a young family. I suggest a new division is being created whereby the mothers are investing in their daughters' education to enter the public sphere of the job market, yet the

gains remain invisible in the home, where academic advances carry little value where domestic responsibilities are concerned.

The narratives of the mothers and daughters in this research suggest a generational progress in gender equality in schools. This is evident through the daughters' greater opportunity to access qualifications and university entry. There is equally a lack of reproduction of feminist perspectives between mother and daughter in the home. University remains a space for women to engage in feminist conversation, yet with the exception of four of the mothers, none of them are showing any interest in discussing feminism with their daughters. Subsequently the other daughters who attended university appear to show no inherent interest in feminism. There is some sense of feminist determinism within family, but not exclusively pro-feminism. Post-feminist statements are frequent in the narratives, suggesting women consider there are few barriers for girls and women in school and the workplace. This notion of feminism as complete has created an obverse choice for women not to engage with feminist involvement.

However, I detected nuances of feminist thinking through some of the interviews and I describe this as passive feminism. The idea of the loss of the feminine and echoes of the radical element of feminism in the 1980s still deters women from an association with feminism. There are underlying subtleties of subliminal, feminist thinking when women acknowledge the work of feminists before them and the necessity of such actions. Post-feminism is embedded in many of the narratives and despite this awareness of previous discrimination, women project a lack of responsibility to react to ongoing pay ceiling and childcare dilemmas in the current cultural context.

Moving from collective feminist action into individual freedoms, the notion of choice has been considered as remaining problematic and choice is often eradicated when women have to consider work as a necessity alongside a young family. Of all of the women interviewed, none expressed the opinion of work within the home as 'work'. The only narrative that begins to explore this issue is Maya (daughter), who suggests mothers are the experts for their

own children and should be paid to raise their children, rather than paying practitioners to do so and returning to work themselves.

The telling of the daughter-mothers stories through Maya, Leanne and Leona's served to showcase a contemporary perspective of mothering. In fact, many of their narratives reflected the same choices and dilemmas of previous generations, including women continuing to retain work both outside of the home and the domestic responsibility inside the home. Of the mothers' experiences, Tia, the youngest mother in the study, expressed her use of time in order to work, mother, run her home and study. Feminism has provided opportunities for women, yet women do not seem moved to take such advantages and some even show signs of adopting a more traditional view of mothering, often fostered by their own experiences within their own families. In considering the relation of the public/private sphere to the workplace, the young women are taking the benefits of feminism for granted within the workplace, but for the women who have become mothers, little appears to have changed within the privacy of the home.

Women's wider role in the job market as full time wage earners has economic implications for women who choose to stay at home and raise children, particularly in a society where women are commonly contributing significantly to the family income. Despite women now having the opportunity to have children and work, daughters Suzie, Taruh and Samantha suggest that when they start a family they may be willing to compromise their careers to have their children, which does not represent the breadth of choice and celebration that post-feminism suggests women are supposed to inhabit. I would add one clear caveat to all of the above. Working within a feminist methodology I recognise the importance of experience and the subjectivity this brings to research (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998; Letherby, 2003). With the exception of Maya, Leanne and Leona, none of the daughters within the research have children and consequently they speak from a speculative rather than a realist position.

Much has changed socially and career wise for women between the generations of the mothers and the daughters in this research. Yet in terms of stigma and issues for childcare and working mothers, little seems to have changed at all. Ringrose (2013) highlights the opposition that still remains to the discourse surrounding the ideologies of feminism. It is acknowledged that collective action by women and for women has created great reforms in a short space of time, yet women's individuality and opportunity remain contested. Women find themselves having to defend the right to stay at home and raise their children, yet equally defend the right to return to work with children.

Chapters Four, Five and Six discussed in-depth the great lengths mothers go to, in order to provide their daughters with support through university. Yet, the daughters' lack of feminist engagement and ambivalence to careers suggest that they are not capitalising on the maternal support. The belief and commitment the mothers are providing for their daughters' futures in the game of higher education, is lost in their daughters' choices and preferences post-education. Women's decisions to 'look away' from feminist issues may be seen as a post-feminist celebration, yet in doing so a core principle of feminism, choice, has been distorted. Morley (2010) explains how women are often mooted as both winners and losers: winners through growing opportunity, yet losers in their lack of visibility in leadership roles. The concept of post-feminism highlights a cultural and social shift of mass gendered conformity, but in doing so neglects the position of the independent, individual self. The daughters' educational gains can never be taken away and this permits an optimistic view that women can return to build careers and fulfill personal aspirations at later stages in their lives and may perpetuate their gains as parents of future generations. The change may be slow, but may prove to be significant in the future.

Chapter Eight

Overview and Conclusion

This research has specifically considered how social constructs and lived relations affect women's ability to access higher education. What has emerged is an understanding of the tensions and convergences between individual agency and choice, within the structures of home and educational institutions. Women's changing role in society has been examined through the inter-family, generational use of mothers and daughters, looking specifically at their experiences of access to higher education. There is a pattern of mothers supporting their daughters that is both gendered and classed, which enabled a deeper exploration of the strategies mothers employ to create advantage and opportunity for their daughters. Four key factors have emerged from such enquiry; (i) the important role that mothers play in enabling their daughters' access to university by providing financial, practical and emotional support (ii) the growing acceptance and normalcy of women as students within the tertiary sector (iii) women's lack of engagement with feminist issues and the emergence of passive feminism and (iv) ongoing dilemmas of childcare provision for women in the workplace. Research around daughters' higher education experiences and the support offered by their mothers is limited and this work fills that gap in knowledge. Intergenerational, gendered considerations of accessing higher education are central to the originality of this study.

Using a qualitative approach, 39 in-depth interviews were undertaken to address the following research questions:

How can we understand generational differences in women's opportunities to access higher education?

In what ways do mothers support their daughters to have choice and access in relation to undergraduate study?

What are the strategies that mothers employ to improve the prospects of their daughters attending university?

