Young Women's Everyday Lives: Home and Work in the North East of England.

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Finally huge thanks go to the women who took part in the research.

Abstract

This thesis is a study of the everyday home and working lives of a group of twenty-one young women living in former mining regions in County Durham. Through an analysis of the women's everyday lives, in particular their experiences of paid and unpaid work, I explore what it means for these women to be a young woman today. Based on in-depth interviews this thesis is concerned with the process of gendering in everyday life, in particular how the everyday work women do is key in the construction and (re)production of classed gender identities. Drawing on a performative understanding of gender (Butler 1990, Goffman 1969) combined with a recognition of the importance class plays both materially and culturally on the women's lives (Bradley 2007, Fraser 1998, Jackson 1998, McNay 1999, 2000, 2004), I argue that work is key in the construction of the women's identities, subjectivities and everyday life. Throughout the thesis I demonstrate the key role work plays in the women's everyday lives and as such I argue for the continued importance of the Sociology of Work in a climate where the study of work has become less central, having being pushed aside by other sociological concerns (Halford & Strangleman 2009). In order that work remains relevant in the discipline, Halford & Strangleman suggest the need for a reintegration of the study of work with other sociological agendas. This thesis is one such attempt at this.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1. Introduction

This thesis is a study of the everyday home and working lives of a group of young women living in former mining regions in County Durham in the Northeast of England. Through an analysis of the women's everyday lives, in particular their experiences of paid and unpaid work, in a context of de-industrialisation and the transition to a post-industrial economy, I provide a specific local exploration of what it means to be a young woman living in the region today. Based on in-depth interviews, this thesis is concerned with the process of gendering and classing in everyday life in the region. Drawing on a performative understanding of gender (Goffman 1969, Butler 1990) and the notion that gender and class are intersectional lived social relations (McNay 2004), I argue that through engagement with different types of work, gender is 'performed' or done' (Butler 1990, West and Zimmerman 1987). Despite arguments proclaiming the end of work's ability to provide identity (Casey 1995, Rifkin 1995), I argue that the women's classed gender identity is substantially produced through engagement with different types of work. I argue it is of vital importance that the value the women attach to work[1] in general and of the actual work they do, is recognised as this is crucial in enabling an understanding of the women's pursuit of respectability.

Because of the importance of paid and unpaid work in the women's lives, I argue for the continued significance of a Sociology of Work in a climate where the study of work has become less central, having being pushed aside by other sociological concerns (Halford & Strangleman 2009). In order that work remains relevant in the discipline, Halford & Strangleman suggest the need for a reintegration of the study of work with other sociological agendas. This thesis is one attempt at this. Part of the originality of this thesis comes from my incorporation of the 'new sociology of work' approach' (Pettinger *et. al.* 2005), 'new social class analysis' with a performative understanding of gender. Incorporating these different positions provides a new approach to understanding the many intersections in the women's everyday lives and makes

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[1] Work does not simply equate employment. See chapter two.

a new and interesting contribution to the sociology of work and the discipline of sociology more generally.

The aim of this opening chapter is to introduce the thesis. As I am interested in the women's everyday lives, I begin by addressing why a 'bottom up' approach was adopted and highlight the usefulness of a sociology of everyday life approach. Here I explore why I am interested in the seemingly trivial phenomena of everyday life and argue that a focus on the everyday is important because although gender and class are social structural phenomena, they are produced, negotiated and sustained, especially through social interaction and social practices on an everyday level. I then go on to outline my theoretical framework and conceptual understanding of gender as a performance of identity; that gender and class are lived social relations, and how this relates to a sociology of everyday life. This leads to a discussion of the conception of, and aim of the research where I argue that there is a lack of research on young women living in former mining communities. This study is specifically concerned with women's lives. The originality and importance of this thesis lies on the fact that I explore the lives of an under researched group and by not focusing on the women in relation to their male partners[2] or a male dominated industry[3] as has been done in the past[4], I aim to move debates on from employment and community studies which are broadly concerned with the heroic male manual worker, to understanding the everyday lives of people living in these areas. As the research was carried out in a specific part of the UK, I discuss the research setting. This is followed by an exploration of the significance of work as a feature of women's lives today. I document some of the recent changes in the world of work relating to both paid and unpaid work. As this thesis is an integration of the sociology of work with other sociological agendas, I then outline the new sociology of work and new social class analysis to demonstrate how these approaches alongside a performative understanding

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[2] For example miners' wives
[3] For example women's involvement in the miners' strikes
[4] This is not to dismiss previous research and theorising on mining communities. I understand that in the past it was impossible to discuss the lives of women without talking about their relations to the male population because of the coal industry and traditional divisions of labour. However women are the sole focus of the research.

of gender can be integrated. I end the chapter by offering a breakdown of the thesis chapters and the sample group.

2. Why Study the Everyday? A Sociology of Everyday Life

As this thesis is concerned with how class and gender are lived, and how class and gender identities are (re)produced/ (re)constructed in everyday sites, in this section I briefly define the everyday, discuss how the everyday has been theorised and argue that an everyday approach and the use of performance as a concept are suited to an analysis of gender and class as lived social relations.

2.1. Everyday Life Sociology

Everyday life is an important area of study in its own right; it is not just a benign, residual category that remains after the major institutions of society have been understood (Lefebre 1986). As such, the sociology of everyday life is an area of inquiry which studies the social behaviour and social interaction that takes place in everyday social settings. The subject matter of everyday life is concerned with that which we presume to be the 'trivial', 'mundane' and familiar aspects of social life, in effect 'the daily lives of ordinary people' (Bennett & Watson 2002: x). Certain sites where individuals 'do' everyday life are regarded as being most associated with the everyday, such as the home, the community and places of work (Bennett & Watson, 2002). I focus on these sites in this thesis. As sociologists it is vital we study the everyday because,

> the daily round up of interactions and encounters, the rituals and repeated behaviours that make up everyday life create and sustain meaning and structures…looking at the minutiae of interactions and exploring the micro-sociology of social behaviour, can reveal understandings of larger social structures and forms (Crow and Pope 2008:597-8).

In effect the 'major questions of sociology are caught up in the analysis of the seemingly insignificant routines of everyday life' (Bennett & Watson 2002: ix). The everyday is a lens through which to see the larger 'macro' social world,

> Since hierarchy is embedded in the most intimate social relationship, and 'social location' and 'culture' are united in the structured nature of

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> everyday social practices, hierarchical practices emerge as 'second nature', unremarkable and unremarked (Bottero & Irwin 2003:471).

Studying the apparently trivial and mundane can throw light on large social processes; everyday life is 'the wider picture' (Scott 2009). Micro-level small-scale practices relate to and are shaped by macro-level patterns. We have to question the familiar (Garfinkel 1967). We need to account for everyday processes as it is the routine and repetitive acts of everyday life that reproduce social life and social identities. One question addressed in this thesis is how the routine and familiar aspects of everyday life in these sites look like when viewed through a class and gendered lens? Everyday institutions and practices are classed and gendered and are sites where the classing and gendering of individuals and relationships take place (Bradley 2007). It is therefore crucial to begin analysis at the level of the everyday in order that inequalities can be seen being lived. This is one way in which to see for example, how larger structural class and gender inequalities play out in the women's everyday lives.

One of the key theoretical perspectives on everyday life, Symbolic Interactionism, emerged from criticisms of macro theory in the mid-twentieth century. Positivism and critical theory were regarded as overly deterministic in their portrayal of the individual who was seen as passive[5]. Many everyday life sociologists felt that analysing interaction was the foundation tool for studying society, but rather than looking at the effects of group interaction on the self, emphasis was put on the process of interaction themselves, how they were shaped by the different motivations of the participants and the implications for social order. By studying individuals in the everyday world it was shown that individuals are not passive beings (Garfinkel 1967, Douglas 1970). Individuals are active: they are shaped by interactions with others as well as being instrumental in shaping the character of interaction themselves. Social order and social structure were viewed as being derived from interaction; social structures do not exist independently of the people who interact with them (Bulmer 1969). Structures are constructed as people interact with each other. Individuals 'make' rather than passively 'take' on roles. Behaviour is constantly being revised in light of the behaviour of others. Behaviour is then influenced

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[5] For early critiques see for example Douglas (1970).

through expectations and the social norms they yield (Goffman 1969). Hence interaction is both voluntary and structured. Following on from this it can be argued that gender is not fixed by nature but is neither simply imposed from social order. Individuals play some part in constructing their gender identity, 'we claim a place in the gender order – or respond to the place we have been given - by the way we conduct ourselves in everyday life' (Connell 2002:4).

2.2. Gender and the Everyday

Scott (2009) suggests one of the reasons for the emergence of the sociology of everyday life as a significant mode of inquiry was the result of the rise of social movements such as Feminism. The feminist movement highlighted the importance of everyday social relations and practices that women were particularly likely to be involved in. By looking at everyday life, 'feminists brought questions of identity and lifestyle differences to the forefront of political consciousness and changed the way we thought about the social world' (Scott 2009:3). Gender operates on an everyday level; it is a facet of everyday existence and as such, an everyday life approach is useful to help understand gender. The home and workplace are sites where our gendered sense of self is constituted; both people and places are gendered; social and spatial relationships are mutually constituted. I now consider why an everyday life approach is suitable for understanding the gendered nature of the women's lives.

Over the last thirty years the ways in which gender and gender divisions have been theorised has undergone substantial changes. There has been a shift from an emphasis on large-scale material and categorical structures of inequality, to seeing gender as something we 'do' rather than as something imposed on us by social structures. In this thesis I draw on arguments that gender is performative or is something that is 'done' from the sociological writings of Goffman[6] (1969, 1979) and West & Zimmerman (1987), and the post-structuralist writings of Butler (1990, 1995, 1997). In this thesis I use the concept of doing or performing gender in a distinctive way.

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[6] Goffman's work specifically focuses on the everyday world and is therefore useful to explore the women's everyday lives.

Despite drawing on different theoretical backgrounds, what links these three theorists is their interest in everyday interactive processes and practices in the construction of social identities. They all argue social identity, more particularly gender (for Butler and West and Zimmerman) is not about a set of traits residing inside individuals but is something people do in their social interactions with others. Gender is embedded in everyday interactions where individuals produce, reproduce and sustain social meanings according to gender behaviour appropriate to their biological sex category. This all means performativity or 'doing gender' is a useful concept to help understand the women's lives. One of the main components of each of the three theorists' argument is that the production of social identity or gender, requires that a performance is repeated, and 'this repetition is at one a re-enactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established' (Butler 1990:140). It is this constant doing and re-doing of our roles which make us who we are. More specifically it is the repetition of acts which make us male or female (Butler 1990).

There are both similarities and differences in Butler's gender performativity and Goffman's and West and Zimmerman's interactional approaches to social identity/ gender. As stated, it is crucial to acknowledge the very different theoretical traditions from which the authors' ideas emerge. This difference in the foundations of the theories may be seen as problematic for a combination of the approaches. Is it possible to integrate a sociological approach to gender with theory which draws on psychoanalysis and poststructuralist language? (Moloney and Fenstermaker 2002). This question will be considered alongside a detailed discussion of each of the theorists, pointing to their similarities and differences in chapter three.

Whilst drawing on a performative understanding of gender I want to make it clear that I conceive of gender as a lived social relation (McNay 2004). I want to make this clear because I am using performativity in a more sociological sense. Butler's account regards gender as located within symbolic or discursive practices which has resulted in criticisms of her work for ignoring the importance of the materiality of gender. This has resulted in debates as to how we best understand gender (e.g. Fraser 1997, 2000) because while,

cultural feminists feel that materialists rely on simplistic divisions such as base and superstructure, reality and representation in order to assert the primacy of economic forces in their analysis of women's oppression… conversely, materialist feminists are critical of the effects of the 'linguistic' turn in feminist theory which, in their view, results in a narrowing down of the issue of oppression to the rarefied one of identity politics (McNay 2004:174).

I would argue that gender cannot be understood as either wholly material or wholly cultural. Gender is not simply a structural location or a location within symbolic or discursive structures. Materialist and culturalist accounts are both insufficient in offering a full understanding of how gender operates because by defining gender within an abstract structure, materialist and culturalist feminists fail to recognise that those abstract forces only reveal themselves in the lived reality of social relations (McNay 2004). We need to look at how social relations are lived, as social, economic and cultural forces only reveal themselves in the lived reality of social relations and connect issues of identity to social structure. To put it simply, I am not interested in abstract understandings of gender, but instead how gender operates on an everyday level, which is why an everyday sociological approach is both useful and complementary.

The starting point then in understanding gender is to look at the lived reality of people's lives. Although both the material and cultural are important, I would argue that it is most useful to begin with an analysis of 'things' rather than 'words'. As Jackson argues, gender,

> foregrounds the social – social structures, relations and practices – but that does not reduce all social structures, relations and practices to capitalism. From my perspective…patriarchal or gendered structures, relations and practices are every bit as material as capitalist ones…and of course, all these intersect and interact, often in unpredictable and contradictory ways, so that the social order is not some seamless monolithic entity. Hence, adopting a materialist stance does not preclude awareness of differences among women; on the contrary, a full understanding of those differences requires that we pay attention to material social inequalities and everyday social practices. Nor does materialism ignore issues of language, culture representation, and subjectivity, but it does entail locating them in their social and historical context. Above all, materialist feminism does not reduce women's oppression to a single cause (Jackson 2001:284).

Like McNay, Jackson places emphasis on agency arguing that there is a need to account for subjectivity and agency for patterns of gendered interaction in everyday life as well as the institutional hierarchies in which they take place. An analysis of the women's lives needs to avoid reducing every aspect of their lives to an effect of social structure but to appreciate the extent to which structures are themselves perpetuated through human practices. As discussed earlier in the chapter, social order and social structure were viewed as being derived from interaction; social structures do not exist independently of the people who interact with them (Bulmer 1969). Individuals are active: they are shaped by interactions with others as well as being instrumental in shaping the character of interaction themselves. This makes it possible to see how a doing gender approach whilst seeing gender as a lived social relation are complementary.

I am interested in 'things' and how these effect subjectivity and vice versa. Because the 'things' feminist sociologists focused on in the 1970s have remained objects of social inquiry in part because of the material underpinnings of gender inequalities. Like Jackson I understand the social as encompassing 'all aspects of social life, from structural inequalities to everyday interactions. Addressing the everyday localised context of women's lives as I do in this thesis highlights that the material and social cannot be only understood in terms of social structure (Jackson 2001). Understanding the local situated context of women's lives has enabled feminists to make connections between aspects of gendered social relations which were previously regarded as separate (e.g. Adkins 1995). An understanding of gender that begins with the material realities of women's lives must include an understanding of social class. Gender inequalities cannot be understood without considering other dimensions of inequality that intersect with gender, in particular in this thesis, social class. In the 1980s writers such as Steedman (1986) and Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) theorised social class as implicit in everyday social processes and interactions. Recent feminist work on class has similarities with early feminist writings which aimed to make visible the everyday lives of women (Smith 1989) and whose work pays attention to the classed and gendered realities of everyday life (Gillies, Reay, Skeggs). Lawler points to an attentiveness of the everyday as being a feature of feminist work on class, which

has brought an immensely important emphasis to the significance of apparently banal and trivial worlds of family, school and leisure...and an attentiveness to the details of class in the everyday which has represented an important challenge to 'deficit' models of working-class life' (2012:10).

Lawler importantly notes how feminist work on class has presented an important challenge to 'deficit' models of working-class life. One of the aims of this research was to present a new and different portrayal of working-class life in former mining communities by specifically looking at the lives of young women living in de-industrialised communities. Models of working-class life in mining and former mining communities were highly masculine. Parker argues that studies of the coal and steel industry conjure up the idea of working-class communities 'and it is through this predominantly male space that class is imbued with heroic virtue, stability and community' (2010:16). A focus on male employment and class relations has obscured the lived experience of class, its intersections with intimacy, community, culture (Gillies 2007, Roberts 1995) and I would argue women's lives. This study is specifically concerned with women's lives and unlike many preceding studies, does not focus on women in relation to their male partners[7] or a male dominated industry[89]. I see this thesis as a different portrayal of working-class life in former mining communities which places women at the centre of the study[10]. By doing this I hope to move the debate on from employment and community studies which are broadly concerned with the heroic male manual worker, to understanding the everyday lives of women living in these areas. A focus on women's lives is also crucial as

> earlier heroic class distinctions, once signified publicly through heavy manufacturing employment, have transposed into concerns about family and inevitably it is the mother who becomes the focus of any condemnation; she becomes, in Walkerdine's (1989) terms the 'guarantor of liberal social order, and moreover, culpable for *social disorder*. Such classed positions are far from heroic; rather they become

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[7] For example miners' wives

[8] For example women's involvement in the miners' strikes

[9] This is not to dismiss previous research and theorising on mining communities. I understand that in the past it was impossible to discuss the lives of women without talking about their relations to the male population because of the coal industry and traditional divisions of labour. However women are the sole focus of the research.

[10] These portrayals of life in mining communities will be explored in the next chapter.

a matter of taste and disgust. So the ways in which these distinctions persist has shifted socio-culturally from associations with the predominantly male world of heavy manufacturing work, to the private and domestic world (Parker 2010:16)

as we will see evidence of in the later analysis chapters.

3. Redressing the Balance: The Conception of the Research

The original aim of the research was two-fold. First it aimed to address a lack of research on young women living in former mining localities, to explore their everyday lives in terms of work, gender relations and family networks and second, to determine whether the closure of the coalmines led to a change in gendered practices between men and women with regards to employment and domestic work. I felt it was important to study the everyday home and working lives of the young women living in former mining communities as notwithstanding the many studies into the political and social changes in the immediate aftermath of the pit closures, the experiences of young adult women have been largely ignored. The majority of the literature on former mining communities and de-industrialisation has been concerned with former miners and their wives (e.g. Waddington *et al.* 1991), the women involved in Women Against Pit Closures (e.g. Seddon 1986) and the effects of de-industrialisation (e.g. McDowell 2003), while the loss of traditional male jobs has been discussed in terms of the consequences of this process for men, especially young men (e.g. Nayak 2006), where young working class men are portrayed as alienated and the main victims of de-industrialisation (this includes debates about the decline of the male breadwinner family and a disruption to gender relations; Beynon et al. 2001). These debates do not often consider the impact upon those young women who also are affected by economic restructuring[11]. In light of this, I wanted to put the young women living in these communities at the focus of this research and explore their lives[12].

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[11] For example male unemployment has negative consequences for women (Dicks 1996).
[12] Since beginning my PhD two studies researching the lives of younger women living in former mining communities have been done. The first being 'From the Coal Face to the Car Park' carried out by Yvette Taylor at Newcastle University and the second 'Identities and regeneration in the former coalfields of East Durham' carried out by Katy Bennett at the University of Leicester. The differences between my research and that by Taylor and Bennett is that

I was also interested in gendered practices in the homes of women living in former mining communities because as Campbell (1986) argued, when the coalmines were in operation, mining communities had a patriarchal dominance, a conclusion echoed by Parry (2003:230)[13],

> Coalmining communities adopted an acutely gendered division of labour, in which men's paid employment was prioritized and supported by women's invisible reproductive labour in the home...Coalmining thus structured social relationships and practices, informing the way they were gendered

In this light, I wanted to establish whether the closure of the coalmines affected gendered practices, in terms of both paid and unpaid work since Russo and Linkon (2005) stress, the associated working class culture of industrial communities remains even when the work disappears. In effect I wanted to establish whether, despite the pit closures, traditional gendered practices were still prevalent in people's lives. Are women still doing the majority if not all of the domestic work and employed in traditional female roles as a secondary breadwinner? It has been suggested that traditional gendered practices have been disrupted because of women's involvement in the miners' strike (Rowbotham and McCrindle 1986, Stead 1987) and because of increased male unemployment and female employment. However, research has also shown that despite increased male unemployment and increased female employment, gendered practices remained stable (Charles and James 2005, Dicks 1996, Waddington *et al.* 1991, Dicks *et al.* 1998) and that gendered practices especially in the home with regards to domestic work have also have remained stable (Waddington 1991, Dicks 1996, 1998 and also generally outside of mining communities, Bianchi *et al.* 2000). Waddington et al. (1991) argue that any anticipated changes to men and women's roles in the home and workplace have been less dramatic and less permanent than anticipated. For example, an unequal domestic division of labour and ideas surrounding the male breadwinner/female carer remain. I wanted to question if this was still the case

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Bennett's research concerns the regeneration of former mining areas and Taylor's research was concerned with women of all ages from across the North East.
[13] Also see Hebron & Wykes (1991), Measham & Allen (1994).

more than a decade after those studies were carried out. Therefore I was interested in the women's working lives in terms of changes to the supposed changes to gendered practices but also because of changes in the labour market and their effects more generally. In order to develop an understanding of classed gendered practices in the women's home and working lives, I wanted to explore the intersections of employment, domestic work, family life and community. To do this I identified four research questions,

1. What kinds of networks do these young women belong to and what form do they take?
2. What types of employment are these young women engaged in or aiming for?
3. How are paid work, domestic work and childcare managed, arranged and negotiated?
4. In what ways, if any do traditional gendered practices exist in the homes of young women living in former mining communities?

By doing this I hoped to be able to offer insight into contemporary gender relations and the everyday working lives of the women. Studying the women's everyday lives will produce empirical evidence to help explain how gender relations actually work (Finch 1993). In effect I wanted to make visible the lives of an under researched group of women.

4. The Research Setting and Sample

The research was carried out in County Durham which is a large county situated in the northeast of England. County Durham is a mainly rural area and has twelve main towns and 240 other smaller towns and villages, many of which are former mining villages[14]. As of April 2009, 493,500 people lived in County Durham. There were 219,000 households in the county, 25% of working people employed in manufacturing and 67% employed in the service sector[15]. The county is broken down into district councils which are useful in distinguishing

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[14] Information from www.durham.gov.uk
[15] From http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=5651

the different areas in the county I recruited from. Figure 1 is a map of these areas in the east of the county; Easington, Durham and Sedgefield[16]. I recruited from the east of the county as this is where the majority of the coalmines were located, and latest to close.

Figure 1.
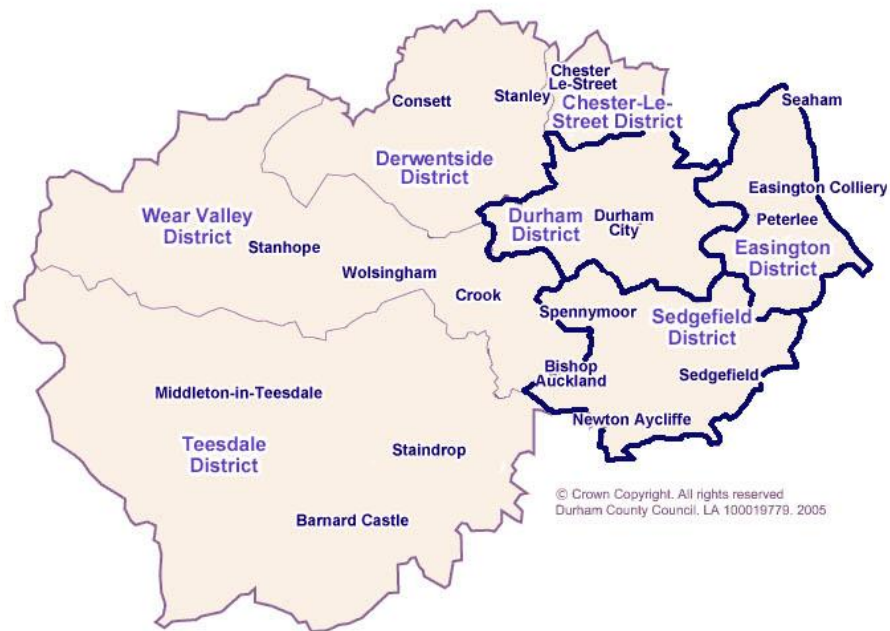
The closure of the coalmines is just one of the ways the North East has faced economic transformation. Along with the decline of heavy engineering, the North East now relies on service and knowledge based employment, public sector and business services (Taylor and Addison 2009). This had led to 'narratives of economic, social and cultural regeneration versus decline and degeneration' (Taylor and Addison 2011: 1.2). Yet many parts of the North East are still heavily coded as masculine and working-class given the legacy, materially and culturally, partly because of those male-orientated heavy industries.

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[16] From
http://www.durham.pa.gov.uk/durhamcc/directory.nsf/map&usg=__JmDHprq5ff_9Yd6ve-0sLiP-1k8=&h=469&w=660&sz=24&hl=en&start=22&zoom=1&tbnid
Accessed 21/8/2010

As this thesis is geographically specific, a consideration of the difference place makes is needed as in 'local cultures', gender relations can vary systematically (Massey and McDowell 1984, Massey and Jess 1995). Gender and class are constituted differently in different regions, in different countries and so on. Gender relations vary over space and time. We need to think about the relationship between gender, class and place as,

> Classed intersections are made explicit in thinking about the spaces we can or cannot occupy, the boundaries –geographical, material, emotional – regulating these, the rendering of people in or out of place and the production of subjective spatialities: what places do we feel (un)comfortable in and how in entry enabled or denied. (Taylor 2010).

We need to think about the space the women occupy in their everyday lives because gender and class identities are forged in and through particular, spaces, sites and networks. Gender identities are multiple and gender may be performed differently in different spaces such as in the paid work space or the domestic space. In this thesis I consider the domestic sphere, the women's place in their communities and the work place. Gender roles are produced and maintained by underlying social relations of gender relations between men and women about who does what work, for whom and what is expected to return (Duncan 1991).There is a further link between gender, place and work as regional economic variations and women's relationship to paid work have been shown to exist demonstrating how work, gender and space are implicated in the construction of one another (Massey and McDowell 1984). In the next chapter I go on to discuss how the North-East's association with industrial work (coal mining and steel making), characterised gender relations in the area and had a significant impact upon the shaping of local gender cultures.

The research sample consists of twenty-one white women aged between eighteen and thirty-one. All are in employment. Six work part-time and fifteen work full-time. Twenty of the women are heterosexual and one of the women is a lesbian in a same sex relationship. There are various living arrangements amongst the women; four of the women are married, eight cohabit, three are single parents, one lives alone, one with a friend and three live with their

parents. Eight of the women have children[17]. I offer a brief introduction to the women who took part in the research below:

Abigail* (27). Working-class[18]. Heterosexual. Educated to degree level. Employed as a learning mentor. Works full-time. Cohabiting. Lives with her partner.

Amy (29). Middle-class. Heterosexual. Educated to degree level. Employed as a teacher. Works full-time. Married. Lives with her husband.

Catherine (27). Working-class. Heterosexual. Educated to A Level Standard. Employed as a prison custody officer. In a relationship. Lives with her parents.

Charlotte (24). Working-class. Heterosexual. Educated to GCSE level. Employed as an administrator/receptionist. Works full-time. In a relationship. Lives with her daughter (age 7) and father half the week and her partner the other half of the week. She is in the process of buying a house with her partner.

Debra (28). Working-class. Heterosexual. Educated to GCSE level. Employed as a secretary. Cohabiting. Lives with her partner and son (age 1).

Hannah (26). Working-class. Heterosexual. Educated to A-Level standard. Employed as a secretary. Works full-time. Single-parent, lives with her son (age 2).

Jennifer (25) Working-class. Lesbian. Educated to a post-graduate level. Employed as a geologist. Works full-time. In a relationship. Lives with her partner.

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[17] See figure 2 for a more detailed table of participant information and text boxes in chapters four, five and six.

[18] These class categories were self-identified by the women themselves.

Jessica (26). Working-class. Heterosexual. Educated to a post-graduate level. Employed as a pharmacist, works part-time. Single-parent. Lives with her daughter (age 8). In the process of moving in with her partner.

Katie (30). Working-class. Heterosexual. Educated to degree level. Employed as a costing officer. Works full-time. Married. Lives with her husband and son (age 2).

Kimberly (25)Working-class. Working-class. Heterosexual. Educated A Level Standard. Employed as an early years practitioner. Works full-time. Cohabiting. Lives with her partner and two children (age 2 and 6).

Laura (21). Working-class. Heterosexual. Works part-time as a retail assistant whilst studying full-time for a degree. During term time lives with her friend, non-term time she lives with her parents and younger brother.

Leanne (29). Working-class. Heterosexual. Educated to A Level standard. Works full-time in customer care.

Lindsay (31). Working-class. Heterosexual. Educated to GCSE level. Employed as a carer. Works full-time. Lives with her partner and daughter (age 3).

Louise (30). Working-class. Heterosexual. Lives alone. Educated to A Level standard. Employed as a carer.

Lucy (25.)Working-class. Heterosexual. Lives with her parents. Educated to A Level standard. Employed as an Early Years Practitioner.

Megan (29). Working-class. Heterosexual Educated A Level standard. Employed as a civil servant. Works part-time on a job share basis. Lives with her husband and son (age 1).

Michelle (26). Working-class. Heterosexual. Lives with her partner. Educated to degree level. Employed as a project manager.

Natalie (29). Working-class. Heterosexual. Lives with her partner. Educated to A Level standard. Employed as a hairdresser.

Rebecca (27). Working-class. Heterosexual. Lives alone. In a relationship. Educated to GCSE level. Employed in customer care.

Sophie (25). Working-class. Heterosexual. Educated to GCSE level. Employed as a retail assistant. Works part-time. Cohabiting. Lives with her partner and two children (age 2 and 4).

Victoria (26). Working-class. Heterosexual. Educated to GCSE level. Works as a part-time receptionist while she trains to be a florist. In a relationship. Lives with her parents.

*All names are pseudonyms.

5. Gender Restructuring and Women's Work

As this thesis is concerned with women's experiences of paid and unpaid work, in this part of the chapter I discuss changes to women's paid and unpaid work more generally in order to put the women's working lives in context. The study of women's paid and unpaid work has been, and continues to be of crucial importance in the sociology of work and gender studies. Influential in this area has been feminist work identifying and theorising gender inequalities and gender regimes. Crucially feminist writers have highlighted how the organisation of work and the cultural values with which paid and domestic work have been associated, are gendered. What happens in the labour market is intrinsically bound up with male and female roles in the family and unpaid work more broadly. The increasing numbers of women (especially mothers) entering into paid work in the latter half of the twentieth century has been one of the most significant aspects of the transformation of gender relations, with a shift from

public to private patriarchy (Walby 1997). The pay gap has narrowed, notions of a woman's place as being in the home have eroded further yet the labour market continues to be characterised by inequality as will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. The changing nature of the labour market and continuing inequalities has meant that the study of women's work has remained of major importance and of continued study. A focus on the lives of young women and a continued study of women's working lives is important because as more women become engaged in paid work and the labour market evolves, the ways individuals and families experience and balance different forms of work is ever changing (Pettinger *et al.* 2005).

The restructuring of the labour market has been part of, and occurred alongside wider gender restructuring. There have been positive outcomes of this. Yet,

> the effects of... gender restructuring upon the lives of men and women are ambiguous in that they do not straightforwardly reinforce old forms of gender inequality, nor, however, can their detraditionalizing impact be regarded as wholly emancipatory. New forms of autonomy and constraint can be seen to be emerging which can no longer be understood through dichotomies of male domination and female subordination. Instead inequalities are emerging along generational, class and racial lines where structural divisions amongst women are as significant as divisions between men and women (McNay 2000: 1).

In terms of paid work, there is increasing polarisation between younger and older women, where younger women are more prevalent in the labour market, in better jobs and positions with higher salaries than older women, while there are new inequalities opening up between younger and qualified women and women who are older or unqualified (Walby 1999). Gender divisions are cross-cut by social class divisions. On average women receive lower returns than men within all occupational class groupings but class differences between women are also considerable (Scott,Crompton and Lyonette 2010). The question of who cares for children also has an increasing resonance because of women's increased employment. Women are returning to work more quickly after having children and the issue of affordable childcare remains. A polarisation has emerged amongst younger women between those who can,

'command a sufficiently higher salary to afford comprehensive childcare and take only minimal career breaks; and those whose childcare responsibilities prevent full-time employment for a number of years' (Walby 1999: 3). Women's decisions to go back to work may also be different for different classes as will be discussed in the next chapter. So as well as the labour market being continuously characterised by gender inequality, inequalities of social class have also deepened and widened. It has been suggested that the advancement of women (especially in the labour market) has been the advance of women from the dominant class and to the advantage of the class to which they belong. This has been achieved at the expense of the working-class as a whole, especially working-class men (Fowler 2003, Coward 1999). The decline of male economic activity has been concentrated among the unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers, not among professional and managerial males (Bonney 2007),

> we have become so mesmerized by stories of women's progress or its limits that we fail to notice the increasing polarization of class inequalities going on behind our backs, and the indirect contribution of women's work to this, through the combining of high salaries at the service class level (Fowler 2003: 482).

Traditional industrial jobs are now less available to working-class men, being replaced by a service based economy. This has been seen to have created new opportunities for women rather than women 'taking' men's jobs (Bradley *et al.* 2000). Fowler also draws attention to female-female domination across the lines of class in relation to paid domestic labour (Anderson 2000, Hochschild & Ehrenreich 2003), this is just one example highlighting how gender is not a single category of analysis. To fully understand how gender is lived, we need to explore how it intersects with multiple identities. Despite these changes, I am not suggesting that gender is no longer a significant social division. Men and women continue to live very different lives in one respect because of the very different relationships they have with both paid and unpaid work as will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The particularities of the lives of the women in this study make them an interesting cohort in order to think through some of these issues. The women are at a particular point in their lives where they are experiencing new social

roles. For example, they are leaving full-time education for the first time, moving out of the parental home, perhaps settling down with a partner and combining paid work with motherhood and/or domestic work. All of the women are engaged in paid work. Those with children combine motherhood and employment and many have to rely on the support of family members to be able to do this. This is in part enabled by their own mothers' history of low employment and because their mothers are still young enough to be able to look after their grandchildren.

I also felt it would be interesting to examine the young women's labour market position and how this position would affect their relationship with domestic work and parenting. In terms of domestic work research has also shown that a more equal domestic division of labour exists in the homes of younger couples (Warde & Hetherington 1993). Would this be the case here? Would changes in the world of paid work be reflected in the home for these young women, when previous research has indicated that changes in paid work have not been reflected in the home (Morris 1990)? Few studies into the domestic division of labour have concentrated specifically on the situation of young women[19].

As I am interested in how gender is lived, I explore how this occurs in and through different spaces and how this intersects with class. The importance of space and place must be considered as my interest in work as goes beyond the workplace into homes and into the community. Gender identity construction occurs in these sites through engagement with work and going across these different spaces.

6. The Future of the Sociology of Work

Work is such a major part of everyday life that I felt examining the women's lives through a 'work lens' would prove invaluable. Despite 'end of work' debates, a focus on work is crucial as work, whether paid or unpaid, is central to both women and men's lives. Work has 'achieved a currently unsurpassed centrality in the twenty-first century in the economies of the advanced industrial

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[19] With the exception of Oakley (1974) and Brannen and Moss (1991), where samples were of similar age to the women in this study.

world and in the everyday lives of their inhabitants' (Perrons *et. al.* 2006). I use this thesis to argue for the continued significance of a Sociology of Work in a climate where the study of work has become less central, having being pushed aside by other sociological concerns (Strangleman 2005, Halford & Strangleman 2009)[20]. Strangleman and Halford suggest part of the problem of the marginalisation of work in sociology is because of intellectual trends and fragmentation in the discipline[21]. Glucksmann (2009) suggests that part of the reason for other areas of sociology becoming more vibrant whilst the sociology of work remained on the defensive may be because of the supposed replacement of work-oriented society by 'consumer society' debates where there has been a shift away from work as the main or sole source of identity to a concern with consumption and lifestyle (Bauman 1998). Linked to this weakening of the sociology of work, Strangleman argues has been the 'cultural turn' and rise in cultural studies. Work and the study of work identities is not of major concern to those writing in that area and when considered, the economic is thought of in terms of consumption rather than production.

It is crucial that work continues to be studied critically because of its continued resonance in people's lives, because there are major connections between divisions of labour and the social construction of multiple identities (McDowell 2008), work remains one of the main mechanisms in the reproduction of social inequalities and because work is a major source of identity (Smeaton 2006). 'End of work' debates, that is the argument that the role of work in society is in decline (Rifkin 1995) and subsequent claims that work has now lost meaning, that it is no longer possible for employment to provide individuals with an identity (Casey 1995, DuGay 1996, Bauman 1998, Beck 2000[22]) although flawed (see Strangleman 2005), have had an impact on our understanding of work. In this thesis I present a challenge to these debates by arguing that work is a main source of identity; both employment and unpaid work continue to provide the women with a (positive) identity. I am not arguing that work is the only source of identity the women have, but as will be

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[20] See Strangleman (2005) for a detailed mapping of the sociology of work as an area of study.
[21] However the sociology of work has been noted for its fragmentation which has allowed engagement with other disciplines (Strangleman 2005).
[22] Interestingly Strangleman (2005) points out these claims have been made even though Beck and Bauman are not sociologists of work.

demonstrated, work was key in their accounts. Halford and Strangleman also note how work is now increasingly studied in Business Schools. Interesting and useful contributions to an understanding of work have been made yet we need to continue to work sociologically as Halford and Strangleman point out, those working in Business Schools do not consider work beyond the employment relationship which results in a lack of attention being paid to unpaid work and how work is linked to various areas of social life.

In order that work remains relevant in the discipline, Halford & Strangleman suggest the need for a reintegration of the study of work with other sociological agendas. The sociology of work 'has historically been central to discussions of class, power and gender and has provided critical insights in terms of social relations (Strangleman 2005:7.1) and can continue to do so. Work is not only the concern of the sociology of work and drawing on other sections of the discipline and beyond can enrich 'immeasurably the sociology of work…engaging with new ideas and other ways of thinking can only benefit the renewal of the sociology of work' (Glucksmann 2009:880). I see this thesis as one such attempt at this. Through this piece of research I aim to integrate 'A New Sociology of Work' (Pettinger *et al.* 2005) with a 'New Sociology of Social Class', along with a performative understanding of gender.

6.1. A 'new sociology of work? and the Total Social Organization of Labour

Despite the sociology of work becoming less central, the recent publication of *A New Sociology of Work* (Pettinger et al. 2005) has demonstrated both the continued importance of the study of work and crucial developments in its theorising. In the book the authors place great emphasis on the relationship between work and social class, and between work and gender relations which is why this approach is so appealing to me as the intersection of class and gender in the analysis of young women's lives is an important part of the research. A range of sociologists have looked at how class and gender, alongside other social divisions such as ethnicity and region, interact and play out specifically in the lives of working class women (Bradley 2000, Skeggs 1997, Warren 2000). This research has drawn from and will feed into these ideas by analysing the

connection between these social divisions, gendered practices and the 'total social organisation of labour' (Glucksman 2000). Recently there has been increased importance placed upon the intersection of gender and class with the recognition that gender cannot be fully understood without considering its intersection with class and vice versa (Skeggs 1997,Crompton 2000). Being a social construct, gender is not fixed; gendered identities are complex and vary across different social, regional and age groups and so an approach taking into account these varying aspects of social life is crucial in order to fully understand the workings of these women's lives. A 'new sociology of work' approach is not new in that those who use this approach are replacing an existing field with a new one, but aim to generate discussions about the nature of work and ways of researching and theorising work and particularly work that falls outside of the narrow employment definition. For example the aim of the book *A New Sociology of Work?* is to

> initiate and develop an empirically grounded understanding of the nature, dimensions, and relations of different forms of work. Work is not assumed to be a discrete activity carried out in exchange for remuneration in institutions (although it can be) but, rather, is conceptualized as being embedded in other domains and entangled in other sorts of social relations (Parry et al. 2005:4).

This approach is key to reinvigorating the sociology of work as there is a focus on uniting empirical research with theoretical and conceptual innovation which is something I hope to achieve with this thesis. Key to the new sociology of work and one of the main reasons I was drawn to the approach is that the project they argue has far-reaching implications for how social inequalities are understood, 'a movement away from the fixed boundaries of occupation, for example raises new questions about the relationship between work and social class, and between work and gender relations' (2005:4). In using this approach I hope to explore the relationships between work, social class and gender. Several of the authors in the book utilise and/or build upon Glucksmann's (1995, 2000, 2005) 'total social organisation of labour approach' (TSOL). Glucksmann developed the concept in an attempt to explain the gendered connections between paid and unpaid work. Briefly the TSOL refuses the

distinction between work and employment, preferring a more inclusive understanding of work and as

> taking place in different socio-economic forms and as interconnected with many other, often non-work, relationships…this approach…entails drawing attention to the…connections between work activities undertaken in different socio-economic spaces (Parry et al. 2005:11).

Glucksmann has revised the concept over the years but gender remains central to the concept. The revised TSOL however broadens its concern from a predominant focus on market and household, and the gendered relations between these to a 'consideration of interconnections and mutual shaping of work across the full spectrum of socio-economic modes (market, state, not-for-profit, household, community and so on)' (2009:886). The concept has been widely applied (Acker 2006, Bradley 2007, Crompton 2006, Glucksmann 2000, McDowell 2005).

The pervasive influence of both gender and class on the women's lives, in particular their working lives will be acknowledged and explored in this thesis. By looking at how gender and class are lived, social, economic and cultural forces reveal themselves in the lived reality of the women's lives. This also allows us to see how gender and class are connected to issues of identity and social structure. As the influence of social class on the women's lives is a concern of this thesis I also drew on new social class analysis literature.

7. 'New' Social Class Analysis

Despite arguments hailing the death of class (Clark & Lipset 1991, Paluski & Waters 1996), the end of the 1990s witnessed a revival of sociological discussions of class, demonstrating the 'continuing significance of class as a means of analysing forms of inequality' (Lawler 2005a:797). The demise of class analysis in sociology was in part due to the cultural turn (which also heavily impacted the way in which gender was theorised) where 'over this period social class increasingly became the lost identity of identity scholarship' (Reay 2011:1). However as we saw in relation to the study of gender, this did

have a positive effect on the way class theorisation developed[23]. For example developments helped to demonstrate how material and social inequalities relate to identity formation and that class is centrally implicated in both culture and identity (Reay 2011). The study of class identity (see for example Skeggs 1997, Reay 1998a, Bradley 1999, Savage, Bagnall & Longhurst 2001) has been particularly prolific.

So what is 'new' here? New sociology of class debates have in one way refashioned class analysis by placing greater emphasis on process of culture, lifestyle and tastes; there is a focus on how class is lived and on class practices; and there is a recognition of how class intersects with other forms of social identity and social divisions, a strength of these new class debates being that class theorists have taken account of gender. The importance of space is also at the heart of new working class studies through the 'recognition of the mutual constitution of class and place through the everyday' (Stenning 2008:10). Although a new approach has been adopted which draws on new theoretical approaches, concepts and concerns, the new sociology of class does not ignore traditional approaches and theories (Crompton 2001, Devine *et al.* 2005, Savage 2000, Skeggs 2004) in that there has been a renewed interest in issues of cultural identity, where cultural approaches are combined with an awareness of economic patterns to demonstrate how class identities are expressed and reproduced through cultural processes; 'cultural processes are embedded within specific kinds of socio-economic practices' (Devine and Savage 2000:193). This is useful as it is recognises that social and economic inequalities are not 'natural' but 'emerge as a consequence of human behaviours in relation to both material resources and cultural distinctions' (Crompton 2006: 658). As a result of this there has been a emphasis on 'examinations of how class is "lived" in gendered and raced ways to complement the macro versions that have monopolized our ways of envisioning social class for far too long' (Reay 1998a:272). In effect there has been a shift in focus from a concern with collective identities, to a focus on how class processes are apparent in more implicit and individualised forms in daily lives

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[23] Similar criticisms to those mounted against discursive understandings of gender were again relevant here; there is need for a consideration of the economic and material which I would argue are very important in discussions of social class as will be seen in later chapters.

(Savage 2000). One of the main contributions new social class analysts have made to an understanding of social class, and one of the main reasons why I draw on this approach, is because emphasis is placed on class practices and how class is lived. One key aim is to understand how class is experienced, a large part of that being experiences of everyday life.

In the UK new class debates often focus on issues of identity, culture, lifestyle, consumption and education. The work of Pierre Bourdieu has been influential in providing tools for sociologists interested in class to explore the inherent ways that class is lived. Feminists working in this area have drawn upon Bourdieu's notion of capitals. For Bourdieu, culture has a sense of structured inequality operating through the recognition and mobilisation of certain forms of economic, social and economic capital. Work by for example Lawler, Reay and Savage have drawn upon this idea to demonstrate how class 'need not be articulated in obvious ways and it is the implicit ways that class operates on a daily basis that can reveal the pervasiveness of the 'difference' of class' (Hebson 2009: 30). The 'affective aspects of class' (Reay 2005: 913) have been highlighted; feelings of guilt, shame, fear and the visibility of class bodily dispositions and tastes are now explored by feminist class theorists (see for example Lawler 1999, Reay 2005, Skeggs 1997, 2004). Class is more than a structural location, it is a set of practices marked on the body. New markers of class such as weight, appearance and accent have been shown to be used to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable class specific performances where working-class performances are often read as unacceptable and inferior (Skeggs 2004). McDowell writes that 'at the turn of the century, rather than being seen as the repository of decency and industrial solidarity, the British working class is now discursively constructed as un-modern, anti-cosmopolitan, backwards and worthless, not playing their part in the newly competitive and multi-cultural Britain' (2008:500). This may in part explain why individuals are reluctant to claim class identities, and adopt a 'defensive, hesitant, ambivalent or ambiguous attitude to class labels' (Bottero 2004:987). Individuals recognise inequality but are unlikely to place themselves 'within' classes, often rejecting class identities (Devine 1992, Reay 1998a, Reay 1998b, Savage *et al.* 2001,

Skeggs 1997). Instead respondents to questions about class are concerned to establish their own 'ordinariness' (Devine 1992, Savage *et al.* 2001).

There has also been a class revival in the USA on a more interdisciplinary level with more of a focus on working-class life. Like in the UK, working-class studies draw on the past but embrace diverse and even contradictory ideas about how class works, why it matters and how we understand it' (Russo and Linkon 2005:10). It is argued that epistemological shifts within the discipline and shifts in the nature of work and people's working lives require a new approach to studying and representing working class lives (Russo and Linkon 2005). New working class studies also do not solely concentrate on labour: questions are asked about how class operates for people at work, at home and in the community. Like the 'new sociology of class' approach 'new working class studies' also regard working classness as both economic and cultural. The material and labour market position of individuals, households and communities alongside symbolic values and cultural practices intertwine to create 'a number of interpretations of class position and class subjectivity' (Stenning 2008:10). For 'new working-class studies' a focus on everyday experience and a critical engagement with the intersections of class, gender and place is a major focus (Russo and Linkon 2005). While putting working-class people and working-class culture at the centre, class is not privileged over other identities as class shapes and is shaped by for example gender, race and place.

As working-class studies are interdisciplinary class is also firmly back on the geographical agenda (McDowell 2008). The influence of geography on our understanding of class has shown that class and place are mutually constitutive. Yet McDowell has concerns about this 'turn back' to class, pointing to the invisibility of gender (age, sexuality or ethnicity) of workers in some work literatures to argue that there is a failure to connect with previous feminist scholarship. I would suggest this is not as much of a concern in Sociology but is of crucial importance as,

> it is in feminist work, in the main, that we find important explorations and theoretical explanations of the ways in which racialised and gendered tasks in the home currently are being transferred into the labour market,

into public and private organisations and institutions that are both recasting and reconfirming older patters of gendered inequalities in the new neoliberal times. But I also accept the reverse argument – that feminist scholarship has often been too slow to bring race and class into its analyses (2008:21).

In the next section I propose how and why we need to analyses the women's lives using a combination of approaches outlined above.

8. Social Class, Gender and Work

One of the strengths of sociology as a discipline is the ability to draw upon and synthesise perspectives. An amalgamation of the three approaches identified to understanding social life is possible as key to each is a focus on everyday life, that is on lived social relations, whether this is how class and gender are experienced through daily practices such as work, or how class and gender are active ongoing sets of practices negotiated through everyday interactions, each approach is concerned with how this relates to identity. Glucksmann suggests the apparent stalling of the sociology of work might be a 'defensiveness shared with other approaches for whom systematic or structural analysis has been an important tool' (2009:880). She however crucially points out that,

> the study of work has always combined understanding of the structural aspects of labour and its organization with concern for the lived experience of those relations, and with cultures of work identities. Its strength has been to combine these levels of analysis, demonstrating their connections.

In effect I see using a combination of new social class analysis with a new sociology of work approach useful in studying gender as the former focuses on how class is lived and the latter allows for new analysis of the relationship between different forms of work and social class and gender relations. Studying work in the same way that social class has been approached means it is possible to see how gender is lived through the work that women do. The exploitation of women's domestic labour, and low paid labour continues to shape what it means to be a woman, yet the precise constraints different women face vary depending on the specific social locations they occupy

(Jackson 2001). An exploration of women's work is one area of study which allows us to see the interlinks between class and gender. I want to now outline some of the other reasons why combining the different approaches is useful in providing an understanding of the women's lives.