This study set out to explore whether there are familial differences in women's opportunities to access higher education and found increasing levels of maternal support to be a key factor in their daughters' success within the tertiary sector. The starting point for investigating these research questions was my interest in the shifting landscape of university access for women. The use of mother and daughter dyads suggested the possibility of developing an understanding of how opinions and choices have altered over time. Many of the mothers reflected on changing social circumstances and a lack of encouragement to engage in higher education, factors that have increased their desire to offer the optimum opportunity for their daughters.

I have gathered together the perspectives of individual, paired and within-family views, to consider how opportunities have changed for women between the generations. Whilst three of the mothers did go to university at the age of 18, the other fifteen went into the workplace straight from school and remained there until they had children. Seven of the mothers never went to university. For the daughters, the social shift in the acceptance that girls' academic potential is equal to that of boys is reflected in the delivery of subjects in schools, as highlighted in the discussions in Chapter Seven. In contrast to the mothers, the large number of girls achieving in school has promoted a higher demand for female access to higher education. It is more common for women to go to university now than was the case for the mothers, who are putting in place support strategies to provide opportunity for their daughters. In many cases the daughters' positions are different to their mothers.

The understanding of the reproduction of social and educational values within the home has been explored through the use of habitus, crucial in understanding the agency at play between the home setting and the ability to access higher education (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Reay, 2005). For the mother-daughter dyads in this research an

intergenerational analysis reveals a changing pattern of maternal input to the educational process. Many of the 18 mothers suggested that when they were children and teenagers they had little or no emotional or practical support from their mothers and as a consequence they show a heightened interest in their daughters' higher education. The middle class mothers now play a fundamental role in accelerating their daughters' bid to access a university place. For many of the dyads, there have been both a transformation and retranslation of educational outcomes within family, demonstrating a substantial change in maternal dispositions of support between the two generations of women (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977).

Class and family are manifest in the navigation around the discourse of higher education (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Women's access to higher education was severely limited up until recent times due to gender and class barriers, in comparison to the now established norm of attending university directly from school. Stories from mothers frequently recalled the prevalence of a lack of social and academic 'fit', signifying they were unable to realise the potential of university attendance. Conversely the daughters conveyed how they often felt compelled to go to university, regardless of their lack of career direction or financial ability to fund education. It is also acknowledged that for some women, cultural or religious identities continue to prohibit a lack of educational engagement. The notion of all women having a 'choice' in relation to education is therefore challenging and ambiguous. Based on the understanding that resources supplied through economic, social and cultural capital make the transition into higher education more straightforward, class remains central to educational access (Ball, 2003, 2008; Roberts, 2012). There was no consensus from the women in this study as to what class *is* or what makes someone working or middle class. Identifying class groupings and distinctions is seen as problematic, but there is a clear response that class still exists and continues to have a bearing on life chances (Robbins, 1993; Ball, 2003, Sayer, 2005). The middle class mothers exhibit high levels of support, particularly those in the divergent study dyad group. For these women, time is a precious investment into their daughters' futures (Reay, 1998b). The mothers in this study are continuing the practice of giving

significant, personal time to support their daughters, including sourcing and researching the best options and choices for university.

Economic capital remains a key element in the purchase and consumption of education beyond basic, compulsory schooling. Financial support is suggested as an important feature of fathers' roles in accessing education for the daughters in this research, but it is the mothers who use and navigate this financial support to secure university entrance as a joint process with their daughters. The application of capital is fundamental to enhancing the daughters' choices in the process of supporting university prospects and this pattern is shown very clearly in the narratives in this research. The mothers are continuing to encourage their daughters' education beyond compulsory schooling, using various strategies to improve their daughters' chances. Many of the mothers spoke of wanting to give their daughters the 'best start in life' and subsequently Helen, Jenny, Tia and Vicky paid off their daughters' higher education tuition fees. Sue provided her daughter with a lump sum of money to invest, in order that she did not start her adult life in debt. However, there remains a high ongoing economic cost for those in less fortunate financial circumstances. The power of economic capital remains uncontested as a driver of inequality in the education system (Bourdieu, 2006). The variety of school types and educational institutions provide a context that reflects the many fields within education and how power is played out through inequality and privilege in different settings (Bourdieu, 1993; Grenfell and James, 1998). Notwithstanding that families are aiding financial support due to the high cost of living, the purchase of education as a descriptor of advantage is further enhanced in nuanced ways. Game playing becomes important here, as the mothers have used their financial and cultural acumen to provide extensive and ongoing support to enhance their daughters' university applications. Bourdieu (1993) asserts that fields have their own rules, but mothers find ways to negotiate maximum advantage, whilst remaining within the rules and structure of the education field.

Mothers are continuing to support daughters throughout the primary school years, organising extra curricula activities in sport, music and academic

subjects to ultimately advantage their daughters in the university application process. Fran's testimony describes the provision for her daughter of dance and music classes at elite academies that offer high-level training, an approach that has secured a top financial scholarship and subsequent opportunity for undergraduate study.

An alternative strategy that the mothers in this study employ is the application of their cultural capital. Mothers use their acumen to gain greater opportunities for their daughters. Sam applied her knowledge of the higher education system in order to provide her daughter, Samantha, with a university opportunity that she did not think would be possible due to Samantha's learning difficulties. Tia supported her daughter with her academic expertise as a teacher to negotiate her A-levels and university choices. In both of these cases, the mothers' appropriation of cultural capital improved their daughters' prospects.

Some of the mothers do not have funds to support their daughters or knowledge of the higher education system and therefore they apply practical strategies of support. Tara, for example, used her work contacts to provide her daughter with waitressing experience and provide an income. Several of the mothers also spoke of practicalities, such as stocking cupboards with food during term time. The discussion around financial sacrifices beyond the schooling years was also indicative of the rising tuition fees, including Jess' example of working purely to pay for her daughters' accommodation costs. Noddings (2003) discusses how mothers often make choices for their children to the detriment of the choices they would otherwise make.

The intergenerational approach shows very clearly how, within this sample, there has been a shift from daughters attending university as independent adults, to being (fully) supported through extended mothering into the tertiary sector. This work has been timely in considering the higher education tuition fee rise in 2012. The raising of higher education tuition fees has highlighted concerns around the debt and the 'good start in life' mothers want for their daughters, meaning the increase in tuition fees has played a significant role in

the mothers' extended support. The metaphor of 'playing the game' has been applied to consider the ways families enhance their children's chances of gaining university places and support subsequent academic success (Bourdieu, 1993; Reay, 1998a; James, 2012). As well as using economic capital to gain advantage, the mothers have displayed how they are 'playing the education game' by applying their cultural capital and economic acumen. The mothers are finding the optimum ways to enhance their daughters' educational and personal profiles, to advantage university options and sustain undergraduate lifestyles (Cooper, 2013). The mothers in this study are taking on extra work or covering their daughters' childcare responsibilities solely to support their daughters, sometimes disadvantaging themselves in the process. Although the daughters have all reached adulthood, an ethic of care remains intact for the mothers, who continue to foster and nurture their daughters' imagined futures (Bradley, 2013). Far from the daughters gaining financial and personal independence at the point of adulthood, they are engaging in extended adolescence and the level of care levied at their daughters mean they remain firmly tied to the family home as mothering continues beyond compulsory school years.

Atkinson's (2012) concept of the middle classes displaying positional suffering and anxiety about maintaining a classed advantage is evident in this study. The middle class mothers' aim to extend gain for their daughters to achieve the best possible university outcome. David *et al.*'s (2010) research into parental involvement in higher education choice reiterates the notion of middle class anxiousness in providing for students' academic success. The mothers in this study are compensating for their own concerns over their daughters' futures by supporting them into higher education. The mothers are not only maintaining advantage at tertiary level, they are extending it through their judicious use of economic, social and cultural capital. Mothers are facilitating the improvement of their daughters' academic profiles in a myriad of personal and practical ways. In all cases but one, the necessity of having money and using economic capital to provide optimum support has opened up the debate around class and higher education. The data collection for this research was completed in 2011, prior to the tuition fee increase in 2012, yet

discussions highlighted class-inflected differences and a high level of anxiety about paying increased levels of fees whilst maintaining middle class lifestyles (Atkinson, 2012). If the middle classes were concerned at the level of tuition fees prior to the rise, this suggests the possibility of marginalisation of access for those from less advantaged backgrounds (Cooper, 2013).

The mothers in this research are offering extensive support to their daughters, in order to provide their daughters with an educational inheritance. Using the metaphor of the symbolic gift of higher education, mothers are compensating and complementing their daughters' personal and educational trajectories, to secure the best possible chance of accessing university (Reay, 1998b; Cooper, 2013). Mothers are not only providing support up to and into university, but also through their daughters' undergraduate years. Far from giving the appearance of 'looking away' or giving their daughters sole agency in their higher education options, mothers are inherently central *to* and implicated *in* their daughters' decision-making processes. There is a clear indication of strategic maternal action to make greater gains for daughters' imagined futures and these extended mothering practices and behaviours are creating a new form of social reproduction. Lareau (2002) and Bradley (2013) highlight how the development of education as a neoliberal, competitive marketplace has incited mothers to demonstrate extreme concerted cultivation. The mothers in this study are creating opportunities to enable their daughters to pursue the highest possible university options.

Without exception, all of the mothers in this study accommodated, either through economic means or social contacts, ways of actively supporting their daughters into higher education. Emotional support from mothers is reflected in several instances, through motivation and influence, participation, enthusiasm and ambition for their daughters' ultimate achievements (Reay, 2004b, 2005; Reay and Ball, 2008). The maternal tie keeps mothers actively involved in their daughters' lives. For the two daughters who did not go to university, their choice not to go was against the norm amongst their peers, but both positively rejected the idea of university as education for its own sake and chose to go into the workplace. Peer pressure and media influence

add substantial weight to women's unquestioned pathway to attend university. Many women are going on to higher education in order not to be left behind geographically and metaphorically by their friendship group, rather than studying for the intrinsic value of educational and personal satisfaction.

Typologies were used as a methodological tool to explore different fields, including the home and school, to understand immediate generational variations in the habitus and the effects on institutional choices. Four distinct groups emerged during the process of categorising the data, based on the idea of sameness (congruence) and difference (divergence) of class and educational patterns. Reproduction of classed norms based on schooling background was evident in the Congruent Study Dyads, which highlighted the severe limitation women previously had overcome to attend university. Women of the mothers' generation were unlikely to realise aspirations to attend university and plan for their working futures unless there was financial stability within the family, demonstrating a significant shift in women's educational opportunities in one generation (Dyhouse, 2002).

Importantly, the participants in the Deferred Congruent Study Group highlighted how a significant number of mothers attended university as mature students, outlining the retranslation of their professional status through delayed learning experiences and increased educational qualifications (Wright, 2011). These women had to make multiple decisions about childcare even before they considered access to university. Widening participation agendas have been found to enhance the opportunities for women in higher education, but engaging working class students, due to class identities and debt remains problematic (Brine and Waller, 2004). Working class values are shown at their highest in the participants in the Congruent Work Dyad group, who demonstrated a reproduction of the desire to work. Significantly, the importance and pressure to earn money appeared to be more prevalent than in the other pairings, reducing the desire to study. The lack of university access due to the need to earn money continues to be a barrier to education.

However, the opportunity to attend university is an option for the daughters, albeit with the need to carry a significant financial debt.

Transformation through education has taken place between the mothers and the daughters in the Divergent Study Group, as none of the mothers attended university, but all of their daughters went on to higher education. Mothers have compensated for their lack of options to go to university, to provide their daughters with improved futures (Bradley, 2013). This group particularly highlights the growing acceptance of women in higher education. Two of the oldest daughters in the sample went as mature students and the rest went straight from compulsory schooling, demonstrating the normalcy of transition into the tertiary sector from A-levels. Three of the mothers in this group also afforded their daughters private schooling, although they themselves were state educated, a further example of women who have been able to provide maternal advantage through transformation of their social group (Bourdieu, 1986).