The study of work and social class sit comfortably alongside each other, easily allowing for an integration of the two approaches. Class has great significance here, also having a specific place in this study as class is of importance when discussing former mining communities (Strangleman 2001) because communities associated with the coal industry in the UK have long been associated with sociological debates surrounding class and place (Dennis et al. 1956, Warwick & Littlejohn 1992). As discussed, there has been a re-emergence of the study of social class. Halford and Strangleman (2009) suggest the approach used by those sociologists studying class today can be adopted by those studying work, in that new approaches which recognise the links between the cultural, emotive and economic may be useful. Class analysts also look to issues of identity, culture, lifestyle whilst not neglecting the material. Material issues must not be neglected when exploring the women's experiences of work. We can also integrate studies of work and class because new class debates often consider class as more than an occupational or economic category, where class is now analysed as something to be 'done', rather than a system into which individuals are put (Bourdieu 1986). There are obvious links here with the 'doing gender' approach. Social identity whether it be class or gender are constantly being reproduced through everyday life interactions and practices, in particular work practices. Although it is widely agreed that employment categories cannot explain the ways in which class is lived, yet it is important that this does not lead to the marginalisation of employment based research in new sociological debates about class (Hebson 2009, Sayer 2011). We still need to understand how class inequality is

> 'strongly structured by divisions of work into jobs of widely differing quality, and the 'contributive injustice' this creates...such an unequal division of labour makes it inevitable that approaches for self-development and fulfilment through work and the recognition that goes with it are unequally distributed (Sayer 2011:7).

Sayers point is extremely important for understanding the women's lives as work and class position are also about recognition,

> What people are allowed to contribute, particularly in terms of work, is at least as important as what they get in terms of resources, because the type that they do has far-reaching effects on the kinds of people they become, on how they view themselves and are viewed by others, and hence on the quality of their lives (Sayer 2011:9).

In the later analysis chapters I will show in detail how the contribution the women feel they make through work (both paid and unpaid) shapes their class and gender identity and how the women do this by defining themselves against other socio-economic groups. Hebson argues that new debates about social class do not engage with employment research. I would argue they fail to engage with debates about domestic work. This thesis begins to address this balance. Being able to integrate the study of work with so many other areas of inquiry demonstrates the interconnectedness of work in many areas of social life.

9. Thesis Breakdown

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. In the next chapter I present a review of the wide range of literatures which have provided the framework for this research. I open the chapter by discussing debates about work as a concept. I then look at the theorisation of the relationship between women's work and gender inequality. This is framed around a discussion of the public/private divide and Marxist feminist debates around the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism. As I see gender as a lived social relation that is done or performed in everyday life, I further outline arguments posed by Butler (1990), Goffman (1969) and West and Zimmerman (1987) but frame this discussion around the importance of material factors in the construction of gender identities. I address the importance of performance and performativity as conceptual tools to analyses everyday gendered practices. Resulting mainly from criticisms of Butler's lack of focus on the social, I address the importance of merging cultural and materialist accounts of gender (Fraser 1998, Bradley, Skeggs 1997, McDowell 2008). This is of particular importance, especially as

the construction of gender involves the appropriation of women's labour. I follow this with a discussion of women's paid employment patterns in the UK and address explanations for an unequal domestic division of labour. I end the chapter by looking at northeast gender cultures and community and deindustrialisation literature.

In chapter three I outline the methodological approach and research methods used to carry out this research. I advocate a feminist qualitative framework and the use of qualitative semi-structured interviews as most appropriate for enabling an understanding of the women's everyday lives. I present a reflexive account of my research experience in order to demonstrate how I put doing feminist research into practice and also discuss some of the practical dilemmas associated with doing feminist research. I then reflect on the influence my positionality may have had on research relationships and data.

In chapter four, the first of the three analysis chapters, I offer an exploration of the women's personal communities, where I set out and examine the important relationships in the women's lives. This is followed by a discussion of the women's feelings about the communities they live. In the second part of the chapter I move onto examine the women's class identities and class identification. In this first analysis chapter I begin my exploration of the women's dis-identification with 'others' to understand the women's class identification to develop a respectable self. I also explore how the women have a strong class identification and importantly that they do not disassociate with a working-class identity as has been shown to be the case in other research (Skeggs 1997, Savage *et al.* 2001).

Chapter 5 is primarily concerned with the women's paid employment. I begin by outlining the types of work the women are engaged in, and their likes and dislikes about their current employment. I explore the women's reasons for being in employment and argue the reasons are complex and go beyond economic factors. I highlight the value the women place on being engaged in paid work and how this allows the women to claim a respectable identity because of the positive associations they hold with being employed. I show how this is particularly important for the mothers in this study as they feel the work they do as mothers is unrecognised. The second part of the chapter focuses on

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how the mothers in the study manage paid work and motherhood as all of the women had to return to work for financial reasons. I discuss the childcare arrangements the women have and argue that being able to rely on informal childcare from family members is crucial in allowing some of the women to return to work. As the mothers (and those planning on having children) feel they have to work but also want to work, and want to be able to spend time with their children, I examine why the women see part-time work as being ideal.

In chapter six I argue that domestic work is one activity in which gender is 'done' or performed. I demonstrate throughout the chapter that doing domestic work is one everyday life activity that produces gender because when doing domestic work a gendered performance is given. In this chapter I use the doing gender approach to attempt to explain why an unequal domestic division of labour exists in the homes of the young women despite research indicating a more equal division of labour in the homes of young couples (Warde and Hetherington 1994). Research also indicates that in middle or 'dual-earner' families there has been a move albeit slowly towards a more egalitarian domestic division of labour[24]. But while this process of 'lagged adaptation' (Gershuny et al. 1994) seems to be occurring, it has not been explained why there has not been a change in working class homes. There is little qualitative research on domestic work in working-class households[25] so I wish to address this gap in this chapter.

In the final chapter I present a summary of the research findings and arguments made. I end the thesis by stating how I see this thesis as contributing to the sociological literature and reiterates the argument for a continued importance of the sociology of work and how this research will contribute sociologically to literatures surrounding former mining communities, working-class and gender literatures and to debates about the domestic division of labour.

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[24] This has mainly been proposed by time survey data e.g. Sullivan 2000
[25] There has been quantitative research done into the homes of working-class families, see for example Warren (2003).

Chapter Two: Women's Home and Working Lives

1. Introduction

The study of women's home and working lives has long been a focus of feminist theorising around gender inequalities and key elements of the feminist agenda for change. Women's paid and unpaid work has undergone immense critical analysis resulting in the argument that work and the institutions where work is carried out, are gendered and play a key role in the subordination of women through the recreation of gender divisions and gender inequalities. As more and more women are part of the labour force[26], authors interested in women's work and the interrelated relationship of work with other areas of social life continue to analyse women's relationship with paid and unpaid work in a changing labour market. The crucial issues of domestic work, childcare and gender segregation continue to be in focus, but the study of women's work is ever widening, now exploring women's work relationships, work identities, the gendering of workplace cultures and hierarchies, and the relationship work has with emotion, sexuality and embodiment to name a few. There is a wealth of research concerned to demonstrate how social divisions and identities impact on women's experiences of paid and unpaid work, and have long shown how gender and class divisions are important points of analysis of women's work. As work is such a major part of women's lives, a critical analysis of the paid and unpaid work of the women interviewed for this research is of crucial importance. As such, a focus on the work done in the public and private spheres is a focal point of this chapter. Through an exploration of the work women do and the relationship work has with intersecting identities we can continue to understand the everyday lives of women.

Gender is lived and experienced differently depending on an individual's class, ethnicity, age, locality and sexuality, so this chapter will focus on gender, class and place, through reviewing critically existing theoretical and empirical studies of paid and unpaid work. In this thesis I explore the women's relationship with different types of work. Accordingly I begin by briefly

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[26] Women's employment rate in 2011 is 65.3%.
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14692 Consulted 17 March 2011

considering debates around the meaning and use of the concept work, as critiques of work as a concept and activity by feminist writers have profound consequences for the sociology of work. This is followed by a discussion of early feminist conceptualisation and debates of women's work. These first mainly structural accounts of women's inequality are followed by a discussion of the value of a performative understanding of gender to the construction of gender identities (Butler 1990). I discuss the 'doing gender' approach where I draw on the work of Goffman (1969), West and Zimmerman (1987) and Butler (1990). A focus on women's work by second wave feminists provided an important location for the development of analyses of the intersection of gender divisions with other divisions such as class so I then examine sociological accounts of working-class performances of gender and follow this with a discussion of recent sociological approaches to the study of class. I then shift the focus of the review to document how gender, class and place intersect in women's experiences of paid and unpaid work. To do this I begin by outlining women's employment patterns in the UK and demonstrate the persistence of an unequal domestic division of labour. This is followed in section eight by an exploration of North East England gender cultures. As sociological understandings of self and identity must consider the social contexts in which identities are formed, I discuss some of the historical context of northeast England in relation to the production of gender identities and gender practices through work. I end the chapter with a brief discussion of community.

1.1. What is work? Work beyond the employment relationship

In its everyday usage, work generally refers to employment. Work is seen as something we are obliged to do and is often used in contrast to the term leisure. It was this everyday understanding of work as a labour and/or economic exchange which was prevalent in early sociological debates. The notion that work as an activity is productive and has a market value derives from early economic and industrial sociology (see Joyce 1987). Work was defined in relation to a male model of industrial labour and as such, traditional sociological explorations of work tended to equate work with full-time waged employment, while the creation of disciplinary boundaries within academia mirrored the

industrial differentiation of institutions, whereby work became the domain of classic economics (Glucksmann 1995). Central to this conceptualisation is of work as 'profoundly gendered' (Irwin 2005: 160). This was in evidence when work was conceptualised around dichotomies of paid and unpaid labour and the public and private spheres. This produced a narrow definition of work where paid work done in the public sphere was the only recognised form of work in mainstream sociology.

However these conceptual boundaries and restricted common sense usage of the term work have been subject to sustained critique. Pahl (1984, 1988) called for a widening of the study of work that would cover both work done in formal and informal sectors. Pahl argued a wider understanding of the processes at play in studying work was needed arguing 'too much emphasis has been given to that work narrowly perceived to be connected with a specific conception of production and too little to the other productive work connected with reproduction and consumption' (1984:19). Pahl also called for a recognition and exploration of all aspects of work across spheres. He insisted on the necessity of taking into account the social relations within which labour activities were embedded. Later this idea was developed by Miriam Glucksmann in her Total Social Organisation of Labour Approach (1995, 2000, 2009). Glucksmann's relational framework refuses the distinction between work and employment in favour of a more inclusive understanding of work as taking place in different socio-economic forms and as interconnected with many other non-work relationships. The approach drew attention to the blurred lines between work and non-work and to the connections between work activities undertaken in different socio-economic spaces.

The idea that work only constituted an activity which has a market value was also at the centre of early feminist criticisms of the concept work. Oakley (1974) famously argued housework is work and the role of a housewife role should be treated as an occupational role regardless of the fact that housework is largely unpaid and performed outside of formal employment relations. Thus it was argued back then that work does not have to be paid and/or visible be regarded as work. Work has multiple meanings referring to employment, domestic work, volunteering and so on, all which may be undertaken within a

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variety of socio-economic relations (Pettinger *et al.* 2005). The importance of the context in which work is performed was highlighted. Delphy (1977, 1984) argued that relations and different perceptions of tasks exist when they are for example carried out in the home compared to when they are performed under employment relations. So when unpaid work was undertaken by women in the home, as part of their domestic role (such as domestic work and childcare) it was not seen as work. Yet when these activities are undertaken under employment relations Delphy argues the nature of the work shifts from reproduction to production and hence is seen as work. Delphy rejected this distinction between production and reproduction, arguing instead that the unpaid work women do within the home is labour and is a form of productive activity like waged labour. Central to this argument was the meaning of 'value' and the critiques of it economic, often Marxist analysis. For Delphy, unpaid work is productive of value; work does not have to be paid for, for it to have value. This disjuncture has in part been explained by the social relations under which work is performed. Pahl's later call for an understanding of the impact of wider social processes in any analysis of work was already evident here in Delphy's argument as 'the peculiarities of domestic labour...arise not from the specific tasks performed but from the social relations within which they are preformed' (Jackson 2008:136). In the case of domestic work, a recognition of the domestic model is crucial as it pre-structures the pattern of gender- related inequality in a capitalist mode of production where social relations are patriarchal and entail men's appropriation of women's labour (Delphy 1977, 1984). Feminist writers also highlighted that sociological writing about work had almost exclusively concerned that paid work carried out by white male workers and the findings of those studies had been used to develop theories that were then used to explain all workers attitudes and experiences. In response to the neglect of women (Walby 1986) feminist writers began to redress this balance by researching and theorising the working lives of women. This led to the production of a large body of feminist writing that provided an understanding of the relationship between work and gender. One of the major achievements of contemporary feminists has been to demonstrate that a key element of gender inequality lies in the

interconnections between the gendered division of labour in both the labour market and in domestic work (Pateman 1988; Okin 1989).

2. The Study of Women's Work

Feminist contributions to an understanding of the relationship between work and gender have been extensive and influential. I begin this section by discussing the feminist critique of the public/private distinction. This was an important contribution to theorising around gender and work as the recognition of the connection between the two spheres lay the ground for a substantial amount of research highlighting how work in many areas of social life are connected and crucially, and in particular how gender relations in the labour market and the household are interlinked. I then discuss feminist theorising of the links between women's paid and unpaid work, beginning with Friedan's (1963) identification of the problem with no name. I then examine arguments that capitalism and patriarchy operate through women's work in the labour market and the family to subordinate women.

2.1.The Public/Private Divide

The public/private divide was key to much early feminist writings on gender and work, being used to explain women's subordinate position in society. The public/private split has been useful for explaining how gender relations have changed since the mid-twentieth century (Holmes 2009). Prior to industrialisation the home was often a site of both production and reproduction. Industrialisation led to production being removed from the home. Home and work were re-imagined as separate spheres associated with specific values and functions; the private as a site of home and family life and the public with employment (Gillis & Hollows 2009). Social theorists of the time (often men) saw this division between the private and public as a given. Durkheim wrote, 'Sociology will prove that the equality of the sexes ... is incompatible with all social existence, by showing that each sex has special and permanent functions that it must fulfil in the natural economy of the human family' (Durkheim cited in Pedersen 2001: 505). Feminists were critical of this 'natural' separation where it was assumed women had their proper place and so challenged the lack of

sociological interest into the private sphere. Whilst challenging the 'natural' separation of the two spheres, feminists argued that the public/private dichotomy played a powerful ideological role in constructing gender relations. The public/private split reflected a sexual division of labour in which men were defined as active in the public world and in paid work, where women were defined as primarily domestic labourers located in the private sphere. The identification of women with the private sphere from the 18th century onwards played a central role in creating forms of gender inequality as domesticity emerged as an ideology that legitimated new gender inequalities. This gender inequality had a class and race dimension. The ideology of separate spheres being organised around the principles of men and women being suited to each sphere was problematic when factoring in other social divisions such as class and race. The ideology of separate spheres was clearly a white and middle-class construction as a distinctively middle class domestic culture was defined through distance from the public world of work. For example, middle-class households employed working-class domestic servants. Many working-class women during the Victorian period had little other option but to earn a wage through this type of paid labour. This was in part because of restrictive 'protective' legislation that disallowed women and children from working in mines and factories. This took away women's jobs and at the same time created the need for carers for children (Humphries 1981).

Patriarchy is a key concept been used to explain women's position in the private sphere. One of the most influential central feminist critiques of the division between the public and the private was offered by Pateman (1988) who argued that a sexual contract is the basis of women's subordination. Pateman argued men's freedom and women's subordination are created through an original sexual contract where the resulting civil freedom is a masculine attribute depending on patriarchal right. Women who are assumed to lack naturally the attributes and capacities of 'individuals' are denied the civil freedoms afforded to men. Sexual difference therefore signifies political difference, the difference between freedom and subjection. Pateman argued that the private sphere is typically presumed to be a necessary and rational foundation for civil or public

life but at the same time is treated as irrelevant. The interrelation between the public and private spheres is also ignored,

> To argue that patriarchy is best confronted by endeavouring to render sexual difference politically irrelevant is to accept the view that the civil (public) realm and the 'individual' are uncontaminated by patriarchal subordination. Patriarchy is then seen as a private familial problem that can be overcome if public laws and policies treat women as if they were exactly the same as men (Pateman 1988: 17).

Criticisms of the division between the public and the private led 'second-wave' feminists to argue that the 'personal is political', challenging the traditional view that the family and personal life were outside the realm of 'politics'. The private sphere it was argued was in fact a primary site of power relations and gender inequality, power relations exist in personal as well as formal institutions (Millet 1970). An emphasis was placed on the ways in which personal circumstances are structured by public factors. It was argued women's lives were regulated and conditioned by the legal status of wives, government policies on childcare, the allocation of welfare benefits, the sexual division of labour and laws relating to rape, sexual harassment and abortion (also see Walby 1990). 'Personal' problems it was argued could only be solved through political means and political action (Pateman 1988). Empirical research into women's everyday experiences in patriarchal societies demonstrated the interrelationship of the public and private and the impossibility of any separation of the two. On a theoretical level, feminists analysed the ways the public sphere influences the private lives of women and the ways in which power relations in the private sphere of the home create situations of oppression and domination. Yuval-Davis (1997) has suggested that the recognition that power relations operate within primary social relations as well as in impersonal secondary social relations of civil domains has been one of the most important contributions of feminist theorising to social theory.

2.2 The problem with no name

Criticisms of the public/private divide led to a focus on the home. As I go on to elaborate in the next section, feminist writers argued the home was a key site in

the oppression of women. As well as being a place of comfort, it was highlighted that for women the home can be a place of violence, emotional turmoil and alienation. 'As lived experience, (the) home can be oppressive' (Blunt and Dowling 2006:15). In the 1960s Friedan famously argued that the home was an oppressive place for women because of their confinement to the domestic role. The public/private divide played a central role in defining appropriate masculinities and femininities. This resulted in women being excluded from, and placed at a disadvantage in paid employment. In the process women became economically dependent upon men and hence unequal. 19th century Liberal feminism called for the same civil rights and economic opportunities for women as men believing this would lead to equality between men and women (Tong 1992); if women had their own income, they would no longer be dependent upon men. This campaigning continued into the twentieth century where Liberal feminists carried on the argument that female engagement in paid work would lead to equality. Friedan (1963) critiqued the 'feminine mystique', the idea that women can find satisfaction solely in the traditional role of wife and mother. Friedan's text documenting the unhappiness of primarily white, married, middle-class, non-working mothers spoke of the 'disease with no name' (this was Friedan's tag for the dissatisfaction of the white, educated, suburban, middle-class, heterosexual housewife) which Friedan argued afflicted those American women of the time. She argued housewives were confined to the home, that the home was a constraint and that women were unhappy due to their seclusion in a home life centred around children and her husband,

> It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slip cover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night, she was afraid to ask, even of herself, the silent question: 'is this all?' (1963: 13).

Although *The Feminine Mystique* helped explain why some women were unsatisfied with being a wife and mother it failed to address other issues deeper than 'the problem that has no name'. Continuing the Liberal feminist tradition,

Friedan saw the solution to this problem as being through women's engagement in paid work. In this Friedan failed to consider how difficult it would be for even privileged women to combine marriage, motherhood and a career unless major structural changes were made within and outside of the family. This was shown to be particularly true from accounts of Black feminists and those interested in issues of class who pointed out that Black and/or working-class women had already been engaged in paid employment and that having to combine paid work, domestic and caring responsibilities was not the liberating dream that Friedan envisaged. Instead it was shown to be a burden. It was argued women's involvement in paid work would not lead to equality with men as the labour market was another area of social life where women were oppressed. Both work done in the public *and* the private produced and reproduced gender inequalities. Feminist writers went on to highlight the connection between the two spheres arguing that gender relations in the labour market are related to gender relations in the household discussed next.

2.3 Gender, Class and Work: Patriarchy and Capitalism

The 1970s and 1980s are regarded as the era of 'classic' feminist accounts of gender and work (Bradley 1996). The main debates of the time centred around one, the importance of the family and labour market structures as an explanation for women's unequal and disadvantaged position in the labour market, two, how gender exists only as a social division because of patriarchal domination (Delphy & Leonard 1992), three, the role capitalism and patriarchy played in being structural determinants of women's subordination in the home and the labour market (Hartman 1986), and four, whether gender divisions at work were ideological (Barrett 1980) or material (Cockburn 1983). It was Marxist feminists who focused most on women's work- related concerns. In doing so they have helped us understand, among other things, how the institution of the family is related to capitalism and patriarchy; how women's domestic work was trivialised as not being 'real' work and finally how women were confined to low status, low paid jobs.

It is widely agreed that gender is not 'natural' but a social construct organised around biological sex (de Beauvoir 1972, Oakley 1972), that the concept of gender was adopted to lay emphasis to the social construction of masculinity and femininity and that appropriate notions of femininity and masculinity have to be understood in the context of hegemonic heterosexuality (Butler 1990, Connell 1995). It then follows that the social relations between men and women are socially constructed too. Structural explanations of gender inequalities suggested that gender inequalities are sustained through a range of social structures that subordinate women (Oakley 1972, Delphy 1977). What marked second wave developments in feminist understandings of the inequalities women faced was an attempt to merge feminist explanations of patriarchy with Marxist theories of capitalism in order to acknowledge that class inequalities divide women and men. Marxism was the dominant critical theory within sociology in the 1970s and its concerns were indeed class but Marxist analyses of women's employment were criticised for concentrating all explanatory force on the needs of capitalism and on class divisions and ignoring gender. As Hartmann (1981) observed, Marxist categories of analysis gave no clues about why women were subordinate to men inside and outside the family. Marxist categories, like capital itself, Hartmann argued were sex-blind. Therefore many feminists attempted to address these criticisms by incorporating feminism into a Marxist critique of capitalism (e.g. Beechy 1977) discussed next.

The concept of patriarchy has been heavily drawn upon by feminists attempting to explain gender inequality and gender segregation in work. Hartmann and Walby in particular pioneered structural analyses which challenged conventional explanations of women's position in the labour market as determined by their position in the household. Hartman (1982) in emphasising the connections between capitalism and patriarchy argued that before the development of capitalism, a patriarchal system was established where men controlled women and children's labour in the family. Through this, men learned the techniques of hierarchical organisation and control which, as capitalism developed, was used by men to segregate paid work to their own advantage. Job segregation meant that men often hold the top hence most well paid positions compared to women. For Hartman this meant the low wages

women earned, kept women dependent upon men encouraging them to marry. Married women were required to do the domestic work in the home which acted to weaken women's position in the labour market. In effect the hierarchical domestic division of labour is perpetuated by the labour market and vice versa. Hartman suggests the 'mutual accommodation' between capitalism and patriarchy results in a 'vicious circle' of disadvantage for women.

In contrast to the so-called dual system theorists Hartman and Walby, Delphy and Leonard (1992) argue women are disadvantaged due to men's exploitation of women's labour, 'women's oppression is directly beneficial to men and only indirectly beneficial to capitalism' (1992:35). Women, they argue, do domestic work in a patriarchal mode of production. As women are responsible for domestic work and do the work themselves, men gain an advantage in the labour market as they are 'freer' than women when it comes to selling their labour power to employers. Delphy argues there are two parallel modes of production, not exclusively capitalist. The unpaid domestic work done by women benefited capitalism but it was labour that was more immediately exploited by men rather than the capitalist class. The 'main enemy' was patriarchy (Delphy 1977). Working-class women in particular are subject to a double exploitation of their labour through their participation in both modes of production.

In another attempt to understand capitalism and patriarchy as intertwined systems of both material and symbolic production, Walby (1990) sets out a framework to understand how the two connect. Patriarchy, she argues, is made up of six structures; paid work, household production, culture, sexuality, violence and the state. A positive feature of this approach is that it includes both cultural aspects and economic arrangements. Walby (1997) later developed this approach to emphasise a shift from 'private' to 'public' patriarchy. Walby argues patriarchal dominance now operates chiefly within the public world of employment and politics. As more women are now employed and so involved in public sphere and not as dependent upon men, patriarchy does not disappear but changes in form. Rather than women's lives being under the control of individual men within the family, decisions affecting women's lives are usually made by groups of men in the public sphere. This 'new' public form of patriarchy

does not exclude women from the public sphere as private patriarchy did, however women are segregated into particular jobs and into lower levels of hierarchies in this new public patriarchy as has been shown in empirical research (Adkins 1995). Walby argues young women's lives are more likely to be affected by public patriarchy more than older women as they have been in education often for longer, been employed from an early age, are less likely to have taken time out of paid work and are not as dependent upon men. Both types of patriarchy then impact differently on different women depending on their class, age and if they have children.

3. 'Performing' or 'Doing' Gender?

I have outlined material (economic) explanations of gender inequalities which stressed the importance of the role paid and unpaid work play in the production of gender identities, In this part of the chapter I examine what I argue is a complementary approach to a material explanation of gender, the conceptualisation that gender is a performance. In chapter one I briefly introduced how gender as a performance has been theorised in distinct ways in different disciplines and how there are both similarities and differences in Goffman and West and Zimmerman's interactional approaches to social identity/ gender identity and Butler's gender performativity. Unlike the theories discussed in the above previous sections, these literatures do not consider women's work outright, yet I argue that performance is a useful concept in helping make sense of the women's everyday lives[27]. I will now consider each of these theorists' ideas in more detail beginning with Goffman, followed by West and Zimmerman, then Butler. Throughout I point to the differences and similarities in the authors' ideas and demonstrate it is possible to incorporate these theorists ideas as they have important things in common.

3.1 The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life

Erving Goffman was a Canadian sociologist associated with symbolic interactionism whose work focused heavily on the everyday world. Goffman's

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[27] Although the theorisation of gender as a performance was later applied to the workplace. New questions were posed about how gender identities are constructed through daily interactions in the workplace.

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work is useful as he argued that the self occurs as a result of social situations; on a daily basis, social actors 'participate in the construction of such a self and, in the process, make and remake the social every day through our social interaction (Lawler 2008:109). The study of everyday life allows us to see the production and reproduction of social identities. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1969), using a dramaturgical analogy, Goffman analysed social interaction and social identity with reference to a stage performance to argue that in everyday life, individuals perform identity. To demonstrate his argument that social identity is a performance, Goffman used a dramaturgical analogy and the idea of regions to show how the self is performed in different social spaces and social situations. Goffman adopted this dramaturgical metaphor to demonstrate the ways people play different roles and manage the impression they present to others in different settings. For example Goffman pointed out how in a theatre there is a division between the back region where the performance is prepared and a front region where the performance is presented. He argued that like in a theatre, in social life there is a 'front stage' and 'back stage'. Goffman argued in social life we present ourselves to the wider world in the front stage region. In the front region we are aware of our audience and so in a sense play to them; in effect an identity performance occurs in this region. Goffman further argued that like in a theatre, the audience does not see the backstage region so access to certain aspects of everyday behaviour can be controlled, to prevent outsiders seeing a performance that is not intended for them. However this does not mean that we are only our 'true self' in the backstage region.

Key to Goffman's argument, following from Mead's suggestion that we develop a sense of self by interacting with others, is that performances are enabled through interaction with others. In effect Goffman argued identity is not the outcome of some essential personality, but, a more fluid creation which develops over time through the interrelationship between the self and those who comprise the social world. Interaction and recognition are key in the construction of identity and as such, our performances need to be recognised as authentic or correct by those others we interact with, for our performances to be accepted. This presentation of the self is therefore designed for an audience,

even if that audience is only there in the imagination. Because identity is about becoming intelligible to other people, but also to oneself; we self observed identity. Whether consciously or unconsciously, when interacting with others in the front region, most people want other people to reach a particular interpretation of their actions, i.e. they want to give a convincing performance of correct social roles and behaviours. As such individuals alter their behaviour according to how they think others might see us, or themselves interpret our behaviour. To try to control or guide the impressions that the others form of individuals, techniques can be used to create and sustain these impressions. Goffman refers to spending time and effort on these performances and making those actions apparent as dramatic realization which rests upon impression management. It is important to note that impression management is not fraudulent behaviour as individuals are mostly not conscious that they play roles. Goffman argues much of our behaviour is done for the benefit of the social group we belong to and as such is not contrived. This is all important as there is a lot at stake in the intelligibility of identity as I will discuss shortly.

It is important to acknowledge the idea that a performance can imply that a character is being played, like that of an actor choosing which act to perform. This may imply an individual is formed prior to acts, that we 'put on an act', that we are not being our real self, or that we are only our 'true selves' in the backstage region. This is a criticism that has been made of Goffman's work yet this is not what Goffman was arguing. Our performances in the front region don't conceal who we really are. In fact Goffman argues that more than playing roles, our performances are what make us who we are. Butler's notion of performativity has also been misread in the same way. For Goffman, West and Zimmerman and Butler, there is no distinction between what is being performed and what is real; the performance constitutes the real self, 'to be a person, then, is to perform being a person' (Lawler 2008:106). As Butler argues, it 'is a kind of persistent impersonation that passes as the real' (Butler 1990 viii). The various performances become aspects of the person. There is no doer behind the deed, the doer becomes formed from the doing. In specific relation to gender, Butler argues, 'gender is always a doing, though not a doing by subject who might be

said to pre-exist the deed' (Butler 1990:25). In effect the constant repetition of giving performances all contribute in the construction of the self. Doing *is* being.

In his later work, Goffman did specifically consider gender in his writing on social identity. In The *Arrangement between the Sexes* (1977) and *Gender Advertisements* (1979) we see Goffman's take on gender as a social category and social construct; in effect Goffman's understanding of gender identity[28]. In The *Arrangement between the Sexes,* gender identity is described as a person's 'sense of who and what he is' (1977:304) with reference to cultural ideas of masculinity and femininity. Here Goffman questioned why societies make so much of the 'very slight' biological differences between the sexes and argued societies grasp at sex-class membership, making it a marker of key social difference. In *Gender Advertisements* Goffman analysed advertisements and developed the concept 'gender display' to show how gender displays indicate and reinforce the unequal position of women in society.

Goffman aimed to subvert common sense explanations of gender difference as being natural by rejecting the idea that gender differentiated beliefs and practices reflect a fundamental biological division in the natures of men and women. He argued biology cannot determine social practices, rather gender 'is a property of organisms, not a class of them' (1977:305). He argued the different natures of men and women are constructed in and through beliefs and practices that apparently honour and reflect this biological distinction. In effect gender is understood by Goffman as 'culturally established correlates of 'sex' '(Goffman 1979:1) with gender distinctions being socially constructed through everyday beliefs and practices, for example through the household division of labour. In effect Goffman argued that gender is produced through gender displays and 'genderisms' (individually enacted gendered practice). Gender displays are non-verbal 'conventionalised portrayals' (Goffman 1971:1) that any culture correlates with biological sex. Gender displays signify sex-class membership that people produce and recognise while co-present with others. Goffman (1979) details how gender is produced as an unequal relation and made to seem natural because of the way we display our gender. Displays of

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[28] Goffman was concerned with gender differentiation rather than gender stratification. Gender differentiation, is produced and reproduced through interaction (1979).

gender are conventional in that in that they follow widely held ideas about what is the norm for men and women and stylised in that many of the things we do to express femininity and masculinity become slightly exaggerated and ritualised. Gender is an illusion we create when we interact with others. We follow scripts which lay down gender norms. There 'is no gender identity...only a schedule for the portrayal of gender' (1979:8). In effect Goffman argued that that we are all actors, trying to give a correct performance of femininity or masculinity, hence gender is not natural, but a performance created in interaction with others and the cumulative effect of gender displays is to 'constitute the hierarchy between men and women' (1979:6). In the next section I outline how Goffman's ideas have influenced a specific understanding as gender as a performance of identity.

3.2 'Doing' Gender

Drawing on the work of Goffman (1969, 1977, 1979), Garfinkel (1967) and an ethnomethodological tradition to develop their understanding of gender identity, West and Zimmerman (1987) provide a systematic theory of gender as a routine and ongoing process individuals must work at in everyday interaction. West and Zimmerman argue social interaction is crucial in the production of gender and like Goffman and Butler, understand gender as a 'routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment' (1987: 126). They suggest gender is not a set of traits, nor a variable or role, but the product of social doings to argue that gender is 'done'. West and Zimmerman's notion of 'doing gender' came from their attempt at a theoretical shift away from understanding sex as a set of ascribed characteristics and from seeing gender as an emergent feature of social interactions. Like Goffman, West and Zimmerman see 'doing gender' as behaviour associated with appropriate expressions of femininity and masculinity, gender being 'the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate to one's sex category' (1987:127).

West and Zimmerman draw in particular on Goffman's work on gender displays (1976), that is, the behavioural aspects of being a woman or man. Although West and Zimmerman are influenced by Goffman's writings they

argue that Goffman gives the impression that individuals follow gendered scripts without too much thought, whereas they point to the work involved in the routine of doing gender to argue that gender displays are not optional. West and Zimmerman are critical of Goffman's approach in that they argue he treated the display of gender as something occasioned that can be entered into when suited. For West and Zimmerman gender is more than a matter of ritualised performance, it is 'something that happened in the nooks and crannies of interaction…and not interfering with the serious business of everyday life' (1987:130). They stress that gender is not optional but is an inescapable ongoing part of everyday interaction. For West and Zimmerman, gender is not a role but the product of social doings. However it can be argued that Goffman's work can be used to show that gender is not inescapable. As gender is the product of social doings, that in playing certain roles individuals give gendered performance(s) and as these performances are repeated over and over then that repetition makes us gendered. Gender is not optional; 'the performative enactment of masculinity and femininity do not simply *express* gender difference, but constitute it' (Lawler 2008:112, italics in original).

Despite West and Zimmerman's above criticism of Goffman, their work shares some key ideas. Gender is understood by West and Zimmerman as an accomplishment[29]. Key to understanding gender as an accomplishment is the idea of accountability. Similar to Goffman's concept of impression management, West and Zimmerman argue, as individuals we know that our conduct is accountable so we frame our actions in relation to how they might be constructed by others in the context in which they occur. Gender is a point of interpretation of action by others to which we can be held accountable of our actions as a man or woman and 'membership in one or the other sex category can afford a means of legitimating or discrediting one's other actions…for involvement in them is accountable as gendered activity' (Fenstermaker, West and Zimmerman 2002:29-30). Accountability is crucial to an understanding of the normative, regulatory order central to the accomplishment of gender. To 'do gender' 'is not always to live up to normative conceptions of femininity and masculinity; it is to engage in behaviour at the risk of assessment' (1987:137). It

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[29] Butler also speaks of the 'accomplishment of gender' (1997).

is the risk of accountability that shapes and drives the production of gender whether this be through conformity or deviance.

Like Goffman, West and Zimmerman see 'doing gender' as involving both the interpersonal and the institutional. When we understand gender as 'an accomplishment, an achieved property of situated conduct, our attention shifts from matters internal to the individual and focuses on interactional, and ultimately, institutional arenas (1987:126). It is individuals who do gender but 'it is a situated doing carried out in the virtual and real presence of others who are presumed to be orientated to its production' (1987:126). Rather than a property of individuals, gender is seen as an emergent feature of social situations, 'both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions in society' (1987:126). Through the concept of accountability both the 'normative character of doing difference and the power of social structural forces as complex sets of situated interactions can be appreciated' (Moloney and Fenstermaker 2002:195) so 'while individuals are the ones who do gender, the process of rendering something accountable is both interactional and institutional in character: it is a feature of social relationships, and its idiom derives from the institutional arena in which those relationships come to life' (West and Fenstermaker 1995:21). The accomplishment of gender along with class etc. as driven by accountability is argued to be a crucial part of the production of the social structure.

After its initial publication in 1987, 'West and Fenstermaker (1995) later developed the concept of 'doing gender' and focus on gender as an accomplishment to offer a wider understanding of the accomplishment of 'difference' i.e. the accomplishment of gender, class and race and the importance of accountability as a motivating underlying system. In doing this West and Fenstermaker aimed to provide a framework for an understanding how social categories are accomplished and operate to produce inequality arguing that 'while gender, race and class - what people come to experience as organizing categories of social difference – exhibit vastly different descriptive characteristics and outcomes, they are, nonetheless, comparable as mechanisms for producing social inequality' (1995:9). Gender, race and class

are considered alongside each other to 'build a coherent argument for understanding how they work simultaneously' (1995:19). For the authors, doing gender is simultaneously confluent with other social identities.

Fenstermaker and West (2002) point to the importance of empirical application of the 'doing gender' approach. 'Doing gender' as a theory was first seen in Fenstermaker's analysis of the household division of labour and the accomplishment of gender to the household in the publication of *The Gender Factory* (1985). The concept was applied to argue that 'neither traditional sociological nor economic explanations of the division of household and market labor make it easy to give formal attention to the two realities of choice and constraint' (1985: 200). Smith (2002) argues that unlike feminist philosophy and literary criticism (including the work of Butler), an advantage of the 'doing gender' approach is that being based in sociology, it is disciplined by research. As she notes, 'dialogue is not only with theoretical traditions or with contemporary feminist thought, but also with a social world to be discovered as people themselves bring it into being' (2002:xi). Fenstermaker and West continue to encourage an empirical focus on 'how inequality is done and to promote a continuing dialogue among feminists about the mechanisms by which we produce relations of inequality via the complex and simultaneous workings of gender, race, and class' (2002:xvii). All approaches lack an exploration of the relationship gender has with other social identities. Both Butler and West and Zimmerman require further consideration of the actual doing of gender and the relationship of gender with class, race and sexuality. In an attempt to rectify this, I consider the actual doing of gender and its relationship with class in this thesis.

3.3 Gender Performativity

Unlike the sociologists Goffman and West and Zimmerman, Judith Butler is a North American feminist philosopher whose work is associated with Queer Theory and draws heavily on European philosophy, e.g. the work of Derrida (1997) and Foucault (1979, 1984) among others. Despite coming from different disciplines and having different influences, like West and Zimmerman and Goffman, Butler (1990) understands (gender) identity as a performance.

Although Butler uses the concept of performativity, suggesting a performance similar to acting and evoking the dramaturgical analogy, she uses the term in a different way, that is linguistically with reference to speech-act theory. Butler's work is concerned with how individuals 'do' gender identities through performance and argues gender is performative[30]. For Butler, performances are performative in that they bring into being gendered subjects. Butler argues we need to understand gender in terms of performativity because gender is created through daily acts of 'playing out' female or male roles, to be seen as feminine comes from the performance of femininity. Butler (1993) distinguishes performativity from performance as a 'bounded act' arguing that performativity 'consists of a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer's 'will' or 'choice'…the reduction of performativity to performance would be a mistake" (1993:234).

There are similarities in Goffman and Butler's work[31] in that they both view gender as constituted in performance. Also Bulter's concept of performativity can be likened to Goffman's view of gender displays. They both conceive of gender as a 'doing' and Goffman's view of gender display as key on the construction of gender hierarchies corresponds in a sense to Butler's claim that gender is cbultural and performed. Also as pointed out in the introduction, both theorists do not regard their being a doer behind the deed. We see the similarity between Goffman and Butler when Goffman wrote,

> What the human nature of males and females really consists of…is a capacity to learn to provide and to read depictions of masculinity and femininity and a willingness to adhere to a schedule for presenting these pictures, and this capacity they have by virtue of being persons, not females or males. One might as well say there is no gender identity. There is only a schedule for the portrayal of gender…There is only evidence of the practice between the sexes of choreographical behaviourly a portrait of relationship (1979:8).

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[30] Performance refers to volitional enactment by an individual. Performativity is the cultural process that constitutes the subject as a gendered subject.

[31] Butler does quote Goffman in her writings but not his later work on gender.

Like West and Zimmerman and Goffman, Butler argues gender is not 'natural' but a repetition of stylised acts West and Zimmerman argue 'gender is ritualistically repeated whereby the repetition occasions both the risk of failure and the congealed effect of sedimentation' (1977:49) while Butler writes, 'Gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being (1990:33). Thus gender and sexuality are then socially constructed through the repetition of everyday acts as we repeatedly 'do gender'. Performativity emphasises that there is not a single performance of gender but routinised repetition which creates the illusion of a stable gendered self.

In *Gender Trouble* (1990) and developed since, Butler aims to destabilise binary gender categories by rejecting the idea that gender differences have their origin in biology, and argues, like Goffman and West and Zimmerman that gender and sexuality are socially constructed. Butler's argument begins with the idea that no identity precedes the social and uses her critique of the sex/gender binary to demonstrate how gender is socially constructed in the context of institutionalised heterosexuality. For Butler the production of gender is accomplished through culture and discourse, in particular the highly regulatory frame of a 'heterosexual matrix', that is a set of norms through which gender is defined. Butler argues at birth individuals are assigned a gender based on a medical interpretation of whether their bodies are 'male' or 'female'. This discourse then effects what are regarded as appropriate performances of femininity and masculinity for that individual. Butler argues gender is performed in the context of correct masculine and feminine behaviour and highlights the importance of heterosexuality in creating these norms. Butler argues gender is only possible because of heterosexuality, which keeps the two sexes (conceptually) apart in order to bring them back together in the 'consecrated' heterosexual encounter. Butler argues that it is taken for granted that there are two genders; male and female. She suggests this identification and its maintenance over time is constructed through gender performance. The regulatory fiction of heterosexuality constrains us to perform within the hegemonic norms that define feminine and masculine norms in specific societal contexts. The suggestion that gender is performed implies a level of free play

within the gender categories we enter into socially. The result is that individuals have the potential to create 'gender trouble' and hence challenge 'compulsory heterosexuality' and gender identity through for example deliberative subversive performances of drag. Change is possible as the 'gap' between one performance and another means change will occur through time. West and Fenstermaker also point to the possibility of resistance and change being possible because of interaction,

> The accomplishment of gender is what gives existing social arrangements that are predicated on sex category their legitimacy (i.e., as "only natural" ways of organizing social life). So, even as we individuals may be held accountable (in relation to our character and motives) for our failure to live up to normative conceptions of gender, the accountability of particular conduct to sex category may thereby be weakened. What is more, collective social movements may, by calling into question particular institutional practices based on sex category, promote alternatives to those practices (West and Fenstermaker 1993: 170-1).

Butler's addition of the importance of the institution of heterosexuality in determining correct gender performances is particularly useful as the 'doing gender' approach does not explicitly state or discuss heterosexuality as a regulatory institution influencing gender performances. Butler draws on Wittig's argument that binary restrictions on sex serve the reproductive aims of a system of compulsory heterosexuality. Wittig places emphasis on the material institutions within a social order which serve to construct gender differences by institutionalising heterosexuality and the patriarchal family. Heterosexual marriage and the 'nuclear family' is central in producing and reproducing gender norms with the family being described as the hegemonic form of heterosexuality (VanEvery 1996). The idea of heteronormativity is also important here. This refers to the idea that, 'institutionalised heterosexuality constitutes the standard for legitimate and expected social and sexual relations' (Ingraham 2007:199).

As the argument that gender is a performative is employed in this thesis, it is important to acknowledge some criticisms, especially those addressed towards Butler. The late 1990s witnessed a major debate between a number of political and cultural theorists concerning the relative significance of culturalist and materialist forms of explanation (Butler 1998, Fraser 1998, 2000). In post

modern accounts of the structure of identity, it is culture that dominates over the material. Although Butler's work on gender performativity has been highly influential, her work has been criticised for being 'merely cultural'. In particular performative accounts of gender have been criticised for ignoring 'those material social relations which underpin the category of sex' (Jackson 1997: 17). Butler fails to address the significant material and social factors which structure people's lives along gendered lines, the performance of identity is not merely cultural (McNay 2000).Butler has also been accused of failing to recognise the way in which heterosexuality operates not only as a norm governing the construction of subjective identities but also as a concrete social structure which involves 'the appropriation of women's bodies and labour' (McNay 1995:18). As I demonstrate later in the chapter inequalities in the labour market restrict women's financial independence leaving them to play an additional role as carer and homemaker. Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon (2002) point to the fact that the reproduction of ourselves as heterosexual gendered beings was recognised by early Marxist Feminists as being central to the realm of economics. They point out that Marxist Feminists showed how the sexual division of labour in and outside of the household both require the production of gendered selves and formed practices that were part of that production. Alsop *et al.* suggest that the performances whereby gender is produced do not simply carry meaning about what it is to be female or male; they are themselves material practices which serve to constitute for example the economic frame. To summarise then it is crucial to also address material concerns as it is important that studies of gender identity are not just about culture but address material hierarchical divisions between women and men.

Not all feminists have taken the 'cultural turn' (Barrett 1992). There has been recognition of the importance of material inequalities (McNay 2000, Phillips, 1999, Witz & Marshall 2004) and of how material and cultural and material inequalities are connected (Fraser 1997, 1998, 2000). Contemporary approaches to material issues attempt to bring together questions of culture and the material. One way in which this has been done is through a consideration of the possible underpinnings to the enactment and recognition of different cultural expressions. Skeggs (2004) for example argues that material differences lie

behind misrecognition. When different identities are played out in different social spaces some identities are recognised more than others, this varied recognition can be seen to exist because of material power. Those who define which identities are legitimate are the ones who hold the material power. McDowell (2006) argues that those theorists who recognise the importance of material inequalities, the importance of the private sphere and in particular the household as a site of the production of class and gender inequality have largely been ignored which is surprising considering the focus on the private and public sphere by second-wave feminists.

There are both similarities and differences in Goffman and West and Zimmerman's interactional approaches to social identity/ gender and Butler's gender performativity. Despite the very different theoretical traditions from which the author's ideas emerge, what links these three theorists is their interest in everyday interactive processes and practices in the construction of social identities. All three argue social identity or gender is not about a set of traits residing inside individuals but is something people do in their social interactions with others. Identity and in particular here, gender is embedded in everyday interactions where individuals produce, reproduce and sustain social meanings according to gender behaviour appropriate to their sex category. One of the main components of each of the three theorists' argument is that to the production of gender identities is the repetition of acts, individuals are constantly doing and re-doing their roles. The production of gender requires that a performance is repeated as, 'this repetition is at one a re-enactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established' (Butler 1990:140). It is this constant doing and re-doing of our roles which make us who we are. Through performance is how our gender identities are done. More specifically as Butler argues, it is the repetition of acts which make us male or female. There is overlap between West and Zimmerman's and Butler's work in terms of their critique of previous gender theories as well as in their understanding of gender as a workable concept. They are similarly critical of the conventional distinction between sex and gender. In all three conceptualisations, gender or identity is not an attribute but an activity. The difference in the foundations of the theories may be a source of misgiving for a

combination of the approaches, yet it is possible to integrate a sociological approach to gender with theory which draws on psychoanalysis and poststructuralist language because of the similarities discussed. Despite these similarities I am not treating the frameworks as synonymous with each other.

4. Deindustrilisation and Individualisation

In chapter one I briefly introduced ideas around the death of class debate. I want to discuss this in more detail, but frame this in terms of de-industrialisation, idividualisation and changes to paid employment. I address these issues because deindustrilisation has occurred in the north east of England while theories of individualisation are part of the death of class debates which have been linked to the decline in significance of the sociology of work (Strangleman 2005, 2007). I begin with a discussion of deindustrilisation, Since 'around 1973'; the date Harvey (1989) identified as the beginning of the transformation of the old Fordist model of economic organisation, the economies of the western world have gone through a period of significant change to a new era of postmodernity. Deindustrialisation occurred in Western industrial economies in the 1980s. Changes due to deindustrialisation were strongly felt in traditional industries (coal, iron, steel and engineering). In Britain over 4 million manufacturing jobs were lost between 1975 and 1995 with employment in those industries falling from 7,890,000 to 3,845,000 (Noon and Blyton 2002:34). Since then growing numbers of individuals (especially women) have become part of the social relations of waged work, working in new industries under different conditions compared to the previous era of manufacturing work. This 'new' economy (Carnoy 2000), has been characterised as the 'new' capitalism' (Sennett 2006), the rise of 'post-Fordism' (Amin 1994) and as a period of 'liquid modernity' (Bauman 2000)[32]. Put simply, there has been transformation of the labour market from the Fordist manufacturing economy of the past to a post-Fordist or post-industrial service economy. The most significant change has been the growing dominance of the service industry with less than 15 percent of British workers now employed in manufacturing (McDowell 2009). The term used to capture this shift has been de-industrialisation. Writers interested in the causes

and consequences of de-industrilisation were interested in male job loss and regional inequalities (Gregory and Urry 1986, Masey 1984), shrinking union membership (Martin, Stanley and Wills 1994) while the decline of manufacturing for some heralded the 'end of work' (Rifkin 1995). The process of de-industrilisation is linked to claim that the transformation of the labour market has meant older forms of working-class solidarity have died as a result of the feminization of the labour force. Labour forces have become increasingly diverse in their social characteristics due to the growth of the service economy. Westen economies have been significantly restructured, replacing the old certainties of full-time permanent waged work with insecurity. Although the rise of the service industry cannot be denied, McDowell argues that the rise of the service sector is neither a new or significant transformation. What is happening is a commodification of many of the types of work that were previously undertaken in the home for 'love'. If these activities (e.g. caring for elderly family members) had been recognised and not excluded from economic analysis this shift would have appeared less dramatic. The service industry includes poorly paid jobs and social mobility anticipated with such a shift has not materialised.