The feminist movement has been crucial to the realisation of women's agency, providing the catalyst for women to engage more productively as more equal in the home and the workplace (Arnot, 2000, 2002; Arnot, David and Weiner, 1999). A post-feminist attitude appears to be a commonly held view among the daughters, as many of the participants' viewpoints have expressed an understanding of feminism as being integral to providing women with fewer barriers to education, careers and both a home and work life (McRobbie, 2009). Yet women's wider involvement in feminist activity remains ambivalent, with a concern about being allied to a feminist identity based on historical, radical associations. This research confirms Bhopal's (2010) assessment of a lack of a 'third space' for women to discuss issues of feminism in an environment in which they will not be judged or pathologised for such thinking. However, feminist reasoning was evident from both mothers and daughters. Older women exhibited greater awareness and involvement with feminist actions, due to their lived experiences at a time when feminism was more prevalent. The majority of the daughters' lack any

engagement with a feminist identity and some articulated a desire to return to stereotypical mothering.

Despite many of the daughters showing post-feminist tendencies and an absence of feminist inquiry, there was evidence of an acknowledgement of the importance of the feminist movement in advancing women's greater opportunities and ongoing feminist discourse. This, I have termed passive feminism. Passive feminism suggests post-feminist attitudes are commonplace, but that women have the opportunity to exercise choice, based on the recognition that such options have been afforded through the work of the feminist movement. There is confirmation from the younger women that the feminist movement has been instrumental in creating greater opportunities for them, but the unconscious sense of freedom and liberty gives them no inclination to engage personally on a political platform. I have uncovered women's lack of involvement with feminist issues, yet acknowledge there is a lack of space in which women can disseminate and encounter such discussions. There is limited feminist discussion between the mother-daughter dyads, the situation made more problematic due to self-identified feminists not assigning their political motivations through their daughters. Feminist supporters are creating an even greater gap between second wave and post feminist discourse with their lack of reproduction of feminist education.

Women's social position has been considered from an individual, personal perspective and a collective, gendered viewpoint. Crucially, no participant expressed an opinion of work within the home as 'work', which raises doubt as to how equality will be achieved in the home if childrearing and domestic roles continue to be unequal, and this is endorsed by women. Women continue to put the needs of their families ahead of their individual desires, often due to the need to work for financial necessity. Women are now considered to have their greatest ever choices around education, career and family. Yet ongoing dilemmas, particularly around starting a family and children, remain a barrier to women successfully negotiating all areas of education and subsequent work and personal life. Clearly, mothering remains an undervalued career. Dilemmas remain for women who wish to have both a

career and mothering roles (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998; Lawler, 2000). Previous generations of women exhibit a traditional view of childrearing, yet there is an anticipation of working mothers as a norm due to financial necessity. However, the acknowledgement that a university degree springboards graduates into professional or managerial positions is not transpiring for the daughters. The daughters are trying to find employment in a difficult financial climate, where jobs are scarce and competitively sought. The care and education sectors also remain dominated by women, employment areas in which salaries are traditionally low.

Women now have the opportunity to delay career and motherhood options until later in life. The feminist movement and sweeping social change has provided greater choice for women, which has been critical to the advancement of women's increased equality. Only time will tell if women will have the chance to gain even more equality through men's increasing roles in the emotional and practical aspect of parenting. Choices involving work-family balance appear to be problematic, but these are dilemmas that women in previous generations did not have the opportunity to face. Reflecting on their own situations and learning from their own experiences, the mothers have given their daughters the opportunity to gain higher education qualifications in a way that was not always possible for themselves. When the daughters have their education and early careers in place and the mothers are secure in the knowledge that their daughters can return to work at any point after having children, the mothers are willing to turn their attention to supporting childcare as grandmothers.

This research has raised some interesting viewpoints, but care should be taken not to generalise from such a small sample. The choice of participants was opportunistic rather than intentional and it was only possible to interview a relatively small sample of mothers and daughters. Nor was it possible to ensure that the sample reflected the full range of family backgrounds and cultural heritages prevalent within contemporary Britain. Indeed, the sample did not include any participants outside of England. However, the findings from this study suggest the importance of further investigations and the

potential for extension of the current work. Beyond this study, I wish to continue engaging with the use of a reflexive methodology, to apply these findings to enhance and support future investigations in this field of research. My favoured option would be to reproduce this study with working class women, to provide narratives through the lens of a very different social class group. This study could also be extended to consider all the daughters' futures once they have graduated from university and their life choices based on factual eventualities, rather than future aspirations. The study could be replicated to interview women that are now paying the higher £9,000 per annum tuition fees and their experiences of dealing with the higher level of debt. Equally, different generations of women, such as grandmothers, other daughters or even granddaughters could be included in this study to widen the generational approach, such as that used by Thomson *et al.* (2011). A cross-gendered approach of mother-son, father-daughter could also be an effective way of looking at generational applications to higher education.

This study could be reproduced with fathers and sons. A male gendered approach to this research could involve in-depth consideration of changing identities and masculinities and the effect on education and the job market. Building on the findings of Willis (1977), James (1995) and Reay (2002), an analysis could be provided of the male as both student and employee, exploring an up-to-date critique of both the working male and adult studentship. However, fathers have been educating their sons for generations, providing a logical reason to favour a female gendered study for the purposes of this research.

Undertaking this research has challenged my preconceptions, understandings, assumptions, biases and personal experiences in relation to my insider status as a woman, mother, daughter and a mature student. The use of the epistemological break (Bourdieu, 1984; Robbins, 1998), to stop and reconsider existing knowledge from various viewpoints, has been imperative to complete this process, albeit with an understanding of the sociological necessity to understand the use of the private in a public sphere (Ribbens, 1993; Ribbens and Edwards, 1998). A reflexive approach has been central to

both data collection and examination, to apply the concept of agency as a relational structure within the interview process and as a means of interpretation during analysis (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Agency and structure have been key factors in understanding both individual choice and the constraints by external forces. Mothers are exercising agency to influence their daughters' access to undergraduate study. The mothers in this study have highlighted how their own higher education decisions and choices differed from the options now available to their daughters. The joint provision of daughters' educational outcomes, enhanced by mothers' contributions, financially and practically, creates a powerful university application and one that feeds inequality into the education system (Reay, 2006). Universities will remain fields of power and allow families to exercise symbolic and realised domination through their use of capital in the entry process (Bourdieu, 1988). Egalitarian ideals of fairness and equity cannot exist under a fragmented and elitist compulsory education system where money and knowledge buys advantage. Education is gained and enhanced throughout the compulsory school years and as I have shown here, does not stop until the game has been won into and beyond the tertiary sector.