Deindustrialisation however has often been devastating. During the 1980s and 1990s in the UK the coal industry lost more than 90% of its workforce (Beatty Fothergill & Lawless 1997). After the closures there was social fragmentation, economic insecurity and political disempowerment (Waddington *at al* 1991) while the decline of the coal industry meant the decline of its communities. Yet Dicks (1993) argued that the closures 'set the seal' on the decline and disintegration already underway. There were various consequences of the pit closures. First on a human level, livelihoods were lost and male unemployment rates were higher in those communities than the national average. However there were regional differences[33]. The northern regions of the UK have been most severely affected by the loss of manufacturing employment and slower growth of service-sector employment (McDowell 2003). Between 1981 and 1991 all mining regions in the UK experienced a reduction in mining employment yet recorded unemployment failed to respond to job loss in that joblessness often became hidden. All mining

areas of the UK experienced a reduction in labour force participation by men of working age. There were large numbers of people who weren't regarded as unemployed but should have been in part to a rational response to the difficulty of finding work, e.g. older men moved into permanent retirement while young men went on training courses and men being registered as permanently sick (Beatty, Fothergill and Lawless 1997, Fieldhouse and Hollywood 1999). Industrial decline has devastated industrial regions of the UK with the loss of well-paid stable manufacturing employment. Psychological problems linked to job loss, loss of an occupational identity, feelings of lack of meaningful structure and loss of purpose were identified along with evidence of social isolation (Waddington *et al.* 2001). Conflict was often evident in the homes of unemployed former miners and their employed wives because of a lack of work done by men in the home. Second there were consequences of the closures on the community. These included the physical impact as evident in the rundown of the environment and dilapidation of local housing, often due to neglectful absentee landlords, while local shops and facilities fell into disrepair. As Critcher et al. wrote,

> The social fabric is undermined as village cohesion is lost, social rivalries develop and people become detached and isolated from erstwhile colleagues and friends…The migration of former miners in search of alternative employment is discouraged by family and cultural ties, lack of transferrable skills, or inability to sell houses. Many younger residents have taken the option of outmigration… and problems with drug misuse and crime. While disaffected youths hanging around the streets become a problem with inter-generational conflict while intra-community conflict occurs between long-term residents and 'outsiders' or between those in work and those dependent on social benefits (2001:213).

Strangleman and Warren write that 'it is interesting the way the loss of industrial work has allowed a new perspective to be drawn on older types of industrial employment' (2008:135). There is a danger in being overly nostalgic for the loss of these jobs because of the nature of the work. It was hard, dirty routine

work where the industry polluted the communities they helped create (Cowie and Heathcott 2003). McDowell suggests that narratives of loss and nostalgia for the golden age of manufacturing have been replaced with a 'new narrative of precarious and insecure work' (2009:3) McDowell cleverly states that for some authors writing on the subject of deindustrialisation that, 'it seemed to these analysts almost inconceivable that working in shops or cafes, providing houses massages, cleaning and teaching children was 'work' in the old sense of producing material products through the application of brute strength and heroic effort, typically by men' (2009:3).

As started above, deindustrialisation was experienced differently in different regions of the UK yet the north east of England has been characterised by its relative deprivation in comparison to the rest of the UK. This depravation arises from the regions industrial structure because of the focus on heavy industries then as a branch plant economy. Recently even more job losses have occurred due to changes in the high tech industries. The decline of traditional male manufacturing jobs and a feminization of employment, in particular the expansion of the service sector (care work and call centres) have been particularly apparent in the region. Despite the decline of male dominated industries, gender inequalities persist with employment continuing to be both segregated vertically and horizontally (Perrons 2004). 'Even when the material basis to traditional conceptions of masculinity have been undermined by employment changes which threaten the male role as sole or even main provider, men seem to be capable of inventing new forms of masculinity to preserve their relatively superior social status' (Perrons 2004:160).

As society moves from industrial to post-industrial, it has been argued that traditional social identities such as class, will decline in social significance (Clark & Lipset 1991, Paluski & Waters 1996, Beck). Paluski and Waters (1996) argued that the concept of class should be abandoned because it is outdated; class societies produced by the industrial revolution have been replaced by 'status-conventional' societies where for example gender, age and consumption practices replace class in people's lives. Similarly Beck (1992) argued that old collectivities such as class have weakened and that class relations have drastically altered and fragmented by the process of post-industrial change.

Class relations have also been seen to have altered and fragmented by the process of post-industrial change, making old theorisations redundant. In Gorz's (1982) account of the 'death of the working-class', this was linked to a de-centring of work in people's lives. Gorz argued work relations ceased to be an important influence on individual and collective identities. Attention shifted from an analysis of production relations to towards the study of cultural consumption as a source of meaning and identities in people's lives. However work relations continue to be a highly significant as a source of individual and collective identities as 'workers continue to hold collective and solidaristic values as well as well as individualistic and institutional ones (Bradley et al. 2000).

Bauman (1998) argued that consumption relations have replaced production relations as the driving force in society. Capitalism has entered into a new phase where the proletariat are no longer needed as producers. Capital now relates to the proletariat in their social function as consumers. He argues the work ethic has slowly been replaced by an aesthetic of consumption. Consequently people's sense of themselves and their identity has altered. Previously, 'work was the main orientation point, in reference to which all the other pursuits could be planned and ordered' (Bauman 1998:17), acting as a compass by which people located themselves, informing standards of living, lifestyle. It was the main mechanism of social integration and 'stood at the centre of the lifelong construction and defence of a man's identity…the type of work coloured the totality of life' (Bauman 1998:17). Whereas Bauman argues the desire to consume has become the primary force in shaping selfhood. This is in part due to a lack of stable employment meaning people must construct their identity around other aspects of their lives. He does acknowledge that for some people work remains a central focus in their lives, but this is only for a small number of elite workers. Bauman therefore wasn't arguing that there will be an end of class relations but that there will be a radical change in their nature involving an end of oppositional class identity. In a related vein, Casey (1995) linked the end of class to the decline of occupational identities. Casey is more vague than Bauman about the role of work in people's lives, arguing that it remains a 'dominant activity' (1995:21) but questioned whether work and production will remain central organising element in post-industrial society. Like

Bauman she argues we have entered a new phase in society where there have been major effects on the formation of self-identity arguing, in the industrial phase, 'social class…provided a primary sense of identification and solidarity' (1995:132). In the post-industrial phase, 'a polarized corporate workplace without the intricate division of labor of industrial society and with the requirement for flexible technologies and workers…hastens the erosion of traditional class and occupational identities (1995:134).

The implications of the ideas put forward by the above theorists is that work is no longer a site of solidaristic class meaning and identity. However although class relations have changed, they continue to have a significant effect on our lives. For example Aronowitz and DiFazio (1994) argued that a 'cult of work' is not in decline but expanding. Hochschild (1997) found the women she observed experienced a sense of value and respect at work which lacked the drudgery of domestic work and childcare. Bradley's (1999) research demonstrated that work was an important source of interest and self-respect to employees in the middle ranks, not just those high-flying professionals and ambitious managers.

Linked to the death of class debate is the individualisation thesis (Beck 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, 2002; Beck et. al. 1994; Giddens 1991). The individualisation thesis is a set of arguments about the nature of social and technological changes combined with a claim about the effects of these on identity, their relations with other individuals and their everyday practices and that class categories have become a flawed tool for a sociological analysis of de-traditionalised society (Beck 2000). It has been suggested that neo-liberal labour markets, the increased casualisation of work, changing patterns of family life and new pressures for reflexivity have disrupted traditional communities, identifications and affiliations. Individuals are disembedded from older communal ways of life, they must now construct their identities in a looser more reflexive and autonomous way (Beck 1992, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, 2002). There has been a concern with the decline of class identity and of class as a social formation (Clark & Lipset 1991; Pakulski & Waters 1996) and the decline of class alongside all kinds of social identities rooted in traditional, inherited groups (Beck, Giddens, Bauman). It is not the case that class

inequalities per se have disappeared but rather that rather than being concerned with objective inequalities, rather it is that class as social formations that have a sense of group belonging are declining in significance in post-industrial society. Beck argues that individual's are no longer firmly rooted in 'given' social identities that provide social bases for what people think. Individualisation disengages class culture from class position (Beck 2007).

The marginalisation of class in the discipline was also a result of the cultural turn in sociology alongside the move from structure/agency to identity, which constituted a major shift away from class analysis. In particular it was argued that class was no longer a useful tool for analysing inequality (Pahl 1993). At the core of debate surrounding social change there has been a focus on the concept of reflexive modernity. Modern society, it has been argued is giving way to post-modernity associated with an undermining of tradition replaced by 'the authority of the individual' (Adkins 2002a: 16). A post-modern society is characterised by processes of de-traditionalisation and individualisation, increased reflexivity which free us from the constraints of gender, in effect men and women are freed from their traditional roles (Beck 1992).

It is also claimed that gender and the family are becoming increasingly irrelevant in individuals' lives. These debates have re-intensified long standing tensions between broad generalised theoretical statements and small-scale detailed empirical research in family sociology (Smart 2007). Changes in the family have been used as evidence to indicate the decline of the family. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995, 2002) suggest the future of the family is bleak, arguing that modern social conditions will succeed in pulling the family apart. In a similar vein Bauman (2003) argues there has been a shift away from 'given' and fixed kinship systems towards elective kinships of affinity. Yet the idea that the family is in decline has been rejected by those who take a different reading of social trends. Arguments based on empirical work suggest that families may be changing in structure, but that they continue to love and support each other (Lewis 2001, Williams 2004). Due to the changes in family life, Smart advocates a 'sociology of personal life'. Smart suggests we can embrace what has traditionally been known as the sociology of the family and the sociology of

kinship but also more recent fields such as friendship, same-sex intimacies, acquaintanceship and relationships across households' (2007:6) to fully understand the modern family. To summarise, the main criticism of individualisation theories is that they are not based on empirical findings. Although individualisation authors recognise the existence of class inequalities, none provide a persuasive account of how material social inequalities relate to identity formation.

5. Class

As briefly discussed in chapter one, despite arguments hailing the death of class, the end of the 1990s witnessed a revival of sociological discussions of class, in particular the study of class identity (Skeggs 1997, Reay 1998a, Bradley 1999, Savage, Bagnall & Longhurst 2001). The new sociology of class demonstrates the 'continuing significance of class as a means of analysing forms of inequality' (Lawler 2005a:797). New sociology of class debates have refashioned class analysis by placing a greater emphasis on process of culture, lifestyle and tastes influenced by the writings of Bourdieu (1986). Although a new approach has been adopted which draws on new theoretical approaches, concepts and concerns, the new sociology of class does not ignore traditional approaches and theories (Crompton 2001, Devine *et al.* 2005, Savage 2000, Skeggs 2004) in that there has been a renewed interest in issues of cultural identity, where cultural approaches are combined with an awareness of economic patterns to demonstrate how class identities are expressed and reproduced through cultural processes; 'cultural processes are embedded within specific kinds of socio-economic practices' (Devine and Savage 2000:193). This is useful as it is recognises that social and economic inequalities are not 'natural' but 'emerge as a consequence of human behaviours in relation to both material resources and cultural distinctions' (Crompton 2006: 658). As a result of this there has been a emphasis on 'examinations of how class is "lived" in gendered and raced ways to complement the macro versions that have monopolized our ways of envisioning social class for far too long' (Reay 1998a:272). In effect there has been a shift in focus from a concern with collective identities, to a focus on how class

processes are apparent in more implicit and individualised forms in daily lives (Savage 2000). One of the strengths of these new class debates has been that class theorists have taken account of gender.

In the UK new class debates often focus on issues of identity, culture, lifestyle, consumption and education. The work of Pierre Bourdieu has been most influential in providing tools for sociologists interested in class to explore the inherent ways that class is lived. Feminists working in this area have drawn upon Bourdieu's notion of habitus, habitus referring to how class is conceptualised as internalised dispositions that arise from a structural positioning. For Bourdieu, culture has a sense of structured inequality operating through the recognition and mobilisation of certain forms of economic, social and economic capital. Work by for example Lawler, Skeggs, Reay and Savage have drawn upon this idea to demonstrate how class 'need not be articulated in obvious ways and it is the implicit ways that class operates on a daily basis that can reveal the pervasiveness of the 'difference' of class' (Hebson 2009: 30). The 'affective aspects of class' (Reay 2005: 913) have been highlighted; feelings of guilt, shame, fear and the visibility of class bodily dispositions and tastes are now explored by feminist class theorists (see for example Lawler 1999, Reay 2005, Skeggs 1997, 2004). Class is more than a structural location, it is a set of practices marked on the body. New markers of class such as weight, appearance and accent have been shown to be used to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable class specific performances where working-class performances are often read as unacceptable and inferior (Skeggs 2004).

On both sides of the Atlantic some new sociology of class authors aim to integrate the study of both middle and working class lives with other analytical categories such as gender, 'ethnicity' and sexuality in order to explore the 'intersections' which 'shape everyday lives and the desire to incorporate both symbolic processes of representation and the more material processes of everyday life, and to interrogate their articulation' (Stenning 2008:10). In the US many have used the somewhat fashionable term intersectionality (McCall 2005) to explore this.

It is widely acknowledged that identities are 'complex, multiple and fluid, continuously (re)produced and perform in different areas of everyday life' (McDowell 2008:491) and that gender is not a single category of analysis, it intersects with multiple identities. Many writers now acknowledge the importance of the intersection of different social identities and there has been an increased importance placed on the intersection of gender and class (Crompton 2000). Skeggs (1997) argues that class and gender must be 'fused together', class cannot be understood without reference to gender and vice versa as class is gendered and gender is classed. Class and gender are lived and experienced jointly (Skeggs 1997, Lawler 2000). It has recently become fashionable to explore these debates through the theoretical framework of intersectionality. The recognition that gender intersects with other social identities has produced more complex understandings of gender identities. Such debates have been important in ensuring gender categories are not fixed and that gender can be understood in different times and contexts (Connell 1995). Intersectionality is a concept which has been developed to capture the 'multiple relationships between different dimensions of identity that construct complex social locations' (McDowell 2008:491).Scott, Crompton & Lyonette (2010) argue that it is not always possible or appropriate to focus on complex interactions, which the concept of intersectionality implies. In this thesis I explore the interrelation of gender and class by conceptualising both concepts as social constructs and sets of social relations (Bradley 1996). Bradley argues these are real structures of difference which should be seen as lived relationships which involve different access to social resources and power.

5.1.Respectability: A working-class performance of gender

In Skeggs (1997) ethnographic study of white working-class women, she argued that the women dis-identified as working-class because of the 'pathologisation' of working-class women, while Reay (1998b) argues that working-class identity is a 'spoiled identity' for women. Because the working-class have 'consistently been classified as dangerous, polluting, threatening, revolutionary, pathological and without respect', respectability is seen as something 'to desire, to prove and to achieve because it has been seen to be a

property of 'others' ' (Skeggs 1997:1). Recently widespread critique of 'chavs' in recent years has been one example of how the working-class continue to be pathologised as dangerous and without taste (Nayak 2006). Lawler argues that 'chavs' have been portrayed as the 'manifestation of a widespread disparagement of the poor and the dispossessed that claims to be "nothing to do with class" even as it invokes class distinctions at every turn' (2005a:800). This group has been marked as lacking and disgusting through their assumed lack of knowledge and taste rather than poverty (Lawler 2005a).

Respectability is key in understanding working-class performances of identity as the culture of the working class has a great influence on the roles people play. Being seen to be respectable has long been a concern of the working class. Martin suggests that 'the persistent association of respectability…and public face is deeply embedded in working-class culture' (1981:57) with the distinction between the rough and the respectable long being recognised as important in working-class history. For women homes and bodies are where respectability is displayed (Skeggs 1997). Judgements of respectability are closely tied to the home because of the association with a woman's place as being in the home. For women respectability is tied to femininity and domesticity. Skeggs (1997) showed how white middle-class femininity was defined as the ideal, it was coded as respectable. In the Victorian period working-class women were educated in the 'domestic ideal',

> Particular feminine roles and functions, such as the feminine-domestic ideal, were allocated a special status and importance and represented as a desirable and unsurpassable goal to which all women would naturally aspire and gain moral superiority from (Skeggs 1997:46).

Middle-class femininity was produced as a sign of difference from other women. Femininity was seen to be the property of middle class women. Working-class women are positioned at a distance from it as femininity was never a given (Skeggs 1997). Cleanliness was an indicator of middle class respectability and as such was a requirement of working-class women wanting to be seen as respectable. Those who had unclean homes were lacking femininity and therefore not respectable. As being working-class continues to hold negative connotations associated with being dirty and hence without value, for women in

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particular, as domesticity is closely linked to femininity, not having a clean home means a lack of respectability. Knowing how to behave correctly and knowing how to present yourself and your home were indicators that separated the rough and the respectable.

6. Women's Paid and Unpaid Work

Feminist studies of the labour market have exposed how it is a site of complex and cross-cutting inequalities of gender, class and 'race'. This proved vital in furthering feminist debates in that women are not a homogenous group. In this part of the chapter I want to concentrate on mainly empirical studies of women's paid and unpaid work and the theoretical developments based on that research to demonstrate the different experiences of work different groups of women have. I begin by outlining women's employment patterns. I then address debates concerning women's combination of paid work and childcare responsibilities. This is followed by a discussion of unpaid domestic work.

6.1. Women's Employment in the UK

In this part of the review I outline how the composition of the labour market has changed in recent decades and how women's involvement has played a major part in this. Over the last three decades the numbers of women (especially mothers) in the labour market has increased dramatically. In 1981 men held 3.2. million more jobs than women. By 2007 the distribution was almost equal with 13.6 million and 13.5 million women were in employment, although half of women employed worked on a part-time basis (ONS 2008). As a result, the study of women's work remains crucial to understanding how these changes affect women's everyday experiences of work. The continued study of women's work is also important as women's working lives have been described as increasingly more certainly more complex than men's, largely because of the greater inter-dependence of family and work related roles due to persistent gendered expectations ascribing women the main responsibilities for care and family tasks (Crompton 2006; Scott *et al*. 2008). Women's work and family transitions are more closely linked than men's, rendering female participation in the labour market more interrupted and unstable than male's (Martin *et al*.

2008). I begin by outlining recent employment patterns, focusing on women's employment.

In the UK, 'two stories' can be told (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010). The pay gap has narrowed, attitudes that women's role should be purely homemakers have weakened further and thanks to gains in education, women are now working in a much wider range of occupations than in previous years (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010). The increasing numbers of women in the labour market is one of the most notable aspects of change. Labour Force Survey (2008) data has shown employment rates for men have been rising since the second quarter of 1971, levelling off in more recent years. In contrast the last three decades have seen a stark rise in the number of jobs filled by women. In the UK, women's economic activity rates grew between 1961 and 2003 from 43 to 84 per cent (Scott 2008). By 2008 the employment rate was 79 per cent for men and 70 per cent for women, unchanged since 1999. Importantly for this research, rates for both men and women are highest among those aged 25 to 34 and 35 to 49. But the rates for men in both age groups remain higher than those for women – 89 per cent for men compared with 73 and 77 per cent respectively for women (ONS 2008:5). The most recent Labour Force Survey data indicates the employment rate in 2010 for men was 75.7% and 65.3% for women.

One of the most substantial changes has been the huge rise in numbers of employed mothers of dependent children. The presence of a dependent child has long had a substantial impact on employment for women. The 1980 Women's Employment Survey (Martin and Roberts 1984) showed that, at the time, while just under half of all married women were in employment, the figure was two thirds of single women but, just over 40% of mothers with dependent children (Scott *et al*. 2008:4). The situation thirty years later in the first decade of the twenty-first century is very different. There is little difference in the proportions of married and non-married women in employment. The employment gap between women with and without dependent children has narrowed substantially; in 2008 while 68% of women with children were in employment, the figure for women without children was only slightly higher at 73% (ONS 2008:6). We continue to see how having dependent children impacts

on female employment, but now the real difference lies in hours of work. Employed women are far more likely than men to work part-time, and the figure is very high for women with dependent children.

The most fundamental difference between women's and men's patterning to paid work is the full-time/part-time divide. The majority of the UK part-time work force is female (Warren 2010), dominated by women with children. 38 per cent of women with dependent children work part time compared with only 22 per cent of those without dependent children. Figures are much lower for men. Only 4 per cent of men with dependent children and 7 per cent of men without dependent children worked part time. (ONS 2008:6). Interestingly the age of the youngest child affects the employment rate of mothers. Of working-age women with children of pre-school age aged under five, 57 per cent were in employment. This compared with 71 per cent for those whose youngest child was aged five to ten and 78 per cent whose youngest child was aged 11 to 15 (ONS 2008:6). In the case of lone mothers, a smaller proportion still are in employment than mothers who are married or cohabiting. Fifty six per cent of lone mothers were in employment, compared with 72 per cent of married or cohabiting women with dependent children. The age of the youngest dependent child has an impact on the employment rate of lone mothers. Only thirty five per cent of those with a child aged under five were in employment compared with 59 per cent of those with a child aged five to ten. The difference in employment rates between lone mothers and married or cohabiting women narrowed as the age of the youngest child rises, almost disappearing for women with dependent children aged 16 to 18 (ONS 2008:6).

Despite some changes in patterns of women's labour market participation over time, what does remain constant is women's inferior position in the labour market. Women are still polarised in 'female' positions. These jobs are both seen as most fitting for women and dominated by them. A 20 per cent of women in employment do administrative or secretarial work compared with 4 per cent of men. Women are also more likely than men to be employed in the personal services and in sales and customer services. Similar proportions of men and women work in professional, associate professional and elementary occupations, such as labourers and catering assistants (ONS 2008: 5).

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The majority of women do paid work that either mirrors the unpaid work they do in the home or 'helps' men in their superior positions. Further and linked to this, feminised occupations are commonly some of the lowest paid occupations. As a result the distribution of men and women across occupations has an important effect on the gender pay gap which is compounded by the effects of vertical segregation within occupations. Vertical segregation refers to the difference in status and consequently the reward in paid work done by men and women (Hakim 1979). Men dominate senior positions within organisations and women dominate junior and less-skilled positions. Men are ten times more likely than women to be employed in skilled trades (19 per cent compared with 2 per cent) and are also more likely to be managers and senior officials (ONS 2008: 5). Even in occupations that are seen as being 'feminised' such as teaching, men dominate the more senior positions such as head teacher. Women have made some inroads into the old professions such as the law and the City, and the new occupations such as the media, yet the power and high wages still remain firmly with men. The persistence in gender segregation within the labour market stands in stark contrast to developments within the educational system. Increasing numbers of women have been gaining educational qualifications with women's participation in higher education in the UK, higher than men's. Yet women have failed to translate this educational success into labour market success. A large part of the reason for this, it is argued is that work-life balance choices and organisational obstacles continue to restrict the career progression of even high qualified women (Purcell and Elias 2008). In households with children, men overall work longer hours than women, even when women have high levels of qualifications and even when they are employed full time (Fagan 2001). Women as a group work fewer hours than men and for less financial reward (Perrons *et al.* 2006).

Although the gender pay gap has narrowed in the UK, it remains persistent. As women are disproportionately grouped in low status and low paid occupations, it follows that overall men earn more than women. The gender pay gap in hourly earnings varies by age beginning to appear in the early 20s reaching its maximum at mid 40s (Purcell and Elias 2008). The gender pay gap depended in the UK because female part-timers earn lower hourly wages than

female full-timers, who themselves earn less than male full-timers (Warren 2010). There are other disadvantages associated with part-time work. Recently feminist concerns surrounding part-time work have focused on women's restricted access to full-time work and the social and economic consequences of working part-time. The benefits and disadvantages associated with part-time work have been widely documented. Briefly the main points to note are that despite part-time work being seen as advantageous in that it allows mainly women to combine paid work and childrearing and provides some women with low educational attainment a step into paid work (Tam 1997), in the UK part-time work is over-concentrated in low-level occupations, associated with low-pay, poor career opportunities, limited job security and is constructed as secondary or inferior to the idea of full-time employment (Burchell *et al.* 1997; O'Reilly and Fagan 1998). The devaluation of part-time work results from and further contributes to the undervaluing of women's skills, and in the UK part-time work can be offered under exploitative conditions. It has been argued that women's life-style preferences differ to those of men; that fewer women than men prefer a full-time labour market career and so their lower investment in paid work affects their earnings (Hakim 2000). This position has been criticised with other writers pointing to the different value placed on the different work done by men and women which reflects established gendered divisions of labour from expected social roles, 'the work that women do is undervalued for the very reason that it is women that do it' (McDowell & Sharp 1997:319). This then restricts women's employment opportunities (McRae 2003).

Divisions amongst women are now a significant feature of the labour market. The disadvantages associated with part-time work create further divisions between those women who work part-time and those who work full-time. There are differences between younger and older women, as younger educated women are more likely to be in employment, more likely to get better jobs and careers, while older women who built their lives around quite different expectations around paid work, face older life in poverty (Walby 1997). There are key differences amongst mothers in the labour market; only some of whom have benefited from increased labour market opportunities. Those most likely to be in the labour market are 'mothers who have qualifications, especially higher

qualifications, notably graduate mothers; mothers who are white; those who have older and fewer children; those who have a partner; and those who have a partner in a non-manual job' (Brannen 1999:46). There is also marked employment diversity amongst women according to their occupational class (Warren 2010). We have seen the persistence of a gender wage gap that on average in the UK women receive lower returns than men within all occupational class groupings, yet the class differences between women are also considerable (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010). Class inequalities amongst women are also in evidence with regard to domestic work; there is female-female domination across the lines of class in relation to who pays for and who provides domestic labour (Anderson 2000, Hochschild 2003). It has also been suggested that the advancement of women in the labour market has been the advance of women from the dominant class and to the advantage of the class to which they belong. This has been achieved at the expense of the working-class as a whole, especially working-class men (Coward 1999, Fowler 2003).

6.2. A changing labour market

An increase in the numbers of women entering the labour market has been obvious over the past three decades in part-time but also full-time jobs. Part of the explanation for this increased participation is because of changes in the structure of the UK labour market. Deindustrialisation and the decline of manufacturing resulted in high levels of male unemployment. As levels of unemployment grew in the 1980s, regional inequalities became apparent as old industrial areas continued to be most impacted by job loss for men. Working life since has generally become less secure for men as the threat of redundancy is ever present along with increased flexibility built around short-term contracts. While manufacturing was in decline, there was a growth of the service sector, which witnessed the creation of jobs (especially part-time work) that were mainly taken up by women. These economic changes heralded debates over a so-called feminisation of the workforce, however the extent to which this occurred across all employment sectors has been questioned. Bradley *et al.* (2000) argue that it is more the case that women dominate low paid and low

status jobs because of the type of work the service sector offers. De-industrialisation and the actual form that feminisation has taken has raised a number of key concerns. One dominant topic in the academic literature was the effects of unemployment, in particular for white working-class men (Bonney 2007, McDowell 2003, Nayak 2006) and their families (Dicks 1996, Dicks *et al.* 1998), but also for their households and communities (Waddington *et.al.* 1991). As part of this changes in gender roles, who cares and who does the domestic work entered into academic debate (Wheelock 1994). Employment was now considered to be highly uncertain, insecurity is hyped while job tenure figures contradict flux in the labour market (see Doogan 2001). Whilst manufacturing was previously most vulnerable to insecurity, the service sector has also seen similar developments. Jobs in certain sectors have become more 'flexible' and career paths have become less defined with hours of work more varied and non-standardised so people's means of getting through their working lives will also change (Pettinger *et al.* 2005). The most notable impact of moves towards flexibility in the labour market on women's lives have been seen in the growth of part-time jobs, as outlined above.

At a time when the labour market was changing, the nature of relationships within the household also became a subject of academic study in its own right (Arber 1993). There was an increased awareness that the household was an important focus of social research as the internal characteristics of the household are constrained by external influences such as the local labour market (Morris 1990). The organisation of, and participation in paid work plays a major part in the internal dynamic of the household as such the changing structure of the labour market and the increased numbers of working women has led to debates about the decline of the male breadwinner/ female carer. It has been established that the male breadwinner family is in decline (Perrons *et al.* 2006, Scott 2008). However this decline has only been partial. The shift to a double-income or single-parent households has transformed established ways of distributing work between men and women for example an uneven distribution of employment opportunities between households (Creighton 1999) and difficulties in combining paid work and childcare especially for women. The domination and deep roots of the male

breadwinner model, with its surrounding ideology and welfare state being built upon it, the idea that a woman's major responsibility is a domestic role in the home means that many women still spend time outside of the labour market or will work part- time because of childcare and other domestic responsibilities. As I expand on shortly, men's lack of contribution to domestic and caring tasks is stalling the move from the male breadwinner/ female carer to dual breadwinner/ dual carer family (Yeandle 1999, Hochschild 1990) which results in a modified breadwinner family (Rubery et. al 1996) or a dual breadwinner/state-carer or the dual breadwinner/ dual carer model (Pfau-Effinger 1999). Employment is now regarded as important for women as it is for men by government, even if women are mothers. This is a major shift from the long accepted idea that for married women and especially for mothers, their economic role was in the home. In policy terms, women are no longer seen as being solely responsible for family work and care. Governments increasingly expect women to work with welfare entitlement being conditional on labour market participation. There is an expectation that women will be fully 'individualised', in the sense of being economically autonomous (Lewis 2008). Mothers increasingly want to and/or need to do paid work but are also expected to do so. In the next part of the chapter I examine the literature concerned with how women combine paid work and their parenting responsibilities.

6.3. Preference or constraint?

Explanations for gender segregation and women's disproportionate involvement in the labour market, in particular in part-time work broadly falls into two arguments. The first advocates individual agency (Hakim 1995, 2000) while the second structural processes (e.g. Walby 1990). Much of the debate in the last two decades concerning the differences in women's employment patterns, particularly why mothers work part-time or full-time have been framed around Hakim's preference theory (1991, 1998, 2000). Preference theory as a model holds parallels with individualisation theory as Hakim argues 'lifestyle preferences and values are becoming more important determinants of behaviour, relative to economic necessity and social structural factors' (2000:80-1). Thus in relation to women's everyday home and working lives,

Hakim argues that women's position in the labour market differs to that of men's due to the preference or 'choice' women make concerning employment and their home life. Women's preferences, she argues, stem from different levels of work commitment. Hakim's work at the beginning of the 1990s identified two groups of women in the labour market, 'self-made women' who are committed to paid work and 'grateful slaves', who see their family and domestic responsibilities as more important than paid work (Hakim 1991, 1993). She too made a distinction between 'committed women' (who work full-time) and 'uncommitted women' (who work part-time). Hakim later updated this theory to change the notion of 'self-made women' and 'grateful slaves' to three types of women. They are 'work-centred', 'home centred' and 'adaptive' (2000). The addition of 'adaptive' women refers to those women who want to work but are not as committed as 'work-centred' women as they want to combine paid work and family. Hakim argues women who work part-time are less committed to work than those women who work full-time hours. In effect it is argued that gender role attitudes and lifestyle preferences explain social and economic outcomes. Hakim's work has inspired much debate. Although many writers accept that women do make 'choices' about combining paid work with family life, Hakim has been heavily criticised for suggesting that preferences are independent of structural factors (Bruegel 1996, Crompton and Harris 1998) when choices are made 'not under the conditions of their own making' (Walby 1997:23).

In contrast to Hakim's preference theory many authors argue with the support of empirical evidence that 'choice' is constrained by social structures such as class and gender (McRae 2003, Crompton and Harris 1998, Ginn *et al.* 1996). Writers who recognise the importance of structural factors argue that part-time workers are structurally constrained due to the incompatibility of full-time employment and caring for children rather than being less committed to employment because of a weak work orientation. Engaging in part-time work does not simply indicate a preference for part-time work (Burchell *et al.* 1997). Theorists of part-time constraint 'underline the different labour markets, institutional structures as well as gendered divisions of paid and unpaid labour within families that are likely to influence both preference formation as well as

attainment' (Gash 2008:658). McRae (2003) makes the distinction between normative constraints on employment and domestic choices (e.g. gender relations within the family) and structural constraints (e.g. access to childcare) and the underlying social class differences in resources. Women continue to be constrained by gender. Gash's empirical work on part-time work found that in the UK, workers appear constrained in their part-time employment. 'Choices' made about who is the primary earner and who takes time out to look after children are 'still being made on a playing field that is not level or equal between men and women' (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010:9). It is widely recognised that structural factors influence women's decisions about returning to work with for example working-class women being more likely to work because they need the money and women in low-level and part-time jobs are heavily constrained by childcare obligations (Warren 2000, Walters 2005). Therefore class also constrains women's choices as different women are located in very different social locations. Social location facilitates and constrains preferences. As Irwin argues,

> people may be free of past constraints, but in respect of how they live their lives they remain embedded within contemporary structural processes. Structure is not just about frameworks of opportunity and constraint, it is also about the shaping of contexts of social action and violation, and when and why choices are meaningful. (Irwin 2005:82).

Rather than 'choice', many writers have pointed to the importance of 'preferences' in the *context* in which they are shaped. (Breugel 1996, Crompton 2002, McRae 2003, Warren and Walters 1998).

6.4. Childcare 'choices'

As more women are employed, especially mothers of dependent children, attention has been paid to how women combine employment and their caring responsibilities. The birth of a child has generally decreased women's employment rates as women reduce their participation in paid work to care for children. However fewer women are now withdrawing from the labour market upon the birth of a child. Research also shows that women are returning to work more quickly than in the past (Smeaton 2006). While some women may be

returning to work more quickly after the birth of a child than in the past, policy changes allowing for more generous paid maternity leave entitlement actually produces highly variable rates and timing of return by occupation and whether women return on a full-time or part-time basis. Women continue to be responsible for childcare and remain more likely than men to either withdraw from the labour market or reduce their working hours in order to meet their childcare responsibilities. Social class is a major factor in women's decisions and practices relating to combining parenting and paid work. For example women's return to work after becoming mothers is class differentiated. Mothers with higher levels of qualifications, who are in a partnership with similar men, are more likely to remain in employment than mothers with low levels of qualifications (Rake *et al.* 2000). While women in 'routine and manual' and 'intermediate' occupations are more likely to work part-time than professional or managerial women (Crompton & Lyonette 2010). So how has this been theorised?

Empirical research has shown how childcare continues to be gendered. The existing division of labour around parenting is shaped and reproduced by the practices and decisions of individuals in relation to spending time at work and at home. There is a considerable amount of research interested in the moral values underpinning decisions about parenting and its relation to participation in paid employment (Duncan *et al.* 2003, McDowell *et al.* 2005) as ideas about what 'good mothering' entails influences decisions about paid work. Research suggests that individuals make decisions 'with reference to moral and socially negotiated (not individual) views about what behaviour is right and proper, and this varies between particular social groups' (Duncan *et al.* 2003:310) and that the requirement to care for children is a 'deeply gendered moral requirement' (Duncan *et al.* 2003: 310). Duncan argues that mothers' decisions about employment and caring emerge from 'gendered moral rationalities'. Decisions are gendered because they address notions of what it is to be a 'good mother'. Decisions are moral as they offer direction about the right thing to do, and rationalities as this provides as framework for decision making. 'Women's moral commitment to care...despite the variability in specific relationships in particular times and places, continues to exercise a powerful

hold over individuals and is deeply implicated in the construction and maintenance of moral identity and reputation' (McDowell 2005:224). Ideas about correct or appropriate gendered practices can be constituted through local social networks. These networks can provide specific spaces within which gender identities are negotiated often through ideas about paid work and/or motherhood (Holloway 1998).

There is evidence to suggest working-class women are more traditional in their attitudes to mothers' caring role than professional and managerial women (Crompton & Lyonette 2008). Irwin (2005) has argued that those women who most firmly believe that mothers should stay at home with young children occupy a particular social position; they are white working-class women with few educational qualifications and limited employment opportunities and are likely to live with a partner who is in work. Irwin argues social location both constrains and facilitates their preferences; choice cannot be disconnected from perceptions and circumstances. Patterns of childcare choices are also class related. Lower social groups are more likely to rely on relatives (Wheelock & Jones 1994, Warren *et al.* 2009) whereas professional and managerial parents 'choose' paid care. Research indicates that most mothers prefer informal care by relatives if they are not able to provide this themselves (Wheelock and Jones 2002). Research indicates that working-class couples rarely use formal childcare, depending instead on family and friends, shift working and shift parenting. Warren *et al.'s.* (2009) study of both working and middle-class families, found that working-class couples had very complicated childcare arrangements. Care was 'patchworked' between shift work (tag-team parenting), that is also working evenings and weekends, whilst using a combination of formal paid care, informal family care and care from nursery and pre-school. Therefore research has shown that class and gender have a huge influence on women's employment and their ability to combine paid and caring work. In the next section of the chapter I move onto look at unpaid domestic work.

6.5. The Domestic Division of Labour

It had been suggested that as more women entered the labour market that this would result in more men contributing to domestic work resulting in the

emergence of a more equal domestic division of labour (Morris 1990). Despite women's increasing paid employment, it seems there has been little change in domestic arrangements towards a more equal domestic division of labour even in the homes of full-time dual-earner households (Brannen and Moss 1991, Green 1997, Bruegel 1999, Jarvis 1999). In this part of the review I look at who is doing the domestic work and why. Gender has been the main point of analysis in exploring an unequal domestic division of labour as across many sections of society women do and/or take responsibility for the domestic work in their home. However as there are differences between women as a group, it is insufficient to just look at gender. Divisions between women as a group according to class, age and sexuality effect different women's experience of domestic work. I begin by briefly outlining early research, then how research continues to indicate an unequal domestic division of labour. This is followed by an examination of explanations for an unequal domestic division of labour.

The relationship between unpaid domestic work and gender inequality has been a major concern of feminist theorists, being an important focus of early feminist activism and writing. The domestic division of labour amongst heterosexual couples has been studied for several decades informed by debates that began in the 1960s concerning women's role within the family. Family research carried out in the 1950s, 60s and 70s suggested change towards more equal relationships between men and women in the home was beginning to occur (Bott 1957, Rosser and Harris 1965, Young and Willmott 1973). Interest was not on domestic tasks performed but rather in examining household labour as an index of equality in marriage. Bott (1957) drew a distinction between 'segregated' and 'joint' roles and 'close-knit' and 'loose-knit' families. Those identified as being loose-knit were more likely to share in joint domestic tasks. Her research indicated that working-class families were more likely to be close-knit. This study was one of the first sociological studies to recognise change in the division of labour and with the work of Young and Willmott (1973), suggested change was underway. Like Bott, Young and Willmott argued the middle classes were moving towards a more egalitarian 'symmetrical' relationship in which both partners shared wage-earning and domestic labour. They identified a change in family structure with a decreasing

segregation of roles, which they termed the 'symmetrical family'. In this phase domestic labour was rarely explored in any detail with women's responsibility for such tasks being largely taken for granted and seen as natural. With increasing numbers of women entering paid employment, they argued men's contribution to domestic work would increase in proportion to women's increased participation in paid work. However, further empirical studies suggested this early optimism was in fact unjustified (Oakley 1974, Mansfield & Collard 1988). Oakley's *Sociology of Housework* (1974) changed the sociological direction of the study of the domestic division of labour. She was the first in the UK to treat the role of a housewife as an occupational role and studied domestic labour as work, challenging the characteristic of the role of the housewife.

Changes in the 1980s such as economic restructuring, unemployment, increased flexible working and women's increased participation in the labour market prompted interest into how these factors would affect the domestic division of labour. Wheelock's (1994) North East study of unemployed men living with employed women, found some households had a less strict gender division of labour since the man became unemployed. Morris' (1985) research in South Wales found less extensive change; a renegotiation of the domestic division of labour took place under the shadow of traditional normative explanations about gender roles. Pahl's (1984) large-scale survey conducted in Sheppey, a discrete place within the South East found that the domestic division of labour was unequal with women doing more than men. Because of increased levels of unemployment some researchers began to argue that studying paid work alone was an unsatisfactory basis for conceptualising social structure and so research into unpaid work assumed greater significance (Morris 1989).

At this time research was also beginning to look at the effects of women's increased employment on the domestic division of labour. An increase in female employment prompted those interested in housework to look at dual-earner and dual-career couples and the impact female employment has on the domestic division of labour (Brannen and Moss 1991, Hochschild 1990). Brannen and Moss (1991) looked at dual-earner couples with children in London. They found that women were doing the majority of the household work.

Warde and Hetherington's (1993) survey of over 300 households found that despite a large number of the women sampled were in employment, they did the vast majority of household work and that tasks were highly gendered. When women are engaged in paid work, work may not have a 'liberating effect for women' (Arber and Gilbert 1992) but may simply increase their burden as they have to work and do the majority of the housework. Hochschild (1990) refers to this as the 'double burden'. Morris (1990) argues that the argument that women's earnings increase their power in the household is over simple as a woman's wage may simply reduce the demand on her partner's wage. There is some evidence that the proportion of domestic work done by husbands of employed women is greater than that done by husbands of unemployed women. Research has shown that women who work part-time do around the same amount of domestic work as unemployed women, it is when women are working full time that there is some change in the domestic division of labour (Pahl's 1984, Brannen and Moss 1991, Pilcher 1999).

On the whole research in the UK, America and Western Europe suggests women continue to do the majority of domestic work (Oakley 1974, Pahl 1984, Hochschild 1990, Gershuny 2000, Sullivan 2000, Windebank 2001, Crompton, Brockman and Lyonette 2005). Men's domestic work contribution is inflexible (Warde and Hetherington 1993), women allocate more time to domestic work than men (Sullivan 1997), women take responsibility for domestic tasks (Windebank 2001, Warren 2002) and domestic tasks are highly gendered women continue to carry out the 'core' domestic tasks, that is the traditionally female tasks such as cleaning, while men participate in male jobs such as household repairs and gardening (Ferree 1991, Nordenmark and Nyman 2003). There are some indications that things are changing slowly with men contributing more to domestic work (Gershuny 2000, Sullivan 2000). Gershuny *et al.* (1994) argue that the division of domestic labour is adapting to changing circumstances in a process they termed 'lagged adaptation'. Individuals are adjusting to women's employment taking time to change and that, as with market work, gender differentials in household work are narrowing and becoming much less gender-typed, it has also been shown that when young

people carry out domestic work, gender stereotyping is less likely (Warde and Hetherington 1993).

However women continue to take overall responsibility for domestic tasks and still perform the majority of domestic work in the home while men will 'help' (Sullivan 2000, Windebank 2001). Although research has shown that when both partners work full-time, men have increased the time they allocate to cooking and cleaning (Pilcher 2000), women continue to spend more time doing domestic work. Time survey data (Lader, Short & Gershuny 2005) shows that overall women carry out about two thirds of domestic tasks spending on average 178 minutes a day compared to 100 minutes among men. Women in all economic categories spend longer on domestic work than men, while women who work full time spend on average 151 minutes compared to 113 minutes by men who work full time. Although the gap in time spent on domestic work is narrowing, some argue that this is largely because women have cut their domestic working hours due to labour force participation (South and Spitze 1994, Crompton, Brockman and Lyonette 2005). Sullivan (2000) notes that there has been an increase in the time contributed to domestic work tasks by men from lower socio-economic positions and a substantial increase in more egalitarian couples (Sullivan 2000). However Warren (2003) argues that women's occupational class only plays a weak part, in that although dual-breadwinning middle class couples could be labelled as a 'strong female-carer' model (women do most of the domestic work), the female-carer arrangement was in fact stronger for working class women. Women's higher earning power is also associated with more equality in doing domestic work (Warren 2003). However it has been noted that it is often the case that higher earning women buy in domestic help to reduce their burden (Gregson and Lowe 1994). The polarisation of women is evident as well-paid women in wealthier countries ease the burden of their domestic work by buying the services of other poorer women in an increasingly international market. Gender inequalities in the world of employment are likely to be intensified in this new economy owing to the expansion of care work to replace women's domestic labour as women enter employment in growing numbers. Class divisions between women arise from

this as domestic work becomes marketised where working-class women service the middle class (Perrons *et al* 2006).

How has this unequal domestic division of labour been explained? It is largely undisputed that women do more domestic work than men but there are differing explanations as to why this is so. Three theoretical perspectives dominate the literature; a) the relative resources perspective b) the time availability perspective and c) the gender perspective. First then the relative resources perspective concerns power relationships in the home. Arguments around relative resources suggest that the allocation of household labour depends on the resources each partner brings to the relationship. In other words, who does the most domestic work is a reflection of power relations between a couple (Blood and Wolf 1960). Higher levels of income for example translate into more power in a relationship, which is used to avoid doing domestic work. Women are responsible for domestic work as they are economically dependent on their husband and so cannot negotiate or bargain out of doing domestic work. A second aspect of this theory draws on Becker's (1991) microeconomic theory in which households divide domestic tasks in ways that maximise efficiency and output through specialisation of partners skills in either the home or labour market. Women can be seen to be better at domestic work resulting from their female roles while men's comparative advantage in wage earning results in their concentration on market labour. The greater his comparative advantage in market work as indicated by higher levels of income, the less time he will invest in non-market labour (Becker 1991). According to this theory, household labour is not gendered. Gender roles are irrelevant as all actors are thought to be driven by the maximization of economic outcome (Geist 2005).

The time availability perspective relates to time availability in the home. The nature of the domestic division of labour has undergone change over the last fifty years mainly due to women's increasing paid employment outside of the home with dual earnings becoming the norm in British homes (Crompton *et al.* 2005). Debates surrounding time availability argue that domestic labour in the home will be rationally divided according to the availability of household members and the amount of work to be done (Coverman 1985). Women and

men's time spent on domestic work is strongly related to time spent in the labour market so as women on the whole work less hours than men then they will do more domestic work. However studies have shown when women's labour force participation increases their domestic work hours reduce while men's do not increase accordingly. Hochschild (1990) described this as the 'stalled revolution' in that women have moved into the previously male dominated world of paid employment but there has been no equivalent increase in the amount of domestic work done by men.

The above two perspectives have been criticised by feminists who argue the allocation of domestic work is about more than time availability and rational choice. Rather it is a symbolic enactment of gender where individuals display 'correct' gender roles through the activity performed and amount of time spent on domestic tasks which explains why there is not a simple trade-off between time spent on domestic work and employment between men and women (Ferree 1990, Bianchi *et al.* 2000). Feminists suggest women do more and have a greater responsibility for domestic work because it is a reflection of their lack of economic resources and power compared to men with men's work being regarded as the primary source of income (Pilcher 1999). Recently Crompton's 1997 and 2005 work supports this by arguing the more resources a woman brings into the household the more likely she is to experience an equal relationship within it. However Hochschild (1990) suggests that where men's beliefs about relative gender power are threatened by a woman's earning power, couples seek a balance by having the breadwinning wife do more domestic work. When a woman becomes the primary breadwinner she does more to reinforce traditional gender identities. Early formulations of this approach focused on gender role ideologies formed through socialisation surrounding appropriate gender roles as 'correct' gender roles are in part filtered through gender ideology. For decades women's domestic responsibility has been regarded as natural and the male breadwinner model was and continues in some ways to be the norm and assumes while men are responsible for labour market work, women's responsibility lies in domestic work (Crompton 1997). In heterosexual couples there is still the assumption that men will take on the primary breadwinner role while women continue to have

the main responsibility for the home as well as earning an income in their own right (Dunne 1997, Volger and Pahl 1993). This theory of gender ideologies has been combined with the idea about 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman 1987) to explain an unequal domestic division of labour. As women do more domestic work this reflects the power of the role 'wife' or 'female partner' and by 'doing gender', domestic work is a mechanism for the production of gender in the home. Domestic work reaffirms a person's relation to the world and because gender is always relevant in the allocation of power and resources, people engage in behaviours, which have gendered expectations. The outcome of any domestic task therefore is seen and seeable in context as gender appropriate (Benjamin and Sullivan 1996). In other words men and women display their 'correct' gender roles through the amount and type of domestic work they perform (Bianchi *et al*. 2000).

7. North East Gender Cultures

As this thesis is geographically specific, a consideration of the spatial construction of gender is needed. Feminist geographers in particular highlighted the need to think about the difference place makes (Massey and Jess 1995) as gender is constituted differently in different regions, in different countries and so on. In effect gender relations vary over space and time. A further contribution from feminist geographers concerns how gender identities are forged in and through particular, spaces, sites and networks. Gender identities are multiple and gender may be performed differently in different spaces such as in the paid work space or the domestic space. Space and place are constituted through cultural discourses about gender so for example 'home' is seen as a 'feminine' space. Here I want to concentrate on how North East gender cultures have been shaped by and shape paid and unpaid work.

Massey and McDowell's (1984) study of gender relations in relation to paid work in four different localities in the UK demonstrated how in 'local cultures', gender relations can vary systematically. Here I draw on their discussion of the North-East and North-West of England as the regional economic variations and women's relationship to paid work in these two areas has been stark, clearly showing how work, gender and space are implicated in

the construction of one another. McDowell and Massey showed how the two regions were characterised by different gender relations. The north-east has a strong association with industrial work, both coal mining and steel making. This had a significant impact upon the shaping of local gender cultures. In mining communities in County Durham family units were divided along gendered lines, where men were the breadwinner and women were housewives (Dennis *et al.* 1956). The nature of the mining industry (shift work), the breadwinner ideology and a lack of employment options for women meant women were confined to the domestic sphere. In effect these communities were hierarchical and patriarchal where women's confinement to the domestic sphere was specifically spatial control, 'the unequal economic and social relationships between men and women imposed by the social organization of mining increased the subordinate position of women' (McDowell and Massey 1994: 193). The area had no history of female waged labour unlike the North-West. In areas such as industrial Lancashire, which has a long history of full-time paid work for women, women were often breadwinners and allocated spending money to husbands rather than the other way round as was common in County Durham (Glucksmann 1982). Gender roles are produced and maintained by underlying social relations of gender –relations between men and women about who does what work, for whom and what is expected to return (Duncan 1991).

Because of the nature of mining communities women led an often-home centred life with female kin relations featuring prominently. The close-knit family has been identified as a key feature of working-class families. Young and Wilmott's (1957) study of Bethnal Green found that kin contact between family members was high whilst also pointing to the strong bond that existed between mothers and daughters. It was suggested a working class kinship network offered a safety net against poverty. They went onto say however that the isolated nuclear family would increasingly become the norm as welfare improved, meaning contact with wider kin would lessen. Following on from this Rosser and Harris' (1965) study of working-class families in Swansea also found contact with extended family was strong. More importantly though they found despite changing patterns of employment meaning an increased geographical distance between kin, strong bonds between members meant

emotional and practical support remained. Charles et. al. (2008) using Rosser and Harris' research model found many people still live within close proximity of relatives and mother-daughter contact was frequently high. McGlone *et al's* (1999) analysis of British Social Attitudes data found that family continued to be a central focus of many people's lives but that women's increasing participation in paid employment meant that women's kin contact had declined in the ten previous years since the last collection of data. The importance of space is evident as geography is at the heart of new working class studies through the 'recognition of the mutual constitution of class and place through the everyday' (Stenning 2008:10). Geographers have focused on the role space and place play in determining different people's perceptions and experiences of community (McDowell and Sharp 1999). In the next part of the chapter I move onto discuss community literatures as the community and neighbourhood and also critical areas of interaction in everyday life (Crow & Allan 1994).

8. Community

Like class and work, community is a classic key analytical sociological concept used for understanding social relations. Despite the suggestion by classical sociologists that community would disappear, 'community has a contemporary resonance ... which appears to have produced a worldwide search for roots, identity and aspirations for belonging' (Delanty 2003:1). Whiles social, cultural and economic changes such as globalisation have challenged the idea of community there remains a long tradition of debate within the social sciences about whether it is possible and desirable to use the concept (see Studdert 2006). This is because community as a concept, is one of the most elusive and vague in sociology as it has a wide range of meanings and diverse inconsistent connotations (Day 2006)

Community is associated with concepts of social cohesion and order. Essentially community refers to 'those things which people have in common, which bind them together, and give them a sense of belonging with one another' (Day 2006:1). Being part of a community involves engaging in social networks of kinship, friendship and neighbourhood, reflecting the broad realm of local social arrangements beyond the home and family but is more familiar than

wider social institutions (Crow and Allan 1994). Community is a long standing sociological concern with for example classical social theorists using community to understand how societies were held together and the extent to which social ties were strengthened or undermined by social change. Tonnies (1957), the founding figure of the sociology of community when detailing Gemeinschaft relations, praised that it is held to represent all that is good in human relations, honouring the benefits this brought to both individuals and society as a whole. The community is characterised by Gemeinschaft relations which represent for the individual emotional cohesions, depth, continuity and fullness (Bell & Newby 1971: 24).

In sociology community has traditionally referred to a particular form of social organisation based on locality, types of population settlements or to ideal-typical ways of life in such places and to social networks whose members share some common characteristic apart from or in addition to a common location (for example, occupational communities). For example in their study of former mining communities in West Yorkshire, Warwick & Littlejohn define community as 'human groups which share a common local space' (1992:12), while community for Lee & Newby (1983) is indicated by people living in a locality, by the existence of local social relations or networks, and by a shared sense of belonging. However community does not have to be tied to place. Not all communities are territorial and there is not a straightforward relationship between places and the capacity to support certain social relations. This is just one of the criticisms levelled at the usefulness of community as a concept. There is no clear widely accepted definition of which characteristic features of social interaction constitute the solidaristic relations typical of a community. The usefulness of community as a concept arose from criticisms that the term was being used uncritically to describe something that 'means all things to people' (Dalley 1988 in Crow and Allan 1994). Pahl writes, 'Any attempt to write an article on community is surely asking for trouble. Despite being once seen as one of the unit ideas of sociology, it must now vie with class as being the most contentious' (2005: 621). The idea that community always implies some kind of exclusive membership has been critically examined especially by feminists who question importantly for this research the 'ways in which notions of community

function ideologically reproducing socio-spatial processes which continue to marginalise and oppress women' (McDowell and Sharp 1999). For some feminists the idea of an exclusive membership means that the concept of community is problematic and should be rejected. Young (1990) for example argues for a rejection of the term community and instead advocates the use of the term 'relational' identity and the use of social groups.

Debates around the meaning of community led some authors to distinguish between different types of community rather than reject the term. Community is part of the language we use to describe people's lives, and as a result it then enters into the ways ideas of solidarity, interests and identities are expressed. As noted community tends to refer to people having something in common but this can be around more than place. Community can be based around common interests or common attachments e.g. a shared position in wider social structure or a sense of identity which in turn creates a sense of belonging. Using definitions of community from Wilmott (1986), Lee and Newby (1983) and McDowell and Sharp (1999) it can be argued that there are three types of community. First a common geographical location: people who dwell in the same geographical area and shared residence has been referred to as 'territorial' or 'place' community (Wilmott) or a 'locality' (Lee and Newby). Second community can mean a social group held together by ties of kinship where community can be identified on the basis of shared characteristics where people are linked by common factors such as religion or occupation. Wilmott refers to this distinction as 'interest community' as networks are structured around common interests. However Lee and Newby add a geographical dimension to this type of community, suggesting that although individuals are linked through social networks, people are not committed to that social system. A third definition is based around a shared sense of identity, common values or shared histories and has been termed 'community of attachment'. It is important to note that there is the possibility of overlap in these definitions as can be seen with the example mining communities which are based on shared locality and shared occupation. Bulmer stated that,

> The social ties of work, leisure, neighbourhood and friendship overlap to
> form close-knit and interlocking locally based collectivities of actors. The

solidarity of the community is strengthened…by a shared history of living and working in one place over a long period of time (1975:87-88).

Furthermore Cohen (1985) argues communities have to be understood as communities of meaning where community plays a crucial role in creating and sustaining a sense of belonging. A person's sense of belonging is centred around both the familiar geographical location of a community but also from the attraction to the social networks of kin and friends that are centred on that location. Cohen (1985) argued that community should be understood as a social practice rather than a social structure. Cohen's argument has been influential as his proposition led to shifts in the focus of thinking about community as a 'form of social interaction based on locality to a concern with meaning and identity' (Delanty 2003: 2). However the social has to be considered in discussions of community as a sense of place is important as this thesis will demonstrate. The cultural turn has led to an excessive concern with the symbolic dimension and a consequent loss in the social dimension of community as shaped by social relations (Amit 2002). 'It is this view of community as a social construct that has been questioned today by critics who want to reinsert the social back into community and recover the sense of place that was displaced by the cultural turn in the theory of community' (Delanty 2003: ixx). Place and locality matter because these are where people reside and which notions of community, belonging and character are invested (Savage *et al.* 2001, Skeggs 1997).

    The above sections have outlined the varied but inextricably linked areas of sociological inquiry, and debates within those areas that I have drawn upon in this thesis to provide an understanding of the women's lives. I have demonstrated the complex issues involved in understanding women's lives from the work that they do the influence of class, place and gender on women's lives. In the next chapter I move on to discuss the research process.

Chapter Three: Researching Women's Everyday Lives

1. Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the methodological approach and methods used to do this research, alongside a critical reflection of the fieldwork stage. Here I advocate the use of a feminist qualitative framework and qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews as most appropriate for enabling an understanding of the women's everyday lives[34]. The chapter is structured as follows: I begin with a theoretical exploration of how to approach and do feminist research. Second I outline my methodological framework and choice of method in order to study the women's everyday lives as it is widely acknowledged that choices surrounding methodology and methods can substantively shape research findings. In the second half of the chapter I move on from a theoretical discussion to present a reflexive account of my research experience in order to demonstrate how I put doing feminist research into practice and also discuss some of the practical dilemmas associated with doing feminist research. I then reflect on the influence my age, class and gender may have had on research relationships and the data. I end the chapter by documenting the approach used to analyse the data.

2. Thinking About and Doing Feminist Research

This thesis is a feminist piece of research which utilised qualitative methods. My methodological position and approach to research practice have been shaped by feminist methodological debates around method, methodology and epistemology. In this part of the chapter I begin to outline my ontological and epistemological position, structuring the discussion around two themes; the theoretical grounding of feminist research and how a feminist approach to doing research can guide good research practice.

Feminist researchers have made an important contribution to social science methodological debates and research practice. Feminist research

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[34] I also used the time diary method to collect data about the women's domestic work practices. However as the return rate was low the time diaries did not form part of the analysis. See appendix 1 for a discussion of this.

concerns the application of feminist theory to methods, methodology and concepts of sociological investigation. There is a large body of work exploring feminist methodological issues (Cook and Fonow 1990, Nielsen 1990, Reinharz 1992, Letherby 2003). Some focus on methodological concerns (Harding 1991, Stanley and Wise 1983), while others concentrated on how research should be done (Oakley 1981, Finch 1984). As feminism is not a unified position (as there are different feminist approaches to epistemology), there is no distinct feminist methodology as such (Harding 1987). Because of this, it is useful to refer to a feminist approach to doing research as 'feminist research practice' (Kelly *et al.* 1994). A feminist approach to doing and thinking about doing research have over the last three decades been concerned with the pursuit of non-hierarchical research relationships, undertakes research that acknowledges the location of the researcher within the research process, refuses to ignore emotional dimensions in the conduct of inquiry and acknowledges the role of affect in the production of knowledge (see Letherby 2003 for a useful overview of these debates)[35]. Crucially feminist research explores the women's descriptions and accounts of their experience and uses gender as a tool to interpret these understandings (Maynard 1994).

Feminist social science research is distinguishable by its concern to reveal and often readdress gender inequality. Consistent with this, feminist research continues to endeavour to make visible the lives of women.   One aim of this research is to make visible the lives of an under-researched group of women in order to address the imbalance that exists in the sociological literature. This is essential because as argued earlier, there is a lack of research on young women living in former mining communities. I want to write these women's experiences of home and work into existing accounts of knowledge to allow these women's lives to be seen, so that their experiences don't go unrecognised and can be explored sociologically. As stated in the introduction, I was struck by the marginalisation of women, especially young women in the research field. I see this study as a small-scale account of the women's lives. There is no underlying single object reality of women's lives to discover but

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[35] I do not attempt to produce an extensive review of these debates here; instead I want to briefly focus on the parts which influenced my own methodological position.

rather an infinite number of local, subjective realities which must be studied from the perspective of those who inhabit them. This is why as feminist researchers we should aim to produce small-scale accounts of reality which then become part of a larger body of literature (Longino 1993). Everyday life is studied in this tradition, 'by examining the local subjective worlds of particular social groups or settings, and trying to identify the norms and values that shape behaviour in that context' (Scott 2009:25). In keeping with placing importance on the local context of women's lives, Maynard (1995) argues that for feminist sociologists to produce 'middle order' theories which emphasise the specifics of given social contexts, institutions and relationships to offer general grounded generalisations integrated with empirical research. Doing this,

> enables us to use materialist and structural methods of analysis without constructing huge, theoretical edifices which are remote from everyday life…feminist sociology…backed by the growing body of empirical research…is well placed to analyse the localised contexts of women's everyday existence and the meanings women give to their lives without losing sight of structural patterns of domination and subordination (Jackson 1999:4.2).

However simply focusing on the lives of women does not automatically make research feminist. Being grounded in women's experiences alone is not sufficient to the conduct of feminist research (Kelly, Burton & Regan 1994, Glucksmann 1994). There are other factors which contribute to this study being a feminist piece of research. As well as wanting to make an under researched group of women's lives visible, I also embarked on a feminist project because a feminist approach to doing research guides good research practice. A major concern of feminist researchers has been with how we actually do research. In this section I discuss how drawing on a feminist approach informed my own research practice as 'it is not just the "doing" of empirical work which is significant, but the ways in which we do it' (Lawler 2000:6). A feminist approach to research can be argued to guide good research practice as issues of power, mutual respect and responsibility are key concerns. The issue of power has been a central construct in discussions of how to do research. Early feminist debates were critical of the ways in which sociological research involved hierarchical power relationships where there was a deliberate separation of the

researcher and the researched; participants were regarded as the passive givers of information with the 'researcher acting as a sponge soaking up the details provided' (Maynard 1994:15), while researchers were encouraged to be emotionally detached in the research relationship (Oakley 1981). Feminist researchers such as Oakley argued that as researchers we must strive for a non-hierarchical relationship with participants through various techniques such as sharing experiences and involving participants in design and analysis to reduce power differentials. Early debates that advocated that power differentials can be removed are now dismissed as naive (Skeggs 1994). However we can strive for mutual respect with participants by undertaking research in a non-exploitative way.

Power is also important in relation to the knowledge produced from empirical research. It is important to be reflexive and make the research process transparent in order that it can clearly be seen how knowledge is produced (Stanley & Wise 1983, Reay 1996). This allows readers to understand the background to the claims we are making. Accounting for methodology is therefore important as,

> To side step methodology means that the mechanisms we utilize in producing knowledge are hidden, relations of privilege are masked and knowers are seen not to be located: therefore the likely abundance of cultural, social, educational and economic capitals is not recognised as central to the production of any knowledge (Skeggs 1997:19).

All knowledge is produced in specific contexts and these situated knowledges (Haraway 1988) are marked by their origin. Individuals are multiply positioned within different frameworks of power, race, class and gender and as such knowers should take responsibility for what they claim to know with respect to their positions. This led to the recognition of the importance of the position or 'positionality' of the researcher. Researchers see the world from a specific embodied location (Rose 1997) and so should be self-reflexive and make their own 'position' and the implications of this known, in order to overcome false notions of neutrality (McDowell 1992).

The importance of making knowledge construction transparent is however not confined to feminist research. There is a long tradition of writers

who have made their working practices involved in producing knowledge claims transparent (Gouldner 1970, Bourdieu 1996). Garfinkel (1967) for example argued that sociological claims could only be fully understood from within the context they were produced. Sociological 'truths' he argued are conditional on both time and space. Despite this an awareness of the effects of gender on the research process was almost absent before the influence of feminism (Hammersley 1992). In terms of reflexive practice, feminist critiques of epistemology highlighted the male agenda in much sociological research (Smith 1988, Harding 1987, Millen 1997). Deeper questions linked to gender must be brought into question beyond the immediate relations between the researcher and the researched. This links to the idea that research should be accountable and accessible. I see striving for mutual respect with participants, making the research process transparent and accounting for my own reflexive position as part of my own ethical practice as a researcher. Later in the chapter I outline how I put this into practice. But before that, as this is a piece of research that used qualitative methods, I want to argue in this instance a qualitative methodology and use of in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews were most appropriate for providing an understanding of the women's everyday lives.

3. Methodological Approach: Adopting a Qualitative Methodology

I adopted a qualitative approach and the use of qualitative interviews both because of my ontological position and because I believe this approach is most appropriate to explore the lives of the women. An interpretive epistemological approach was adopted as interpretive philosophers and sociologists regard the social world not as an objective entity to be measured and observed by the use of scientific methods (as done by those adopting a positivist position), but emphasise an understanding of human behaviour and human action which embodies a view of social reality as a constantly changing emergent property of individuals' creation (Bryman 2004). A qualitative approach was adopted as through it

> We can explore a wider array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social

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processes, institutions, discourse or relationship work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate (Mason 2002:1).

An interpretive approach is therefore useful for understanding the social meaning of everyday life. I wanted to use qualitative methods as they would allow me to focus on the women's everyday lives in detail as they can provide closer access to the individual's perspective (Silverman 2005). In effect qualitative methods provide a different, more complex understanding of social phenomena than quantitative methods. I wanted to explore the women's everyday lives by analysing their understandings and experiences of everyday life. Mason also suggests we can do this by using qualitative methodologies that allow the 'richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity' (Mason 2002:1) of everyday life to emerge. Importantly for this research, qualitative research 'has an unrivalled capacity to constitute compelling arguments about *how things work in particular contexts'* (Mason 2002:1, italics in original) as they do not seek to create an overall general picture. As discussed, this is a small-scale study of a particular group of women at a certain point in time. In the next section I discuss how in order to collect the data I wanted, I chose to use in depth semi-structured interviews[36] as they would allow me to explore the women's views, understandings, interpretations and experiences of their everyday lives. I then discuss how I composed the interview schedule to talk to the women about their everyday lives and conclude this part of the chapter by discussing where I carried out the interviews.

3.1. *In-depth Interviews*

The interview is one of the main data collection tools used by qualitative researchers because it enable us to access people's meanings, perceptions and constructions of reality, as they allow detail to be found in 'the precise particularities of such matters as people's understandings and interactions' (Silverman 2005:9). This allows the meanings the individual attributes to events or relationships to be understood in their own terms, providing a greater understanding of the subject's point of view. In-depth interviews provide the researcher with detailed accounts of how the participant sees the social world.

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[36] See appendix 2.

Such rich, qualitative data is regarded as highly authentic and valid (Bryman 2008).In-depth interviews were the most appropriate means of gaining an 'authentic' voice from the women. Being able to discuss in-depth the various aspects of the women's everyday lives allowed for a greater understanding of the 'richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity' (Mason 2002:1) of the women's lives. The complexities and contradictions apparent in these women's lives emerged through the use of qualitative interviews, which may not have appeared if using a quantitative approach. For example, if I had simply asked the women to state if they were either working, middle or upper class, the complex and often contradictory accounts may not have been made apparent[37].

Semi-structured interviews rather than structured or non-structured interviews were used because semi-structured interviews can unfold like a relaxed conversation and at the same time, the use of an interview schedule helps to focus the interview while still allowing topics to emerge which may not be included in the interview guide. I hoped that by aiming to create an interview situation that was more like a conversation, that the interview would be more relaxed, the women would feel comfortable and at ease to speak to me in detail about their lives. Having a good relationship with the women was important to me. Good rapport was important in terms of gathering 'good' data but was equally important in terms of trying to reduce power differentials. Using semi-structured interviews that would allow me to interact with the women, to be able to share experiences and answer any of their questions in this manner was one attempt at this.

3.2. Researching Everyday Life

Scott (2009) argues that there are two tasks when researching social life. First interpreting everyday life means viewing social behaviour through a particular kind of lens and second, understanding everyday life is an essential part of any theory about the social world so the task of the researcher is to examine the common sense meanings individuals give to their actions (Douglas 1981). As discussed in the introduction, it is essential to make the familiar strange

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[37] As will be shown in chapter four.

(Garfinkel 1967). So how did I go about asking the women about their everyday lives? As discussed in chapter two, the everyday world is reproduced in various sites. For the purpose of the research I wanted to talk to the women about three of the everyday sites, the home, places of work and the community. By questioning the women through a class and gender lens about their practices and experiences in these sites I hoped to be able to analyse the mundane everyday activities in order to understand how class and gender are lived.

In in-depth interviews, the interviewer encourages long discussions with the participant. Interviews often begin with a discussion of general areas of interest before moving on to specifically address certain topics. I adopted this framework. I was interested in the home, community and places of work therefore the interview was framed around the following key areas; the community, class identification, family and friends, employment and domestic work[38]. I opened the interview with questions about community meaning I was able to begin with general questions relating to opinions on where the women live. I wanted to ask the women about their feelings about the community they live in, did they have a sense of community as one of the arguments posed during the miners' strike was that the closure of the coal pits would lead to the end of community. I was also interested in community because as said earlier in the thesis, our sense of the everyday is based on the community we identify with and in those spaces we live and work while community is built on a shared sense of what is and what is not every day (Bennett and Watson 2008).

By opening the interview with general questions relating to where the women live I hoped this would 'ease' the women into being interviewed before moving onto ask about their class identification. Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2001) see asking questions about class at the end of the interview as advantageous as respondents often display class ambivalence in terms of class identification. Although I did not 'jump in' and ask about class straight away, I felt leaving that part of the interview until the end would not have made sense. It was more important that the interview flowed. By opening with a discussion of where the women live, I was then able to frame asking about class in terms of the wider community first, which led me into asking about their own class

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[38] See appendix 2 for the interview schedule.

identification and their thoughts on class more generally. This was a particularly interesting part of the interview mainly because of the different interpretations of the question. This is where using qualitative interviewing shows its strength because as noted, some of the women had very different understandings of what being working, middle and upper class entailed. If I had used a questionnaire to ask about class I would never have uncovered the complex and often contradictory and different understandings of class that the women have. For example the difficulty in defining a person's class position was evident when many of the women spoke about an 'underclass, questioning what class someone belongs to when they are unemployed and/or have never been in employment. The sociology of wok has a long been interested in researching and understanding individual's feelings about work. I wanted to do this in relation to both the women's paid and unpaid work. In the second part of the interview I spoke to the women about their paid working lives. Previous research has looked at attitudes, orientations, commitment, satisfaction and preferences about work. This became particularly prevalent in studies researching the relationship between gender and work (e.g. the preference/constraint debate as outlined in the previous chapter). In the interview I also asked about previous and current employment, future aspirations, their partner's employment situation and work/life balance to try and understand the women's own feelings about the paid work they have done, do and hope to do in the future. In the final part of the interview I asked the women about the domestic division of labour in their homes. Here I concentrated on four areas of concern in contemporary debates; domestic work practices (who does what), relationships (for, from and with whom), negotiations (how) and meanings of domestic work (for those carrying out domestic work and others) (Warren 2011).

4. Decision Making and Participant Criteria

I begin this part of the chapter by explaining my choice of location and participant criteria. I then document some of the issues faced during the fieldwork stage and how I resolved these, mainly in terms of recruitment and the impact this had on the research.

4.1. The Location

The geographical focus of the research was on County Durham. The region is a valuable research site for number of reasons, the main being that it was dominated by coalmining before the pit closures; the former Durham coalfield was one of the largest in the county. I decided to base my research in Seaham and the surrounding villages as it was in this part of County Durham where the coalmines were last to close[39]. In light of this, I felt any remaining influence of the mining industry on the area would be more apparent there. When first deciding where to locate the research I decided against another prominent former mining locality; Easington Colliery, as it has been the focus of both the media and academic research because of its poor socio-economic condition. Easington Colliery even featured around the time of the fieldwork in the Channel 4 documentary 'The Secret Millionaire' (26/8/08). The programme was advertised with the tag-line, 'Carl Hopkins travels to the former mining town of Easington in County Durham, setting for Billy Elliot and one of the most deprived areas in Britain, to see if he can help the declining community'. Easington has been focused upon a great deal because of its socio-economic deprivation and it can be argued, has been 'over-researched'. This may now be true of Seaham and may explain, as I will go onto discuss, why recruitment was unsuccessful there. The problem of an area being over-researched was also a recent problem for Yvette Taylor[40] and for Huw Beynon's (2001)[41] team where they faced the problem of people complaining of being 'questioned to death'. Beynon's initial contacts in the East Durham Coalfield with the Unions and local contacts produced a high level of non-response and even when they advertised in libraries and in local shops they still encountered problems of people not wanting to be interviewed. In a discussion with one of my interviewees about my surprise at the slow uptake of participants, she too said that people in certain areas such as Seaham and Easington are sick of people wanting to talk to them. Taylor's younger participants spoke about wanting to move on from the association with the coalmine as the area was changing in a

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[39] Vane Tempest Colliery for example closed in 1993.
[40] The project in question 'The coalface to the car park'.
[41] ESRC project, 'Social exclusion or flexible adaptation: Coal districts in a period of economic transformation'.

different direction. You may question why I recruited in the area given its 'over-researched' status. As argued there is a lack of research on young women in these areas. In effect I wanted to research an under-researched group who live in an 'under-researched' area, By doing this I hope to move on the mining communities literature from a focus on employment and community which have been broadly concerned with the heroic male worker to understand the lives of those individuals living in the area. We can also suggest a change in direction in mining communities research as this links to the fact that some want to move on from the area's association with coal mining. The women's lives now in this research have little personal association with the mining legacy. The coal mines are not part of their everyday lives, this is not to say they do not acknowledge the area's past and how it shaped the areas in which they live but feel it is separate/distant from their own lives.

4.2. Participant Criteria

In order to paint a picture of young women's lives I decided upon the following participant criteria. There were four main aspects to the participant criteria. I originally wanted to interview women who as well as living in Seaham,

- Were aged between eighteen and thirty
- Lived with their partner and/or children
- Had a father, grandfather or great-grandfather who worked as a coal miner.

I discussed in chapter one why I am specifically interested in the lives of young women and so I felt the age range here appropriate. Because of my interest in the workings of the household, I wanted to speak with women who lived with their partner and/or children because I felt one way to examine gendered practices, was through examining the domestic division of labour in the women's homes. The third aspect of the criteria was chosen so that the women had a connection to the coalmining industry. As I was interested in exploring the lives of working-class women in particular, I felt this would be a useful distinction. I also hoped that as the area is working-class that there would be a good chance the women would be working-class. Despite being specifically

interested in working-class women, when advertising the research I did not say that I wanted to speak to working-class women. I was wary of the response this may generate in that it is well documented that class can be an embarrassing subject (Sayer 2001) and that individuals can be ambivalent about identifying themselves in class terms (Savage *et al*. 2001), especially as working-class (Skeggs 1997). On reflection I am pleased with this decision because as discussed earlier individuals have very different understandings of what being working-class is.

5. Recruitment

It is widely acknowledged that doing research, especially qualitative research, is not without its challenges. In this next section I document the problems faced with recruitment and the questions I felt I had to address in terms of the original aim of the thesis. Throughout the fieldwork stage I used a variety of recruitment techniques, some more successful than others. I attended public meetings[42], local events[43], put up posters and contacted the local council and leafleted places of work[44] in Seaham, which all prove to be unsuccessful. I did have a contact in the area; however this person had very recently been used by another researcher. I decided against using the same gatekeeper as I was wary of the possibility of interviewing the same people. In the early stages of the research I made contact with community centres in the area and this initially proved successful as two women initially agreed to take part. However this did not result in any interviews. As these methods were proving unsuccessful, because I wanted to try and contact as many people as possible and also to access those women who may never had any contact with community groups[45], I opted to use the social networking site Facebook. On Facebook, individuals can set up groups of common interest so I searched through groups that were connected to Seaham and found one group called 'Seaham and Proud'. As the group had a couple of hundred members, I hoped this would be a useful

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[42] In Seaham for residents about new developments. Few people were in attendance.
[43] Such as 'Pride in Easington Family Fun Day' held at Dalton Park.
[44] I leafleted and spoke to staff and the public at Dalton Park Shopping Centre. A large supermarket was contacted and posters were put up in the local library, shops and cafes.
[45] I had some concern over the use of community based sampling. I wanted to recruit women who did not have access to community groups or centres as from personal experience many of the young women I know do not have contact with them at all.

recruitment technique. To begin with I contacted the creator of the group to ask if I could advertise my research on the group page, and after contact was made he was very happy to message all the members in the group on my behalf. From this method I recruited my first two participants. Although both did not fully fit the initial criteria, as I was a few months into the fieldwork stage and still had not carried out any interviews, the decision was made to go ahead and interview them. The two interviews could be used to pilot the research and hopefully provide further leads. While snowballing can act as a useful technique this was relatively unsuccessful in this instance and throughout the research.

Throughout that time I continued contacting various people at the local council and although this did not lead to any participants directly, I was put in contact with one community centre [46]which although was not in Seaham, was in Easington District[47]. As take up was still minimal, the decision was made to extend the research area into Easington District and further into County Durham as I had women from former mining communities outside of Easington District saying they would like to take part. The final sample was recruited from FaceBook, community centres, word of mouth and through a contact at the office of a local house builder[48].

After deciding to extend the research area, I felt I had to consider the possible impact of this because I was moving away from my original research proposal. Brannen and Moss (1991) point out that each research project has its own history which rarely conforms to the original proposal. I was initially concerned that there may have been a difference in the responses from those who lived in the areas where the coalmines had been closed around twenty years as opposed to those which had not been in operation for around fifty years, as the areas where the coalmines closed later are still regarded as being blighted by the pit closures. Bearing this in mind I went ahead and carried out

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[46] The name of this community centre will not be identified as participants could potentially be identified.

[47] The location was a former mining area where the pit had closed in 1981.

[48] I also found another woman interested in taking part, Debra, this time through a friend who told her about my research. She also lived in a former mining community but again not in the Seaham area but near Cramlington. Although at this point the research area had changed to cover former mining towns and villages in County Durham but not as far up as Cramlington, I was unsure whether to interview Debra or not, but when I found out that she had only recently moved there and was from a mining town in Sedgefield I decided to go ahead with the interview.

the interviews with those women who lived in Sedgefield and Durham and found little difference in the themes that were emerging from those respondents and those from the original research area. A further concern I had was that those areas in County Durham where the coalmines had closed a lot earlier may no longer be regarded as former mining communities, yet when my contact at the house builders passed the leaflets around, those women who did take part did say to him initially that they lived in a former mining community but not near Seaham. Later in order to assist recruitment I also had to further adjust the criteria. I interviewed single women who lived alone or with parents as they came forward showing an interest in the research. On reflection I believe this helped to provide a wider picture of women's lives in the area as many women are not in relationships or are able to afford to leave home.   Despite adapting the research criteria I could justify any changes made as the women offered similar accounts; there was a saturation of data. The crucial elements of the criteria however remained, I interviewed young women living in former mining localities, and all but one of the women grew up in a working-class area and have working-class parents, while the one woman who identifies as middle-class has close links to a former mining community. To summarise because of all the problems with recruitment, my thesis was no longer going to be concerned with the legacy of the miners' strike, but importantly is based in former mining communities and as such, it is more appropriate to see this piece of research as an exploration of the lives of young women living in County Durham. The research has remained concerned with exploring the lives of an under-researched group. Below, in figure 2 I present a breakdown of the sample.

The problem recruiting participants was more extensive than I had envisaged. General methodology literature fails to discuss the difficulties of recruitment. I looked to more specific discussions about doing research particularly from feminist researchers who talk about the 'mess, confusion and complexity of doing research' (Kelly, Burton & Regan 1994:46). I found their reflexive and open attitude to doing research refreshing and more helpful than broad text book discussions. I felt they helped me understand in more depth the

Name	Age	Status	Living Arrangement	Class (Self-defined)	Occupation	PT/FT	Regular Working Pattern	Shift Work	Earn more per annum than partner	Children	Childcare Arrangements whilst at Work
Jessica	26	Single-Parent	Lives with her child. In the process of trying to move in with boyfriend	Working	Pharmacist	Part-time	Yes	No	Yes	1 (School Age)	Daughter at school. School holidays cared for by Jessica's family – her Mother, Father & Sister.
Sophie	25	Co-habiting	Lives with partner & children	Working	Retail Assistant	Part-time	No. Works evenings/ weekends	Yes & nights	No	2 (Pre-School Age)	Provided by both Grandmothers.
Megan	29	Married	Lives with partner & children	Working	Civil Servant	Part-time Job Share	Yes	No	No	1 (Pre-School Age)	Provided by her mother-in-law
Debra	28	Co-habiting	Lives with partner & children	Working	Secretary	Part-time	Yes	No	No	1 (Pre-School Age)	Provided by both Grandmothers, uncle & child minder
Hannah	26	Single-Parent	Lives with her child	Working	Secretary	Full-time	Yes	No	-	1 (Pre-School Age)	Mainly Nursery. Also by Hannah's Grandmother.
Lindsay	31	Co-habiting	Lives with partner & children	Working	Carer	Full-time	No	Yes & nights	No	1 (Pre-School Age)	Provided by Lindsay's Aunts & Mother-in-Law
Katie	30	Married	Lives with partner & children	Working	Costing Officer	Full-time	Yes	No	Yes	1 (Pre-School)	Provided by her Mother
Abigail	27	Co-habiting	Lives with her partner	Working	Learning Mentor	Fill-time	Yes	No	No	0	-
Catherine	27	In a Relationship	Lives with her parents	Working	Prison Custody Officer	Full-time	Yes	No	No	0	-
Amy	29	Married	Lives with her partner	Middle	Teacher	Full-time	Yes	No	Yes	Pregnant	Proposes using a childminder &/or nursery
Victoria	26	In a relationship	Lives with parents	Working	Receptionist & Student	Part-time	Yes	No	No	0	-
Jennifer	25	Co-habiting	Lives with partner	Working	Geologist	Full-time	Yes	No	No	0	-
Louise	30	Single	Lives Alone	Working	Carer	Full-time	No	Yes & nights	-	0	-
Charlotte	24	Single-Parent	Lives with her father and her daughter. In the process of trying to buy a house with her boyfriend.	Working	Administrator/ Receptionist	Full-time	Yes	No	Yes	1 (School Age)	Family members.
Natalie	29	Co-habiting	Lives with partner	Working	Hairdresser	Full-time	Yes	No	No	0	-
Leanne	29	Married	Lives with partner	Working	Customer Care	Full-time	Yes	No	No	0	-
Rebecca	27	In a relationship	Lives alone	Working	Customer Care	Full-time	Yes	No	No	0	-
Lucy	25	Single	Lives with parents	Working	Early Years Practitioner	Full-time	Yes	No	-	0	-
Michelle	26	Co-habiting	Lives with partner	Working	Project Manager	Full-time	Yes	No	No	0	-
Kimberly	25	Co-habiting	Lives with partner & children	Working	Early Years Practitioner	Full-time	Yes	No	No	2 (School & Pre-School Age)	One child at school. One child in Nursery.
Laura	21	In a relationship	Lives with friend (term time) & with parents & sibling (non-term time)	Working	Student / Retail	Full-time Student Part-time Retail Assistant	Yes	No	Yes	0	-

FIGURE 2. Participant Information

realities of doing research, the research process and relationship with participants. I somewhat naively thought recruitment wouldn't be difficult or take so long, especially as I was offering an incentive to take part. On reflection there are three possible reasons for this, the first being that some localities appear to be over-researched and second that people are just not interested in taking part. Third, in a similar vein to Reay's PhD. research experience (Miriam et al. 1996), I found a common problem was time availability. Some women who showed interest in the research often did not take part because they felt they simply didn't have the time. The issue of time was also apparent when arranging interviews. I had to be very flexible, doing interviews during the day, on evenings and at weekends. I even carried out interviews on lunch hours at the women's place of work. Having similar problems with recruitment, Reay questioned the ethics of pursuing reluctant participants. This was an issue I had also considered; how many times do you make contact in an attempt to make the interview happen? I decided to contact potential participants twice with possible times and dates, leaving them to contact me. I did not want to become a nuisance.

Careful thought was put into where to do the interviews. Wengraf whimsically suggests that when it comes to the actual interview session:

> You want a setting as free from interruptions and as comfortable and non- distracting as possible. You want to avoid interruptions by phones, by noise from outside, by other people. Ideally, this would mean an 'interview room' in the home or workplace of neither party. Not very feasible. (2001:191).

This was in fact the case, many of the interviews had disruptions. Where possible I carried out the interviews in the women's homes. I wanted to do this for three reasons. First I wanted to carry out the interviews in a comfortable setting for the women. Second I hoped offering to go to the women's homes would make participation easier and increase participation numbers. I was aware that carrying out interviews in for example a room in the university would be quiet and without disruption, yet I was wary that doing this would have been unfeasible because Newcastle University is some distance away from County Durham. I felt asking women to have to travel between 30-45 minutes, maybe

even more if using public transport, and having to find their way to the university would put people off as the travel and interview time combined would be substantive, especially when many women have work and care commitments. Third, as I was interested in the household, I felt that visiting the women's homes may add a further dimension to the research. This proved particularly useful, as in relation to discussions around housework, many of the women often pointed things out to me, even showing me around their homes[49].

Where possible I carried out two interviews with the women rather than one (potentially very long) interview. There were two reasons for this, the first concerning recruitment. I felt that asking the women to find a free time window of possibly up to three hours may be problematic and may lead to non-participation. In some instances however it was not possible to interview the women on two separate occasions. Reasons for only being able or only wanting to be interviewed once ranged from wanting to do the interview all in one go or having a time available to do the whole interview. As discussed, recruitment was difficult and so I had to be flexible about this, so where necessary I carried out just one interview. The second reason for carrying out two interviews was that I hoped this would collect the best possible data. A second interview would allow me to follow up any questions I had after the first interview and after transcription. This proved to be very useful as after listening and transcribing the interview I was able to clarify points and ask the women if they could talk more about topics I felt we had not fully explored. This process was both interesting and useful as I was able to speak to the women in more detail about certain topics and it often did lead to more detailed discussion. Again I felt meeting with the women on more than one occasion would help build a good relationship with the interviewee. On the occasions where I was able to interview the women on two occasions, the second interview was more relaxed as having met before and we were both more comfortable in each other's company. I found that the women were more likely to ask me more questions both about the research generally but also about my experiences of and opinions of the topics we were discussing. I would therefore certainly adopt this approach in the future. Seeing the women for a second time also meant we

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[49] This will be expanded upon in chapter six.

could discuss in detail their time diary entries. Having down on paper all the domestic work the women did in their home in a week acted somewhat like a vignette and sparked more of a discussion about the tasks they did and the time spent doing them.

6. Doing Qualitative Research

Mason (2002) comments that doing qualitative research requires a great deal of practical, emotional, physical and intellectual effort. This was certainly the case here. As well as problems with recruitment, practical problems encountered included non-participation after initial interest, people not being in when I called at their home to do the interview (even after checking with them in the morning that it would still be ok to come and do the interview) and not being able to carry out the interviews in the women's homes. This wasn't a problem as such, more of a preference, and in those cases where disruptions and noise were at a minimum, the interviews still went very well. When interviews were not carried out in the women's homes, they were done at the university, places of work and one in a fast-food restaurant. Noise disruption was a problem in some instances, yet the biggest practical issue I had to deal with was the presence of other adults and/or children during the interview. I want to consider how this may have impacted on the research and how issues were resolved.

There were four occasions where I did the interview in the women's home when children were present. The degree of disruption this caused varied greatly. I experienced noisy toys and TVs which sometimes made it difficult to hear what was being said (and made transcribing difficult at times), children wanting to play with the tape recorder and on the worst occasion children fighting, which resulted in the interview being stopped and rescheduled by the mother to an evening when the children would be in bed. The main problem with children being present was that these distractions often stopped the conversation mid-flow and often meant that the women's chain of thought was disrupted. The interview was not as relaxed and was often shorter as the women went into less detail. In those instances there was less interaction between myself and the interviewee, that is, it was as though the women were just trying to answer my questions as best they could and as quickly as possible

so they could watch and/or attend to their children rather than having more of a conversation with myself where stories and thoughts were exchanged. This is one example of how at times some of the ideals put forward by feminist researchers writing about how to do research are not always practical. For example Oakley's (1981) suggestion that in order to reduce hierarchical power relations, a reciprocal relationship through sharing experiences with those you are interviewing was not always possible between the women and myself. As noted the women were more concerned with just being able to answer my questions because of the disruption. This is not to suggest however that the data gathered from these interviews was not as good as in those quiet undisrupted interviews.

A further issue I had not considered before actually doing the empirical work was the presence of other adults at the interview. When interviewing Kimberley this happened on both occasions. The first time her partner was sitting in the living room with us, and although I was solely addressing my questions to her, at some points he did join in the conversation. On this first occasion this wasn't too much of an issue as I was asking her about where she lives and her employment and he did not dominate the conversation. However I did see his presence as being a problem if it were to occur at the second interview as I would be asking her about domestic work. I was wary that if he was present Kimberley may not talk as openly about her opinions on who does what if he was there. I attempted to arrange to see her on a week day when he would be at work but she wanted me to go back on a weekend again. He actually wasn't present for much of the second interview and Kimberley did jokingly tell him that everything she was telling me was not new, that she had expressed her opinions on the issue to him before. The issue the second time was the presence of Kimberley's friend during the interview who, although she was happy to join in the conversation, did not want to take part in the research. The presence of her partner and friend was at times useful as they asked Kimberley questions themselves or brought up points which prompted her to recall something else, but at times the interruptions were problematic, especially when they disrupted Kimberley talking to me. I also had the experience of doing two 'paired' interviews. On both occasions I was contacted by one of the friends

saying they and a friend wanted to take part and would there be the possibility of doing the interview together. Both interviews went well, with no one person dominating the conversation. A strength of interviewing two women at once was that they asked each other questions and responded to each other's answers, providing a further dimension to their accounts.

The different interview situations did affect the interview dynamic. When there was only myself and the interviewee(s) present, this provided a comfortable, quiet and relaxed setting. In those instances and in the case of those carried out at the university and at their place of work, the interviews were overall more structured and the participants spoke in greater length and in more detail than those interviews that were carried out in the women's homes when children were present. To summarise, despite having an 'ideal' interview situation in mind, when this was not possible, challenges had to be faced and I had to work with the situation presented to me. Although I have tended to focus on the difficulties I had, this is not to say that the whole process was negative. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting the women who were all kind, lovely and helpful. When visiting the women's homes I was made to feel very comfortable and I found the interviews interesting, enjoyable and often very funny. Meeting the participants was a particular high point of the research. In the next part of the chapter, I continue to reflect on the research process by discussing my subjective position in relation to the research and the researched.

7. Researching Working-Class Women's Lives

Feminist researchers advocate reflexivity which involves 'giving a full and honest account of the research process as possible, in particular explicating the position of the researcher in relation to the researched' (Reay 1996:443). Earlier I documented my experience of the fieldwork stage of the research to help make the process of knowledge production clear. In order that I offer a full and honest account of the research process and subject myself as a researcher to the same scrutiny as the actual doing of the research I now want to document my own position in relation to the researched.. To do this I begin by discussing how I attempted to reduce hierarchical power relations in the research relationship, how my subjective position may have helped with this and by

specifically considering my own location in the research process. The issue of power and privilege cannot be removed by simply 'asserting one's self into the account' (Adkins 2002b) yet it remains important to do so in order to understand the process of knowledge production.

7.1. Power

I found the issue of power in the research relationship complex as power was evident on both sides, participants are not simply powerless. On one hand the women had the power to shape the research. They could decide whether or not to take part and to withdraw their consent at any time. One thing which did demonstrate the power the women had in the interview was that they often stopped the interview at varying points. Whether it was to answer the phone, or the door, or to tend to children, it was apparent that the interview was not as important, although they were apologetic for disturbances. Yet power remains heavily weighted on my side. In some ways I am in a more powerful position than the women because of my education and position coming from a university setting. Ultimately power does lie with the researcher as they interpret and reproduce the participant's lives on paper. In effect the researcher has ultimate control over the interview material when they 'leave' with the data (Ribbens 1989). The set up of the interview is also constructed so that as researchers we are in control. This was evident for example when many of the women asked if they had answered my questions sufficiently and looked to me to lead the interview and frame what would happen in the interview situation.

Power relations can't be done away with but we can strive for mutual respect with participants. I hoped by offering gift vouchers for taking part in the research, not simply as an incentive to take part but as a thank you would help mutual respect between the women and myself. As I required the women to be interviewed for a significant amount of time, on more than one occasion and for a time diary to be completed, I felt it only fair that the women should be thanked for giving up their time to help me complete the research. Another way mutual respect can be strived for is by being open with participants in the interviews and being willing to answer questions from participants and/or share experiences. Interacting with participants helps to break down the separation

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between the researcher and respondent (Reinharz 1992). An open and reciprocal relationship avoids objectifying the participant and by answering questions from participants helps creates reciprocity and mutual trust which will hopefully lead to good quality data being collected (Oakley 1990). I feel that I was able to interact with the women in the interviews which helped break down the separation between myself and the women as I was very similar to them in a number of ways as will now be explored.

7.2. Positionality

Qualitative feminist research should involve critical self-scrutiny by the researcher, or '*active reflexivity*' (Mason 2002:7 italics in original). The matter of questioning how the process of research and analysis has an effect on research outcomes is known as 'reflexivity'. To be reflexive requires an awareness of our contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining 'outside' while conducting research. It is important to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs research. May (1998) argues that reflexivity has two dimensions, the endogenous and the referential[50]. 'Referential' or 'personal' reflexivity will be discussed in this section as it is the study of the relations between the person who engages in the research and the persons or groups who are the focus of that research. This involves reflecting upon the ways in which your own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research.

I have attempted to give an honest account of the research process but in order to do this in full I want to now consider my location within the research process. A reflexive and critical approach to research is not the province of feminists alone, but as Williams argues, feminists have been particularly 'concerned with showing the situatedness of representational claims' (1993:579). Part of adopting a feminist methodology includes understanding the relationship you have with the research participants and the research topic,

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[50] Endogenous reflexivity is the examination of the processes by which communities constitute their social reality (May 1998)

whilst also acknowledging the experience of the research for the researcher. Before embarking on my fieldwork, influenced by accounts from female working-class researchers, I felt it important to consider how my own subjectivity may impact on the research. There were two issues I wanted to think through. First I was aware that my age, gender and accent would have an effect on how I was seen by the women and that this may subsequently affect the actual data collected. Would similarities between me and the women lead to a more comfortable setting? Second, as doing research can have an effect on the researcher, I wanted to consider my own class position in relation to the women, as writers such as Lawler (2000) and Walkerdine (1985) have wrote about their confusions and insecurities as working-class academics interviewing both working and middle-class women,

> I was struck by the fantasies, anxieties and pain triggered in me by being perceived as a middle class academic confronting a working class family. Although I invested considerable desire in wanting to be 'one of them' at the same time 'being different', no amount of humanistic seeking for the 'beyond ideology' would get them to see me as a working-class girl 'like them (Walkerdine 1985:195-6).

Although I did not necessarily experience similar feelings of insecurity myself (because I was seen as a student rather than an academic and as I go onto discuss, I found the interviews very comfortable, possibly because my own subjective position is very similar to the women's), reading these accounts before doing the fieldwork prompted me to consider how my own subjectivity beyond my class position may impact on the research. I felt this to be important as I fit the research criteria. I considered whether my own class position, age, gender and being from and living in the same area as the women would allow for a better research relationship? That is, would similarities between me and the participants lead to good rapport in the interview situation and the interviewees feeling more comfortable therefore leading to a more 'open' relationship which may mean the women speak more openly and in more detail about their lives?

Feminist standpoint theorists claim that certain groups of knowers are better positioned to research women's lives because of their social situation. I

am not suggesting that I was in a better position to carry out the research or claiming 'insider' status as shared gender or class does not automatically mean shared experience; I do, however, think because there was only a small degree of social distance between myself and the women due to the above similarities, that this did help in creating a more relaxed interview, rapport and improve my ability to interact with the women. As well as fitting the research criteria I found I had similar experiences of growing up, education, first entering the labour market and moving out of home at a similar age with many of the women. Being able to engage with the women and discussing my own experiences, which were working-class, young female experiences did benefit the research in that the interviews were very comfortable. Armstead (1995) found her ability to identify with her research participants helped her establish a strong rapport with those women and developed a friendship of sorts. I am not claiming I developed a friendship with any of the women, yet in many instances it felt like I was talking to a friend of a friend rather than me shooting questions at the women. For instance some of the conversations I had with the women, especially about domestic work are conversations I have had with friends. Although I was similar to the women in some ways there were notable differences between us. The main difference with many of the women being that I am not a mother. A further striking difference was that my own domestic practices differed considerably to many of the women's.

7. Ethical Considerations

In this section I continue to try and make the research process as transparent as possible by outlining the ethical considerations in this research. Acting in an ethical way is a major part of social research as we are responsible to our research subjects. Social scientists have an ethical obligation to their participants as we delve into the private lives of those being studied, so researchers must ensure the rights, privacy and welfare of those taking part (Berg 2004). Concerns regarding ethics in social research revolve around issues of harm, consent, privacy and the confidentiality of data (Punch 2005). At all stages of the project the ethical implications of the research were considered. This included seeking informed consent. At the start of the interview session if they didn't already have one, I gave each respondent an

information sheet[51] and briefly reiterated what my PhD was about, what the interviews would be used for and what general topics I would like to discuss with them. The information sheet also included my contact details so if they felt they needed to contact me after the interview this would be possible. I also explained to the respondents that anonymity would be assured in any dissemination of the research and that the tape recordings and the transcripts of the interview would be kept in a secure place. I was also aware of issues of confidentiality and anonymity with regards to certain respondents knowing other women who had taken part in the research. Confidentiality is "*an active attempt to remove from the research records any elements that might indicate the subjects' identities*" (Berg 2004:65). Rather than just assuring anonymity to the respondents I also felt it was important to assure the women that certain aspects about themselves would be changed to ensure confidentiality so that if the other women who took part were to read any publications from this thesis, they would not be able to identify people they may know. I had asked the women to sign a consent form agreeing to take part. At this point I told them that they could withdraw their consent at any time if they so wished. I also explained that if there were any questions that they did not want to answer or any topics they felt uncomfortable with then they just had to say and we would move on. At no point during the interviews did anyone say they did not want to discuss anything with me but on one occasion one respondent asked me to turn off the tape when she was talking about family members who she did not like and did not want any record of what she said at all. I also complied with the British Sociological Association's statement of ethical practice.