Gender equality remains an aspiration, but there is a generational improvement in women's equity. However, this research shows that it is women in their role as mothers who are supporting their daughters to have greater life chances. Mothers are challenging the constraints they encountered themselves by extending the options and opportunities available to their daughters. Mothers are offering their daughters an educational legacy, yet in many cases the daughters are bypassing the maternal gift. It is possible now for women to choose higher education, motherhood and a career. With intergenerational support, managing these options becomes more viable, but women have to choose which goals to pursue and which pathways to take. Mothers are powerful allies in a supporting role.

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List of Appendices

Mother and Daughter Dyads at a Glance

Summary of the Research

Information for Participants

Participant Consent Form

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS AT A GLANCE

ANNE AND ANNETTE

	Mother
Name	ANNE
Age	58
Occupation	Retired school teacher (ill health)
Education	Grammar to A-levels
University	BA Initial Teacher Training, PGCE
£	Financially supporting Annette through HE
Family	Widowed with son from first marriage. Re-married. Her husband's two daughters lost their biological mother to cancer and Annette adopted them four years ago. Anne underwent cancer treatment herself during Annette's transition from school to university.
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	Not identified

	Daughter
Name	ANNETTE
Age	20
Occupation	Current undergraduate
Education	State comprehensive to A-levels
University	Undergraduate, transferred from film making course after completing two years, currently in first year Initial Teacher Training
£	UG tuition fees - £3,290 pa, receives maintenance loan. Works p/t in a bar during term-time and various jobs during the holidays, living costs topped up by parents
Family	Mum, Dad (building surveyor), brother (28) and sister (16). Lives in shared student accommodation during term-time and at home during the holidays.
Ethnicity/Class	White working
Feminist	No

CHRIS AND CHRISTINA

	Mother
Name	CHRIS
Age	49
Occupation	Academic – University Professor
Education	State grammar school to A-levels
University	UG and Masters degrees in Social Work, PhD.
£	During own UG study received full funding, mature student (21) grant, unemployment benefit during holidays. Chris's ex-husband is financially supporting Christina through university
Family	Lives with long-term partner and Christina during university holidays
Ethnicity/Class	White lower/middle
Feminist	Yes

	Daughter
Name	CHRISTINA
Age	21
Occupation	Current undergraduate
Education	State grammar to A-levels
University	Undergraduate, about to enter third of fourth year of joint BA French and Spanish. Will spend third year studying in Spain
£	Took a gap year and worked in Costa Rica. Lived in Halls of Residence for first year and shared student accommodation during the second. Tuition fee loan of £3,290 pa. Father paying for Christina's living and travel costs.
Family	Mum, Dad (web designer), Stepfather. Close to both parents and lives with Mum and stepfather during holidays.
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	Yes

DEBBIE AND DEBORAH

	Mother
Name	DEBBIE
Age	45
Occupation	Training consultant and trainer in Early Years
Education	State school educated to O-levels. Completed an Early Years Diploma that led onto UG study as a mature student.
University	BA in Early Childhood Studies. Has recently completed a Maths GCSE, a pre-requisite in order to consider progression onto her chosen Masters course.
£	Supported her daughter financially through university.
Family	Husband (married at 17, has been married 27 years), son (26) and daughter (23). Lives with husband and son.
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	No

	Daughter
Name	DEBORAH
Age	23
Occupation	Estate agent
Education	State educated to A-levels
University	BA Classics
£	Deborah has a tuition fee loan for her UG study of £3,000 per annum.
Family	Dad, Mum and brother. Lives with her partner.
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	No

ELLE AND ELEANOR

	Mother
Name	ELLE
Age	46
Occupation	Self employed childminder
Education	State educated to A-levels
University	BSc in nursing. She also undertook NVQs to pursue her later childminding career.
£	All four of Elle's daughters have attended/are attending university. A legacy left to her through a will has supported the tuition fee costs. All of her daughters lived at home during their study and Eleanor support their food and accommodation.
Family	Husband (sales manager) and four daughters (18, 22 (twins) and 23).
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	No

	Daughter
Name	ELEANOR
Age	22
Occupation	Primary school teacher
Education	State educated to A-levels
University	BA in Initial Teacher Training and graduated with QTS status.
£	Used the proceeds of a legacy to fund tuition fee costs of £3,290 per annum. Worked at a local supermarket during study to fund her living costs. Lived at home during her undergraduate study.
Family	Mum, Dad and three sisters. Has a twin sister. Has recently married and lives with her husband.
Ethnicity/Class	White working/middle
Feminist	Yes

FRAN AND FRANCESCA

	Mother
Name	FRAN
Age	58
Occupation	Community Dentist
Education	State school to O-levels. Went into workplace at 16 and returned to take A-levels at college as a mature student
University	BSc in Anatomy and Physiology, MSc in Dentistry
£	All of Fran's higher education study was fully funded and grant aided. Married students' mortgages were also 50% funded. All of Fran's children have been privately educated at secondary level and all have received scholarships. Fran is an advocate of the current tuition fee system. She and her husband top-up their children's university living costs. Her eldest son's fees were £1,000 pa, Francesca's fees were £3,290 pa and her youngest son's fees will be at the higher rate of £9,000 pa
Family	Husband and three children. Fran's eldest son has just completed his undergraduate study and Francesca is going to university in the next academic year. Fran's youngest son attends boarding school
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	Not identified

	Daughter
Name	FRANCESCA
Age	20
Occupation	In process of returning to undergraduate study. Studied as a beauty therapist during the break in study
Education	State primary, private secondary (scholarship) to A-levels
University	Began undergraduate study in Business Management, but at the age of 18 suffered a stroke. Following rehabilitation and complete recovery, Francesca tried to re-start the course, but it was too soon after her illness. Francesca is beginning a Law degree in the next academic year at a local university
£	Francesca will have fees of £3,290 pa and will receive a tuition fee loan. Her parents will support her living costs and Francesca plans to live at home during her study. She trained and worked following her recovery as a Beauty Therapist and has some savings
Family	Mum, Dad (self employed Chartered Accountant), two brothers (21 and 17).
Ethnicity/Class	White middle/upper
Feminist	Not identified