Another issue to consider was my own safety when doing the empirical work. This was an issue on two accounts. The first regarded using Facebook. As I have a Facebook profile myself, before contacting people who had created groups, I made sure my privacy settings were set high so that people couldn't see my whole profile and in effect be able to see my personal information. I also felt that it was important to contact those people who had created the groups to ask if I could advertise on their group page. I did not want to come across as 'cheeky' using the group to advertise my research without asking as I am not

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[51] See appendix 3.

from the specific area the group was concerned with. The second issue concerning safety related to the fact that in some instances I would be going to the women's homes. In these instances I would let a family member know when I arrived at my destination, gave some approximation of how long I would be and then let them know when I was home.

9. Analysis

Feminist research also led to discussions about framing and the writing up of research findings, so here I want to briefly outline how I approached analysing the data. I used an inductive approach (where theory emerges from the data), in the form of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1990). I adopted this approach as,

> Theory derived from data is more likely to resemble 'reality' than is theory derived from putting together a series of concepts based on experience or solely through speculation (how one thinks things ought to work). Grounded theories because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action (Strauss & Corbin 1998: 12).

I wanted to allow relevant themes to emerge from the data. When using grounded theory it is important to be aware that no study can be completely inductive or solely based on grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin recognise this as researchers have background knowledge and concepts they will use in confronting their data (Payne & Payne 2004). No work is free of politics. My own work is theoretically grounded (Stanley & Wise 1990, Maynard 1994). It takes 'gender as a fundamental organiser of social life' (Kelly at al. 1994:156). This again shows why as researchers we must acknowledge our intellectual and personal presence in the research. Due to the fact we cannot be truly inductive in our approach, as researchers we should aim to 'provide modifications, reworkings, extensions and/or critiques of existing theory and the creation of new concepts' (Letherby 2003:67). Using a grounded theory approach, as the project progresses, 'the approach shifts from induction to deduction. The initial ideas derived from the data are tested back against new data' (Payne & Payne 2004:99). The data was analysed thematically. In terms of looking at the data to

interpret the women's everyday lives I followed Scott's (2009) technique for studying everyday life to search for 'underlying rules, routines and regularities in the behaviour you observe, insofar as these tell us something about how the settings are socially organised (2009:5), to dig deep to identify the meanings behind for example the women's everyday practices. I then had to relate the micro-level processes to the wider social world. What would this tell us about how class and gender are lived? One issue that arose in the analysis stage due to my similar experiences as the women was as Diane Reay (1996) found, a fear of distorting the often similar experiences of the women. I had to be careful to not gloss over these 'normal' experiences that were similar to my own but to question and critically examine these 'normal' everyday practices. I had to bracket out my prior assumptions about what is normal (Scott 2009). Scott also points out that it is important for us to challenge our taken for granted assumptions (Garfinkel 1967). A useful tool used in the analysis stage was to consider what would happen to the women when the social rules in their lives are broken. Deviant cases can be interesting as some social rules only become visible when they are broken. The use of this is apparent in the analysis chapters when I discuss how actual or possible rule-breaking acts are significant for the women in terms of losing face, feeling ashamed and in terms of the social relations they evoke.   Once the data collection stage was finished the transcripts were all coded and analysed.

10. Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of the methodological approach and methods used to carry out this research, alongside a critical reflection of the fieldwork stage. I advocated the use of a feminist qualitative framework and qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews as most appropriate for enabling an understanding of the women's everyday lives. I discussed the theoretical grounding of feminist research and argued such an approach guides good research practice. Adopting this approach and using qualitative semi-structure interviews which are flexible and fluid, allowed me to understand the meanings, interpretations and subjective experiences of the women I interviewed. As this research is concerned with revealing and understanding the women's lives of those women living in former mining localities, I wanted to adopt a feminist

approach as feminist research is committed to exploring the accounts of women's experiences and making the lives of women visible. Through this research I make visible the lives of an under-researched group of women which will also address the imbalance which exists in the sociological literature. I presented a reflexive account of my research experience to demonstrate how I put one aspect of doing feminist research into practice. I also documented some of the difficulties faced when doing my fieldwork in order to demonstrate some of the practical problems involved with doing feminist research, how problems with recruitment affected the direction of the project and generally to highlight the problems with doing research. The next chapter is the first of three analysis chapters where I document and explore the research findings.

Chapter Four: Personal Communities, Community & Class Identification

1. Introduction

In this first of three data chapters, I focus on one strand of everyday life sociology; 'personal communities' (Spencer & Pahl 2006), that is the wider set of significant ties in which people are embedded. Informed by new working-class studies (Russo & Linkon 2005), I examine how class and gender are lived on an everyday level, at home and in the community. This is followed by an exploration of the women's feelings about where they live and feelings of community and attachment. In the second part of the chapter I move on to examine the women's class identity and class identification. I argue that exploring the women's disapproval and/or disgust of unrespectable 'others' from economically marginal groups[52] and their dis-identification with respectable 'others' (i.e. the middle-class), can inform our understanding of the women's working-class identities and working-class identification, notably in their pursuit to be seen as respectable, a theme which runs throughout the three data chapters. I also examine how unlike in other studies (e.g. Skeggs 1997), the women here do not distance themselves from a identifying as working-class because of a history of working-class pride and a strong work ethic in former mining communities.

2. Personal Communities

In order to begin to explore the nature of the women's everyday lives, I wanted to explore their personal communities. The concept 'personal community' is used by Spencer and Pahl to encompass the wider set of significant ties in which people are embedded. Influenced by Wellman's (1982) use of the term which encompasses people's 'intimate and active ties with friends, neighbours and work mates as well as kin' (2006:44), Spencer and Pahl use the term to refer to 'a specific subset of people's informal and social relationships – those who are important to them at the time' (2006:45). Focusing at the level of family

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[52] Like MacDonald (2008) I use the term 'economically marginal' to best describe those indiviuals the women refer to as 'dole wallahs'.

and friends is useful as recent conceptions regard community as a search for identity and belonging; this is something which is found in the women's personal communities, in particular through strong family attachments. A focus upon the significant relationships and bonds in the women's lives, 'which give both structure and meaning to their lives' (2006:45) is what I found appealing about the use of the concept. The use of personal community was also appealing because as will be shown, the women's ideas about community are so closely tied to their relationships with kin and friends and many of the women don't feel part of a wider place-based community. I was also drawn to using personal community rather than the concept of network because, as Spencer and Pahl suggest, in some network studies there tends to be greater emphasis on features such as the size of the network or the frequency of contact. These are important factors, however as I go onto discuss, for the women it is the quality of the relationship, not the scale or frequency of contact which is important. Frequency of contact with friends in this case does not simply reflect the strength of friendship ties. There is also no emotional dimension in the term network and it 'certainly does not invoke the special importance of connectedness' (Smart 2007:7).

Although the focus of this thesis is on the women's lives, it is important to locate the women's lives in the wider set of significant ties in which their lives are embedded. This was because, as highlighted in chapter one, this thesis is about a particular group of women living in post-industrial communities at a particular point in time, and, as will be demonstrated through each of the data chapters, these ties have a considerable influence on the women's lives and how they make sense of them. In order to demonstrate this and 'set the scene' for this and the following data chapters, I set out and explore the women's personal communities, beginning with a discussion of the women's relationships with their immediate family. I demonstrate how family attachments are extremely important to the women and provide crucial support therefore enabling the women to engage in paid employment. I then go on to consider the effect strong family attachments have on the other relationships in the women's personal communities, that is to say those relationships with their friends. It is important to note here that although 'personal communities' are personal and

individual in that they are focused on particular individuals and constructed from information from those individuals, this does not mean they should be taken as aspects of individualisation (Spencer & Pahl 2006). An analysis of the relationships the women have with family and friends is important, especially when it has been suggested that we are now living in a period in which the social ties of kinship have weakened (e.g. Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2003). The argument of this chapter stands in opposition to individualisation theories as the evidence presented here suggests that kinship bonds are close-knit and highly important in the women's lives and that friendship ties remain strong.

2.1. Family Attachments

The first part of the women's personal communities I want to consider is their relationship with their family because of the strong attachments the women have with their immediate family. Those involved in the women's personal community include parents, partners, children, siblings, grandparents and to a lesser extent aunts, uncles and cousins. Aunts feature more prominently in some of the women's personal communities as they provide childcare. In regards to family, the women's personal communities are relatively small but very close knit. The women's attachments in particular to their partners, parents, children, siblings and in many cases also grandparents are strong. All but one of the women are in regular contact with their parents[53], especially with their mothers. Close contact between mothers and daughters is a feature of traditional working-class communities where relationships were shown to be based on support (Young and Wilmott 1957). This was a characteristic here as many of the women's mothers (and other family members) do provide support for the women in terms of childcare as will be discussed shortly, but more than this many of the women have close relationships with their mothers and enjoy spending time with them and other members of their immediate family on a regular basis,

> Gemma: So do you see your Mam and Dad regularly?
> Kimberley: Yeah 'cause I, I pop on me dinner break to me Mam's 'cause she lives near the school, 'cause I work in the nursery I pop to me Mam's

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[53] Lindsay less little contact with her father. Her mother died when she was younger.

on my dinner break and then on a Sunday they make Sunday dinner so
we see them a few times a week
Gemma: Do they come round here as well?
Kimberley: Yeah...
Gemma: Did you also say you have a sister?
Kimberley: Yeah
Gemma: And do you see her quite often?
Kimberley: Oh yeah we are a very close family
Gemma: Does she go down for dinner on a Sunday?
Kimberley: Yeah we take turns at making dinner (laughs)

This close relationship is in part enabled by geographical closeness as was the case for many of the women. Kimberley lives in the same village as her parents and sister, her parents only live a few streets away from her home and place of work. Kimberley chooses to go to her mother's house for lunch when she could as easily go home. Kimberly actively chooses to spend time with her mother.

The women's personal communities are on the whole local. The majority of the women's personal communities are very much embedded in their local area as they live very close to their immediate family allowing for regular face-to-face contact. Recent Institute for Public Policy research based on the General Household Survey found that people living in the north of England, especially in the northeast, are significantly more likely to meet up with family members that they don't live with, more than in any other part of the country. The research found that 62% of people in the northeast see family members at least once a week, 57% in the northwest, 56% in Yorkshire and the Humber. In the southeast 42% report seeing family regularly and in London the figure is significantly less than the northeast at 35% (Schmecker 2008). Many of the women see their parents and siblings once a week, if not more regularly, with some seeing their mothers in particular nearly every day. When the women see their mothers or other family members nearly every day, this is often because their family members care for their children whilst they are at work. However the women also see family and primarily their parents on days when they are not at work, as illustrated in the example above, such as on a Sunday when they get together to have lunch (often with their parents not the in-laws). Contact is also made and maintained through speaking regularly on the phone. Abigail for example said she speaks on the phone to her mother every day. When there

isn't an extreme geographical closeness, that is when the women live in a different town or village as opposed to a few streets away, phone contact was more regular than face to face contact. Where ties are more geographically dispersed (out of the region), they remain strong, with phone calls being a major way in which contact is maintained. For example two of the women maintain family relationships with their parent(s) and siblings over much longer distances. Lucy's parents and sister live in the northwest of England and Leanne's mother lives in Germany. Leanne sees her mother a few times a year, while Lucy visits her parents and sister quite regularly and they also visit her. Only Lucy and Leanne have non-local parents in the sense that they live outside of the northeast of England.

Many of the women choose to spend their spare time with their family. However, there is some sense of obligation that the women should visit family members, in particular parents and grandparents, especially when the women have moved out of their home town or village. On the whole the women visit their parents more than their parents visit the women. This was particularly apparent in the cases where the women have moved some distance away from their parents. This was noted by both Michelle and Jennifer who have moved out of County Durham. There appear to be two reasons for this, the first practical, the second based on other considerations. Michelle can drive while her mother can't. Using public transport would take a substantial amount of time. Both Michelle and Jennifer said they feel because they were the ones to move out of the area that they should make the effort to visit their family. Furthermore because their grandparents, siblings, nieces and nephews have remained in County Durham, they feel that it makes more practical sense for them to visit home on average once a week to see everyone rather than everyone 'traipsing' the distance to see them. Both did say they wish that their family would make more effort to come and visit them. However because some family members do find this difficult, the women continue to be the ones to travel home. This results in other family members coming to assume Michelle and Jennifer will regularly visit and so don't feel the need to go to them as it is easier for them to see Michelle and Jennifer when they come 'home'. When there are other people than just their daughter to visit, parents visit the women

and vice versa. For example Lucy's parents' (who live in the northwest) visit Lucy regularly as Lucy's grandmother and aunt live a few streets away from Lucy. In a practical sense as seen above, Lucy's parents come to visit to see many people while Lucy also feels an obligation to visit home as she chose to move out of the area. Although practical reasons such as transport issues are important reasons for the women visiting parents than vice-versa, I would suggest the fact that the women are more likely to visit their parents is also about maintaining family relationships and 'doing family'. This is apparent in both those women who live close to family and those who do not.   Although many of the women see their family regularly, specifically where they take their children to be looked after when they go to work, visiting is about 'going home', being with and spending time with the family. For the women, families spend time together and their family practices (Morgan 1996) reflect this. Many of the women commented that they visit their parents or their in-laws on a Sunday for lunch. This is seen as a chance for family to be together as often siblings and their children would also attend. It is interesting to note that the women mainly have Sunday lunch with their parents rather than the in-laws. However when parents were not local, more time was spent with the in-laws. This may indicate the women prioritise spending time with their own family over their in-laws.

2.2. Family Support

Traditional accounts of working-class communities highlighted that working-class families were close-knit with a strong mother-daughter relationship due to the need for mutual support (Bott 1957, Young and Willmott 1957), while Finch argued practical support is 'the essence of kin relationships' (1989:30). I briefly mentioned that some of the women have a high level of contact with family members because of the support they receive in terms of providing childcare. I want to only briefly make reference to this here as this is examined in more detail in the next chapter; however there are a few important points that I want to consider. As I show in the next chapter, the mothers (who are all employed) all need (financially) to work, so have to combine employment with their caring responsibilities. Some of the women cannot afford to pay for childcare, so family support in the form of unpaid childcare is crucial in allowing many of the

mothers to return to work. A significant characteristic of new working-class studies is a focus on how class and place are mutually constitutive (Russo & Linkon 2005). The geographical closeness of family members allows childcare to be provided easily by family members. Geographical closeness means that children can easily be taken to and picked up from family member's homes before and after work. This is especially important when childcare is being negotiated between and carried out by various family members, principally when those family members providing care are in employment themselves. A 'tangled web' (Jarvis 1999) of kin relations, geographical location and resources is evident, which points to the interconnectedness of home, work and family and place. Being able to engage in paid work is in part enabled by place, by the localised nature of the women's lives.

The idea that having to rely on family for support determines the amount of contact made, raises the question of whether contact would be less frequent if support was not required. In some respects the answer is yes, as if the women did not need to take their children to a family member every time they go to work, then contact would be less. However regular contact would still be made, because as I discussed, the women see family members for other reasons than just to drop off or collect their children. As can be seen from the women who do not have children, who rely on their parents less for support, they have regular contact as they want to maintain the child/parent relationship. Strong family ties are associated with coalfield communities (Strangleman 2001) and research has stressed the significance of traditional social networks (based on kinship, friendship and neighbourliness) after the pit closures (Warwick and Littlejohn 1992). Like Warwick and Littlejohn's (1992) research of former mining communities, this research has indicated that for women, kinship is highly important, more important than links with friends and neighbours. The women's families play a more central role in the women's lives than their friends, though this is not to say that friends are not important. In the following section I explore the women's friendships and address the role that friends play in the women's lives. I argue that the nature of the women's friendship relationships are affected by the women's strong family attachments.

2.3. Friendship Relationships

The women have a relatively small number of friends but are an important part of the women's personal communities. Small numbers of what the women described as 'real friends' were evident, with the quality of the friendship bond being more important than the number of friends[54]. There is little statistical evidence about friendship with the exception of the frequency people see their friends and how many friends' people have (Spencer and Pahl 2006). Spencer and Pahl make reference to survey data that on one hand indicates a quarter of respondents claim to have fewer than three close friends, while another quarter claiming more than eighteen (Park & Roberts 2002). The women here were more in line with the first quarter. Friends are mainly from school or work, with many remaining close friends with people since childhood. These friendships often developed at school and as the women continue to live close to friends, they can maintain these relationships relatively easily. The localised nature of the women's lives has allowed the women to maintain long-term friendships which the women envisage lasting for years to come. Despite a low amount of face-to-face time, the women stay in contact with friends with phone calls and text messages. Regular contact in this way enables the women to remain a constant presence in each other lives. Maintaining their friendships is important to the women. This is evident in the above quote, where we see how Lindsay and her friends set dates in order that they commit to seeing one another. A small number of the women have friendships that they maintain over a long distance, but on the whole friendships remain local.

The women socialised in various but similar ways with friends. These include meeting for coffee, visiting each other's homes or going out for drinks. One of the most common activities was meeting for food. For a group of young women all under the age of thirty one, they do not regularly go out with friends for a 'night out' drinking, when as discussed in chapter two, young white working-class women are represented as excessive and drunk (Skeggs 2005).

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[54] Due to the fact that the majority of the women have a small group of friends, many asked me in the interview if the other respondents had similar numbers of friends. As a result of the negative association of not having many friends, the women were relieved to be told that the other interviewees also had small friendship groups.

In contrast to popular representations of young working-class women, friendships were low-key. The women were not regularly going out with friends getting drunk as the media suggest. Whether this is misrepresentation in the media or not representative of this specific group of women's lives, only further research will be able to say. Spencer and Pahl write that friends are people who 'enjoy each other's company, sharing activities, going out together, chatting on the telephone, emailing, or visiting each other's home' (Spencer & Pahl 2006:59). This is certainly a good description of how the women spoke about their friends. Because 'a core conception of friendship is the idea that friends are people who like each other, who get along' (Spencer & Pahl 2006:59), they are comfortable in each other's presence and can relax and enjoy each other's company. The tie between friends is defined as an informal one. There is a sense of being off duty from work and family responsibilities when with friends (Spencer & Pahl 2006). The women's relationship with friends is about spending enjoyable time together socialising.

The frequency with which most of the women see their friends is in comparison low to the amount they see immediate family,

> Gemma: How often do you see your friends?
> Lindsay: I am a bit crap with that really. I try and catch up with everyone once a month, even if it's just a phone call, time runs away with you...the ones that I see on a monthly basis, we try and get out just for some tea or you know...I mean one is through Blaketon and she works up in Newcastle so by the time she gets home and if her boyfriend is off on a weekend you don't get chance to see each other, trying to find the time where, we make ourselves a date and we say right on this day we are going to go for some tea, we will meet you there at 7'o'clock and you know we will try and catch up, but you, both my best friends have really stressful jobs, I mean I have a stressful job plus I have a child and you find you are continuously juggling.

Many counted their busy lives as the reason for not seeing their friends more often. It has been suggested that relationships based on friendship are a source of social give and are important for social integration and in particular the provision of social support (Spencer and Pahl 2006). There has been some concern that friendship relationships are being negatively affected by the growing demands of paid work (Williams et al. 2008). There is some evidence

of this here. The changing nature and demands of work have resulted in the women having little time for friendship activities. The women's working lives and childcare responsibilities impact on the time that is available for the women to spend with their friends. Not having spare time to spend with friends because of work is a factor, but not seeing friends as regularly as family is also reflective of the priorities the women have about whom they do spend their spare time with. It was apparent in many of the women's accounts that when the women do have free time, spending time with their partner and/or children, and other immediate family is more important. Arguments surrounding families of 'choice' and arguments that relationships beyond kinship have become more prevalent (Smart and Neal 1999) are not applicable to the lives of this particular group of women. This is because of the following reasons. First because the women have a close relationship with their families and are more likely to rely on family, rather than friends for support. Friends are seen as people who offer each other practical help and offer emotional support if needed, and many of the women commented their friends would be there to offer them any support they would need. However the women have such strong support from family members that friends are not often relied upon for support. Support in terms of childcare is not an option as the women commented that their friends also work. If financial or practical support was for example needed, many said they would ask their family rather than friends. They would feel more comfortable approaching family members as they don't want to 'put on' their friends . An explanation of why the women see their friends less often might be, in part, as a result of the women relying on their family rather than friends for support. If support like that given by family members was being given by friends, then there may be more contact with friends. Therefore from an investigation of the women's relationships within their personal communities it would appear that the women's close relationship with their partners and/or children and immediate family has an effect on their friendships. Work is having an effect on friendship relationships but the closeness of the women and their families I argue is also key to understanding the nature of the friendship relationship.

Second being a family and/or being part of a family are important to the women[55]. By spending the majority of their spare time with their partner and/or children they are doing what families do (Morgan 1996). The fact that the women prioritise spending time with their partner over their friends, may be because partners are usually, but not always, treated as family, especially when the women are married or have children. Relationships with partners are also perceived to be based on help, love and support, which are qualities associated with family ties (Spencer & Pahl 2006). As well as this, the women may prioritise spending time with their partner as Spencer & Pahl suggest partners are also like friends, 'it seems in many ways that partners are the archetypal suffused relationship' (2006:120). There is a paradox in that friends are important to the women but are the least important within their personal communities. It was often commented by the women that because their friends were in similar positions (because of paid work, domestic work, little time to spend with children and/or partners), that there was an understanding between friends that as they are all in the same position, they understand making time to see each other can be difficult. However it may be that the women are in fact creating this situation by making it a way of life. They accept this as being the 'norm'.

Work does have an impact on when friends spend time together in that the women meet when their partner's are at work, for example seen above in the quote from Lindsay. Many of the women spoke about arranging to meet friends when they knew their partner wasn't going to be at home. It appears that time to see friends is arranged around the women's relationship with their partner, in particular when a partner is not around. As the women have busy lives, this is in part about using their time effectively, yet as we know the women prioritise spending time with family, the primacy of the (hetero)sexual bond (Richardson 1996) is evident here. The primacy of the heterosexual relationship demonstrates one way in which heterosexuality structures the women's everyday lives. Heterosexuality is institutionalised as a particular form of practice and relationships, of family structure and identity (Richardson 1996).

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[55] This is also a theme in the next chapter where I argue that through their paid work the women make and maintain what they feel being a family entails.

Heteronormativity is apparent in the women's family practices, where primacy is placed upon spending time with family. It will be made evident through this and the next two data chapters that the women want to be good partners and mothers, in order to do this, they feel it is most important to spend time with their children and partners. As will be explored later in the thesis, this is linked to issues of class and the women's idea of what constitutes a good mother and in chapter six, a good housewife. The structure of the women's relationships are mediated through heterosexual, gender and class norms. This suggestion is supported by the fact that in this research those women not in a relationship spend more time with their friends than those in a relationship, and Jennifer, who is in a same-sex relationship, although regularly spends time with her family, also spends a large proportion of time with friends. Jennifer is a member of various sports teams and socialises with her friends from the team regularly. It is important to note that as her partner is also a member of the sports team, they have a lot of the same friends and so do not have to arrange to meet friends in the same way as some of the other heterosexual women. In the next section I briefly pay attention to the relationship the women have with their neighbours. In many of the cases, (but not all), there is not a friendship with neighbours, however I want to consider those (non)relationships, as the role neighbours play are tied to the women's ideas about community.

3. Neighbours

Neighbours are not a feature of the women's personal communities because the women do not have 'intimate' and/or 'active' ties with them. Neighbours do not constitute important relationships the women's lives. Although most of the women often know their neighbours by name and do talk to them (often in the street), there are varying levels of interaction with their neighbours. This ranges from no interaction at all (Abigail said that some of her neighbours put their heads down so they don't have to speak), to simply saying hello or waving to having a quick chat to going into each other's homes, (although this is rare as most of the women never socialise with their neighbours). Three illustrative examples of the women's accounts of their relationship with their neighbours can be seen below,

Kimberley: more or less I know everyone here with living here all me life, there's not many people I don't know from here
Gemma: So do you know your neighbours then?
Kimberley: Oh yeah next door but one is Liz and Phil and they've got a little boy who plays with my daughter and next door are lovely but we don't see much of them 'cause they are old
Gemma: Do you socialise with your neighbours?
Kimberley: No not really
Gemma: Do you ever pop in to each other's houses?
Kimberley: No not really 'cause I don't have the time, if I see people outside then I will talk to them then, but no

Lindsay: I talk to people. We know the people round the back, in the back two houses, there are new people just moved in next door which are nicer than our previous neighbour who was a complete an awful awful awful man ...and just round about there is a new girl moved in where that Peugeot is erm and we do wave to others but I speak to these immediate neighbours and the ones round the back
Gemma: Do you ever socialise with them or even pop in each other's houses?
Lindsay: I do pop in sometimes but it is a rare thing

Abigail: I don't talk to, I say hello to my neighbours but I don't speak to anybody else on the estate, everyone is pretty busy, our view is everyone works all the hours God sends to pay for the mortgage and stuff even though most of them, in our cul-de-sac they are mostly young couples who don't have kids, you would be surprised at how many don't have kids and stuff but nobody talks to each other, no one has invited anyone round to their houses and stuff but I would never say 'oh just come in'

Even though Kimberley knows most of the people in the village from living there all her life and working in the local school, she does not interact much with her neighbours. The women who do not really know their neighbours and have little or no interaction with them, have not lived in their current home for a substantial period of time; this was particularly apparent for those women who live on new housing estates. In contrast women like Kimberley, Catherine, Victoria and Louise who have lived in the same village (and even in the same house) most of their life, although neighbours have always come and gone, the women have got to know their neighbours over a significant period of time. It may be that time has an impact on the neighbourly relationship. The presence of children may also make a difference. Most of the women have very young children, only

three have children at the age where they go out to play. There is little interaction between Abigail and her neighbours, this may be because of a lack of children in her street. Children are often outside more than adults when they are out playing. Children playing with each can lead to parents beginning to chat in the street and hence able to strike up some sort of interaction.

Neighbours are not a significant part of the women's personal communities, yet many of the women said they would like to have a feeling of neighbourliness. Those who have little interaction with neighbours felt that knowing your neighbours created a friendly environment and also engendered feelings of safety. Natalie, for example, knows her neighbours to speak to in the street and feels knowing them and recognising their cars means she feels safe in her street. Unrecognisable cars and people in the street would prompt suspicion. Knowing her neighbours dissipates this fear of strangers. Strangers were seen as potential thieves. Abigail said in one sense she would like to know her neighbours, to be on speaking terms so she could ask them to watch her house when she goes on holiday and do the same in return for them. Reciprocity is important to the women but only in the context of safety and security. Traditionally being able to rely on neighbours was a feature of community life. A lack of this feeling may indicate a lack of community attachment or belonging. Some of the women said they do not feel part of a community, or want to be part of a community, but do want a relationship with neighbours to make their street feel more friendly and safe. In effect the women distinguish between neighbourliness and community.

4. Family and Community

In this section I address issues around community and place and question what it is that shapes the women's ideas about community. To do this I begin with a discussion of the women's accounts of what they like about where they live and their feelings about community belonging, and suggest that for the women, ideas about community belonging are closely tied to family. On the whole, the majority of the women like where they live. Reasons included liking the town or village, the location and/or proximity to work (many of the women live close to their place of work so not having a long commute to work was favoured, being

relatively close to work was important to many of the mothers in relation to childcare), a feeling of belonging and safety due to the area's familiarity and, most importantly for the women, being close to family and friends.

The most common response given as to what the women like about where they live is that they live close to family, as Kimberley said, 'that's another reason why I like living here, all my family, like my sister, Mam and Dad live here'. In particular being close to immediate family was very important,

> The thing I like about living here in this particular house is where it's situated. I am literally around the corner from my Mam, my Grandad just lives around the corner, he is like 94 and every, well sort of everyday that I am in, because I work job-share, he will walk to the village and stop here on his way back and have a cup of tea and two custard creams...and I just think it's, we get a lot of people popping in and out all the time which I absolutely love and I think because where the house is situated it's easy for people to do that...but er, that is probably the best thing about living here (Megan).

As discussed the majority of the women live very close to their family, in some cases literally a couple of streets away and this was seen in a positive way. However for Lindsay, Abigail and Natalie who live further away from their families, in a different town or village, the (relatively short) space away offers some emotional distance. Lindsay likes distance away from her family as she doesn't have a positive relationship with her father. While Natalie said,

> I am quite happy with how often I see them because if they are getting on me nerves I live far enough away to where they can't walk to my house and for them they would have to drive, it isn't on the way to anywhere for them so they would have to drive out of the way to come to my house because they couldn't call in at mine after going to Durham or something and that suits me. I am quite happy I can then pick and choose when I want to go over.

Despite the above quote, Natalie, and also Abigail regularly see their parents and siblings, sometimes three or four times a week and speak regularly on the phone, demonstrating the closeness of the ties reflected upon earlier. The majority of the women said they are happy living in the area. Many intend on staying in their current home, some want to move house (for more space) but

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want to stay in the same area, while those who may want to move to a different town or village want to stay in the northeast in order to remain close to family and friends. Some of the women have left their hometown at points in their adult life. Jennifer and Laura were originally from Seaham but now live in one of the region's cities. Amy, whose family on her mother's side are originally from County Durham (but now live in the northwest), moved to the area after attending university locally. Michelle moved from one former mining locality to another, to live near the town her partner grew up in as it is close to work. Leanne is originally from Newcastle but moved to County Durham like Michelle to live with her husband. Katie and Louise have both lived in other countries and other parts of the UK but have returned to the northeast permanently. Jennifer and Laura left Seaham as they felt it could not offer them what they wanted. For Jennifer, by going to college in a nearby large town she felt her horizons broaden, saying that, "I just wanted to sort of be in a place that was a bit more happening". Both Jennifer and Laura commented on a lack of things to do, lack of places to socialise and the lack and quality of shops. Despite Seaham not offering what was desired from a place at early adulthood, Laura did say that although she plans to stay in Newcastle, she would consider returning to Seaham if she were to have children. I would suggest that this is about life course. Laura's 'home' town can offer her something different when at a later stage in life. At school leaving age both Laura and Jennifer felt their home town couldn't offer them what they wanted in terms of expanding their horizons, meeting new people and in terms of educational facilities yet when they want to have children, 'home' offers support and a chance to be close to family in that children grow up having a close relationship with grandparents and other family members. This was evident in the case of Katie. Katie has moved out of her home town and back on several occasions. She has lived elsewhere in the North-East and in other countries. When having children of her own, Katie wanted to be geographically close to her family in order that they can frequently see each other and hopefully have a close relationship. When talking about why she liked where she lived and why she wouldn't want to move she commented,

> It's where all me family are, you get more sentimental. I wouldn't want to move away from my family especially with the kid now, I wouldn't want to

take him away and have him grow up not knowing any of his family, I think it's really important.

Being close to family also allowed Katie to return to work as she cannot afford childcare and relies on her parents to provide childcare.

Because of the importance the women place on being close to family, it may be useful to approach the women's feelings about community in terms of attachment or belonging. As discussed in chapter two, community is not just about a shared identity connected to place (Wilmott 1989). Community can also be approached as 'communities of meaning' (Cohen 1982, 1985) as community plays a 'crucial symbolic role in generating people's sense of belonging' (Crow & Allen 1994: 6). For those women who do feel part of a community, being close, both geographically and emotionally to family was one of the main reasons given by the women as to why they felt part of a community. Being part of a family, living in close proximity was one way in which the women feel they belong to a wider group. Traditionally there has been a 'close conceptual relationship between family-as-kinship and community-as-locality; families are part of the constitution of communities, and communities form a context for living family life' (Edwards 2008:5). Classic accounts of community life as a result are often interwoven with accounts of family life. As discussed in chapter two, some authors have suggested that family may be tangential to what is considered community but this is not to be the case for the women in this study.

4.3. Insiders and Newcomers and Belonging

Part of the reason given by some of the women as to why they feel part of a community was because of familiarity with the people and the place. Kimberley spoke about feeling part of a community because she knows everyone, people are friendly and say hello when she passes them in the street. Kimberley has lived in the village all her life but also knows a lot of the residents as she works in the local school. In a similar vein, although Michelle is a relatively new resident to her village she feels part of a community she said 'everyone knows everyone',

> People are really friendly... Well I think it's part of the fact that it has a lot of history, as well its, people who tend to live there have lived there all their life and lived there because their parents have lived there and things and its quite a close-knit community and everybody is sort of recognises each other's faces and it's not again going back to the blandness of big new housing developments it doesn't have that, it has like well the sense, it has a community hall you know that everybody uses and you know its erm nice.

Most of the residents have been welcoming[56]. Michelle has made an effort to integrate herself into the community by trying to get to know people and involving herself in local events. As will be discussed in the next section, this is important as 'incomers' are sometimes viewed in a negative way by long-standing residents for not integrating themselves into the community.

For Catherine, being local and knowing people in the local area was important to her in terms feeling part of a community. Catherine feels she gains status as a member of the community from the length of time she and her family have been residents of the village. This can however result in divisions between insiders and newcomers. Community life can be exclusive as well as inclusive. The women's accounts of feeling part of a community drew attention to both sides of exclusionary practices; both feelings of exclusion and the exclusion of others. Victoria experienced exclusion at a local community group. She found the group to be closed off emotionally, they did not make her feel welcome so that she was did not go back. The group were not interested in newcomers. In a similar vein Amy and Natalie's local pub has a good community spirit yet 'when you first go in there they are a little bit more like, they try and work out who you are, then once they realise you live somewhere near they are alright with you' (Natalie). Amy is not originally from County Durham and experienced an unwelcoming reception on her first visit to the local pub yet when the landlord knew she had a family connection to the village he was more welcoming. Some of the women spoke negatively of 'outsiders' that is those new residents who do not integrate into the community. As shown in chapter two, communities are constructed around members having something in common, yet social divisions also exist between community members. In terms of 'place community', notions

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[56] I say most people as some of the younger residents have shouted abuse at Michelle. This is discussed later in the chapter.

of 'them' and 'us' express underlying social divisions, often being spoken about by community members in terms of 'outsiders'. The notion of outsiders was present in many of the interviews. 'Outsiders' in terms of newcomers were often spoken about because of the increase in new housing developments,

> ...because of the two new estates and the one they are building now, you have got loads of people coming in because its literally two minutes from the A1 so people can go to Newcastle or down to Darlington, it's close to Durham so you have all these people coming in because they were selling the houses for £50,000 because when they first put them up nobody wanted them there, so they put the prices down and then all these business people moved in and you don't see them. So basically they are not spending any money in the place so it's just a base for them to come back to so it's not like they are in the community (Catherine).

The problems commuters bring is not a new issue. Pahl (1965) wrote in his research that 'the old community has been killed by commuting' (1965:13). Waddington *et al.'s* (2001) research into former mining communities identified a difficulty with 'new' residents. There was a strong perception that migration patterns had affected the homogeneity of the area and shifts in housing patterns had been to the detriment of the area and added to the instability of the community. 'New' residents were also criticised by more established community members for not integrating into the community in to which they had moved. Waddington *et al.* also discussed how new housing developments on the periphery of the old mining estates had diminished neighbourliness and community spirit. As was evident in this research, some newcomers have been seen to commute away from the town during the day to go to work and drive away from the town to shop in large supermarkets and retail outlets. They have little use for local services and a lack of involvement in the community can cause friction (Crow and MacLean 2000). Catherine for example feels that newcomers do not belong as they do not have a presence in the community as they both work and socialise/consume outside of the village. In her opinion they are not contributing to the community. Yet Catherine herself does not work in the village, tends to socialise in larger towns and mainly shops in larger supermarkets and shopping centres away from the village. Does Catherine believe it is all right for her to do this because she has lived there all her life and

has a strong family attachment to the area? Do newcomers have to make more of an effort to become part of the community? It would appear that in Catherine's opinion yes they do. She feels an established member of the community and so can act in a different way to newcomers. She has a long standing connection to the village through her family. Family is again shown to have a strong link to community. As pointed out earlier, Amy was seen as an outside until the residents were aware that she had a family connection to the village. Many of the women who have moved from the town or village where they grew up have experienced exclusion from residents and have little interaction with their neighbours. It is therefore not surprising that some newer residents are not present in the community. Many of the women themselves have moved to a different town or village and act as 'commuters', using their home as a base and work and shop elsewhere.

4.4. Community Decline

Not all of the women feel part of a community. Reasons were complex ranging from Catherine's feelings that 'you don't know anyone anymore and there have always been new people but now it's like who's that?' to Abigail's assertion that she doesn't feel part of a community because when asked why she simply said, I don't know, I don't have time'. Some of the women felt being part of a community involves activity and involvement. It appeared from the women's accounts that time demands, in particular from work, may be one explanation as to why the women don't feel part of a community, that is the women's busy lives, in some instances, result in not having time to get involved in community activities or even having conversations with neighbours. Natalie summed this up well in our discussion about neighbours, in that it is difficult to strike up conversations, to meet people and develop relationships because of their busy lives saying 'I suppose if you are someone who just drives in the car, gets out and then goes in the house, they don't know anything about you'. Some of the women have little daily face-to-face interaction with neighbours and the wider community meaning they have little opportunity to make bonds.

Although some of the women do not feel part of a community, some would like to as for them community conjures up ideas of solidarity. Natalie for

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example had mixed feelings about community belonging. When asked if she feels part of a community she said,

> Yes and no. I think if I wanted to be more involved I could be. I think if I was one of the ones on the estate who had the little family and didn't work I would feel a hell of a lot more part of the community and you always get things dropped through the door for different things that are going on and things like that but er because I work so much I'm not, things to do with the parish church and all that, they always do different things then there is the school do funfairs and things like that er and there was one the other day, I think it was more of like a toddlers group type thing er where there was loads of activities for the weekend er so it's more I would say more for people with children. I suppose you could go along if you wanted to, you know what I mean but I would say it is more designed for people who have got children.

Community again is seen as something that you have to be involved in, community is about doing things. It is active. But more than this Natalie seems to be saying that community is being made, but is designed around children. Children facilitate community relationships, especially when as Natalie comments, most community events are based around children.

A lack of feeling part of a community was also linked to feelings of community decline. Lindsay talking about the village she grew up in said,

> Lots of new people moving in, it was always a very community based village where front doors were left open and I remember as a kid going to different people's houses and you got some sweets or a lolly you know. If your ball went over someone's gate the gate was always open to go and get it and erm, kids were quite happily accepted up there, it was the village green where the kids played and people never had a bias towards kids then and now you find when I go up there, I still talk to all my old neighbours more than I probably do my neighbours round here, I still class there as my home you know, it's where I grew up and where I know everybody but you tend to find all the new people that are moving in are very much closed doors, not community orientated so the village is sort of shutting down its hatches and people are shutting their doors and not wanting the kids to play and you tend to find you know they are shooing kids along. There are more people coming into the little terraced houses now like first time buyer houses for young professional couples more than anything they just don't want kids running around their house
>
> Gemma: Do you feel that you are part of a community here?

Lindsay: No I wouldn't say a community no, not like what I had before. I mean my next door neighbour to the right, they were cracking, she was such a lovely woman...she was so friendly and nice and if the door was open you were welcome, if it was locked she was in bed, simple as. So there were many times we would sit out the front with deck chairs and we would have a drink and there would be the whole street out and we would have barbecue and it was the whole street you know all together whereas I don't think that would happen here but it might, there is the possibility now because there is a young family at this side, there is a young family at the back, there is us, there is always the possibility in the summer when people have barbecues and shout each other over (Lindsay).

Neighbours were part of Lindsay's feeling of community when she was younger. Newcomers may be closed off because they do use their homes as a base, or because they don't feel welcome. Lindsay is critical of newcomers yet she lives on new housing estate, so she is herself a newcomer. However she does want to integrate herself. Newcomers are again seen in a negative light. Previously doors were open meaning people were welcome but neighbours now keep their doors closed implying they too are closed off and not welcoming. Newcomers are also seen as responsible for a lack of community feeling as they don't want children playing in the street. Children are again seen as enabling community. The idea of loss of community was present in Lindsay's reasoning as to why she does not feel part of a community, Lindsay offers a nostalgic description of community life as it had been. This was contrasted with feelings of loss, of those ways being lost in the present. She feels there has been a shift from a more communal way of life to one where she feels isolated. However she talks about being able to socialise with people in the summer rather than the winter. People are less closed off from the outside world in the summer months and so the opportunity may arise for people to get to know each other. The presence of young families may also provide an opportunity for Lindsay to get to know people. This may be because the children will play in the street and the parents will get to know each other because of this. Children may be important to ideas about community as children are often fixed in place; young working-class families tend to settle and not move around a lot, especially in this economic crisis, which may contribute to feelings of stability.

> *Megan*
>
> *Aged 29. Identified as heterosexual and working-class.*
> *Megan lives with her husband (engineer) and her son (aged one).*
> *They own their own home.*
> *Megan is educated to A Level Standard. She works part-time on a job share basis as a civil servant. Whilst in her current job Megan has been promoted twice. She worked full-time before the birth of her son. Megan returned to work on a part-time basis so that she could care for her son but also continue to work as she enjoys her job. They were in a good financial position to allow Megan to do this and unpaid care is provided by family members. Whilst at work childcare is provided by both grandmothers.*
> *Megan has a close relationship with her mother and sister. Her father lives outside of the UK near the Persian Gulf. Her and her family visit when possible. She has a very close relationship with members of her family on her mother's side, in particular her mother, aunts and grandfather.*

Figure 3: Participant Information

5. Class

Class and community have long been researched alongside one another, notably in studies of mining communities. The communities that 'grew up around the coal industry in the UK have long formed the bedrock of discussions of class and place in British sociology' (Strangleman 2001: 253). Informed by new working-class studies, one aim of the research is to explore the women's own class identification. Self-identification is important as it allows us to see how the women understand and make sense of their social position. I explore one of the main themes running throughout the thesis, that the women's gendered working-class identity, concerned with the pursuit of respectability, is constructed and reinforced through a dis-identification with 'others'. In this case the 'other' can be both those individuals who are economically marginal or middle-class. In new class theorising, morality and taste are shown to be implicated in the maintenance of class boundaries, and 'increasingly, with the cultural turn in class analysis, 'distinction' (following Bourdieu 1986) has

become an important theme in the exploration of classed identities – both in terms of how identities are claimed as one's own and how they are ascribed to others' (Jackson 2011:17). I wanted to establish if the women identified as either working or middle-class as research done in the UK suggests that individuals reject class identities and that attachments to being working-class have often reflected a wish to be seen as 'ordinary' (Bradley 1999, Devine 1992, Savage *et al.* 2001).

Before I specifically address the women's distinction of other classes, I begin by exploring the women's accounts of what they don't like about where they live, as it was here the women first began to make distinctions between themselves and 'others'.

5.1. 'Others': Economically Marginal Groups

When asked if there was anything they don't like about where they live, many of the women pointed to the less desirable parts of the town or village in which they live. Hannah and Catherine for example felt that private landlords buying homes in the lower priced and often less desirable areas contribute to certain areas' ongoing or new negative reputation. They felt problems arose from landlords renting out properties to 'anyone' (that is troublesome tenants, drug users etc.) and not managing them properly. In Joanne's hometown this was not just a problem for private housing but also for commercial properties where shops have been left empty and simply boarded up. This has been noted as a problem for many former mining communities (Bennett, Beynon and Hudson 2000). Accounts of the less desirable areas were often followed with a discussion of the people who live in those areas,

> I think when I started senior school I realised there were areas of the town that I wasn't allowed to go (by her parents), that were a bit rough, erm, and then when I went to senior school I met a lot of these people who lived in these other areas of the town who I had never met before and I came into contact with them. It's not that I didn't like the other areas of the town it was just that I sort of knew it was don't go there type of thing (Laura)

> I didn't live in the nicest area, erm, I mean I sort of live in, people used to say, people from the school used to say that it was posh but I think I was

> like on the lower end of the posh scale if you like, it was, the bit I lived in was all privately owned but it was bordering onto an ex council estate but it was a nice area, it was safe to go play around but obviously the charvers, not that's what we called them back then, used to like come round so there were always people like walking around, but yeah it was one of the nicer areas. The other areas of the town were generally like the council house areas, lots of boarded up houses before the regeneration (Jennifer)

If an area is perceived as 'rough', it is assumed that the people who live there are rough too. There has been a long standing association that living in 'rough' areas often implies those living there are themselves 'rough'. Traditional working-class communities frequently operated with a distinction between 'respectable' and 'rough' groupings' (Crow & Maclean 2000). Although this was a self imposed and/or self claimed framework, this distinction was also used by middle-class observers to distinguish the deserving and undeserving poor and as a result it was important to be seen to be respectable The unease about less desirable areas and the people who live there were expressed through concerns about respectability. In the women's account they make distinctions between themselves and those individuals they perceive as less respectable,

> but if you go to Peterlee its like not as well kept as Hartlepool, I think it's because of the people who go there, the people who don't have transport, the kind of un-kempt families who use the convenience of it and the closeness but I choose to go elsewhere (Victoria)

By choosing not to shop in Peterlee and actively going to Hartlepool Victoria is distancing herself from those un-kempt families. Because she chooses to shop in Hartlepool she is not dirty and hence respectable. Connections are made between rough and respectable areas and the people who live there. In the quotes above the women are respectable because they don't live or consume in the rough areas, they are not 'Charvers' as Jennifer suggests. Charvers or Chavs (as know nationally) have negative associations attached to them, in particular criminality and are associated with a working or underclass. Nayak (2008) describes how Chavs in a northeast context are portrayed in popular imagination and cultural discourse as a,

'white trash' urban underclass of the type Haylett (2001) has described. Furthermore, like many minority ethnic groups before them, *Charvers* were associated with street crime, disease, drugs, over-breeding (many came from large families) and the seedy underbelly of the 'black economy'....*Charvers* represent modern day anxieties concerning fear of crime, economic displacement and loss of class respectability (2006: 824).

The negative association with economically marginal groups meant the women distinguished themselves and distanced themselves from such individuals. Emma said that the worst thing about where she lived was, '*the Chavs, the scum, there are some not nice people'.* Lindsay spoke about moving out of the village she currently lives in as she doesn't want her daughter to go to school with children of who she considers to be less respectable families as her daughter may be associated with them and hence not be seen as respectable,

> I think living here is fine, but it has that reputation of being a bit of a bad area, so to go to the local school would mean that she (her daughter) would mix with kids from that side of the woods if you know what I mean...It's the gypsies that are over the road that are the problem (laughs) and you know for a fact that when she gets older you know, I am sure they are lovely people but they have their ways, I don't want my daughter to be growing up with, I am sounding awful aren't I but I don't want her to grow up with a tracksuit on erm and gold earrings I just don't want that (laughs)

Lindsay, like Laura, does not have contact with the individuals she describes. This is evident when Lindsay comments 'I am sure they are lovely people'. Lindsay doesn't have access to the economically marginalised, they exist in her imagination. Lindsay codes the economically marginalised bodies with her disgust of the clothes and jewellery she thinks those 'others' wear. Tracksuits and gold earrings worn together are regarded by Lindsay as bad taste as this way of dressing is associated with Chavs. By saying that she doesn't want her daughter to wear those things, Lindsay is in effect saying that she does not want her daughter to become a Chav and be regarded by other people as having bad taste and as such be seen as unrespectable. When Lindsay comments 'they have their ways' she is implying that their way of life is different from hers. Lindsay's normative concerns in relation to class and race go beyond

the unequal distribution of material goods and recognition 'to questions of just what is good in terms of ways of life, practices, objects, behaviours and types of character that people see as desirable' (Sayer 2005:3). Lindsay is concerned that if her daughter was to wear tracksuits and big gold earrings that other people on first impressions because of the clothes she would be wearing would think of her as 'rough' because 'the body is the most ubiquitous signifier of class' (Skeggs, 1997: 82). It is apparent here that class operates not just through economic inequality but through right and wrong judgements (Bourdieu 1986). In pointing to the clothes that Gypsies wear, Lindsay is in effect judging their taste levels. The visibility of class in bodily dispositions and tastes has been shown to be a central way in which class is practiced and how inequality is perpetuated (Skeggs 1997,2004). A key feature of new sociological approaches to class is an understanding that individuals are judged as morally worthwhile but only if they have the right knowledge, attitudes and taste. For Lindsay, gypsies do not have the right knowledge, tastes and attitudes. She sees herself as morally superior.

Lindsay also wants to move out of the village she currently lives in so her daughter does not go to school with the children of Gypsies/Chavs and either 'become' a Chav or be seen by others as being a Chav/Gypsy. Lindsay was not the only person to mention Gypsies in discussions of less desirable areas. Gypsies and Travellers are 'one of the largest ethnic minority groups in County Durham'[57]. There are areas where Gypsy communities have set up more permanent residence. In many respects Gypsies and 'Chavs' are associated with the same negative connotations and like Chav, is often a term of disgust and contempt because again they are seen to have bad taste in clothes, their homes, be involved in criminal activity and lack a work ethic. This in particular results in hostility as an explanation of a rationalisation of deeper anxieties. When I asked Catherine what class she felt the majority of people where she lived belonged to she replied,

> I would say some of them are working-class, some of them are just dole wallahs who are out to get as much money out of the working-class in

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[57] From 'Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities: Gypsies and Travellers', Durham County Council April 2008.

> taxes as they possibly can. That is the problem here, you have the
> people who go to work and the people who have never worked and their
> Dad's never worked and so on, so why should they work?

Catherine's feelings above were echoed by some of the other women. Their opinion of Gypsies and Chavs is negative as they perceive that they choose not to work and/or do not contribute to society through paying taxes. The depiction of these groups as choosing not to work echoes underclass sentiments (Murray 1990) that a culture of being dependent on state benefits filters down through generations of family members. We see Catherine's negative opinion of those from economically marginal groups in her suggestion that they are prepared to live off state benefits, something which the women in this research do not want to do, in part for a fear of being seen as unrespectable. In effect Catherine is making moral distinctions between her life and those of the undeserving poor because she believes that they actively choose not to make an economic contribution to society. Sayer (2001) usefully points to the relations between economic evaluation and ethical evaluation, and between worth and status. Moral stigma is frequently attached to those who are worst off in class terms, and correspondingly, a moral privilege is attached to high class. The importance of work for the women's own identity will be explored in the next chapter while the importance of work in the women's class identification will be discussed shortly.

Influenced by Lawler's (2005b) paper on expressions of disgust at white working-class existence and what this may be able to tell us about middle-class identities and identifications, I argue that the women's disapproval/disgust of economically marginal groups can inform our understanding of the women's class identities and class identifications[58]. We can begin to understand the women's class identity through their disassociation with economically marginal groups. It is often easier to state what we are not than what we are. By saying that they are not like those individuals who are economically marginal in the accounts they give, the women aim to distance themselves from those they disapprove of and in effect hope to portray themselves as respectable

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[58] My use of this differs from Lalwer's in that she used the framework to look at the media's representation of the working-class. Here I use the framework to examine the women's accounts of their disapproval/disgust of economically marginal others.

individuals. This imaginary other is presented by some of the women as a tool to distance them from the economically marginalised, excluding them from critical widely-held views about the undeserving poor. The discourse of the underclass and the negative connotations of single mothers maintain old distinctions of the deserving and undeserving poor (Lawler 2005a). As will be explored in the next chapter the women did regard those individuals who choose not to work as the undeserving poor. The single mothers in particular in this research do not want to be associated with those mothers who choose not to work. They do not want to be seen in the negative way single mothers often are portrayed in gendered underclass discourse, where especially young women were seen as welfare-draining single mothers. There is a lack of moral worth associated to those who are believed to choose not to work. This serves to reveal the women's own class insecurity. They don't want to be seen as economically marginal by others. Class is a moral signifier of worth but can also be a source of social stigma. Sayer (2001) suggests that the class politics of recognition may be more of an issue than the class politics of the distribution of income. As Lawler argues in her discussion of middle-class identities, the issue here is not simply about the women looking down on people, but more importantly is about how the women 'work to produce (in this case identities) that rely on *not* being the repellent and disgusting 'other' ' (2005b:431). In effect, the women regard those who they see as economically marginal as lacking in something, as lacking pride, taste and respectability. The women regard economically marginal individuals as lacking worth because they perceive them as choosing not to work.

5.2. Working-Class Identification

A significant feature of this research is that unlike other studies of working-class women, all of the women identified as working-class except Amy (who identified as middle-class),

> Rebecca: I think I would consider myself to be working-class just
> Leanne: Well we are
> Rebecca: Yeah

Not all of the women however easily identified as working-class. Some of the women talked me through their thought processes in considering whether they were middle class or not, with discussions about being borderline, but all identified as working-class because of their family background and economic need to work. Savage *et al.* (2001) argue that offering both working and middle-class identifications is used as part of a quest to appear normal. However as I go onto discuss shortly, this is about more than wanting to appear normal, but relates to the women's feelings that they could not be (and in some case would not want to be) middle-class. The structural nature of class was evident in the women's accounts of their class identification in that they spoke about the economic features that they feel makes them working-class, such as employment, house type/ownership and money (or a lack of it). Work was key to the women's class identification,

> Because I am a single mum (laughs), I have to work to live erm, I couldn't, I couldn't be the type of person who would just live off benefits, I get help with my son because I am a single parent but I couldn't not work, I don't think I could not work because I feel that I have to work to live (Hannah)

Savage *et al.* argue that working-classness can be used to establish one's ordinariness arguing that 'it is not that a particular kind of work is singled out, rather that the need to work is used to establish a certain common position (2001:888). The women strongly associate class with employment; that is in 'having to work to live' means they have to identify as working-class. The women regard those individuals who choose to live on benefits as not working-class; a common sentiment being how can you be working-class if you do not work? Paid work was also drawn upon to identify as working-class and not as middle-class, as some of the women felt that they could not be middle-class as they were unable to be stay at home mothers (only middle-class mothers were thought to be able to do this). It was assumed that middle-class mother's partners would be able to solely support the household. As they were not in this position after having children they thus could not be middle-class. It is interesting that the women disapprove of economically marginal mothers who choose not to work but do not disapprove of middle-class mothers who choose

not to work. This is about marginal mothers being unrespectable due to the fact that they rely on state benefits, but as will be expanded upon in the next chapter, for the women one aspect of being a good mother is being able to provide for your children financially. The women disapprove of those who chose not to work and live off benefits, but do not disapprove of those women who choose not to work, who they see as being able to afford to do so as they can continue to support their children financially through their partner's wage.

The women also identified as working-class as a product of their social background, in particular their family background,

> I think it's it who your family are, like who, my Mam and Dad are and their Mam and Dad are from a working class background so yeah it kind of makes you who you are doesn't it?, yeah if I was even to win the lottery or get an amazing job that paid £150,000 a year I would still, I don't know, but I would like to think that I would still be the same, so even then I would still consider myself as working class" (Megan)

> I don't know how you define class, just because you get a super job, you're from a working class background, I don't think that changes your class (Jennifer)

> Katie: even with the job that I've got to be honest and the people I work with that do exactly the same job they class themselves as middle class because it's a professional job and stuff like that. I don't think I am middle class in any way shape or form
> Gemma: why not?
> Katie: "Because I'm working class (laughs), because me Dad worked in the pit and me Grandad worked in the pit… just because me and me brother were fortunate enough to get a good education and get good jobs doesn't change who you are and where you come from

> I think I am kinda borderline, I would like to think that I was near to the middle class but I know deep down that I have working class roots and I will always be one of these people who goes out to work…I don't think I will ever go totally middle class but I would like to think I am at the top of working class (Abigail).

Abigail and Katie have progressed to professional occupations which has elevated their social position to some degree, yet again we see the idea that you can't change your class even if you now work in more 'middle-class occupations'. There were tensions between their economic capital which provides them with a good income, and their family history and identifications; these tensions have been apparent in other research. Hebson (2009) found that

although economic capital can provide a middle class existence, the individuals she spoke to rejected middle-class dispositions. Parent's occupation plays a role in determining the women's class position,

> My Dad works at Black & Decker, my Mum works in an estate agents she has worked there, they have both worked all their lives and never, and I don't think they could really afford to retire, erm my sister works in the nursery, she works full-time and my Nan and Granddad, me Granddad used to work in the pit and me Nana she has had several jobs I think.

Most of the women feel that you cannot change class. Despite your job or wealth, your family background and/or the class you were born into is key to your social class positioning. Amy's background, parent's occupations and her job as a teacher in the same way made her middle-class. Amy's family history on her mother's side is embedded in a former mining community. Her parents have a reasonable amount of social mobility. Amy and both her parents are teachers and Amy feels that this makes her middle-class. Amy credited her occupation as part of the reason she identifies as middle-class, but unlike the other women, Amy did not talk about the economic need to work. Amy was pregnant at the time of the interview and said if she wanted to she could give up work, her partner's wage would be able to support the household. Her ability to give up paid work reinforces the other women's views about stay at home mothers being middle-class. Unlike the other women, Amy spoke about class in terms of the opportunity she feels she had growing up and associated being working-class with limited opportunities. She compared her class position to her partner's, who she said identifies as working-class. Amy said she felt she had more opportunities growing up than him from going on holiday abroad every year, to being involved in extra-curricular activities outside of school to going to one of the top universities in the country.

The women also identified working-class practices beyond work. Accent for the women was an identifier of class. When asked what makes her working-class, Laura said, 'well I have an accent' and Debra said she was not middle-class as the way she talks is 'common and I don't have a posh accent'. Everyone has an accent but only some people's accents become 'non-accents',

that is middle-class accents become 'normal'. Because of this strong accent (the northeast dialect is quite strong, especially in former industrial working-class areas) it is in opposition to 'non-accents' and in effect a sign of not being middle-class.

Skeggs' (1997) research displayed class defensiveness and working-class disidentification by the women in her study. I would argue that the women in this study did not disidentify as working-class because the women in the two studies define working-class in different ways. Whereas in this study, the women saw those who did not work as economically marginal, the women in Skeggs' study tended to categorise those individuals as working-class. I would argue that the different connotations in part lie with the class pride associated with a strong industrial past in the northeast. Former mining areas are associated with a strong-work ethic and a respectable working-class. Working-class culture remains even when work disappears (Portelli 2005). This allows the women to positively identify as working-class. Savage *et. al.* argue ' 'working-classness' is not entirely a stigmatised identity that people tend to distance themselves from' (2001:885). The women have a strong work ethic and positive attachment to work and as the women define as working-class because they work, being working-class to the women is about being hard working and decent. Research into the life transitions of young adults in some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the North-East (MacDonald 2008) found an 'insistent valuing of work as a source of not just income but of self and family respect: old fashioned, 'respectable' working-class views about the importance of working for a living, of self-reliance and of stigma against those perceived as work-shy' (2008:240).

5.3. Distinguishing Against 'Others': The Middle-Class

The women's working-class identity is also constructed and reinforced through a dis-identification with a middle-class 'other' in that the women too identified as working-class through a disidentification with respectable others. Conversations about being working class often included a discussion of middle-classness. There was some indication that factors such as occupation, family background, not having an accent and owning 'marked' middle-class items identify middle-

classness in the same way those factors mark working-classness. In this next passage Jennifer talks about a friend whom she regards as middle-class,

> Jennifer: The one from Seaham (her friend) actually she is a strange one because I think of her as borderline middle class even though she is from Seaham and went to the same school as I did and I don't think, her parents were in a bit better situation than mine, it's just the way she acts, she sort of made herself into this middle class person if that is possible, to me she has anyway
>
> Gemma: So how has she made herself middle class?
>
> Jennifer: Oh God I think its cos when I first went to her house her Mam lives with her new partner, I think he is something like a GP, he's got a good job and her Mam she is like a social worker or something like that so to me they seem quite middle class and the first time I went to the house they had an Aga and they have this lovely big house in Seaham, it is a terraced house not in the prettiest of areas but to me it felt a world away from where I lived…and the way she was she seemed incredibly posh. Since I moved to Newcastle I've been told that I have a bit of a Geordie twang which I don't know if I have or not but she is from Seaham and has lived here (in Newcastle) so she has lived in all the same places as me, she's got this non accent, she has managed to lose her accent which I have never tried to do, she has and to me that is quite posh

In the above account we see that Jennifer regards her friend as middle-class because of her parent's jobs, owning a large house, and losing her accent. Although Jennifer's friend has attempted to make herself middle-class, Jennifer isn't convinced that this attempt has been successful. Despite her attempts Jennifer still questions her position as borderline. There are two other things I want to point to here. Jennifer says that her friend's home 'felt a world away from where I lived'. This was also echoed by Hannah when she says in a discussion about one of her friends who she perceives as middle-class that at their home, 'it was a different world'. For Hannah this was because her friend's father is the owner of a chain of hairdressing salons, her mother has never worked outside the home,

> they had a massive house in Darlington, they have loads of cars and when you pulled up there was like a yacht on the drive way, it was a different world, it's like that in Yarm, when you go out in Yarm you see loads of people, I remember when I was out there were two lads at the bar arguing over who had the better watch was it Marc Jacobs or Armani and I was like oh my God, it's just the reality, it's just like have you got anything better to think about

Hannah and Jennifer are not middle-class because they don't have the same material resources as their friends. Their own experience of everyday life is very different. Jennifer's comments that her friend is middle-class because of the way she acts reflects how class is not just about material resources but about behaviour and taste; it is also about cultural capital. In order to best illustrate this, I focus on the below quote from Michelle, as her account includes many of the factors in defining class and dis-identifying with others,

> Gemma: So do you see yourself as belonging to a class group?
> Michelle: Working class. It's funny my partner sees himself as middle class and I see myself as working class and he always tries to convince me 'oh no you are middle class, you are middle class' but I don't know, I definitely just see myself as working class because I just see myself as like this lass from Dentmoor[59] and you know erm, like I don't see myself as middle class, I don't feel like, I feel like middle class people have to be mature (laughs) I don't know why but that's just the way you view classes, I guess isn't it different style people but erm my partner is like 'well no your parents weren't' cos me Dad was like a manager and I am like a manager but me Mam is just a receptionist and she is definitely working class and I definitely class me Dad as working class even though he had a good job and I just pretty much, I don't see myself as any different to how my parents are and they view themselves as working class as well so ... like the way I talk and that is quite common (laughs) I don't have a posh accent or anything

> Michelle: his mam and dad were teachers but his wider family is like quite well off and quite rich and er his uncles and aunties like have really good jobs, especially all of his uncles are like, earn loads of money, most of them are retired now but they have lots of money so, and they all speak quite posh and stuff you know the queen's English and things...his Dad considers himself middle-class, his dad definitely does cos his dad moves in middle class circles he has very posh friends, they are very distinguished,
> Gemma: Do you not move in distinguished circles?!
> Michelle: (laughs) No I don't think I do. I mean my friends are people who I have known for ages and like you know the people who I met at uni I wouldn't consider you know, my closest friend I would consider working class and I tend to keep friends for a long time and I still have friends in Aston in things like that and school friends, I am not like, I tend to keep the same friends for a long time rather than like always moving in new circles...and money, we have a budget yeah so I don't see, to me like again I have grown up with me parents like you know, not scrimping and saving but watching the pennies and things like that to make sure you have enough for everything you need and we are still like that now so I

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[59] This is a pseudonym.

don't see how I could distinguish myself as being middle class, cos my view of middle class people is like having money, having, always being intelligent and confident and things like that and I don't see myself as any of those things and I don't see myself as any better erm or any different than the people I have grown up with erm so I am happier counting myself as one of those people than counting myself as someone who is, I am not convinced I could move in middle class circles very well because I don't feel like I get on with people or have anything in common with them and I just feel very uncomfortable erm so that's probably another reason why I feel more comfortable with working class people than I would with people who I know are like middle class I just don't feel like I have anything in common with them or have the same interests or don't particularly care about politics or you know Luke's dad always talks about music and you know 'been to see this ballet wasn't it wonderful and been to see the opera' and I am like ohh (laughs) just happy with Eastenders and a glass of wine (laughs) so I don't feel like I have anything in common

In Michelle's account we see how she has a strong desire to be seen as ordinary, not as different to anybody else. Michelle is defensive of being seen to be middle-class. Lawler (1999) argues that moving up to the middle class involves moving out, seemingly to betray the value's of one's class. She feels she is not middle-class as she feels she couldn't move in middle-class circles, not just because she feels she doesn't have things in common, but because she sees herself as lacking in intelligence, confidence and an interest/awareness of the arts. Unlike occasions when the women dis-identified with an unrespectable other, where the women felt those individuals were lacking in something (in moral worth attached to a choosing not to be in employment), when the women dis-identify with the middle-class, it is the women themselves (not the respectable other) who are lacking in something, whether it be material goods, a posh accent or personal attributes such as intelligence. Despite the performance of respectability, when scrutinized by the critical gaze of the bourgeoisie, the women as a group will be found wanting (Nayak 2006).

Although Michelle doesn't think she can pass as middle-class, she doesn't want to,

Michelle: the people in the village are lovely, certain people kind of like label us as like the rich people from the new houses so it's been like, it's been an odd reaction to find like people especially like the young, the kids and stuff are mean to you in the street because you are from the

> new houses and stuff and the old people are fine, its certain young ones about that ten to fifteen age
>
> Gemma: They shout at you in the street?!
>
> Michelle: Yeah they do, honestly it's ridiculous and it's even worse that we drive a BMW cos they shout at the car 'oh posh people with a BMW' and stuff like that
>
> Gemma: How do you feel about that?
>
> Michelle: It's strange, I don't like it because I just want to say I'm not (laughs) but like it's just really weird because I certainly wouldn't see myself as that, erm its I don't know, I don't see myself as that and I know I'm not so it's just funny though cos as your salary grows your out goings grow, so the spare cash that I have may be less than the spare cash they have cos it's all relative

Michelle displays embarrassment at being seen to be middle-class because as we know from the above account that she positions herself away from the middle-class. It is interesting that we again see how the presence of newcomers to an area can be a source of contention. Although Michelle says the comments are from younger children, their ideas must have come from their parents. It understandable that to some of the residents Michelle is regarded as posh as her expensive car and five bedroom house on a new housing estate is in stark comparison to the small terraced houses that are opposite.

6. Conclusion

Work continues to affect community relations but in a very different way from when the coalmines were open. Rather than work (in this case coal mining) being a source of commonality for both workers and families, the lack of an industry where a large proportion of the community are employed, men and women are now employed in a variety of occupations, many of which who have to travel outside of their home town. This alongside some movement out of home towns (although only small, often staying in the same County) means that there is not a single industry to bring people together, actors are out at work (often outside of the community) which doesn't provide people with the opportunity to get to know each other. Engagement with employment alongside their domestic responsibilities allows the women little time, after spending time with family/partners and friends, to then socialise or be able to be active in the community. As has been shown, for the women, community involvement is active, something which takes time and effort, something which the women said

they couldn't commit to because of their work responsibilities. The women's working lives and strong family attachments also impact on the women's friendship relationships. Work and family life are prioritised. Kin contact remains strong. There are strong obligations to family. The women are attentive to needs of other family members. They are not free of family ties as individualisation theory suggests, and don't want to be. They actively maintain contact and a relationship with their immediate family.

The time that has to be committed to both paid and unpaid work, and the women's strong commitment to family, means the women feel they don't have time to be involved in community while little daily face-to-face interaction with neighbours and the wider community means the women have little opportunity to make bonds. Community for the women is about people having something in common, a common interest which leads to ideas of identity and solidarity. Many of the women felt they don't have this. There is little interaction so they can't find if they have common or shared interests. It appears that it people have children in common this allows opportunity for community attachment to develop. Also to be part of a community is to be part of a family living in that locality. This may indicate why children are seen as allowing community engagement and belonging. Morris (1998) argues that social networks have always played a crucial role in indicating the existence of 'community'. Wider social networks aren't a feature of some of the women's lives and may explain a lack of feelings of community yet other social networks, in particular the women's personal communities are very strong which may help us understand why when feelings of community attachment were present in the women's accounts, they were linked to family. A lack of community belonging or attachment was because of a lack of wider social networks not a decline in family relationships. Family connections remain strong and evoke feelings of community for some of the women based on the need for support, geographical closeness and an active desire to spend spare time with family. In effect for the women, community is something found in their personal communities, it is about feelings of belonging and attachment to family and place. Women's employment does not affect family relationships but wider community networks. In some instances work aids family connections as the need for childcare support means

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the women see some family members (in particular their mothers) on a regular basis. Those support networks are gendered, a feature of traditional mining community relations. This is in part because of gendered expectations particularly about women's caring role. It is the women who take children to family member's homes, and it is female family members on the whole providing unpaid childcare and helps explain why the women have closer relationships with their mother's (and aunts) than their father. Class and gender continue to have an important impact on how families support each other and maintain relationships.

In the second half of the chapter I examined the women's class identity. Exploring the women's disapproval and/or disgust of individuals from economically marginal groups allows for a greater understanding of the women's class subjectivities. In distinguishing themselves from unrespectable 'others', by stating who they are not, is a key way in which the women identify who they are, in their endeavours to be deemed respectable. Recognition by others is one way in which we see class being lived. The recognition that they are not part of an economically marginal group allows the women to be recognised as respectable. The women's own understanding of their class identity is very closely linked to the material conditions of their lives and that of their families and their social background. Unlike other studies of working-class women's class identification (e.g. Skeggs 1997), the women here do not distance themselves from being working-class in part due to the positive association the women have with the area in which they live, due to its history of being home to a hard-working respectable working-class. This is just one example in this thesis why work needs to be re-introduced into class analysis. Understanding the relationship women have with work is key to understanding their class subjectivities. In addition to this, the women identified class practices beyond work, which is why the sociology of work and new sociology of class can benefit from being fused together. I then returned to the idea that we can develop a greater understanding of the women's class subjectivity through their dis-identification with 'others', this time a respectable other. The women did not feel they could be middle-class not just because of a lack of material things, but because they are lacking in social and cultural capital. In the In the next chapter

I move onto discuss the women's paid working lives. Many of the themes raised in this chapter emerge again such as the closeness of family, the process of 'othering', respectability and the importance paid work plays in the women's lives, not only in terms of their everyday practices but also in the construction of their identity.

Chapter Five: Employment and Childcare

1. Introduction

In this chapter I specifically focus on the women's relationship with paid work. In the previous chapter it was apparent that employment was a major feature in the women's discussion of class and to their construction of a respectable self. The relationship between employment and the construction of a respectable self is seen again in this chapter. This chapter is divided into two linked parts. The first focuses on the women's current employment and includes discussions around their choice of employment, feelings about their paid work and the women's reasons for working. The second part of the chapter focuses on how the mothers in the study manage paid work and motherhood and point to the interconnection between paid work, caring and the household(s). Throughout the chapter we see how class and gender are lived on an everyday basis. Class and gender influence and constrain the women's choices surrounding paid work and combining paid work and motherhood. This is made particularly evident through an exploration of why part-time work is desirable to the mothers and those women who plan on having children.

2. The Women's Current Employment

As the women are between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one, the focus here is on a particular period of their working lives. Most of the women have had stable histories since leaving school (with the exception of those women who have had periods out of the labour market after having children). Although some of the women have been in the labour force for up to fifteen years, this period still represents the early stages of their working lives as many expect to go onto work until they are at least sixty-five. This cohort also represents an early stage in the women's working lives where they are experiencing new social roles such as leaving full-time education for the first time, moving out of the parental home, perhaps settling down with a partner and combining paid work with motherhood and/or domestic work. Here I focus on the women's employment experience. This includes outlining the women's current employment, their likes and dislikes in relation to their jobs and the reasons the women gave for engaging in paid

employment to demonstrate the crucial role paid work plays in the women's construction of their classed gender identity as a worker and mother.

2.1. Occupation, Working Time and Wage

In chapter two we saw how women continue to be unequal to men in paid work in the UK, in terms of occupation type, hours worked and unequal pay. This research showed the same pattern. First, horizontal segregation was evident here as all of the women's work histories are heavily concentrated in female dominated positions. Many of the women are employed in jobs typically regarded as female work, occupying positions such as carer, early years practitioner, customer care advisor, retail worker, hairdresser, and secretary/admin worker. Of those women who hold professional jobs, two have typically feminised jobs; primary school teacher and pharmacist. Primary school teaching is associated with women because of its caring and nurturing role while pharmacy is seen as a 'good' job for women with caring responsibilities because of its flexible working hours (Crompton and Sanderson 1990). Only three of the women hold positions not regarded as 'female' work, being employed as a geologist, prisoner custody escort officer and a project manager. Second, there is an indication of vertical segregation as only six of the women hold professional positions (project manager, geologist, pharmacist, manager, learning mentor and teacher). Out of these 6 women, five are university graduates. The one non-university graduate is manager in a hairdressing salon, an occupation that is not generally associated with professional occupations. Careers are also gendered here. Although some of the women hold professional positions, horizontal segregation is at play as two women work in education, one is manager of a hairdressing salon and the pharmacy position is in the retail sector. Women's inroads into professional and managerial occupations have largely been seen as resulting from the increase in educational qualifications gained by women (Witz 1997). This may be evident here to some extent as the university graduates do hold the higher status and higher paid jobs. Increasing numbers of women are now gaining degrees and working in a wider range of occupations compared with twenty five years ago (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010). However only a quarter of the sample went

to university reflecting the low numbers of working-class women who go onto university education.

Figure two details the women's current employment details. Fourteen of the women work full-time (thirty hours plus per week) and seven work part-time. Part-time work is related to women's caring responsibilities on the whole as out of the twelve women who do not have children, ten work full-time and two work part-time. The two who work part-time (Laura and Victoria) are in part-time employment as they are in full-time education. Of those women with children, four work full-time and five work part-time (those women with children all worked full-time hours before they had children). The majority of the women (nineteen) have fixed days and hours of work. Two do not have a fixed working pattern as they work shifts where the days change every month, but the length of the shift remains the same. They work both day and night shifts. Only one woman works a late evening shift while the remaining eighteen women work 'normal' hours between the hours of eight and six.

If we now move onto the women's wage: the five university graduates said they have a good income. The remaining women said they are in low-waged employment. Twelve of the women are married/ cohabiting. Of the twelve women with partners ten earn less than their partners per year. This is in part due to working part-time, being in a less well-paid job or a combination of both. The women who work part-time all earn less than their partner because they work fewer hours and because they have less well-paid jobs than their partners. Of those who work full-time and earn less than their partners, on the whole this was because they have less well-paid jobs. Of the one same-sex couple in the study, Jennifer earns less than her partner (although the gap in earnings is not great). Here we see the impact of both horizontal and vertical segregation on women's wages. Only three of the women earn more per year than their partner[60]. Although only a small proportion of the women in this study earn more than their partner, increasing numbers of men are finding themselves in partnerships with women of equal or superior employment status due to increasing educational achievements made by women (Crompton 2006).

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[60] Two currently live with their partner and the other is in the process of trying to buy a house with her partner.

Name	Status	Job	Pt or Ft	Regular working pattern	Works shifts	Children	Childcare Arrangements	Earn more than partner per annum?
Jessica	Single Mother/ in process of trying to move in with boyfriend	Pharmacist	PT	Yes	-	1	Is at school. School holidays looked after mother & family members	Yes
Sophie	Cohabiting	Retail	PT	-	Yes including night	2	Family	No
Megan	Married	Civil Servant	PT- Job Share	Yes	-	1	Family	No
Debra	Cohabiting	Secretary	PT	Yes	-	1	Family & Child Minder	No
Hannah	Single Mother	Secretary	FT	Yes	-	1	Nursery & Family	-
Lindsay		Carer	FT	-	Yes including night	1	Family	No
Katie	Married	Costing Officer	FT	Yes	-	1	Family & Nursery	Yes
Abigail	Cohabiting	Learning Mentor	FT	Yes	-	-		No
Catherine	Lives with parents	Prisoner Custody Escort Officer	FT	Yes	-	-		-
Amy	Married	Teacher	FT	Yes	-	(Pregnant)		Yes
Charlotte	Single Parent/ planning to live with boyfriend	Admin/Reception	PT	Yes	-	1	School & Child minder	Yes
Victoria	Lives with parents	Receptionist/Part time student	PT PT	Yes	-	-		-
Jennifer	Cohabiting	Geologist	FT	Yes	-	-		No
Louise	Single	Carer	FT	-	Yes including night	-		-
Laura	Lives with friend (term time) and parents non term	Student/ Retail	FT PT	-	Weekend	-		-
Kimberly	Cohabiting	Early Years Practitioner	PT	Yes	-	2	Nursery	No
Michelle	Cohabiting	Project Manager	FT	Yes	-	-		No
Lucy	Lives with parents	Early Years Practitioner	FT	Yes	-	-		-
Rebecca	Single	Customer Care	FT	Yes	-	-		-
Leanne	Married	Customer Care	FT	Yes	-	-		No
Natalie	Cohabiting	Hairdresser / Manager	FT	Yes	-	-		No

. **PARTICIPANT EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

This does not appear to be evident. Crompton suggests this is not as typical for working class women. In two of the higher waged female couples the women have more or higher qualifications than their partner and this has helped them secure better-paid jobs. The women who are not as highly educated on the whole do not have the same educational achievements as the women in Crompton's study in order to match or exceed their partners' wages. The women graduates' partners are not themselves university educated. This may in part explain why they earn more than their partners as women benefit less than men from a degree in terms of labour market participation and earnings (Purcell 2002). Chapter two showed much research into women's occupations, work time and wages in the UK. So how do this sample of young women living mainly in County Durham (interviewed in 2008) compare to wider figures? All of the women are in permanent employment. Similarly to wider figures there are women who work both full and part-time and that it is more often mothers who work part-time. Although some work in professional occupations and some earn more than their male partners, most of the women work in female dominated occupations and earn less than their partners.

Hakim (1991) argues that inequalities exist in employment between men and women and amongst women as a group because of the different lifestyle choices they make. For this group of women, inequalities in the labour market *are not* because of the choices they make in relation to paid work. It was clear that the women's choices surrounding their engagement in paid work are affected by both structural and cultural factors. In order to demonstrate this I begin by exploring the women's feelings about their current employment and discuss the reasons the women gave for engaging in paid work, which clearly show the structural and cultural influences of class and gender on their 'choices'.

2.2. Feelings about their current job

I wanted to ask the women their feelings about their current employment as attitudes to working in general have been found to be different from workers' feelings about their actual job (Hakim 2002). Most of the women said that they like their job and enjoy going to work, with most reporting a great deal of

> ***AMY***
>
> *Amy is aged 29, heterosexual and identified as middle-class.*
>
> *Amy is the only participant who is not from the North East of England, she is from the North West, although her family on her mother's side are from County Durham. Her grandmother and aunt still live in County Durham in the same village as Amy. Amy came to the North East to attend University. After finishing university Amy stayed in the area and got a job as a teacher in a primary school. Amy works full-time. Amy's parents are also both teachers. Amy has a strong desire to progress in her career, in particular to become Head of a school. Although she lives in a different region to her parents and sister, Amy has a close relationship with them. She visits home regularly and her parents and sister also visit her as they also come to see Amy's elderly grandmother.*
>
> *Amy is married and lives with her husband (a full-time tool maker). They own their own home. Amy is the only participant to currently have a paid cleaner working for her. Amy was struggling to combine both paid work and domestic tasks. Rather than her husband offering to do more, he suggested they hire his mother to do the cleaning. This does cause some problems for Amy, such as feeling that her mother-in-law judges her on her inability to look after their home even though she works full-time and has to work on an evening at home because of her job.*
>
> *Amy was pregnant at the time of the interview. Amy plans on putting her child in nursery after her maternity leave. Her partner works shifts so when they are both at work, care would be provided by professionals. Amy said she would feel uncomfortable having her mother-in-law providing childcare on a regular basis because she was worried a stronger bond would form between one set of grandparents than another.*

Figure 5: Participation Information

satisfaction and fulfilment from their work. Fulfilment in their job was especially apparent in those who care for or help people in their job,

I love it, absolutely love it…I just love the company, the culture's fantastic and they treat you so nice, I just really enjoy my work, I come out of work happy, I get a buzz from what I do because I feel like I help people in a way. It's such a big thing bra fitting and like you get so close to your customers and a lot of them can be quite emotional, some have had breasts removed through cancer, some hate their bodies, hate the way they look and you can put them in a lovely fitting bra and they come out happy, it's such a nice job, you do see some sights (laughs) but overall I enjoy it, I feel like I'm doing something you know? (Laura)

Gemma: Do you like your job?
Lucy: Yeah, yeah I like it, I mean there are little bits like when they cut your hours and things like that but, never mind
Gemma: What is it that you like about your job?
Lucy: Erm I suppose a lot of it is knowing that the kids are looked after and that, and the contentment of it
Gemma: Do you get a lot of satisfaction from your work?
Lucy: Yeah especially when, I mean I work with the babies and you see them coming in at 3 months old or something like that and you see them moving on and they are a year old and seeing all the things they have achieved yeah its nice

Laura works part-time in retail whilst studying for a degree. Laura is happy in her job for both the extrinsic and intrinsic aspects. Lucy however is not happy extrinsically as she has some worries job security. Extrinsic satisfaction refers to the instrumental, material aspects of employment such as pay, job security. Intrinsic satisfaction refers to the quality of the work. This includes aspects such as relations with managers, the nature of the work (Rose 2003). As well as the intrinsic aspects, getting along with colleagues and the nature of the job itself, Laura is happy with the extrinsic aspects such as pay and working time as her job fits around her university hours; she only works one day a week, a Sunday where she gets double pay. It could be said that because Laura is not in the store all day every day, the likelihood of her becoming bored with the nature of her job and/or irritated by customers is reduced.

A minority of the women do not like their jobs. Jessica, a single-mother, is a pharmacist working in the retail setting and likes the extrinsic but not the intrinsic aspects of her job. Working as a pharmacist gives her the flexibility and wage to be able to work part-time to be able to combine work and motherhood. She does not like working in retail in particular because of having to constantly deal with problematic customers. At the time of the interview she was beginning

Figure 6: Participant Information

to work one day a week at a drug clinic in the hope that it may offer other opportunities so she could escape the retail sector,

> I like how it fits around my life but when I am at work do I enjoy what I do, no, but I love the fact that I can do the hours that I need to, to look after my daughter and financially that is enough, it's well paid enough for me to do that so I love that part of it, but what I do day to day do I enjoy, no.

As pointed out earlier, pharmacy is to an extent now seen as a 'good' job for women because of its flexible working hours. This is the one aspect of her job that Jessica likes. As a single-parent the high wage pharmacists can command means that she can afford to work part-time hour so she can also do the school run. This is especially important as she cannot rely on family members to help with childcare due to their own working hours[61]. Jessica was compelled to take her job for both the wage and the hours not because she actually likes what she does. Both Laura and Jessica are happy with their wage and can both to some

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[61] Both of these points will be explored in more detail shortly. For example later in the chapter I demonstrate that being able to do the school run was important to her as her role as a mother.

extent negotiate their working hours whereas this was not possible for some of the women. Like Jessica, Lindsay (who works in care) said she does not like her job because,

> I find it very stressful, I didn't use to find it stressful but now that I am a Mam, this is my reasoning anyway, it might not make sense but now that I am a Mam my daughter and my family are my first priority and work has always been my first priority 'cause work takes up so much of your time that you know it becomes your life, whereas now this is my life, being at home with my daughter and having time with my partner and I have sort of pushed work to one side and I have built it up in my mind that I just can't manage any more so you know trying to weigh up what is important, my partner and my daughter are important and work shouldn't be important so I really need to find a job with less stress (pause) I want to be a housewife (laughs)

Although Lindsay comments that work shouldn't be important, from other parts of the interview it appears that that work is important to her. Lindsay was very explicit in her attitudes towards those who do not value work. She values work as important in terms of respectability because of the stigma she attaches to economically marginal groups. Her laughter at wanting to be a housewife reflects the wider attitudes she holds and thinks others do about housewives. Despite some of the women not liking their current job, this does not mean that those women do not like working for a living. You can dislike a job but have a positive attitude towards work; as Rose argues, 'analysis requires a sharp distinction between satisfaction with *work* and satisfaction with a *job*' (2003:505). Lindsay works in an intensive occupation and despite being a female dominate occupation, her working conditions do not lend themselves to balancing paid work and mothering. At the time of the interview Lindsay had very recently been suffering from post-natal depression and felt that she needed to be at home with her daughter so that she could be 'a Mam'. Lindsay would still be a mother even when she isn't at home. Lindsay equates being at home with being a mother. Lindsay is finding combining caring and full-time paid work stressful. The twelve hour shifts she has to work, coupled with the nature of her job, caring for adults with learning difficulties add to the stress she feels. She works twelve hour shifts so she is not at home for some critical times involved with being a mother such as being there on a morning when her daughter

wakes up and when she goes to bed. She is sometimes absent at those times. Because she is at work she cannot do the things she identifies with being a

Catherine

Catherine

Catherine aged 27 is heterosexual and identified as working-class. Catherine is educated to A Level Standard. Catherine did not want to continue into Higher Education although she had the grades to do so. She wanted to go into full-time employment. Whilst at college Catherine worked in the service industry and after college left this job when she gained full-time employment in a bank. Catherine currently works as a Prisoner Custody Escort Officer, works full-time and has a regular working pattern working Monday to Friday. She does not plan on staying in the role long-term.

Catherine currently lives with her parents. Her mother works in catering and her father at the time of the interview was working as a gardener. He has recently been made redundant and has only been able to secure short-term employment. They have lived in the same home all of Catherine's life. Catherine is in a long-term relationship and plans on moving in with her partner sometime in the future where she envisages an unequal domestic division of labour.

The domestic division of labour in Catherine's home in gendered in that it is Catherine and her mother who carry out domestic tasks. Her father does little in the home but does take responsibility for the garden.

Figure 7: Participant Information

mother.

There is no possibility of reducing her working hours as she cannot afford to work part-time. As she has always worked in care, Lindsay feels that she cannot give up her job to move to another care job with shorter shifts as she has a 'good job' in care that pays more than the majority of other employers. Care work is also very different for example from Jessica and Laura's work in retail and the other women's positions in offices and occupations that work on a nine to five basis in that she cannot negotiate her hours as many of the other mothers in this study have done. Care work is very different in that someone has to be there 24/7. Lindsay commented there is little opportunity of starting half an hour earlier or later as people have to be there to look after the residents and take over the previous shift. For Lindsay, her priorities have changed since

becoming a mother. Previously she was a worker and now she sees her main role as a mother. This means that she is not there when her daughter gets up on a morning and is not back from work to put her to bed at night. In effect she does not see her daughter on the days she is at work. This conflicts with Lindsay's priority of being a mother as her job means some days she cannot carry out her role as a mother resulting in her dislike of her job. Lindsay's situation is a good example of how women's decisions around work are simply not about the women's choice or preference.

3. Why work?

Women's increasing participation in the UK labour market (as shown in chapter two) is a result of various developments such as advancements in education, social and legal change, as well as changes in the labour market more generally. Dual-earning has also become an economic necessity for many families resulting in many women feeling that they have to work. The income work provides was a key reason given by the women as to why they work but was not the only factor. Through the women's responses to why they work, it was apparent that paid work is of major importance in their lives.

3.1. Working for a wage

The need to work for the income it provides was cited as a reason for working by all of the women, most often being their first response. For example Katie said 'we couldn't afford for me not to work, it's as simple as that' while Hannah said, 'money is too important to me, I couldn't afford not to (work) and it isn't because I spend loads on myself because I don't, but like the cost of living, I need to work five days'. Being in employment was not a recruiting factor for the sample, yet the fact that all the women are in employment reflects changes in women's employment rates. For working-class families in the UK, two wages are considered to be necessary to support a household (Crompton 1997) while in policy terms, women are now expected to provide for and/or support themselves and their families financially (Pitt 2002). Paid work provides the women with money to buy essentials and to pay bills; it is not 'pin money'.

Working for an income is important to all the women despite a range of family circumstances. For the single mothers and women living alone, their income was essential as it allowed them to support themselves. For those women living with their parents their income allowed them to save in order to move out of the parental home. For the married/cohabiting women, with and without children, their incomes were regarded as essential to the household budget as their partner's. For those women working part-time, who earn significantly less than their partners, their wage is important, they are not just working for 'pin money'. This is linked to ideas about living standards. The women want to work for the income it provides so, as some said, they were not 'just managing'. By this the women meant that they had money left once the essentials were paid for, were not living on the breadline and not having to worry about being able to pay for things (both essentials and non-essentials). Rather than 'just managing', working enabled the women to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families. On returning to work after maternity leave Megan said,

> We could have managed but that is all we would have been doing because we like our holidays and that kind of thing and we do tend to go out, well we go out as a family or me and my husband you know what I mean, erm and yeah, I think just to be more than comfortable, I think it was nice for me to go back job share, we would have managed and that's all we would have done

Like Megan, working to be able to consume was a factor in working. Hannah said, 'I need to work to pay off my loan, my mortgage, my credit card bills 'cause I want to buy nice things, I want to buy things that I like to wear, I want to buy things for the house or things for my son' while Debra commented, 'There are only so many things you can do on a tight budget and at least we can afford do things on a weekend as a family'. Higher income levels provide a disposable income, which gives more choice about the lifestyle the women can have. The women consume to create a family life rather than consume for consumptions sake. Expectations about family life include the idea that families should spend time together. They want to go out as a family as do things they wouldn't be able to do if they did not have the money. Going on holiday, doing things on a weekend and creating a nice home are all about 'doing family' (Morgan 1996).

'Doing family' is an activity which has to be displayed (Finch 2007) and so family practices reflect this. For some writers such as Bauman, in developed capitalist economies individuals now do not work to subsist but work to earn money to acquire consumer power. Bauman argues that individuals work in order to consume rather than because of any work ethic people may have arguing, 'it is the aesthetics of consumption that now rules where the work ethic once ruled' (1998:32). However Bauman's work can be criticised for not considering women, especially young working class women while also being criticised for not being based upon empirical research. Although the women in this study work to consume, a strong commitment to paid work and/ or work ethic was also evident. In the next section I discuss the non-income reasons the women gave for working. The discussion is framed around an exploration of the importance of engagement in paid work in the construction of the women's classed gender identity. I begin exploring the other reasons the women gave for working by arguing that the women's strong work commitment the women results in paid work being central to the women's sense of self.

3.2. Work ethic, commitment to self improvement & being a good mother

The concept of a 'work ethic' refers to the moral dimension of being involved in paid work. Positive value is associated with doing a good job, working hard and /or attached to work that has intrinsic value. The notion of the work ethic is linked to the protestant ethic, which presented work as a religious and moral obligation (Weber 1930 [2002]). Recently there has been a conceptual shift from thinking about a work ethic to a commitment to work (Hakim 1991). Many of the women in this study engage in paid work because they have a strong commitment towards paid work. I explore this by outlining the women's continued aim for self-improvement through education and how the women's commitment to paid work can be further understood by exploring the women's ideas about the social stigma attached to unemployment.

There is an ongoing influential debate in the study of women's employment over the extent of women's commitment to the labour market, whether and how it differs to men, and between different groups of women. A

major stimulant of this debate was Hakim's (1991) publication that argued women are unequal to men in the labour market because some women place more importance on their home lives than careers because 'home centred women' or 'grateful slaves' do not hold a strong work ethic. Since then a number of studies have in contrast demonstrated a strong commitment to paid work. For example Proctor and Padfield (1998) found evidence of a strong commitment to work among young employed women, arguing the employed women they interviewed were committed to developing their working lives. 'CAVA Mothers, Care and Employment' research (details in Irwin 2005) revealed a significant work ethic amongst mothers of young children. Irwin usefully points out that this has been regarded a feature of middle-class respondents, many of whom see work as a core part of their identity, but was also found to be a theme for many working-class respondents with 'more circumscribed opportunities and perhaps more circumscribed motivations for work' (2005:102). I argue that a strong commitment to work was evident in many of the young women in my sample, even in those mothers also place importance on their caring role.

Paid work was seen by all of the women as the logical next step after finishing their education with many saying they have always had aspirations of a working life. Hannah for example commented, 'I have always, I have gone to school I have had an education so I have always wanted to work'. After leaving school all of the women either went into training in the workplace, went to college and some then onto university. A strong work ethic or desire for self-improvement was apparent in many of the women's accounts in regards to continuing their education in order to improve their lives. Many of the women are continuing their education or are hoping to do so in the future. For example Katie is doing a degree part-time; Victoria is re-training to work as a florist, Jessica is doing a post-graduate qualification while some are involved in further training and courses in the workplace. Two of the women aim to have their own business in the future which they see as being possible through education. Laura aims to have her own retail shop using her degree in business management to help facilitate this and Victoria is retraining as a florist with the aim of running her own shop. Advances made in education and social change

more generally mean that women want to work for self-achievement and economic independence. As Rose (2005) argues, there has been a career-centeredness growing in women in that they recognise that hard work is needed (and has resulted in achievements) in order to improve their lives economically. Many of the women expressed sentiments of hoping to move up or to continue moving up the career ladder and knew they would have to work hard in order to do so. Michelle and Megan for example have been promoted more than once in their current occupations and for others who expressed a desire to be promoted or change to what they regard as a better career, in one regard to improve their salary, saw further education/training as one way in which this could be done.

One theme which emerged was that many of the women do not intend on staying in the same occupation/ position in the long-term; Katie said, 'Overall I like it yeah, I certainly don't want to be there for the rest of my life'. For many of the women, the idea of staying in the same position would lead to boredom and the need for a new challenge. Natalie said, 'I want a new challenge. I am getting bored. I know this place inside and out and if anything I am not as much a manager as I used to be because it's just easy now. I don't have to think about it, I want to start working myself again'. Many also want to progress up the career ladder which was often framed in terms of the greater income this would provide. Some of the women in professional jobs have progression built into their current posts and are able to stay and develop. However those outside the more professional positions have less opportunity to do this as there are fewer opportunities for moving within the workplace. Those women intend to look for opportunities elsewhere. Katie's reasons for not wanting to stay in the same job come from her desire to, on completion, use her degree to secure a job she feels will be associated with her degree, which she hopes she will enjoy more and will also give her a higher level of income. A large proportion of the women have had various jobs in the period of their relatively short working lives. Reasons for moving job included wanting a new challenge because of either boredom or no longer enjoying their job, but the main reason the women have changed jobs was to increase their income level. The women did not feel they could drop their wage when changing jobs. Here we see in one way how decisions about paid work are affected by structural factors like wage. The

women perceive and evaluate returns in education, placing value on the potential of further education to enhance the quality of their personal, familial and community lives (Mickelson 2003). Work allows the women to support their families. A role which the women feel is important as a mother. Extrinsic reasons for working are important but work also allows the women to create a positive identity as a worker.

The women's commitment to paid work is also linked strongly to the social stigma of unemployment. Kimberly said, 'I think it is wrong not to work, like through choice' and when asked why she works Jennifer said, 'well for money but also for social stigma. I mean I know what I think about people who aren't working without a legitimate reason for not working if you know what I mean, being lazy'. In the preceding chapter I discussed how the women regarded those who choose not to work in a negative way. As Jennifer says, they are regarded as being lazy whereas the women want to work, being in employment is seen in a positive light. It was apparent from the women's discussions about economically marginal others that the women hold being engaged in the labour market in high regard. This is because work has a moral dimension to it. Those who have a reluctance to work are regarded by the women as lacking in something. A lack of a want to work is associated with laziness and a willingness to be dependent upon others. This has been a feature of 'underclass' debates in society generally.   Dependence upon the state was therefore especially frowned upon by the women. Because of this, the mothers in the study, especially the single mothers wanted their contribution to society through paid work to be recognised. This will be discussed shortly.

Therefore for the women, working is not just about bringing home an income but is also attached to social norms and values about being a good person. The women's strong commitment to paid work and desire to continue with their education to improve their paid working opportunities was in some respects expected from the analysis of the women's dislike and disapproval of economically marginal groups in the last chapter. By exploring the women's feelings about 'others' who choose not to work, I argued that paid work is central in the women's pursuit to be seen as respectable. The women associate being engaged in paid work in a positive way which results in paid work

providing the women with a positive source of identity. In the next section I continue to demonstrate how being part of the labour market gives the women a positive sense of self.

3.3. Positive features of paid work

Many of the women credit their parents with giving them a strong work ethic. The women spoke about growing up seeing their parents working hard. In the last chapter I discussed how a strong work ethic is perceived as a characteristic of those living in mining communities. This appears to be the case here as working for a living was stressed upon the women. Paid work as a part of everyday life was internalised by the women. The women have grown up seeing both their parents work, working for a living and also combining paid work and motherhood is seen as normal. Jahoda's (1982) study of unemployment has been of particular use in examining what people gain from work aside from income. The study identified that paid work gives a sense of purpose and achievement, gives regular activity (which relieves boredom), social status, time structure and social relations beyond the family. These factors were all apparent in the women's accounts as we have partially seen. The positive aspects of working and negative aspects of not working discussed above were apparent in the women's accounts of why they work. Engaging in paid work was also discussed in terms of the sense of personal achievement it gives. For Michelle who works as a project manager, the sense of achievement she receives from her job makes her challenging and sometimes stressful job worthwhile. In contrast to this, the women believe that not working would bring out feelings associated with laziness and boredom, a common response from the women,

> But sometimes I do think wouldn't it be great not to work, wouldn't it be great to be a housewife and then I think well actually no it wouldn't be, I would be bored after a month or something (Lindsay, full-time worker)

> If I could afford not to work I would probably still work part time just for something to do. I mean there are only so many cups of coffee you can drink and so many episodes of Jeremy Kyle that you can watch during the day isn't there (laughs) (Katie, full-time worker).

Earlier when we saw Natalie talking about wanting a new job because she wants a new challenge as she is getting bored at work because she knows the job inside and out she adds , 'I want to start working myself again, I am becoming quite lazy which I don't like'. A relief from boredom was also discussed in terms of the mental stimulation work gives,

> from my point of view I would have probably quite liked not working at all but then I think the novelty would have worn off because I know what I was like after nine months, I mean I was completely and utterly brain dead , I had forgotten how to spell, just things you take for granted (Megan, part-time worker)

> Well for me I do because I know as much as I say I want to quit and be a lady of leisure and I could spend more time in bed but erm I need to keep my brain active I feel like if I didn't have a job I would just, I would get bored and when I get bored I get down and not depressed but you know what I mean but when I'm working my brain is getting exercise and stuff like that and doing something that is productive rather than just sitting around. Yeah it is important for me to have a job, there are only sometimes when it gets a bit stressful that I wish I didn't have a job but again on top of that I have to work for money (Michelle, full-time worker).