HELEN AND HELENA

	Mother
Name	HELEN
Age	45
Occupation	Full-time mother
Education	Early education undertaken in Malta. Returned to UK and state educated to A levels
University	No. Worked from the age of 16 until she had her children as a pension fund administrator
£	Helen and her husband have paid for private education for all three of their children. Helena is the first to go to university. Helen has paid for every aspect of her study, including tuition fees, accommodation, living allowance, food, car and materials for her course
Family	Husband, a self employed chartered accountant, daughter (19) and two sons (17 and 13)
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	No

	Daughter
Name	HELENA
Age	19
Occupation	Current undergraduate
Education	Privately educated from preparatory school to A-levels
University	In third year of a BA Art and Design course
£	All aspects of Helena's study is fully funded by her parents. She does not work during the holidays. Helena's tuition fees are £3,290 per annum
Family	Mum, Dad and two brothers. Lives in shared rented accommodation during term time and the family home during holidays
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	Not identified

JENNY AND JENNIFER

	Mother
Name	JENNY
Age	55
Occupation	Voluntary work at golf club and charity fundraiser (£50,000+ to date)
Education	State primary, part funded Convent secondary school to O-levels. A-levels taken at local boys' grammar school. Her older sister was state school educated, Jenny was part funded and her younger brother was privately educated
University	Jenny did not attend university. She took vocational qualifications at an adult education centre in Personnel Management, in which she worked until she had her children. She held various jobs including clothes parties, teaching in adult education and a bookkeeper for her husband's business
£	Both of Jenny's children were privately educated for the whole of their compulsory education. Jenny and her husband have paid off Jennifer's and her brother's tuition fees, £3,000 and £9,870 respectively
Family	Husband and two children (24 and 21).
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	No

	Daughter
Name	JENNIFER
Age	24
Occupation	PR Manager
Education	Privately educated from pre-prep to A-levels
University	BA in Business Management and Psychology
£	Parents paid off her £1,000 pa tuition fee loan at the end of her studies. Received a maintenance grant and parents topped up living costs. Did not work during studies
Family	Mum, Dad (self employed Chartered Surveyor) and brother (21). Lives with partner
Ethnicity/Class	Middle
Feminist	Yes

JESS AND JESSICA

	Mother
Name	JESS
Age	50
Occupation	Science technician in state secondary school
Education	State school to O-levels. NVQ early years
University	No
£	Jess took on her full-time work solely for the income to support her children through university. Jess and her husband support their children financially by paying for accommodation and living costs. All children currently at university – eldest son as a mature student
Family	Husband of 28 years (insurance broker), two sons (25 and 20) and a daughter (21). Lives with husband and all children during university holidays
Ethnicity/Class	White working/middle
Feminist	No

	Daughter
Name	JESSICA
Age	21
Occupation	Current UG
Education	State secondary to A-levels
University	In third year of BA Psychology following a gap year
£	Has tuition fees loan of £3,290 pa, a maintenance loan. Works part-time in a pub during the holidays to subsidise her income
Family	Lives in rented accommodation during term time and at home during the holidays
Ethnicity/Class	White lower/middle
Feminist	No

KATHY AND KATHERINE

	Mother
Name	KATHY
Age	51
Occupation	PA to Director
Education	State educated in primary school. Gained a grant to attend an independent school at secondary and stayed there until A-levels
University	Did not attend university. She studied for an HND in Hotel Catering and Institutional Management. After a spell in catering she re-trained a TOPs (Training Opportunity Course) and a further private course as secretary. She returned to secretarial work after having her children and remains with the same employer
£	Kathy's two eldest children went to university and were supported by Kathy and her husband, who have paid their tuition fees and accommodation. Kathy's youngest daughter, Katherine, has not attended university. Kathy is supportive of this decision but happy to support any future plans of undergraduate study
Family	Husband (Chartered surveyor), three daughters (25, 22 and 18).
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	Not identified

	Daughter
Name	KATHERINE
Age	18
Occupation	Full time sales assistant in a department store
Education	State educated to A-levels
University	Katherine does not wish to attend university. She feels her future career aspiration as a photographer would be best achieved through building a portfolio of work. She is considering university as a future option
£	Katherine is working full-time. She lives at home for free and her parents are topping-up additional day-to-day living costs on her salary
Family	Mum, Dad and two sisters. Lives in the family home
Ethnicity/Class	White working/middle
Feminist	Not identified

LEIGH, LEANNE AND LEONA

	Mother
Name	LEIGH
Age	76
Occupation	Retired dressmaker. Supports daughters with childcare and domestic help
Education	Government school (Jamaica)
University	No
£	Both Leanne and Leona's university fees were means tested. Leigh and her husband provided financial support for both top-ups
Family	Widow, two adult daughters and three grandchildren. Lives in London
Ethnicity/Class	Black Jamaican, working
Feminist	No

	Daughter
Name	LEANNE
Age	38
Occupation	Marketing consultant (on maternity leave)
Education	State educated to A-levels
University	Started in teacher training and changed mid course, graduated with BA English and History
£	Means tested tuition fees with parents topping up balance. Had a student bank loan
Family	Lives with her husband and two children (7 and 3 weeks) in London
Ethnicity/Class	Black British, working
Feminist	No

	Daughter
Name	LEONA
Age	42
Occupation	Public sector worker
Education	State educated to 16
University	Worked between ages of 16 and 22. Undertook an access course as a mature student (22) and graduated with LLB - Law. Continued working in law until the birth of her son and changed career when she returned to the workplace
£	Means tested tuition fees with parents topping up balance. Supported herself from savings from earlier employment earnings
Family	Single, lives with her 13 year old son
Ethnicity/Class	Black British, working
Feminist	No

MAY AND MAYA

	Mother
Name	MAY
Age	70
Occupation	Retired independent expert in Family Court
Education	Independent school to A-levels
University	BSc Economics. Returned to academia later in life, began on an MA researching Foster Care, which was upgraded and progressed to completion as a PhD
£	All of May's children attended university prior to the introduction of tuition fees. The Local Authority paid a grant of £1,000 per student for maintenance. Meals and accommodation were subsidised. Financially supported Maya during final year of study
Family	Husband (retired), son and two daughters. Lives with husband
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	Not identified