The women also work for the social aspects employment can offer. We see the women's intrinsic enjoyment of work. Being out of the house and seeing people every day was something the women enjoyed. Many of the women as I have touched upon want to work for money because it gives them some independence; they are not reliant upon either their partner or the state. It is common for a work ethic in women to be bound up with women's desire for independence and autonomy (Irwin 2005) and as such, not working would disrupt the women's sense of themselves,

> in my fantasy world, I would get married to a rich fella and then get him to buy me all the things I wanted and I wouldn't work. I would have pamper days and take care of my son but I would get bored, I would need to work even if I worked part-time. I couldn't sit at home not doing anything, even when I was on maternity leave I was, it's a horrible thing to say, I had 2 months before I had my son and then I had him and it was hard work but then I was like, I need to get back to work, one I can't afford it and two I thought I can't not work (Hannah).

For Hannah, in reality not going to work is not the ideal situation she imagined it would be.

3.4 . Employment and Identity

In order to demonstrate that paid work is an important feature in the women's sense of who they are I begin this section by looking at those women who said they would give up working if they could. I then examine the role paid work plays in the mothers' identity. Only a small minority of the sample (three women) said they wouldn't work if they didn't have to. Although being realistic about their situation in that they expressed they needed to work for the income work gives them, the women who expressed in an 'ideal world' would happily be a 'lady of leisure' and not work, do not have children,

> Leanne: I would have to say, if I did have the money and I didn't have to work I wouldn't
> Rebecca: Yeah I probably wouldn't. I would get a hobby (laughs)
> Leanne: I'd go to the gym and go shopping (laughs)

Although wanting to be a 'lady of leisure', the idea that you would have to relieve boredom because of not working was again apparent. They see that this can be avoided by having a hobby or filling your day with other activities, they wouldn't want to do nothing. Lucy, a full-time worker who lives with her parents also said that she only works for the money despite enjoying her job. All of the other women in this study, both with and without children said they would continue to work even if they did not have to. This is because engaging in paid work is part of who the women are. This as can be seen in the following quote from Laura where she is talking about her boyfriend (who she does not live with) who after finishing university is having difficulty finding a job,

> I wouldn't mind if I was bringing in more than him, but I would like him to have a job. I mean I am pushing him now to get a job. It's not because I would feel like I was doing all the work, I think I would feel like, a job's a person's identity in a way, I would feel like he wasn't going anywhere if he didn't have a job or ambition or anything but obviously if he couldn't get a job I would encourage him to push and get a job but as far as money is concerned I don't really care because I don't really work for the money

This quote is interesting in that we see many of the themes discussed in this chapter in Laura's response. First we see Laura recognises the possibility that she may earn more than her male partner (as some of the women already do) which is something of a recent change (in this region) in women's thinking about work. Although she says that she does not work for money we have already seen that Laura works whilst studying to support herself and started working part-time at the age of fifteen to earn money to be able to buy the things she needed to reduce the burden on her parents as her father was unemployed. It would appear that in the above quote that Laura is suggesting that she does not only work for money, she also works because she wants to. She wants to work as she feels that you are expected to work. She believes that working gives you an identity you can be proud of and displays that you have ambition, are hard working and hence respectable. Women have been cementing their labour market participation in increasing numbers and as a result, work-based identities are assuming greater significance in women's conceptions of themselves (McDowell 2006).

I want to now discuss the important role paid work plays in the women's conception of themselves especially for the mothers in this study. Many of the mothers I spoke to derive a sense of identity from paid work that was separate from being a mother. I begin by continuing the idea that not working (in terms of paid work) disrupts the women's sense of themselves. I then discuss how paid work is important as the women feel their work as a mother goes unrecognised. For Kimberley paid work, 'gives you a bit of identity as well when you have your own children'. She went onto comment, 'I think it's nice to have your family but it's nice to have your own thing'. Paid work provides her with another role. She is a mother and a worker. Many of the mothers spoke about the boredom they felt when at home on maternity leave. Through the women's accounts of this, the importance paid work plays is made clear,

> it's just, I don't know, being at home all the time, I didn't realise just how taxing it is, erm, certainly not the lifestyle for me, just having no adult conversation and as much as I enjoy spending time with my son there are only so many gu gu ga ga's you can do in a day, erm, it's nice to

have a bit conversation back at work, I was going a bit stir crazy (laughs). I used to go up me Mam's every day just for a couple of hours just to get out of the house you know (Katie)

After having their children the social aspects the women get from paid work are apparent. In contrast to those women who said they would give up work if they could, the mothers experience a different type of boredom. Being bored when you are at home on maternity leave because of a lack of conversation for example is very different to being bored because you have nothing to fill your time with. Not working disrupts the women's sense of themselves as they are used to going to work every day. Paid work has been a huge part of their daily life. The issue of value is also important here. When Katie says 'there are only so many gu gu ga ga's', we see that Katie struggles to see the value in the mothering work she does. Her friends were not in the same position as Katie and so to have conversations with other adults Katie visits her mother to relieve boredom.

Some of the women expressed the importance paid work plays to the women's sense of themselves because they do not feel their work as a mother is recognised,

I was thinking about this the other day. I thought if you know, I don't know if I could not work. I think I maybe could say for a year or something but I do genuinely think that after so long the novelty would wear off and I think you would lose a sense of who you are or what you contribute because all I would be doing is just be in here (in her home), I would feel all I was doing would be, although I would have children and I would like to think I was a good wife and mother, that kind of thing but I think I would lose face of who I was, I wouldn't feel like I was contributing to anything because nobody could see what I do, it's only me in my own home, you know what I mean. So for me I think it would be important, it is important (Megan).

For Megan working is part of who she is. Again we see how not working would disrupt Megan's sense of herself but importantly Megan feels that her role as a mother is undervalued, she feels that mothers are perceived as not contributing to society. The women feel that value is attached to a mother who works and is seen to be working. Similarly Lindsay said she feels that the work mothers do bringing up children is not visible and so goes unrecognised,

people don't see them (mothers) as an equal. They see them as somebody lower than themselves because they work and they pay taxes and they do this and they do that and you just sit on your backside looking after kids which is one of the most important jobs in the world

The fact that Lindsay thinks that 'others' think mothers do not contribute financially to society is key to the women's need to work. She feels that the work she does in the home as not carrying the same value as work done outside of the home in the public sphere. By engaging in paid work the women are seen to be contributing to society. One theme running throughout this thesis is that in order to be seen as respectable, the women need their work, whether paid or domestic to be seen and recognised as having value by 'others' (real or imaginary). Megan and Lindsay feel as though their work bringing up children goes unrecognised despite Lindsay saying that it is the most important job in the world. So how can we understand this? As we see in the quote from Megan, childrearing is carried out inside the home and so is not visible and therefore unrecognised whereas paid work done in the public sphere is seen and therefore recognised as having value in that by working you contribute to society both through your labour and through paying taxes. As the women feel their work as a mother is not seen or recognised as having value, the women rely on their paid work to show 'others' that they have value and contribute to society though paid work. Even Lindsay who thinks motherhood is the most important job in the world doesn't think being a mother is enough because of a lack of external valuing. There is an enormous amount of value to motherhood but the women don't feel that this value travels. If the women were surrounded by other mothers who weren't working would they feel different? The women are surrounded by working mothers, if more women did not work would women be able to feel that their role as a mother had value?

Being seen to be working hard and having a job is one way in which young working class women are attributed value over those who are seen to not have value, such as non-working lone mothers. The mothers are aware of the negative associations attributed to some groups of mothers (they themselves hold negative views of some groups of mothers) and are keen to distance

themselves from those mothers who choose not to work and be dependent upon the state. Hannah a single mother said,

> I have to work to live erm I couldn't, but I couldn't be the type of person who would just live off benefits, I get help with my son because I am a single parent but I couldn't not work, I don't think I could not work because I feel that I have to work to live to be able to afford to buy things that I want to buy for myself and my son and to live in our house and not be supported by other people

By engaging in paid work the women distance themselves from those women in an attempt to be seen as respectable. The negative portrayal of single mothers has its roots in perceptions of a 'underclass'. Morris argues that,

> the gender-related issues which arise from the debate about the 'underclass' partly stem from unresolved questions about the sexual division of labour. Women's position in the household, and particularly the situation of single-mothers, raises a number of problems for conceptions of social inclusion. As welfare dependents they become stigmatised members of the underclass...Their weak position in the labour market, which is partly a result of gender segregation, means they are for the most part unable to earn sufficient to be self-supporting, and full-time employment would anyway conflict with their mothering role...The underclass debate...marginalises the status of single mothers; thus single motherhood is presented as a moral issue (1999:42).

In recent years the expectation that women should work when they are mothers and provide for their families has made the need for the women to be seen as contributing to society and providing for their families themselves even more important. Government policies construct both mothers and fathers as workers (Brannen 1999, McDowell *et.al.* 2005). Through these policies both parents are expected to provide materially for children (Miller 1997 in Walby 1999). Paid work is an increasingly large part of everyday life for women with full-time work being seen by government as something all adults without caring responsibilities can and should be doing (McDowell et al 2005). Mothers are now encouraged to work. Across Europe, governments are encouraging women's employment even when their children are young (Crompton 2006). The idea that women should work to provide financially for themselves and their families as we have seen, is apparent in the women's accounts. The development of 'social citizenship' has placed as much emphasis on obligations

as on rights, the prime obligation being work as a means of self-reliance which as Morris (1999) suggests, this places women in an ambiguous position. Women she argues either earn their 'public' citizenship rights by their own paid employment or they perform their 'private' family obligations and remain dependent. We see the dilemmas of this here. The women feel their 'private' role as a mother is not recognised so the place importance on their 'public' contribution as in part they do not want to be associated with those women who choose not to work and hence do not contribute to society. The women get something from paid work that they don't get from motherhood. This issue stems from the fact that the women are not able to full participate fully in the labour market unlike men. As the women cannot equally participate in the labour market, as long as the main responsibility for caring resides with women, the women feel their contribution is not as great and so want to be recognised as contributing to society through being in employment.

For the mothers, being a good mother is not only about caring for their children but is now also about provisioning (being able to support children financially through their own labour market participation) and as we saw earlier through being able to provide for their children and being able to buy them things was part of the reason some of the women gave for working. McDowell (2006) argues that being a good mother is about caring for your children, but also providing for them through the 'purchase of a consumption based lifestyle' while Pitt (2002 in McDowell 2006) has identified the emergence of a new discourse of mothering which she argues revolves around 'being a new capitalist mother' and suggest that fulfilment from caring is no longer the dominant discourse among young mothers. However this research indicates while the women take fulfilment from paid work while being able to care for their children remained very important.

4. Combining Motherhood and Employment

In this section I explore how the women combine and manage paid work and motherhood, a central part of this discussion focusing on the role part-time work plays in this and its perceived advantages. I argue the women's 'choice' about returning to work have been restricted by structural factors. In similar findings

to research by McDowell *et al* (2005), I argue that the women make choices about paid work and childcare based upon economic reasons, local family networks and ideas surrounding motherhood. Nine of the participants are working mothers. Of the nine mothers, seven have children under school age and two have children of primary school age. It was apparent that the mothers wanted to return to work after having their children for varying reasons. Their reasons include primarily the need for an income but also because they like their job, have a positive attachment to work and gain value from participating in the labour market.

4.1. Returning to work

In the UK one of the major changes to women's labour market activity in recent times has been the increasing numbers of mothers with young children returning to paid work. Women now generally take a relatively short time out of the labour market to have children and the period of time mothers take time out to have children have been getting shorter over recent generations (Macran *et al.* 1996). Motherhood disrupts women's working lives less than in the past (Rubery *et al.* 1998). Most of the women interviewed returned to work after the statutory maternity leave, returning to work within the space of one year. The two exceptions to this were Jessica and Kimberley. Jessica was in full-time education when she became a mother. Kimberley left her job when she became a mother as she felt working night-shift would be problematic in terms of childcare. Interestingly after the birth of her second child, Kimberley did not leave her job, taking the statutory maternity leave as she had re-trained and was in a new job where childcare could be arranged. This is just one example of how changes in work in one sphere effects work in other areas, that is Kimberley's new position affected her decision about being able to keep on working.

The women were mainly responsible for childcare and where possible, reduced their working hours. Women continue to take responsibility for unpaid caring work within the home while men continue to dominate paid work (Warren 2010). For all of the women there was a financial need to return to work. None of the mothers were in a financial position to leave their job (nor did they want

to). They felt they could not solely rely on their partners wage to support the household. For all the mothers not returning to work would have made their financial position very difficult and so many did not feel they had a 'choice' about not returning to work. All of the mothers worked full-time hours before having children. On returning to work four returned to work back to their full-time hours while five returned to part-time hours, one on a job share basis. Only some of the women had a 'choice' about whether they were going to return to work on a part-time or full-time basis. For those women who returned to work full-time, their decision was largely based on financial reasons, all saying if possible financially they would have wanted to go back on a part-time basis. Katie for example said, 'If I could afford to work part-time I would' while Hannah commented that 'in a perfect world I would have the money that I am on now but working part-time so I could be with him'. Those who returned to work part-time did so as they were in a position financially where they could afford to reduce their hours. Women's decisions about returning to work can be different for different classes as working-class women are more likely to work because they need the money (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010). McDowell (2004) has argued that 'the need for multiple wage-earners in a household...means that all the work of social reproduction must be squeezed into a shorter and shorter time or redistributed among other networks' (2004:150). Economic needs means that the women returned to work relatively quickly after having their children and only through being able to draw on family networks of support to provide unpaid childcare, could many return to work in order to be able to provide for their families.

Figure 8: Participant Information

Jessica

Jessica is aged 26 and identified as heterosexual and working-class.

Jessica grew up with her parents and younger sister and brother. Her mother intermittently worked part-time in retail, her father full-time as an engineer for a gas company. Whilst studying for her A Levels Jessica fell pregnant. She had her daughter when she had just turned 18 and gained excellent grades for her A Levels. At the time of the birth of her daughter, Jessica was in a relationship but she and her daughter lived at home with her parents. Jessica began university at the same time as the rest of her cohort at a local university to study Pharmacy. During this time Jessica and her partner moved into their own home, renting a house a few streets away from Jessica's parents. This relationship came to an end during her time at university. On leaving university Jessica secured employment as a pharmacist and bought a flat in her home town for her and her daughter to live in. Her flat is only a ten minute walk away from her parent's home. Jessica is fortunate enough to work part-time hours because she receives a high income. This was important to her so she was able to pick her daughter up from school and be able to take her to her evening activities. Throughout university and now, Jessica has relied upon her family to provide childcare. At present Jessica takes her daughter to her parent's home before she goes to work. A family member then walks her daughter to school, only a few streets away. She relies on family to provide childcare during the school holidays. Her daughter is eight years old. Jessica is hoping to train in other areas to develop her career. She is currently working one day a week in a drug clinic to allow her to move out of the retail setting and studying for a post-graduate qualification. She is currently in a relationship and in the process of moving in with her partner to a local village only five minutes drive away from her home town. This is so Jessica can still easily take her daughter to her mother's and then be able to pick her up from school. Her partner works full-time and Jessica takes home a higher monthly wage even though she works fewer hours.

4.2. Who cares?

Even for those mothers who returned to work part-time, their choice about the hours they work was dependent upon childcare. As discussed, all of the mothers needed to return to work because of financial reasons, so the women have to rely upon childcare. As many of the women do not earn a sufficient wage to be able to pay for formal childcare (a childminder or a nursery place), the only way they could return to work is to rely on unpaid informal childcare from family members. Wider changes in family structures across Britain such as the geographical separation of families (often due to people moving for employment) mean parents can't help with childcare. However we know from the last chapter that many of these women live within close proximity to family members. Some family members can provide childcare. All the partners of the women with children work 9-5 and one works away so they are not available to help with childcare. As Lindsay works shifts, her partner is able to look after their child after 6pm and weekend but all other times childcare is provided by family members. Using formal childcare was not economically viable for some of the women. The cost of childcare would have been so great in comparison to their own wage that they in effect would have been working to pay for childcare. Money was certainly an issue surrounding childcare. Debra (who works part-time) for example could not afford to have her son cared for a few days a week saying, 'we were going to put him into childcare just two days a week just to get him mixing with other kids but that would be £200 a month so you have to weigh it up'. Because of their low income (because of low earnings and/or working part-time hours) family networks were heavily relied upon and crucial in helping women go back to work. All of the mothers relied upon informal childcare from family members to differing degrees, using both informal and formal childcare, in some instances, a mixture of the two. Support in the main was provided by grandparents, a common feature of childcare 'choices' of lower social groups (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010, Wheelock and Jones 2003). 'Patterns of childcare choices are ... class-related, with lower social groups more likely to rely on relatives, while professional and managerial parents 'choose' the more expensive market-based care' (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010:10).

If we first look at the women who have children of pre-school age, four solely rely upon family members to care for their children when they are at work. Two rely upon both family members and professional childcare. Of those who have children at school, one uses a childminder after school and the other does not have to rely upon childcare. Kimberly has one child at school and one younger child and when she is at work her oldest child is at school and the youngest is cared for in the nursery school where she works. As the nursery is part of the school, her oldest child after school goes into the same nursery. It was the women not their partners who reduced their hours (when possible) to care for their children and were the ones who organised childcare. Women are more likely than men to adjust their working lives by taking on part-time work or short-hours full-time work (Rubery, Smith and Fagan 1998). Part of the reason this practice occurs is because the responsibility of caring for children is seen as lying with mothers. Gendered views on parenting were present,

> I wouldn't feel comfortable letting him (either leave his job or work part-time to care for children) because I feel like it should be me and also he earns more than I do so there would be a bigger financial loss to have him, I would feel uncomfortable, I would feel like I wasn't being a woman but that's just me, I know there a lot of women at work who put their kids in the nursery and go back full-time as soon as they can (Michelle).

Michelle associates care with women and structural factors relating to income are also a factor. Workplace relations structure domestic relations (Walby 1986). Mothering still has an associated primary caring role for the women living in this region. Ideas surrounding caring are gendered. Women adjust their working time because they feel responsible for caring obligations. Even government support through maternity leave provides benefits for mothers, but not fathers to take time out of the labour market in order to care for children (Folbre 1994). Also as the majority of the women earn less than their partners, it is the women, not their partners who if possible reduce their working hours to reduce the impact on the household budget. Women's employment position both horizontally and vertically impacts upon decisions about who should care for children. This was also clear when we see that is mainly female family members (grandmothers and aunts) who help care for their children. 'Choice' about returning to work part-time is made on the fact that the women want to

care for children and often earn less than men. 'The so-called 'choices' parents make about who is the primary earner and who takes time out to look after the children are still being made on a playing field that is not level or equal between men and women' (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010:9).

When possible the women said that their mothers/aunts offered to look after their children when they would returned to work, the women did not have ask,

> they offered from the minute she was born. Before she was born it was always when you go back to work we will have her and it was always a topic of conversation, 'eh I can't wait til you go back to work and I've got the bairn', it was like get back to work we want to have the baby (laughs)… when I talked about going back to work I always said if we can get her into nursery one day a week, no it wouldn't be heard of (Lindsay)

and has even been a topic of conversation for those planning on having (more) children, 'his Mam said she would love to go part-time and have our baby part-time' (Rebecca). There is a gender split in who is providing informal childcare. Women more than men are associated with a caring role, but specifically in this case grandfathers were not able to provide childcare as on the whole they were still in full-time employment unlike the grandmothers who were no longer working or worked part-time. Work in different sections of society are interconnected as women are more likely to be able to provide care for their grandchildren as the gendered nature of the workforce means that many older women do not work or work part-time as they were wholly responsible for domestic work and caring for their own children. Changes in the increasing numbers of women working full-time is reflected in this research and for many of the women, their mothers also work full-time. Those women in this case whose mothers work full-time cannot rely upon their mothers to help provide childcare. This has implications for future generations. Will future generations have to rely on formal childcare or will they be able to rely on informal care as Rebecca above will be able to through her mother-in-law's decision to reduce her working hours? If they do have to use formal care will they be able to afford to do so? In some instances will women not be able to work because of her caring responsibilities?

The ability to draw on local family networks is crucial in allowing women to combine paid work and having children. The geographical closeness of family members allows childcare to be provided easily by family members. This is especially important when childcare is being negotiated between various people. Geographical closeness means that children can easily be taken to and picked up from family member's homes before and after work. This is especially important when family members who are being relied upon to help with childcare also do paid work themselves. Some of the women's parents and mothers-in-law do not work so childcare is easily arranged. Yet some of their mothers work part-time and arranging childcare between various people's working hours can be difficult. These care arrangements are not simple and can be quite complex, being negotiated amongst more than one party. For example, Debra works part-time and when she is at work, childcare is provided by her mother, mother-in-law, brother-in-law and a paid childminder. As both grandmothers work part-time there are occasions where their shifts overlap or clash and in those instances, if her brother-in-law is not available, a paid childminder is used for an hour or two. Childcare is being carried out across households through a 'tangled web' of kin relations, geographical location and resources (Jarvis 1999). However 'choice' was restricted for those women who have to use formal childcare on a regular basis because they do not have family members who can look after their children on a full-time basis. Hannah and Charlotte both work full-time and their parents are unable to help with childcare as Hannah's parents both work full-time and Charlotte's parents both suffer with poor health. Family networks are still relied upon though as Hannah's own grandmother has her son one day a week and is available to help collect him from nursery if Hannah can't herself.

This study has reiterated the importance of family networks in providing unpaid childcare so that women can return to work. In this study, when grand- and great-grandparents (and in this case aunts) do not work or work part-time the women would rather have them look after their children than paid professionals. Research by LaValle et al (2000 in Charles, Davies and Harris 2008) and Warren, Fox and Pascall (2009) found that in working class families informal care is used to a greater extent than formal care and is often chosen in

part as the women have no experience of the other. For Jessica care provided in the family was preferred over private care because she 'didn't want anybody else looking after her and me Mam said the same so I didn't have to ask her, especially when they are so young it is horrible leaving them with strangers'. Both Jessica and her mother feel care should be provided in the family. This may possibly explain why some of the women's family offered their help with childcare without the women having to ask. Part of the reason Jessica did not want anybody else looking after her child was because she felt looking after her daughter was her responsibility,

> that's my job to take her to school and pick her up from school and take her to her dance classes and swim club whereas some people just seem to, they pay someone else to do all that don't they and I see that as being part of your job as a parent so that's why it's important to me

Jessica had strong opinions on what being a mother entailed. Although only slightly critical of some other mothers she knew who Jessica felt placed their children in nursery too young, she did not want to force her opinions onto others, but had strong feelings about how she should behave as a mother. Jessica feels that her daughter is her responsibility and that she should be the main carer for her daughter. She works part-time in order to fit around her daughters care arrangements, she fits work around her daughter, not the other way round. Although it is Jessica's job as she says to pick up her daughter from school and take her to dance class, she also sees it as her job to provide financially for her daughter, this being especially prominent as she is a single mother.

By working part-time she can do both jobs both caring for and providing for. In order to provide for her daughter Jessica is happy to have her parents help look after her daughter as other studies have shown, grandparents are the next best thing (Wheelock, Oughton and Baines 2003) when a mother cannot care for the child herself. Despite seeing it as her job to look after her daughter, Jessica does not mind leaving her daughter with her mother (the primary carer after Jessica) as care remains inside the family. Unlike putting her daughter into a private nursery, Jessica's daughter will be cared for in an environment very

similar to the one she has at home. And as some of the other women discussed, having family members caring for your children is favoured as they have very similar values and ways of raising their children because they themselves were brought up by their mothers and also learnt in part how to be a mother from their mothers helping them with their children.

Being a good mother as we have seen is important to the women. While wanting to work, the mothers also wanted to spend time raising their children. This was important for the women so that they did not 'miss out' on their children growing up,

> I couldn't have gone back full-time, no way. I mean it was hard enough going back job share but you miss out on so much with them and he grows up very quickly and not seeing him the back end of the week (when she is at work) is so hard so I am happy to be able to, I am fortunate enough to be able to work part-time (Megan)

The women's accounts of how their lives compare to those of their own mothers are both different and similar. The women's mothers did not work when the women were young children, they gave up their jobs. The ways the women balance and experience work have changed in some respects to their own mothers' experience of work. As discussed, the women did not feel they had a choice about not returning to work because of economic necessity, but at the same time wanted to keep working for the reasons discussed. The women also grew up with their mothers working at some point during their childhood meaning in that respect being a working mother is not out of the ordinary. However their own experience of their mothers working informed their desire to be able to combine employment and motherhood through part-time work. As in previous generations, childcare remains heavily in the family realm. Thus work is embedded in other social relations, especially the family as has been shown throughout this chapter. The women's ideas about work and combining work and motherhood are influenced by especially mothers working patterns and informal childcare allows the women to go to work.

Ideas about being a good parent and/or a good mother can also be seen when people compare their experiences and attitudes with that of other parents.

For example picking your children up from school was seen as something which was important to them and for their children,

> when I said I would work full-time I actually do 9.30 to 4.30 because I always said when they asked me to go full-time I said I either want to drop my daughter at school or pick her up. I think it is important still to go to the school and have that with her (Charlotte)

> It is important to me (being able to take her daughter to school) I think just because my Mam took me to school and picked me up from school and that's what I see as a parent, I know a lot of people don't nowadays and I keep getting myself into trouble at work because my manager her daughter is 18 months and she is in nursery and when there was all this debate going on about if my hours were going to change she just didn't understand 'cause her idea of a parent is completely different to what my idea is …also I used to find that when I used to work full-time it was her 1st year at school by the time I had got in she had already told my Mam what she had done at school and she didn't want to tell me about it all over again so I was kind of missing out on all of that, that's from a selfish view point I suppose (Jessica)

Ideas about good mothering practices in this sample are attached to having certain responsibilities to your child which you should fulfil. These include taking them and /or picking them up from school, spending time with your children and where possible not putting them in private childcare for the majority of the time. Being there to care for your children whenever possible was very important to them as one woman said, what is the point of having children if you are not going to look after them or hardly see them.

Research into employment, parenting and childcare in the past two decades has highlighted the importance of norms in people's decisions and actions with regard to these with a growing literature on diverse subjectivities and their links to childrearing and gender roles (Hakim 1996, 2000; Duncan et al. 2003; McRae 2003). People make decisions about combining paid work and parenting with reference to moral and socially negotiated views about correct behaviour which varies between social groupings and places (Duncan and Edwards 1999). Duncan et al (2003) argue that the perceived economic costs and benefits of taking employment or not remain secondary to social and moral understandings of children's care needs. However in this study, the economic costs of returning to work did not appear to be secondary to children's care

needs. The two were equally important. Economic costs are linked to children's needs. Money is needed to provide a home, to pay bills, buy essentials such as food and clothes. Providing for children's needs is expensive. As all the mothers in this study could not be dependent upon their partners wage to provide all of these things they feel it is important to be working, not reliant upon the state and hence stigmatised as an unemployed mother. Employment allowed the women to provide for their families but meant the children needed to be cared for when at work. As a result part-time work was seen as the ideal solution by the women in order to be able to fulfil their mothering role both as a carer and provider.

4.3. Part-time work as the ideal solution?

As was discussed in detail in chapter two, despite the disadvantages associated with part-time employment, part-time work is often regarded as advantageous by women with children as it allows them to combine employment and motherhood. Part-time work was seen as desirable by many of the women, both by those who are mothers and those planning on having children. If women feel they have to take on paid work (for financial reasons, so they are not dependent upon the state, and are able to provide for their own families) 'then the contradiction with mothers' normative understandings of what they should be doing as 'good mothers' can produce dilemmas and stress (McDowell et al 2005). In order to perform both of these roles the women see part-time work as one way to be recognised as both making a financial contribution to society and as a good mother. Part-time work can be seen as a 'good mothering strategy' (Holloway 1999:110).

Part-time work has long been discussed in work-life articulation literature in a major way. Seeking to have a balance between paid work and caring became regarded as important as women were no longer confined to the home to care for children. Work-life articulation refers to the way people successfully (or not) pursue their working and non-working lives (particularly caring responsibilities). The dominant way that work-life balance is seen to be achieved by the women in this study at the family level is by one partner (often the female) working part-time. Part-time work is seen as a way to be able to combine paid work, being a parent and running a home and so achieve a work-

life balance; there is a suitable amount of time that can be allocated to each task easily. Being able to work part-time in order to do their work in each area is important to the women as it can be difficult in managing all three,

> It never really dawned on me how tiring having a child can be until you have got that baby and that house to maintain and you have that full-time job and your socialising and everything else that comes with life in general and you know it is hard work when you are a Mam. I go home and I'm a full-time carer then I go to work and I am a full-time carer at work and I have to find one hundred per cent for both (Lindsay).

Part-time work was seen by the women who work full-time as a solution to managing a busy life. As Charlotte said, 'it (paid work) takes up a lot of my time, part-time would be way easier'.

For those women who work part-time, part of wanting to work part-time was so they could spend time with their children and not 'miss out' on them growing up,

> I couldn't have gone back full-time, no way. I mean it was hard enough going back job share but you miss out on so much with them and he grows up very quickly and not seeing him the back end of the week is so hard so yeah I am happy to be able to, I am fortunate enough to be able to work part-time (Megan).

Holloway (1999) argues that one way women's attitudes to childrearing develop is out of their own experiences as children and is one reason as discussed earlier why the women feel happy to have mothers care for their children. Many of the women grew up with their mothers working part or full time once they and their siblings reached school age, so combining work and children is 'normalised'. There is a difference in their mothering practices in that the women's mothers often did not work when they were small children not returning to work until their youngest child went to school. Because of their own experiences growing up, some spoke about not wanting to work full-time,

> my Mam stopped working erm when I was born and didn't go back to work until I was about 8 or 9 and you know it was good having her there, it was brilliant having her pick me up from school and stuff like that so I want to be able to do that for my kid because I know when she went back to work I really felt the difference and I want to be able to do that for my

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children at least some of the time to be just there so they remember me being there when they were younger (Michelle).

Interestingly for those planning on having children, working part-time also appeals to them,

> Well I have definitely thought about it, would I quit work, would I ship them off to nursery as soon as possible and get back to work but I think I will probably like to do something like stay where I am definitely, they have all sorts of flexible work arrangements where you can work 3 days a week like part-time and you can, again I have to balance it with the cost of the nursery because they are so expensive, sometimes the cost of the nursery can be more than you earn. I might not be able to afford to stop working, I may have to go to part-time but if I had the choice I would definitely go part-time (Michelle).

> I would like to think that I was only doing three days because I think there is no point having kids and working full-time and I know some people have to which is fair enough but I think the money you pay out in childcare isn't worth it (Natalie).

> so I can spend more time with the kids and so I don't feel overwhelmed by raising a child and a family and looking after a house and having to work (Rebecca).

> I think it is a big role to take on working full-time and bringing up a child, I know a lot of people do but financially I would have to come back to work you know and juggle it but I think sort of again financial reasons to do with nursery fees and things like that its probably more expensive to send your child to nursery it wouldn't be worth it (Leanne).

So for those who do not have children, part-time work is seen as the solution to combining work and a family. They are already aware that childcare can be expensive and that the cost of private care may use up a lot of their wage so going back full-time would be problematic. Some of the women as we have seen want to work part-time but cannot. Many working-class women often don't have the luxury of putting into their practice their preferences towards combing motherhood and childcare as the ability to achieve a work and life 'balance' has a significant social-class dimension (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010).

Part time work is therefore seen as ideal as it allows the women to fulfil their 'public' role through paid work. They are able to make a contribution to

society and this contribution can be seen meaning they feel they are then not seen as being a dependent mother. Part-time work also allows them to fulfil their 'private' citizenship role by carrying out what they see as their appropriate gender role, by providing financially for their children whilst also spending time at home caring for them. Want to do both so part-time work is seen as the ideal solution. As I have shown decisions about paid employment and motherhood are not based solely on what is best for the household but are based on the women's own intrinsic and extrinsic desires to work. Warren, Fox and Pascall argue decisions about work 'cannot be understood as individual choices outside their material context (2009:127) as decisions about part-time work are linked to issues of affordable childcare and mothering practices.

To end this section I want to briefly consider some of the debates about part-time work. One strand of the debate interested in women's entry into part-time work has concerned the extent to which women's entry is largely due to low levels of education and training and so can't access good part-time jobs (e.g. Warren 2000). In this study the women work part-time to be able to combine their caring and paid work not because of their low levels of education and training as all the mothers were in full-time employment before becoming mothers. Part-time work in this study is about being able to combine unpaid caring and work. For example those who do not have children only mention part-time work when talking about having children and combining work and motherhood. The women also do not intend on staying in part-time work. Once their children are old enough, many want to return to full-time work. This again highlights the importance paid work plays in the women's lives but also in terms of the increased income it will offer. Another aspect of the part-time work debate is concerned with whether women experience downward occupational mobility on entry into part-time jobs. This research has not found any evidence of this as those women who have returned to work on a part-time basis have gone back to the same job but with reduced hours (so yes the women do experience a reduction in total earnings). They have not had to change their occupation. Interestingly those women who don't have children but plan on having them in the future also see themselves as being able to go back to their current position but on a part-time basis. Initiatives allowing women to return to

work on a part-time basis are seen as advantageous by the women as there is less disruption to their working lives.

5. Categorising Women's Employment Preferences

The findings of this research reaffirms that employment relations and women's parenting role both determine women's unequal position in the labour market. This chapter has demonstrated the persistent importance of gender and class in understanding women's employment choices and decisions and how norms and obligations about what constitutes good behaviour around paid work and childrearing impact on the behaviours of these women in relation to paid work. I want to return to consider the debates around the classification of women's employment 'choices'. As discussed earlier in terms of categorising working women, in response to Hakim's arguments, returning to work for the women in this study was not about being 'committed' or 'uncommitted'. Those who returned part-time were no less committed to their work than those who returned full-time, while those who returned full-time were not more committed than those who went back part-time. The varying reasons the women gave for engaging in paid work, in particular the women's strong commitment to paid work results in Hakim's classification of women into different types of women again being shown to be problematic. Hakim's 'adaptive' category does not adequately take into account the importance the women place on working whilst also caring for children. The 'adaptive' category is only about 'choice' and does not take into consideration structural constraints placed upon choices. Walters (2005) classification of working women based on empirical evidence is more fitting as many of the women in this study can be characterised as what Walters classifies as 'the aspirers'. In her study of part-time female workers employed in manual occupations, Walters rejects Hakim's classifications complying three different categories of women's orientations to work. They consist of 'involuntary workers' who would prefer not to work and work for purely economic reasons. These women match Hakim's (2000) 'home centred women'. The second group, 'the stickers' are characterised as having a preference for paid work. These women would continue to work if they did not need to financially and although enjoy the social nature of work, have no

aspirations for promotion. Walter's third group, 'the aspirers' is a useful categorisation as the women in this category have a preference for paid work, would continue to work if they did not need the money and are ambitious in their orientation to work. For women in this category, work and family life are as important as each other. The categorisation of 'aspirers' is also useful as many of the women in this study expressed a desire to 'move up the career ladder' whilst also placing importance on a family life. Walter's categorisations are more useful than Hakim's as they allow for an equal importance to be placed upon paid work and family life. Proctor and Padfield (1998) argue that women cannot be pigeon-holed into having a single orientation towards work or home as the balance between work and family varies over the life course in response to changing circumstances. For example many of the sample do not have children at present and so could be seen to be 'committed women' as they work full-time as have career aspirations. Yet as has been seen, when the women have children work remains important to them, they do not become solely home centred.

This research suggests in contrast to Hakim's preference theory that the mothers in this study were not in paid work because they are less committed to work than those women in the study who work part-time. Structural and cultural factors are at play in decision making surrounding combining paid work and motherhood. Structural factors such as unaffordable childcare and other family members working hours meant that some women could only work part-time. Cultural values are also important factors in decisions about returning to work. As I have discussed, many of the women felt the importance of both providing and caring for their children. The women want to spend time raising their children but are not less committed to their work as those who work full-time. I would argue that both part-time and full-time workers are structurally constrained in their choices about employment hours. The part-time workers cannot afford full-time care while full-time workers cannot afford to give up working full-time hours. Their decisions about working hours are not about being less committed/more committed or having a weaker/stronger work orientation as Hakim suggests. After having children the women remained

committed to their work but also to their family. Work remains important as it is a major source of positive identity to the women.

6. Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have shown the importance paid work plays in the women's lives on many levels, in particular the relationship between employment and the construction of a respectable self. Paid work is a significant part of the women's lives and they work for many reasons, one of the main being for the income it provides. Being in employment was not a recruiting factor for the sample, yet the fact that all the women are in employment reflects changes in women's employment rates and that for working-class families in the UK, two wages are considered to be necessary to support a household (Crompton 1997). In the UK women continue to be unequal to men in paid work in terms of occupation type, hours worked and unequal pay. This research reflected this with both horizontal and vertical segregation being evident. Wider gender structures continue to shape the women's employment. Despite Hakim's (1991) claims that inequalities exist in employment between men and women and amongst women as a group because of the different lifestyle choices they make, and because of a lack of a work ethic, for this group of women, inequalities in the labour market *are not* because of the choices they make in relation to paid work. The women work because they have a commitment to paid work, because of a strong work ethic and commitment to self-improvement. The women's choices surrounding their engagement in paid work are affected by both structural and cultural factors. Bauman's suggestion that the want to consume has replaced a work ethic, has been shown here not to be as straightforward as this. The women work for many reasons, but the women do work because of a commitment to work and to consume. The notion of not 'just managing' was particularly noted by those with children. Expectations about family life include the idea that families should spend time together. Going on holiday, doing things on a weekend and creating a nice home are all about 'doing family' (Morgan 1996). 'Doing family' is an activity which has to be displayed (Finch 2007) and so family practices reflect this. The women consume to create a family life rather than consume for consumptions sake.

The women also work because of the social stigma of unemployment and the high value they place on work.

I have shown the crucial role paid work plays in the women's construction of their classed gender identity as a worker and mother. The women take a positive respectable identity from paid work because of the value they place on being in employment. Working represents a commitment to work, hard work and self-reliance; values they associate with a respectable identity. It was apparent from the women's discussions about economically marginal others that the women hold being engaged in the labour market in high regard. This is because work has a moral dimension to it. Those who have a reluctance to work are regarded by the women as lacking in something. A lack of a want to work is associated with laziness and a willingness to be dependent upon others. Dependence upon the state was therefore especially frowned upon by the women. Morris (1999) argues that mothers either earn their 'public' citizenship rights by their own paid employment or they perform their 'private' family obligations and remain dependent. The women feel their 'private' role as a mother is not recognised so the place importance on their 'public' contribution as in part they do not want to be associated with those women who choose not to work and hence do not contribute to society. Being seen to be working hard and having a job is one way in which young working class women are attributed value over those who are seen to not have value, such as non-working lone mothers. The mothers are aware of the negative associations attributed to some groups of mothers (they themselves hold negative views of some groups of mothers) and are keen to distance themselves from those mothers who choose not to work and be dependent upon the state. The women also get something from paid work that they don't get from motherhood. This issue stems from the fact that the women are not able to full participate fully in the labour market unlike men. As the women cannot equally participate in the labour market, as long as the main responsibility for caring resides with women, the women feel their contribution is not as great and so want to be recognised as contributing to society through being in employment.

I argued the women's 'choice' about returning to work have been restricted by structural factors. Women's decisions about returning to work can

be different for different classes as working-class women are more likely to work because they need the money (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010). I argued that the women make choices about paid work and childcare based upon economic reasons, local family networks and ideas surrounding motherhood. Support in the main was provided by grandparents, a common feature of childcare 'choices' of lower social groups (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010, Wheelock and Jones 2003). The women were mainly responsible for childcare and where possible, reduced their working hours. Women continue to take responsibility for unpaid caring work within the home while men continue to dominate paid work (Warren 2010). Women are more likely than men to adjust their working lives by taking on part-time work or short-hours full-time work (Rubery, Smith and Fagan 1998). Part of the reason this practice occurs is because the responsibility of caring for children is seen as lying with mothers. Mothering still has an associated primary caring role for the women living in this region. Ideas surrounding caring are gendered. Women adjust their working time because they feel responsible for caring obligations. Also as the majority of the women earn less than their partners, it is the women, not their partners who if possible reduce their working hours to reduce the impact on the household budget. Women's employment position both horizontally and vertically impacts upon decisions about who should care for children. 'The so-called 'choices' parents make about who is the primary earner and who takes time out to look after the children are still being made on a playing field that is not level or equal between men and women' (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010:9).

The ability to draw on local family networks is crucial in allowing women to combine paid work and having children. The geographical closeness of family members allows childcare to be provided easily by family members. This is especially important when childcare is being negotiated between various people. The women make decisions about combining paid work and parenting with reference to moral and socially negotiated views about correct behaviour which varies between social groupings and places (Duncan and Edwards 1999). Duncan et al (2003) argue that the perceived economic costs and benefits of taking employment or not remain secondary to social and moral understandings of children's care needs. However in this study, the economic

costs of returning to work did not appear to be secondary to children's care needs. The two were equally important. Economic costs are linked to children's needs. Employment allowed the women to provide for their families but meant the children needed to be cared for when at work. As a result part-time work was seen as the ideal solution by the women in order to be able to fulfil their mothering role both as a carer and provider. Part-time work can be seen as a 'good mothering strategy' (Holloway 1999:110).

Chapter Six: Doing Domestic Work: Doing Class and Gender

1. Introduction

In this chapter the focus will shift from the women's employment to another aspect of their everyday lives, unpaid domestic work. As gender is continually (re)created through every day practices and because research continues to show women do the majority of domestic work, it is important to demonstrate how through one regular repeated everyday activity, gender is done and (re)produced in the context of the home. To further develop my argument that the women's identity is substantially produced through engagement with different types of work, I address the importance and significance of unpaid domestic work practices in the home by highlighting the importance of the value and prestige the women derive from doing domestic work. The significance of these domestic work practices must also be grounded in an understanding of the intersection of gender with social class because doing domestic work for the women is about more than the labour; it is about accruing value from having and offering an impression of a clean and tidy home in order to present a respectable self. Theorising domestic work as a classed gender performance in this way can offer a new means of understanding why the majority of the women in this study do most of the domestic work in their homes.

I begin this chapter by presenting some of the research findings. I look at who is doing the domestic work in the women's homes as this is a crucial in demonstrating the 'doing gender' approach empirically. Influenced by developments in new sociology of class debates (Skeggs 1997, Lawler 2005a), to develop my argument that the women's classed gender identity is substantially produced through engagement with different types of work, in this case domestic work, I examine the women's everyday experience of and the emotions tied to doing domestic work, by exploring the feelings of burden, pleasure, value and prestige that can result from having a clean and tidy home. I further widen the argument that doing domestic work is a gender performance by discussing a maternal influence on how the women do domestic work and the (hidden) training the women have had from their mothers. I then move on to explore why having a clean and tidy home is so important to the women. I

consider how the women use domestic work and the presentation of their homes to construct and perform a respectable classed gendered identity. I adopt Goffman's (1969) dramaturgical analogy and concepts and impression management to explore how the women present their homes to others and how this is created and managed. Throughout the chapter I show how doing domestic work produces a clean and tidy home, but it also produces sets of relations between people, such as those between the women and their partner, between mother and daughter and with an imaginary and/or real 'other'.

2. Doing the Domestic Work

Research into the domestic division of labour continues to focus on and place importance on who does which tasks, who is responsible for domestic work and/or how much time is spent doing it (e.g. Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny 2011). I was also interested in these questions. In existing sociological literature, these issues have been well explored as discussed in chapter three. However, it is important that I address these to determine the details of the labour done for this sample of women and also as a preliminary stage in order to develop my analysis. Figure one below offers a breakdown of the women's responses to the question '*Who mostly does household tasks in your home*?' The women were asked to say who mostly did each task; either mostly themselves, mostly their partner or if they shared the task.

The data in the table below shows, consistent with the sociological literature, that the women do most of the work, that tasks are gendered, that the women do more of the everyday routine tasks (regular routine tasks are 'female' tasks) and that they are responsible for domestic work in their homes. This confirms what others have found. However, this finding bears repetition because of widespread assumptions about increasing equality and because,

> The continuing gender segregation among these categories (routine and non-routine) of domestic work, points to the on-going significance of gender ideologies and the interactional aspects of gender ('doing gender') in the performance of domestic work...in order to conform to their appropriate normative gender identities, men and women perform housework activities accordingly (Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny 2011:238).

Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny (2011) argue that at the interactional level, the domestic division of labour remains unequal because there remain in place barriers stopping change. They suggest the 'doing gender' approach may explain why women and men continue to do differing amounts of domestic work. This approach can begin in part to help us understand why the women do more in their homes because a consequence of the gendered division of labour is that the home can hold different meanings for men and women and as such perform gender through domestic work in different ways. Because the women do the majority of the domestic work and mostly do female associated tasks, the women are 'doing gender' when doing domestic work. Domestic work is gendered because of both the quantity and the type of work being done. This strongly reflects the idea of male and female appropriate work (Connell 2002). Throughout this chapter I focus on the interactional aspect of the 'doing gender' approach while adding the important social class dimension to argue that the women's classed gender identity is substantially produced through engagement with domestic work but before I can do that I ned to explore how gender is done when doing domestic work and how domestic work is gendered.

3. Domestic Work as Women's Work?

Feminist writers interested in the domestic division of labour have long argued that the role gender plays on many levels, is significant in producing an unequal domestic division of labour (Hartman 1982, Delphy and Leonard 1992, Walby 1990). A pervasive common-sense view is that women are associated with the domestic sphere, and thus with everyday life more generally (Scott 2009). Nature has been used as a trope to explain women's association with domesticity. This is an important part of the argument I make in this chapter. Wider social factors such as the institution of heterosexuality and the traditional male breadwinner/female carer model (which is part of the institution of heterosexuality) have contributed to the creation of a society where men and women are expected to perform appropriate gender behaviour. Domestic work is gendered expected behaviour for women in part because domesticity is

Figure 10. Domestic Work Summary Table

Name	Does Most	Responsible	Why Do Most?	When?	Like doing housework?	Tasks Like	Tasks Dislike	Equal?	Negotiation	Cleaner	Bothered by mess?	Upstairs/ Downstairs	Presentation/ other people
Debra	Yes is happy doing most	Yes	Always has done, , works PT	Week day and mostly evenings	Doesn't mind it. Sometimes gets on her nerves	Dusting and vacuuming	Ironing	He does more since child born & does things when asked / he offers	No, she automatically did it	No	Yes (not as much by kids toys etc)	No	Yes to a lesser extent than the other women.
Abigail	Yes is not happy doing most	Yes	If she didn't it wouldn't get done. He works Saturday also.	Week days and big clean on Weekend Saturday	No. Finds it never ending. Likes end result / satisfaction			He does some things when asked. His jobs	At start did but it didn't last	Yes	Yes	No but if visitors, tidy rooms they would see	Yes, mentioned before I asked
Michelle	Yes, wishes he would do more some times	Yes, doesn't mind	Her role. Automatically did it.	Week days and big clean on Weekend Saturday	No boring. Only when someone coming to visit. Satisfaction.	Cleaning bathroom as most satisfaction from that	Dusting	Does things when asked	No	Yes has had one previously	Yes	No	Yes, mentioned before I asked
Megan	Yes is happy as she works PT	Yes	She works part-time	Week days	Likes satisfaction. Other than that it has to be done	-	Bath room	He helps. More equal before children		Yes or someone to do ironing	Yes (kids toys different)	No but if visitors, tidy rooms they would see	Yes mentioned before I asked
Leanne	Yes, happy as he does his own fair share	No thinks he has to be as well	Wants the house tidy, he is more relaxed about it	Week days and big clean on Weekend	No would have a cleaner so it's nice all the time	Don't mind vacuuming	Ironing	She does most but he does help, he asks what needs doing	No	Yes	Yes	No but if visitors, tidy rooms they would see	Yes mentioned before I asked

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Kimberly	Yes, happy as he works more and he wouldn't do it right	Yes	She works PT	Week days and weekend	Not really, has to be done	Cleaning floors is quick	Cleaning windows, ironing	No, work patterns always meant she was at home more	No	No	Yes (kids stuff a bit different)	No but tidy rooms people would see	Yes
Jennifer	Yes, happy but wishes partner would do more	Yes	Is more tidy than partner	Week days and weekend	Not really, more of the satisfaction	Don't mind bathroom.	Dusting, emptying bin	Does most but not it all	In previous home she worked PT and pattern of her doing more has followed even though now FT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lindsay	No	No	Equal	Week days and week end	Not really, tolerates it, likes the end result	Hanging out washing	-		Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Sophie	Yes	Yes	Husband works away	Weekday evenings and week ends	Doesn't mind	-	-	No, husband does no house work	No	No	Yes	Yes, tidy rooms people see	Yes
Katie	Yes, happy as he does his share	Yes	Rather that it was done, properly	Every week day	No, does not enjoy it but likes end result, satisfaction	-	Washing up	Husband does help out a lot	Yes, decided they would share	Yes has had one	Yes but not kids toys etc	yes	Yes mentions it before I ask
Natalie	Yes, happy as house proud, her control, he doesn't properly	No but takes on the responsibility	was brought up and enjoys having a clean home for partner		Hates it, loves the end result, satisfaction		Ironing, vacuuming		No, automatically did it	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Charlotte	Yes	Yes	Her job, naturally to do it	Week and weekend	No, just gets it done	Hanging washing on line	Ironing	No but he will vacuum	No	Yes	No	Yes	

traditionally held as a feminine virtue, is often viewed as intrinsic or natural to being a woman, while men are discouraged from doing domestic work, or 'women's work', because it is inherently seen as less valuable. As domestic work is seen as being natural for women it is hence regarded as 'unskilled' work as opposed to skilled, which involves training. This is evident as domestic cleaners are seen as unskilled and there is considerable social stigma attached to cleaning as an occupation (Gregson and Lowe 1994). There is a contradiction in that there is little value attached to domestic work but the there is great value and prestige to be had from having a clean home. Being a good wife and mother also rest on a woman's ability to be able to successfully keep a clean and tidy home. I want to discuss these issues here in order to demonstrate, that the ability to do domestic work does not come naturally to women, the skills have to be learnt. Domestic work is socially constructed as gendered and by doing this work the women do gender. Before I do this I want to discuss how some of the women said they do most of the domestic work in their home as they feel it is their role to do so.