	Daughter
Name	MAYA
Age	44
Occupation	Homemaker
Education	State primary, secondary independent European school (full bursary). Took European Baccalaureate examinations
University	Four year undergraduate course in Psychology, French and Russian followed by PGCE
£	UG study undertaken prior to introduction of tuition fees. Worked during holidays in a pub and also teaching foreign languages. Had a small grant and minimal financial support from parents during final year of study
Family	Lives with two children (6 year-old twins)
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	No

ROSE, ROSALIND AND ROSANNE

	Mother
Name	ROSE
Age	50
Occupation	University lecturer and academic
Education	State educated to A-levels
University	BA teacher training, MA in Education and PhD in Early Childhood Studies
£	Rose and her husband paid Roseanne's fees of £1,000 pa outright. Following the increase, Rosalind took out a tuition fee loan for £3,290 pa. Rose supported both with accommodation costs
Family	Husband (teacher), two daughters. Lives with husband and one daughter (full-time) and one daughter (part-time)
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	Yes

	Daughter
Name	ROSALIND
Age	22
Occupation	Current UG student. Part-time admin support in university
Education	State comprehensive educated to A-levels, GCSEs in International Baccalaureate qualifications
University	Started BSc in Pharmacology, but suffered septicemia. Following recovery changed courses and now in second year of UG study, BA Digital Animation and Production
£	£3,290 pa fees for which she has a tuition fee loan. Has part-time job at the university where she is studying. Parents contribute to her accommodation costs
Family	Mum, Dad and sister. Lives between the family home and her rented flat with her partner
Ethnicity/Class	White lower/middle
Feminist	Not identified

	Daughter
Name	ROSEANNE
Age	24
Occupation	Full-time for a research engine company
Education	State educated to A-levels
University	BA Philosophy, MA Computer Science
£	Fees of £1,000 pa paid by parents. Parents supported accommodation costs
Family	Lives with Mum and Dad
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	Yes

SAM AND SAMANTHA

	Mother
Name	SAM
Age	55
Occupation	University lecturer and academic
Education	Grammar school educated to A-levels. Went to college to complete an Occupational Therapy course
University	Part-time BSc Occupational Therapy. Masters and PG teaching course, which led to a funded PhD
£	All study was undertaken before the introduction of any teaching or tuition fees. Study was supported with work in Occupational Therapy and in a Citizens Advice Bureau between raising her children. Her ex-husband provided financial support for Samantha
Family	Divorced with two adult children. Lives with partner
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	Yes

	Daughter
Name	SAMANTHA
Age	25
Occupation	Full-time voluntary internship with an events company (no pay). Part-time bar work in the evenings
Education	State educated to A-levels. Diagnosed as severely dyslexic
University	BA in Events and Music Management
£	Undergraduate fees of £3,290 per annum plus living costs. Samantha has a student loan of £36,000. Worked in a pub during her study and continues to do so to subsidise her internship
Family	Mum, Dad and brother. Lives with her partner
Ethnicity/Class	White, not willing to identify class
Feminist	No

STEPH AND STEPHANIE

	Mother
Name	STEPH
Age	52
Occupation	Dog groomer and walker
Education	State comprehensive to O-levels
University	Did not attend university. Worked as silver service waitress from 16 until having children. Holds NVQs in dog grooming
£	None of Fern's children have attended university
Family	Husband, two children from previous marriage (31 and 27). Cares for elderly mother and grandson (4). Five siblings. Lives with husband and daughter
Ethnicity/Class	White working
Feminist	No

	Daughter
Name	STEPHANIE
Age	27
Occupation	Assistant manager for high end cosmetics company
Education	State comprehensive to O-levels. Diagnosed with Arnold-Chiari malformation syndrome at 14 and missed a lot of schooling up to her O-levels
University	Did not attend university. Went into hairdressing at 16 and worked up through vocational hairdressing and make-up qualifications to current work position
£	Following a relationship split, Stephanie is still paying back debts from the joint mortgage. Although Stephanie currently has no desire to go to university, she feels the fees and her debt would prohibit any possibility of university study
Family	Lives with her Mum and Stepdad (builder). Occasionally stays with her Grandmother
Ethnicity/Class	White working
Feminist	No

SUE, SUZANNE AND SUZANNE

	Mother
Name	SUE
Age	49
Occupation	Head of Mathematics in Secondary School
Education	State school primary school, grammar school for secondary education to A-levels
University	First class degree in Mathematics
£	Has provided Suzie with a lump sum of money at the beginning of her course to fund her study in whichever way she chooses. Will do the same for Suzanne
Family	Husband (Insurance broker), two daughters (18 and 21).
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	No

	Daughter
Name	SUZANNE
Age	18
Occupation	Current A-level student
Education	State educated to current A-level status
University	Has a conditional offer for a four year language degree from the next academic year
£	Like her sister, Suzanne will be afforded a lump sum of money at the beginning of her undergraduate study. She does not yet know how she will apportion this money
Family	Mum, Dad and sister.
Ethnicity/Class	White, not willing to identify class
Feminist	Not identified

	Daughter
Name	SUZIE
Age	21
Occupation	Current undergraduate
Education	State educated to A-levels. Gained 12 A*s at GCSE and 4 A*s at A-level
University	She gained a place at a prestigious university, was unhappy and left after one term. Currently in the third year of a five-year BSc in veterinary science at another Russell Group university
£	Suzie's parents provided a lump sum at 18 to fund her UG study. Suzie has chosen to invest this money and gain interest. She has taken out a tuition fee loan of £3,290 per annum and intends to repay this in full at the end of the course. Worked in vets surgery during holidays and weekends to fund her living costs
Family	Mum, Dad and sister. Lives in shared rented accommodation during term time and in the family home during the holidays
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	Not identified

TARA AND TARUH

	Mother
Name	TARA
Age	53
Occupation	Unwaged, but involved in a substantial amount of community care work and casual paid employment
Education	State comprehensive to O-levels, NNEB at college at 16
University	Current part-time Masters student in Childhood Studies, BA in Early Childhood Studies
£	Unable to financially support daughters through education. Has £26,000 loan outstanding from own study as a mature student
Family	Three daughters from two marriages, both to foreign men. Six siblings. Currently single and living with youngest daughter
Ethnicity/Class	White working
Feminist	Not identified

	Daughter
Name	TARUH
Age	23
Occupation	Global Health Development advisor
Education	Early education abroad. Secondary education from 14 in state comprehensive to A-levels
University	BA in International Relations, Criminology and Social Policy
£	UG tuition fees £3,290 pa. Received £1,000 pa maintenance loan. Wants to do Masters, but debt prohibits study. Eldest sister's fees were £1,000 pa and youngest sister's will be £9,000 pa. Has self funded all study through part-time jobs
Family	Mum and two sisters (31 and 18). Father (civil servant). Large extended family in Palestine, where polygamy is an accepted custom.
Ethnicity/Class	Dual heritage – Palestinian and English. Not willing to identify class
Feminist	No

TIA AND TIANA

	Mother
Name	TIA
Age	41
Occupation	University lecturer and academic
Education	State school educated – 10 GCSES and 4 A-levels
University	BA Initial Teacher Training as a mature student, following her arranged marriage aged 19 and the birth of her daughters
£	Paying for all Tiana's tuition fees and UG living costs
Family	Lives with husband (self employed risk management consultant) and two daughters (16 and 18)
Ethnicity/Class	British Asian, working
Feminist	Yes

	Daughter
Name	TIANA
Age	20
Occupation	Current undergraduate student
Education	Grammar school to A-levels. GCSE 7A*s, 5As, A-levels 4As
University	BA English and Spanish, four years, one gap year in Spain
£	Parents paying all tuition fees at £3,290 pa and living costs. Tiana is topping up with a part-time job in a clothes shop
Family	Lives with Mum, Dad and sister
Ethnicity/Class	British Asian, working-middle
Feminist	Yes

VICKY AND VICTORIA

	Mother
Name	VICKY
Age	62
Occupation	Part-time receptionist
Education	Primary education in local village hall, secondary modern to O-levels. Left school at 15
University	No
£	Has provided full financial support for both of her daughters through university. Eldest daughter had funded UG fees, Vicky and her husband will be repaying Victoria's fees and all associated living costs during undergraduate study
Family	Husband (self employed IT consultant) and two daughters (25 and 23). Lives with husband and Victoria
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	No

	Daughter
Name	VICTORIA
Age	23
Occupation	Unwaged
Education	Independent primary school, state secondary to A-levels
University	BA Classics, started MA Classics but left the course
£	Victoria's parents will be repaying her tuition fees of £3,290 pa and maintenance loan. Financially supported her through undergraduate study
Family	Lives with Mum and Dad
Ethnicity/Class	White middle
Feminist	No

Key

HE – higher education

HND – Higher National Diploma

ITT – Initial Teacher Training

MA – Master of Arts

Not identified – unable to definitively answer yes or no

PG – postgraduate

PGCE – Post Graduate Certification of Education

PhD – Doctor of Philosophy

Attn: Linda Cooper
Anglia Ruskin University
Address

Date

Researcher: Linda Cooper
[E-mail]
[Mobile]

SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

My own background really defines my interest in this research area. As an 18-year-old woman I did not have the opportunity to pursue higher education, however, my 9-year-old daughter is already sure she will go to university. How did such a change occur in one generation? I am fascinated to learn of other women's barriers or access to higher education, both past and present. As you are a woman in the age range to access higher education, you have been asked to take part in this research.

This research will explore the gap between mothers' and daughters' experiences in accessing higher education. This research aims to understand *why* women are now able to enjoy greater access to learning than in previous decades and to explore continued barriers to education.

Higher education is important to discuss at this time, due to the imminent rise in university tuition fees in 2012 and international focus on women's access and participation in education in 2011.

The main area of research interest is the experiences in women's opportunities to achieve higher education now than in previous years, by looking at the effect of family opinion, opportunity and finances. I will also be interested if you wish to express your point of view on social class, feminism or equal rights.



<p>Information for Participants in Research</p>
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Research Project Title: Generational differences in mothers' and daughters' access to higher education: understanding gendered and classed narratives.

I am delighted you wish to become involved and share your experiences with me. This information sheet is to provide details to general questions that you may have.

- Interviews will ask for approximately 1-2 hours per interview.
- All interviews will be audio taped to ensure accuracy in transcription and the information kept separately from other research material to maintain confidentiality.
- All matters discussed are considered confidential.
- You will not be identified at any time by your own name and will be referred to using a fictitious name.
- Should you wish to withdraw from the research, you have the entitlement to withdraw, without penalty, at any time. The researcher will discuss with you the possibility of retaining the information already given, for use in the research.
- Should any conversation take place that poses a threat, distress or concern to anyone in this arrangement, I have a duty to disclose any such comments to my PhD supervisor.
- Your comfort and safety are of paramount importance and will be given the highest consideration at all times.
- Any questions or conversations held between us will be answered with complete honesty and to the best of my ability.
- You should be aware that the data collected from this project may be used in published materials including books or academic journals.

I look forward to our first meeting.
Linda Cooper

[E-mail]
[Mobile]

Further contact at the Anglia Ruskin University
[Supervisor]

Written correspondence to:
Linda Cooper
Anglia Ruskin University
Address

Date

Researcher: Linda Cooper

[E-mail]

[Mobile]

Research supervisor contact at the Anglia Ruskin University:

[Supervisor]

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read and fully understand the attached 'Information for Participants in Research' sheet. This provides details of how the research will be conducted and the responsibility on the researcher to protect my best interests at all times. I understand what my role will be in this research and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

This letter confirms my willingness to engage with this research. I am aware that at any time I have the option to freely withdraw my participation from this research at any time and without prejudice.

I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.

I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.

I agree to the processing of any such data for any purposes connected with the research project as outlined to me.

Name of Participant

Address of Participant

Telephone Numbers of Participant

Signed Date

Name of Witness

Signed Date

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Signed Date