3.1. A Woman's Job?

Many of the women I interviewed drew on implicit and explicit gender analysis when reflecting on their own domestic division of labour. Four of the women specifically said that they do most of the domestic work because of attitudes towards household practices. One explicitly gendered rationale concerned men's attitudes to domestic work more generally. In Sophie's case, she said she does most of the work because her partner thinks that it is her job to do it, not his. His ideas about gender roles are linked to the idea of the male breadwinner and the female carer, which is enforced by their labour market situation. After having children, Sophie spent time out of the labour market and then returned to work on a part-time basis and so their situation was reinforced as she was working fewer hours and Sophie's husband works away from home. During the week she feels she has to do the domestic work as there is no one else there to do it (leaving it is not an option as will be explored later). When her partner is at home he does not do any of the regular routine work such as

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cooking and cleaning but will carry out any household repairs and do gardening. The relations of different types of work are apparent here. Paid work relations are tied to unpaid work practices.

In contrast, Michelle and Charlotte reported that they do most of the domestic work because they themselves feel it is their job or role to do so. Their partners do not have as traditional a view as Sophie's partner. On moving in together, Charlotte said it just came *naturally* for her to do the domestic work[62]. Similarly Michelle said she automatically did it. Michelle's partner also assumes she will do the domestic work,

> It comes back to the cooking thing, it's like the assumption is automatically that I will do it so he won't do anything unless I, so unless I ask him its usually assumed that I will do it... and then I don't like to ask him because then I feel I have, I'm not doing my job because I still feel like from my parents, my Mam was the only one who did all the domestic work, I feel like I should be doing the domestic work, I should be doing it for him and things so I don't really like to ask him that much because I feel like 'oh God she can't even tidy the house' or you know, I feel like, that role is, I'm not fulfilling that role maybe (Michelle).

This quote is typical of many of the women's experiences. Some of the women derive value from doing domestic work for their partners. The significance of gender ideologies in the interactional aspects of performing gender is evident here. Ideas relating to men and women's roles in the home affect Michelle's behaviour towards, and for her partner. Understanding domestic work as gendered can in part help us to understand why an unequal domestic division of labour exists and continues to do so if women feel that this role is expected of them or feel that they have to adopt this role in order to be a 'good' woman and/or wife.

3.2. A Maternal Influence

If we are to understand domestic work as gendered work, it is crucial to discuss how this work becomes gendered. All of the women grew up in homes where there was an unequal domestic division of labour and witnesses their mothers and other female (not male) family members doing domestic work. We briefly

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[62] Many of the women commented that they felt they 'naturally' did the domestic work on moving in with their partner.

saw earlier how part of Michelle's own reason for doing most of the work came from seeing her mother and father performing 'appropriate' gender roles and wanting to emulate her mother's behaviour. Like Michelle, part of Natalie's reason for doing most of the work was,

> Because of the way I have been brought up. Definitely, definitely because that's what me Mam did, that is what I see and that's what, it's not what I think being a good partner is ... I think 'cause me Mam has always been there and done everything for me Dad, yeah she didn't work but because she has always done everything for me Dad in that way, it's just something I think should be done.

As the women have grown up only seeing women doing domestic work it appears that domestic work is 'natural' for women and not for men. In this way domestic work is gendered because it is constantly being reproduced as being women's work. For example Catherine saw two generations of women doing domestic work. Catherine currently lives with her parents but did talk about living with her partner in the future. When I asked who she thought would do the domestic work then, she said,

> I will just do it myself. It has always been something like, I have always seen me Mam do it and I have always seen me Nana do it so it's nowt different to me and even like when I was little, say about ten, eleven, when my Mam went to work on a Sunday I would do the Sunday dinner. Nana would come round and say are you not tidying up, so then I would have a cup of tea with her and then I would start and tidy up afterwards so it has always been the way.

There are very strong expectations of appropriate behaviour here. Domestic work was expected female behaviour in her home. Some of the women spoke about looking up to their mothers. They see their mothers as good people and somewhat of a role model. In order to be a good person, they feel they should emulate their mother's behaviour. Part of this involves doing most of the domestic work. This was true of Michelle and Natalie,

> I think well if me Mam did it [the majority of the domestic work] then why shouldn't I do it? Perhaps it's what women are meant to do you know what I mean because like your Mam is your role model you know what I mean? Like I would feel odd if he did the majority of it, I would feel like a

kept woman or something or lazy er because me Mam is always beavering around and always doing things and stuff so I feel like I should always be doing things…I see my Mam as a good person and I tend to copy her because I want to be a good person like she is a good person (Michelle)

Michelle's mother had three children and had a paid job. The possibility of feeling like a kept woman highlights the negative status associated with domestic work. The notion of being lazy from not doing work is clear again here in this quote. To not do domestic work and/or to allow her partner to do the work would mean Michelle was lazy and could therefore not be a good person like her mother.

Many of the women also spoke about growing up in clean and tidy homes. Katie commented that, 'I guess it was just the way I was brought up, to always keep your house tidy'. Jennifer spoke about both her mother and grandmother being very tidy, especially her grandmother with whom she spent a lot of time with when she was younger,

> My grandparents' [house] from me Dad's side is always like immaculate and me Gran will be like, 'I've just done me cupboards out', it's like she hasn't owt else to do. Me Gran, she would have all the ornaments polished and she would get me Granddad to brass them constantly, everything is perfect, if you go in their house you put your jacket on the back of the couch and she will move it into the spare room, it's really bad and when we were little it was the same and, but I've always been like a clean and tidy person but I always, I don't know if it has anything to do with, 'cause when I was really little when my Mam went back to work and I was a baby, Gran sort of brought us up for those first couple of years and shutting the door exactly right and taking your shoes off, I don't know if I have got some of it from her as well. Her house is always immaculate, we were taught it had to be done properly.

Jennifer is slightly critical of her Gran's practices when she comments 'it's like she hasn't 'owt else to do'. In order to be able to have an immaculate home you have to have nothing else to do, i.e. not to be in paid work. An immaculate home requires lots of time and effort. Abigail commented her own mother was critical of her for not cleaning her windows and skirting boards regularly. Like Jennifer, Abigail had said she had in no uncertain terms told her mother to shut up because she works full time and has better things to do than clean her skirting boards! Yet because all of the women are engaged in employment and

have children to care for, they cannot spend all of their time doing domestic work to have an immaculate home.

Women are not naturally disposed to knowing how to do domestic work and how to be good at it. Most of the women did help out their mothers when they were old enough and learnt how to for example iron by starting with tea towels and progressing upwards to clothes. Katie and Jennifer's quotes implicitly and explicitly point towards some form of teaching they received about how to keep a home clean and tidy. The women were taught by their mothers and grandmothers how to do domestic work. A maternal influence was evident in many accounts, in terms of being made aware that you keep your home clean and how to actually do the work,

> Mam liked to have everything tidy and ordered, constantly worrying about things like me (Jennifer)
>
> Definitely learnt from me Mam, me Mam always does her floors last, I always do my floors last, she does the whole house and then she will hoover up and that's exactly how I do it, er she hated ironing as well (Natalie)
>
> I think me and me Mam do most things the same, she does them better 'cause obviously she has had 30 year more practice than me like but yeah we do it the same (Catherine)

If knowing how to do domestic work was natural for women then Catherine wouldn't believe her mother is better at doing the work because of her years of practice and experience. Part of the explanation as to why domestic work is seen as 'natural' for women links to definitions of skill. Women have been seen to be more naturally suited to tedious, repetitious, monotonous work. Yet women have got their skills as a result of training that they have had in the home from their mothers and other family members,

> It is partly because of this training, like so many other female activities which come under the heading of domestic labour, is socially invisible and privatized, that the skill it produces are attributed to nature and the jobs that make use of it are classified as 'unskilled or 'semi-skilled' (Elson & Pearson 1981)

Skills which are seen as 'natural', such as domestic work are re-defined as not skills at all which is why jobs such as domestic work tend to be classified as unskilled. Social things are turned in to nature and this skill becomes de-skilled. Elson and Pearson argue that the social invisibility of the training that produces these skills is intrinsic to the process of gender construction. They powerfully argue that although ideology plays a role in women's subordination to men, it is more than patriarchal attitudes and is more than people failing to see the contribution women make but it is a *material process* 'which goes on not just in our heads, but in our practices' (2010:94). Therefore it is not just ideas but domestic work practices and the hidden training which goes on which is part of the explanation as to why domestic work is seen as 'natural' for women and contributes to an unequal domestic division of labour.

The women have also grown up in clean, tidy homes and hence have particular standards for their own homes. As the women have been taught how to do domestic work, they then have the knowledge of how it should be done (and to a particular standard) so when the women then live with a partner, as they have the knowledge about how to do the work, they often do it, some saying this was automatic whereas many commented their partners don't know how to do domestic work. The women have particular standards about tidiness and cleanliness and some do not feel they can rely on their partners' efforts and so manage and do most of the domestic work themselves. One of the reasons given as to why the women do most of the domestic work was because they felt their partners did not know how to do the work correctly,

> He is canny rubbish at it, that's an awful thing to say 'cause I really appreciate everything that he does but he is just not as thorough and I feel like I have to go round after him tidying up the bits that he's missed (Katie)

> Sometimes bless him, if he does do things and he doesn't do it right I bite his head off (Natalie)

> Debra: I think sometimes if you want it doing properly then you do it yourself, if you want it doing at a certain time, I would be saying 'oh this needs doing' and he always says 'oh I will do it later' you know, so oh, I will just do it, but I just do it because if I do it, it gets done
> Gemma: What do you mean when you say he doesn't do it properly?

Debra: He doesn't do it the way I would do it

The fact that Debra she says he always says he will do it later implies that she has asked for his help many times and has been greeted with the same response. She feels that things need doing at certain times; they cannot be left until later. Because of this, her partner's lack of urgency and abilities she just does the work herself. It is difficult for the women to ask for help because the issue can lead to misery and friction in their relationships. Being called a 'nag' and the possibility of an argument means some of the women do the work for an 'easy life'. From the women's accounts it was apparent that he women have to ask their partner's to do the work, the men don't voluntarily do domestic work. This may in part be because of gender role attitudes and the women doing the work automatically as discussed previously, but also because the women feel that the men were incapable of seeing mess. Katie spoke about how her partner does not see bits on the carpets and said, 'If it was up to him to get the housework done it wouldn't be as tidy or as clean… He would happily sit in a room messy whereas I wouldn't'. This ambivalence about wanting their partners to do more but at the same time being cautious about the impact that would have on the appearance and cleanliness of the home was a concern of many of the women. We see that Katie has different ideas about what clean and tidy means to her partner. Leanne also had a similar example when I asked why she does most of the work part of her explanation was, 'I think it's because I am more regimental on cleaning than he is. He is more relaxed than I am with regards to the house being clean and tidy and because I want the house tidy'. But why is it as Katie said, her partner can sit in a messy room but she cannot and why is Leanne's partner more relaxed about domestic work? This was also touched upon by some of the other women who said that they could not relax when there is mess. Douglas suggests that 'there is no thing as absolute as dirt: it is in the eye of the beholder" (1966:2). It may be that the women look more closely than their partners as dirt is socially unacceptable. Dirt and mess reflect badly on women more than men as the home has traditionally been seen as a woman's responsibility and so women as we have seen cannot be as relaxed about domestic work as men as the state of the home reflects on the respectability of a woman and not on a man's.

Another example of the women's partners' perceived inability to do domestic work properly and lack of training can be seen in the following,

> Leanne: He doesn't really do the bathrooms. I do them
> Gemma: Why is that?
> Leanne: Because he doesn't clean them properly. Where I would fully go round and bleach everywhere he wouldn't
> Gemma: So if he doesn't do things as you say right, do you tell him?
> Leanne: Oh yes I make it clear (laughs), you missed that bit and that bit and that bit. But no, I'm not really that bad but I would tell him if he did, he did the bathroom once and I had to go back over it and I told him he hadn't done it properly, he had gone over it with anti-bacterial wipes
> Rebecca: At least he tried
> Leanne: At least!

Leanne's partner does do domestic work but rather than just doing it, he asks her what needs to be done. This quote implies that Leanne's partner does see domestic work as her responsibility in that he is asking her opinion on what needs to be done/her permission to do domestic work. His attempt to clean the bathroom properly was met with mockery. The way 'at least he tried' was said in a way that recognised his efforts but mocked the attempt and thought process that using anti-bacterial wipes would be acceptable. It is as though he does not have the knowledge of how to clean a bathroom properly. It is as if the women are putting men in their place, they do not have the knowledge about how to for example as above clean the bathroom and so their partners then do not clean those rooms. So when men *do* do the work, it's not good *enough* because they don't know how to clean properly.

Some of the women want their partners to do more, especially those women who work full-time and found the demands of employment, housework and for some childcare, difficult to manage. Because they want more help and as partner's don't have the knowledge to do the work to a certain standard, some of the women are teaching their partners to do domestic work 'properly' (i.e. how they would do it),

> I am teaching him how to do the hoovering so that's good…I am just teaching him how to like volunteer a little bit more. I am trying to get him into the habit of doing it once a week to where he would carry on doing it once a week so where I would come in and he has done it (Natalie).

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Natalie said that she wants help because she works as a hairdresser, is on her feet all day and regards as domestic work as more physical labour that requires her to stay on her feet. It is interesting that she is only encouraging him to take on one job that she only expects him to do once a week. We have seen that Natalie sees domestic work as something that she should do and this may in part explain why she is only asking for a small amount of help. The dilemma of her feeling she should be doing the work is at odds with the double burden of working full-time and then feeling she should be doing the domestic work. Abigail also only requires her partner to take responsibility for putting the bins out which only needs to be done once a week. This relates back to the idea that men are more likely to do the less regular tasks. By teaching and asking their partners to do some domestic work the women are letting their partners know that the domestic work is not solely their responsibility, they too have to help out. Previous studies into the domestic division of labour have shown that despite men contributing more, in heterosexual relationships men will 'help' while women perform most of the work and take responsibility for it (Sullivan 2000, Windebank 2001, Warren 2002). The fact that the women feel they have to do the work themselves so that respectability is maintained may in part explain why men only 'help'.

Michelle

Michelle is aged 26. Heterosexual. Identified as working-class.

Whilst growing up Michelle lived with her mother (a receptionist) and father (safety officer) and older sisters. Both of her parents are now retired. She grew up with her mother doing all of the domestic work.

After school Michelle studied A Levels and then went to a local University. Whilst at college and university Michelle worked part-time in the service industry. After university Michelle got a graduate job as a project manager for an international company. She works full-time.

Michelle lived in the same home with her family until she moved out to go to university. After university and moving home for a short while, Michelle then moved back to Newcastle. Her job has taken her around the world and she lived in Europe for one year. Michelle currently lives with her fiancé (accountant) in Cramlington. Michelle owns her own home on a new housing estate.

Michelle and her partner are engaged to be married and plan on having children. Michelle plans on continuing to work full-time after having children due to economic reasons. The company she works for has their own Nursery. Michelle plans on putting her child in the nursery that her company provides for its employees but is worried about the cost of childcare. As she lives Northumberland and her family in County Durham, unpaid childcare provided by family members is not possible. Despite the long commute to her home town, Michelle regularly visits to see her parents, sisters and nephews.

Figure 9: Participant Information

As the women do most of the domestic work and take responsibility for it, it seems appropriate to discuss their experiences of and feelings about domestic work, more specifically, if they like or dislike doing domestic work. The sociology of domestic work has long regarded domestic work as a burden that disadvantages women to the advantage of men. Oakley's (1974) research highlighted the dissatisfaction her sample had with the monotony of domestic work, yet women in various other studies have clearly expressed some level of satisfaction or even enjoyment from domestic work (Baxter 1998). The enjoyment of work is central to debates in the sociology of work and exploring enjoyment or dislike of one type of work can further add to these debates. Enjoyment of, or a dislike of domestic work is a contentious topic as it in some ways reflects the 'grateful slaves' debate (Hakim 1991) inspired by women's satisfaction with low-paid, low-skilled jobs and with being a housewife. Domestic work is often regarded as a burden partly to do with assumptions about manual work and classed assumptions about what work is worthwhile (maunual work is not seen as worthwhile) yet some kinds of work in appropriate conditions, can be a source of meaning and fulfilment (Sayer 2011).

Figure one includes information on the women's domestic likes and dislikes[63]. To gauge whether or not the women liked or disliked doing domestic work, I began by asking generally if they liked doing domestic work or not. I then asked about specific tasks. There was a spilt in the responses given. Some of the women said they were indifferent to doing domestic work; they neither liked nor disliked it. For example Debra said, 'I don't mind doing housework, its finding time when I have him [child]'. 'Mind' implies neither a like or dislike of domestic work. Yet similarly to Oakley's (1974) sample, many of the women in this study said they disliked doing domestic work. Like many of the women, Michelle finds domestic work dull saying,

> No…it's boring and I'd rather be doing something else. The only time I enjoy doing domestic work is if I know somebody is coming to the house and then I feel a bit more like pride in doing it. It's horrible. If like you know it's the weekly clean then I hate it.

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[63] This next section draws on data from all of the participants, not just from those living with their partner.

Domestic work is regarded as a burden by many of the women. It is another type of work that has to be done on top of their paid work. Natalie for example said, 'I love it once it's done but it's just something else when I finish work that involves standing up when I just want to sit down… when I am actually doing it I think urgh'. The physical labour demands of domestic work is one aspect the women do not like. For example in Natalie's case domestic work is seen as a burden as it is not just about a 'second shift'[64] or about finding time to do the work, it is also about actual physical exhaustion. Cleaning is hard physical labour and having to do this after a day of work that is also physical, can be a struggle for Natalie as she finds it difficult to muster the energy to do domestic work.

A further reason many of the women gave for not liking domestic work was that they feel it is repetitive, boring and/or from knowing it will soon need starting all over again; as Abigail said, 'It's just never ending is it? You feel like you do it and then the next thing you know it needs doing again'. DeBeauvoir expressed this sentiment when she wrote how domestic work,

> has a negative basis: cleaning is getting rid of dirt, tidying up is eliminating disorder…no satisfaction is possible; the hovel remains a hovel in spite of woman's sweat and tears…legions of women have only this endless struggle without victory over the dirt…domestic work with its endless repetition: the clean becomes soiled, the soiled is made clean, over and over, day after day (1974:470).

This is reflective of many of the women's feelings about domestic work. However for this sample of women, satisfaction is possible as was evident above where Natalie said she loves it when the work is done. Liking or disliking doing domestic work however is very different from getting some sort of satisfaction from the end result so is an important consideration. The satisfaction from having done domestic work was discussed in many of the interviews. Katie commented that, 'I don't like doing domestic work. Although if I spent ages and ages on cleaning something, like when I give the kitchen a really good clean, I do get a feeling of satisfaction after I have done it, but I don't

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[64] Having to do domestic work on top of paid work has been termed the 'double burden' or the 'second shift' (Hochschild 2003). This term is used to describe how in heterosexual relationships, where both partners are in paid employment the woman does more domestic work than her male partner.

enjoy doing it'. In particular, for many of the other women, satisfaction comes from the end result of doing domestic work, when their home is clean and tidy.

4. Pleasures and Dangers

Second wave feminists were particularly interested in the home and frequently portrayed it as a prison and a constraint on the lives of women (see Gillis and Hollows 2009). The idea that an investment in domestic life is contrary to the aims of feminism has structured much feminist debate (Friedan 1996, Faludi 1991). Although there are burdens and factors which mean there is a cost associated with not doing domestic work, the home can be an area in which women can invest as a sign of status and self-worth. Pleasure can be gained from having a clean home, as this is synonymous with being a good housewife/mother. But why is this? The notion of self-worth and status from having a clean home relates back historically to when keeping a clean home was hard to achieve. The poor could not maintain their homes or clothes to the same standards as those who could afford to employ servants, so cleanliness was a sign of wealth and status (Cox 2006). There is a long standing normative notion that the home should be clean and tidy. One way in which we are shown how homes should look today comes from the media, in particular from TV programmes, adverts and from popular culture which present an 'ideal' version of the home.

4.1. How clean is your house?

Homes are constantly on the television. Viewers are bombarded with visual representations of the home thorough lifestyle programmes and adverts with the ideal home being presented as clean, tidy and clutter free (clutter such as ornaments collect dust). The mid and late 1990s witnessed an explosion of home makeover programmes followed by programmes about how we should present our homes to potential homebuyers and more recently, cleanliness in particular has been the focus of programmes such as *How Clean Is Your House?* (2003-2009) and Anthea Turner's *The Perfect Housewife* (2006-2007). Advertising and TV programmes construct the home, its cleanliness and presentation through what they show. We are told that homes should be clean

and shown how to do this. We are told how our homes should look in terms of its decoration and that we should present our homes in certain ways. Adverts warn that dirt leads to illness and that homes should smell nice for visitors (the Glade adverts in particular). On the other end of the spectrum, undesirable domesticities are shown. On *How Clean Is Your House?* participants are represented as victims of failed domesticity (Hunt 2009), we are shown how not to live. Importantly these shows and adverts tell us that the presentation of our homes to other people is vitally important in making the right impression. To make a good impression your home should be clean, tidy and smell clean. The women here claim self-worth in a number of ways from being able to maintain their homes to the standard that is represented on television. However they are not a passive audience. They do not 'take in' these messages. As I will go onto discuss, the idea of a show home is critiqued and the women are actively engaged in recreating their homes through their interactions with others such as family members.

Some of the women took pleasure from domestic work in that they like the nature of the work. Hannah was one of the few women who said she likes doing domestic work,

> Gemma: Do you like doing housework?
> Hannah: To be honest I do, it's very therapeutic, its, it's a relaxing thing. I love erm hoovering, I love doing ironing although I don't iron that much, but when you get into the rhythm I think it's just relaxing, that one movement, it's not hectic, the only thing I don't like doing is like if someone is coming round and you think oh my God the house is a mess it's like whoosh, whoosh, whoosh around, that's the only thing I don't like doing but when it's relaxing and when you get to the end of it you think the house is nice and clean and that is relaxing in itself and you can sigh at the end of it and think that's done for another week (laughs).

Although Hannah likes doing some domestic tasks when the work doesn't have to be rushed, we again see the repetitive nature of domestic work. While Hannah likes the routine of cleaning and for her, it's relaxing nature, in contrast, it is the hurrying around in preparation for visitors that Michelle enjoys. For both Hannah and Michelle there is some urgency about cleaning for when visitors will call. This urgency motivates Michelle. However for Michelle it is not the doing of the domestic work she enjoys, it is in the act of taking pride in her

home, she enjoys preparing the home for visitors. Despite the different feelings towards domestic work, both Hannah and Michelle's reaction to the question of whether they like or dislike doing domestic work are linked to the concern the women have about the impression visitors will have of their homes. This concern about the impressions of visitors was present in the majority of the women's accounts as will be discussed in depth shortly.

Conforming to a domestic ideal can be pleasurable. We saw earlier that Hannah said that knowing her home was nice and clean is relaxing in itself. The opposite, a messy and dirty home leaves her feeling uneasy. Many of the women spoke about not being able to sit and relax when there is tidying or cleaning to be done. Mary Douglas argues that dirt is matter out of place so that 'dirt is essentially disorder' (1966:2). The women cannot relax when there is work that needs to be done as their home is not in order. Catherine, Jennifer and Megan for example spoke about household items 'having a home',

> I am obsessed with things having a place…especially if things aren't in the right place like newspapers, for some reason we always end up with one on the floor and I am like 'newspapers live in the rack'… 'if you get something out the cupboard you bloody well put it back'. But everything should have a home, I don't like untidiness (Catherine).

Douglas argues that, 'eliminating it (dirt) [and mess I would argue] is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organise the environment' (1966:2). By cleaning and tidying, the women are restoring order which results in their being able to relax. Positively re-ordering the environment is done to make the home conform to an idea, that of a good housewife. I would also suggest the women find it difficult to relax when there is work to be done because as we saw in the last chapter the women equate not doing work with laziness. In the same way that the women wanted to distinguish themselves from those who choose to be unemployed, those who they see as lazy, this may in part help explain what is going on here. Not doing domestic work is lazy, a messy home implies laziness, and as the women do not want to be seen as lazy they do domestic work; a clean and tidy home reflects work has been done. Deem (1995) argues that for men, the home is primarily a space and time for relaxation; traditionally defined in relation to an external workplace, whereas for

women the home can signify a place of work because of domestic work. Relaxation is not possible until the domestic work is done, hence having a clean home can be relaxing 'in itself'.

In the two previous chapters I demonstrated the value the women place on work, whether that is paid or unpaid. In the previous chapter we saw that they women place great value on paid work in that to be in employment is not to be lazy. I would argue that although many of the women don't like the nature of domestic work for the reasons outlined above, they do take satisfaction from their efforts as a clean, tidy home is evidence of the work that has been done. Satisfaction from doing domestic work in part comes from the women knowing (and seeing) they have done the work. The women claim self-worth from being able to maintain their homes to the standard that is represented on television.

Having a clean home can show the outside world the women's ability to maintain their homes to a high standard. This can be a source of pride and/or status for the women. A clean home also suggests that its residents are not dirty. It was apparent in some of the women's accounts they want their homes to be clean and tidy for their partners to enjoy. The women take pleasure from this. Natalie said, 'I enjoy him coming in having a nice tea made for him and coming into a nice clean house, I enjoy the fact that he enjoys that, it sounds really sad doesn't it?' Natalie enjoys playing the role of the good wife and takes pleasure from her partner's enjoyment of the end result. She is critical of this when she says that 'it sounds really sad'. 'Sad' in this context is not referring to the opposite of happy, but sad in that she may be considered pitiful or old-fashioned by others who may have more egalitarian attitudes towards domestic work. She is ambivalent in what she says as in the interview she also said she does not think doing all the work is what a good partner is, she is not responsible, yet says doing domestic work is just something she thinks should be done. She is performing a gendered domestic role in part for her partner's enjoyment but also for her own pleasure.

For mothers especially, honour is also accumulated through cleanliness (hence no germs). Dirt for the women was unacceptable, especially for those with young children who were concerned about hygiene and the health of their children. Yet mess was discussed differently to dirt. Different types of mess

were discussed by some of the participants. For example although seen as being messy, children's toys were seen as acceptable mess unlike in contrast for example dirty dinner plates on the bedroom floor. Mess is not always matter out of place. In this instance children's toys are expected to be present during the day as their absence would signal an assumed pathology and the women felt it is generally accepted that it is impossible to be tidy when you have young children. Because toys are regarded as acceptable mess, they do not disrupt the impression of a tidy home. The mothers accumulate honour through cleanliness but also through allowing their children to play which is why toys are seen as acceptable mess. Yet the women have to manage the tension between their children's needs and the cleanliness of their home. This is achieved in part by clearing toys away on an evening. Place and time matter here. When children are in bed on an evening, when they are absent downstairs, toys were then regarded as unacceptable mess which should be tidied away to offer the impression of a tidy home.

4.2. Making the right impression

So why is it important the women have a clean and tidy home and to a standard they are happy with? We have seen that having a clean home is important in terms of hygiene, order and as a sign of work having been done (not being lazy). But importantly it is also about creating a good/correct impression for visitors because the cleanliness of the home is associated with women and their ability to be a good housewife and keep a home. This is strongly tied to social class. The majority of the women spoke about the impression others would have of their home often in terms of unannounced visitors,

> If it was a mess and somebody came in I would be absolutely mortified. I would be thinking God they must think my house is a mess you know what I mean, it bothers me when people come in and I think my house if a mess and untidy, it really gets to me (Megan).

> Leanne: I like my home to be nice
> Rebecca: Yeah I do
> Leanne: I would hate to think that anyone knocked on my door and came in and it was a state
> Gemma: Why is that?

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> Leanne: Oh I would just hate it, I don't know, just pride in your house I think
> Gemma: So if someone came round
> Rebecca: If I knew I would be whizzing around

So why are the women concerned about how their homes look to other people? I pointed out earlier that dirty homes represent failed domesticity (Hunt 2009) and cleanliness has long been an indicator of middle-class respectability and as such has been a requirement of working-class women wanting to be seen as respectable (Skeggs 1997). Domesticity has closely been tied to respectability. Clean represents respectability and dirty equals rough or shameful. Skeggs (1997) argues that for women, the home is one of the key sites where respectability is displayed. As such a dirty home would give the impression the women are not respectable. Because of this I want to argue that as the home is one representation of self, doing domestic work and presenting a clean and tidy home allows the women to give a good impression, that of being respectable. The women fear being judged as lazy and disrespectable from a lack of domesticity.

The women are in part concerned about the impression their home gives to visitors because the women themselves make judgements about other women's homes. In the same way that such programmes as How Clean Is Your House? give viewers the opportunity to critique the participants homes and hence them, some of the women spoke about dirty and / or messy homes they had visited, they themselves critiqued other people's homes. As well as surveying their own behaviour, in effect the women themselves become the judgemental other,

> God I hope that people don't think of my house like that. I would hate it; absolutely hate it if someone said anything about my house...her house is an absolute tip, it's disgusting it's dirty, messy like horrible. Like her downstairs toilet she had a rabbit in it and it's disgusting. She had started painting walls and it's not finished. The gate is hanging off and the garden is overgrown, it's like the Chatsworth Estate (Abigail).

When studying everyday life it is important to challenge our taken for granted assumptions (Garfinkel 1967) about the world by considering what happens

when rules are broken. These deviant cases can be as interesting to study as normative cases, in so far as they can reveal the underlying values and assumptions that have been challenged. Douglas's argument about dirt being matter out of place helps us to understand why Abigail felt the rabbit in the toilet was disgusting. The rabbit being out of place confuses us. The distinction between clean and tidy representing respectable and dirty/ messy representing the rough is evident here with the reference to the Chatsworth Estate from the Channel 4 television programme *Shameless*. The Chatsworth Estate is a council estate whose residents are often unemployed (by choice), work-shy 'rough' residents who live in not very nice homes. Abigail is making the distinction between herself and this other woman. As Abigail's home is not like hers, she is not like a character from Shameless. The women do not want others to think of them in the same way they think of people with dirty homes, they don't want to be seen as rough. By offering a different presentation of the home i.e. clean and tidy, the women present themselves as respectable. A correct performance of respectability is offered unlike the perceived failed attempt seen above. Some social rules only become visible when they are broken. A messy home is breaking the rules. Rule-breaking acts are significant not only in terms of their implications for the individual (losing face, feeling ashamed), but also in terms of the social relations they evoke.

Skeggs (1997) argues that working-class women are under surveillance from a judgemental external imaginary other. In the same way that we saw in the last chapter, the women do not want to be seen as undesirable through being unemployed by other people, the women do not want to be seen in a negative light through their homes. This in turn makes the women scrutinise themselves and hence keep their homes clean. I would argue that this external imaginary other can also be a real external other. As well as surveying themselves, the women are under surveillance from other women and men,

> He went out the other night and stayed at his friend's and came in on Sunday and he actually said how disgusting it [his friend's flat] was, it's a brand new flat and he has split up with his girlfriend and he said the toilet was filthy and he said thanks to me for doing it [the domestic work in their home] (Abigail).

As the flat is brand new, the assumption from Abigail's partner is that it should not be disgusting. The implication is that the flat is dirty because the girlfriend no longer lives there, it must have been her who cleaned. By thanking Abigail for keeping their home clean, Abigail's partner is in effect saying thank you for doing the housework because if not, he would too live in a disgusting home with a dirty toilet. Her efforts have been recognised and she has been thanked for them but only when her partner saw what their home would be like if Abigail did not do the housework. We see in this instance that domestic work is assumed by Abigail's partner to be women's work, and because he does not offer to do more but just thanks her.

We again see the importance of creating the right impression for other women through the issue of employing a cleaner. I wanted to ask the women if they would like to have a cleaner as when women are engaged in paid work, this work may not have a 'liberating effect for women' (Arber and Gilbert 1992), but may simply as we have seen, increase their burden as they have to combine paid and domestic work. Also the other time pressures from childcare and the women's perceived incapability of their partners' domestic work prompted this interest. There was a split with some women saying they would like a cleaner while others did not, though both responses were linked to standards of cleanliness and the presentation of the home. Amy has a cleaner while Michelle and Katie previously had a cleaner when they lived outside of the UK. Amy's main reason for having a cleaner is because she was finding it extremely difficult to find time to combine her paid and domestic work responsibilities. Having a dirty and messy home was causing her upset. Rather than her husband offering to do more domestic work, they decided to hire a cleaner. This may again indicate the gendered nature of domestic work. Hiring a cleaner is quite common for middle class couples as this helps with the double burden women have and helps stop arguments about men contributing more. This links to the idea that domestic work is a woman's responsibility. Gregson and Lowe's (1994) research on waged domestic labour and the redistribution of domestic work within dual career couples shows that when women have greater economic power (Amy earns more than her partner) this does not mean men do

more domestic work, rather that other women, a cleaner for example is paid to do it as they have the income to do so.

For those who did want a cleaner the idea that your home would be clean and tidy more often was advantageous while for those who did not want a cleaner, they were concerned with the cleaner's standards of cleanliness. Catherine for example was concerned because she felt 'sometimes cleaners aren't as clean as you think they are', while Debra said, 'I think I would still pick at it if somebody else was doing and because they may put something back wrong'. Not doing the work to the standard they require and/or not putting things back in the right place would have a detrimental effect on the presentation of the home which would then reflect badly on the women. Some of the women also did not like the idea that someone else would see their home when it was dirty and messy. Catherine said, 'I sometimes think bloody hell look at that dust on that skirting board and I wouldn't want someone thinking 'eh look they haven't cleaned their skirting boards' ' and Natalie when I asked if she would like a cleaner said, "no because I would have to clean the house before she came in" I then asked why: 'cause somebody else would be coming into my house and I wouldn't want them coming into my house when it was dirty'. There are two points to raise here. The first being that the some of the women don't want a cleaner because they feel a cleaner may judge their own standards. They are worried a cleaner may think they are not respectable as they don't or can't keep a clean home. The second being that the women are concerned a cleaner won't do the work properly. This may have consequences for the women. If a cleaner does not clean to their standards then they will have to do the work again, and when time is an issue for the women this will cause problems. And if the home is not cleaned properly this may disrupt the impression the women are trying to give. It is also worth questioning why Natalie would feel the need to clean before a cleaner came in. Again this may be because she does not want any visitor to think badly of her for having a dirty home (even when that is the purpose of them being there) but as I have shown there is something distinctive about cleaning. For example you wouldn't try to paint the house before a decorator came in. As discussed earlier, I would argue that although I have shown domestic work has to be taught, cleaning is not

seen as a skill: it is perceived as natural, is something that women can and should do and so dirt and mess should not be apparent.

The women's domestic practices are under surveillance from other women, including in some cases their own mothers and mothers-in-law. Amy (the one middle-class woman in the study), is aware of how her home reflects upon her as a person, but rather than being concerned about the impression visitors will have of her, it is her mother-in-law who she feels judges her, on her ability to look after her home. She spoke about how at first she found it difficult having her mother-in-law as their cleaner and the judgements she felt she was making on her capabilities as her son's wife,

> I didn't want his Mam as our cleaner, somebody who didn't talk about me behind my back, you know somebody who wasn't going to say 'oh what a grubby git' when I hadn't done anything (laughs), bad wife, she doesn't do anything, so I find that difficult even though I appreciate what she does and we do pay her so it's not like, she still knows what my house is like which is hard but he doesn't care and if she ever mentions anything I just look at him [her husband] and he has to say 'mother we don't want to talk about it'… I think she does tell his Nana because she made a comment about my housekeeping one time about 6 months ago, I can't remember what it was now, it was something about not looking after my house properly and it made me think who has told you that? and I was like 'oh right now I see'.

Her efforts have been scrutinised, they have not lived up to her mother-in-law's expectations (according to Amy her mother-in-law is working-class). This surveillance and then comment to her about her efforts then makes Amy aware that she is being scrutinised. Middle-class women may also be affected by the need to keep their homes clean but the sentiment to do so was so much stronger in the accounts of the working-class women as there is a greater fear of them being judged as lazy and without value.

As many of the women are in close contact with their mothers and see them regularly, having a clean and tidy house for when their mothers came round was important for some of the women, especially for Abigail, Michelle and Natalie. Some of the women get honour from producing a clean home: from being able to meet or else attempting to meet their mother's standards. For example Abigail said she would tidy and clean more if her mother was visiting

than anyone else. This may be because she said her mother has criticised her way of doing domestic work and/or not doing certain household tasks regularly enough such as washing the windows or cleaning the skirting boards. In conversation with me and Abigail, Catherine spoke about how at her boyfriend's parent's house they do not dry the dishes,

> Catherine: they eat their tea and then they just leave the pots on the side but I have never been brought up with that, I know there is nothing wrong with washing your pots and leaving them on the side…
> Abigail: I do that, my Mam goes nuts. But my view is my Mam has too much time and she knows I think that, I just look at her now when she says stuff about inside windows and stuff like that, I am like 'woman'! Cos my Mam has nothing better to do. Like in the holidays I will do the skirting boards and stuff like that then.

Abigail can't always meet her mother's standards. There is a tension here in that when there is time available Abigail does those extra tasks she normally doesn't have time to do. The holidays become a time to do domestic work and Abigail is at pains to point this out. When Abigail is not engaged in paid work she feels she should be doing domestic work. As I pointed out in chapter two, individual's 'make' rather than passively 'take' their roles and are constantly revising their behaviour in light of the behaviour of others. This can explain why the women behave in different ways in front of different visitors.

Because of a judgemental external other, the women keep their homes tidy, but also when they know they will be expecting visitors, purposely tidy and clean if need be. Even if they only had short notice, they will quickly tidy up the areas visitors will see. I argue that this is the women adopting impression management. Because the women live close to family and friends there is always chance that someone may call by unexpectedly which is another reason for constantly keeping their homes clean and tidy,

> Gemma: So why don't you like it being messy?
> Abigail: I just think you never know who is going to come in you know what I mean. You never know so you have to be on top of it. I will, like if he says 'oh me Mam is coming round' I have to tidy up and stuff but he wouldn't think anything of it.
> Gemma: So if you knew you had visitors coming round would you purposely tidy up?
> Abigail: Yeah

> Catherine: If I knew I had visitors coming round I would hoover and tidy the kitchen. I hate messy kitchens
> Abigail: And I would spray some Febreeze and maybe shake and vac

Visitors to Catherine's house enter by the back door, which leads into the kitchen. This explains why she said she would clean the kitchen because as she said, 'see people always come in my back door so I would have to tidy the kitchen as well 'cause first appearances count'. We see here how having your home smelling clean is also a factor in creating a good impression. Abigail felt spraying Febreeze was important as she has a dog and was worried that her home would smell badly because of this. Abigail's partner, she states, would not think to clean the toilet before visitors arrive. It is she who is concerned about cleanliness and the impression this will give, not him. She has to do the work ready for visitors to give an impression of respectability.

Katie

Aged 30. Identified as working-class and heterosexual.

Katie grew up with her mother (who intermittently worked part-time in retail) her father (miner) and younger brother. Growing up she experienced an unequal domestic division of labour with her mothering doing everything for her father while Katie not her brother was expected to help.

Katie is educated to degree level. Katie was a mature student, having recently graduated at the time of the interview. Katie has had various occupations from retail, bar work and then training as a medical secretary. Katie has worked in Saudi Arabia for a period of a year on two occasions. She now works as a costing officer at a local university. She works full-time. Katie is hoping her degree in Management will allow career development and progression to a management position. Katie earns more than her partner.

Katie lives with her husband (full-time electrician) and their son (aged 2). They rent their home. Whilst at work Katie's mother provides care for her son. Katie said that she could not afford to work full-time or afford childcare so unpaid childcare in the family allowed her to return to work.

Figure 11: Participant Information

I carried out some of the interviews in the women's homes and I became the external other. For example when I arrived at Megan's home her husband told me that Megan had been cleaning and tidying for hours ready for my visit and Kimberly told me herself that she had tidied up ready for my arrival. Because the women make judgements about other people's homes and are in turn conscious that the same judgements may be made of them, when I visited some apologised to me for the mess even though in my opinion there was little mess. By apologising for the mess either to me or to any other visitor, the women are pointing out that they are aware that it is not tidy. This is to stave off criticism. Although the home may be perfectly tidy, it could always be better. How clean is a clean house? Everything could always be better; again we see the never ending nature of domestic work. It may also be that the women doubt their own judgement on how clean their home is. Skeggs refers to this doubt of your own judgement as 'the emotional politics of class' (1997:90). As I have shown, many of the women said they would be mortified if visitors saw their homes as dirty and messy as "the working class are never free from the judgement of imaginary and real others that position them, not just as different, but as inferior, as inadequate" (Skeggs 1997:90). It is important for the women to have a clean and tidy home as dirt and mess signify working-classness and hence a lack of value and lack of respectability.

Doing domestic work can further be seen as a classed gendered performance as performance is formed through interaction with others. For a respectable identity to be achieved there has to be interaction with others as the pursuit of respectability demands recognition (Sayer 2005). We have seen a recognition of failed domesticity, yet some of the women had their efforts recognised in the desired way. This was evident when for example Abigail said, 'and like sometimes people come round and they are like, "oh your house is so nice" and you get a bit of a buzz off it, it's quite nice, a show home someone said it was like'. When the good impression they want to achieve is validated by others, a sense of pleasure is derived. A correct display, the women's search for respectability through the neatness of their homes is validated. As Lawler suggests, 'it is no good doing (or being) something if no one recognizes that we are doing (or being) it. So we need to spend energy not only on an action but

also on making that action apparent' (2008:107). Goffman refers to this as dramatic realisation and it rests on impression management. I have shown that impression management works for some of the women when they are complimented on their homes in that a convincing performance of respectability has been given. We have briefly seen some of the tools used in impression management, I want to return to this now.

A search for respectability through the neatness of the home was evident in that for many of the working-class women, the idea of having a show home was seen in a positive light. For example Abigail spoke about having her home referred to as being like a show home glowingly while the idea of having a home like a show home was desirable,

> Leanne: I don't like anybody seeing the house a mess. If I am in the other room and his Mam knocks on the door I quickly run and put the plates in the kitchen and like
> Gemma: Do you not want people to think you are messy?
> Leanne: I don't know, I think it's because they always say I have a beautiful house and I always keep it clean, I think probably I'm living up to their expectations
> Rebecca: Mine is like a show home
> Leanne: Mine is verging on that mind when people come round, but not to the stage where I would say 'oh no you can't sit there' you know what I mean, but you do like to keep it pristine and if you were having a do or something it would be perfect
> Rebecca: Mind saying that my Nana doesn't like people sitting on the cushions that are on the couch
> Leanne: Yeah I know what you mean, I fluff the cushions and put the remote back and he is like 'God', and I am like' I know' but oh well

Again we see concern about family members' opinions, especially here about the impression Leanne's mother-in-law has. There is a distinction here between having your home looking like a show home but not taking this to the extreme that the home then becomes unliveable. The women have to carefully negotiate a line here in that the home needs to be clean and tidy but not too much. However for Amy (middle class) and Lindsay (shares the work equally with her partner), the idea of having a home like a show home was seen in a negative light; they both want to live in a clean and tidy home yet were critical of having a home like a show home. Lindsay said about a friend that, 'all she was bothered about was appearances, it's this is my house, it's like a show house, come and

have a look and then upstairs is like a pit'. In this instance the appearance is deceptive. Lindsay is suggesting that there may be a gap between being and seeming and this enables her critique. The impression Lindsay's friend wants her to take away has failed. Lindsay also said in the interview that people have

> ### *Lindsay*
>
> *Aged 31. Identified as working-class and heterosexual.*
>
> *Lindsay's mother died when she was young and does not have a good relationship with her father. She is educated to GCSE level. She works full-time as a carer in a residential hospital. Lindsay has a history of employment in care. Lindsay lives with her partner (full-time chef) and her daughter (aged 3). They own their own home. At the time of the interview Lindsay was on sick leave from work due to depression. She is not happy in her current job because the shift patterns make spending time with her daughter difficult. Lindsay relies on her aunts (who she has a very good relationship with) to help with childcare.*
>
> *Lindsay was the only participant who has an equal domestic division of labour in her home.*

Figure 12: Participant Information

to take her how they find her and if her home is messy then tough! As Lindsay has an equal domestic division of labour this may allow her to have a home that is generally tidy in all the rooms as two people are contributing but also because the domestic work is not her sole responsibility, a messy home will not only reflect on her if it is known her and her partner share the work.

4.3. Front/Back Stage

I will now continue to examine how a good impression is achieved and controlled. I have argued that one way in which the women manage a respectable impression is by doing most of the work themselves or by teaching their partners to do domestic work 'properly'. Yet importantly tied to this is the way in which impressions are managed through controlling which parts of the home visitors see. Respectability is created through the use of space in the

home. Goffman's (1969) dramaturgical analogy helps to further my argument that domestic work is a gendered performance concerned with creating an impression of respectability as the home like a theatre can be seen as having a front stage and a back stage (see chapter two for an explanation of the concept). The women were most concerned about the cleanliness and presentation in the 'front stage/region' of their homes as this is where their performance would be given.

The notion of presenting a respectable self to others has long been a concern of the working-class. Historically one way this was done was through the use of space in the home through the distinction of the front and back of the house. The front of the house was the public face of the home and so was kept clean to present a respectable impression to the outside world. To keep the front of the home clean the back door was used by its inhabitants as their entrance to the home, especially by those who returned home from work dirty. By using the back door, dirt would be kept to the rear of the house, away from visitors who would enter by the front door. Visitors would then only see a clean and tidy space and respectability could be maintained (Martin 1981). Although this practice does continue today but to a lesser extent, in this research it was apparent that a distinction between the two areas of the home remains. This distinction remains part of creating a respectable impression. The idea that there are areas of the home that visitors will not see in order that respectability is maintained was evident. A split into a front and back region became apparent when some of the women spoke about cleanliness being most important in the areas that visitors would see, i.e. in the front region (downstairs). This is where the performance is given and so is important that these rooms are tidy. The back region (upstairs) could be messy, as visitors would not see those rooms. An example of this can be seen in the following,

> If I knew someone was coming round I would fly round and like move shoes and letters and all sorts of things, but every time people come round they say it's immaculate, I mean they don't see the bedrooms, the bedrooms aren't immaculate especially the spare room. You know what it's like, it's somewhere to throw your shoes and I have said [to her partner] I don't mind if you want to throw your stuff like your clothes and that, put it all in that room because I don't mind how messy that room is, I

never clean in there, I hoover but never clean it. As long as the dining room, living room, the kitchen and the bathroom are fine (Jennifer).

Unlike in the quote above where Lindsay is critical of her friend's home (for being messy upstairs), Jennifer's attempt to be seen as respectable was successful as visitors tell her that her home is immaculate despite the fact that the back region is messy. This impression management works as the visitors do not see the messy rooms. Unlike the rabbit in the downstairs toilet which was 'out of place', Jennifer's items which are 'out of place' are hidden from visitors. The shoes, clothes and so on are 'out of place' but have been put in rooms where they will not be seen. The expression of shock at having a rabbit in a toilet is more disruptive to the order of things as although you would expect to find shoes etc. in a spare room, even if they are messy, a rabbit in a toilet is unheard of. It is evident in the above quote that domestic work is not just about hygiene because some rooms such as spare rooms or spare bedrooms were rarely cleaned and tidied to the same standards as downstairs. As Jennifer went on to say, 'as long as I know it looks clean and that it looks ok then I don't mind, clean behind the toilet who is going to know that?'. Yet as we saw earlier sometimes this doesn't work. Like Lindsay, visitors to Jennifer's home may see dirt behind the toilet.

Despite this, for the women, domestic work is about trying to offer the right impression in the rooms visitors would see,

> I would pick up the shoes in the front door 'cause there are always loads of shoes there and I would actually walk through the rooms as a person who was outside and see what looks messy and do that so I would walk into me sitting room and straighten me couch up, fluff all the cushions up and wipe the dust off the top of the glass table… then I would literally run up stairs and shut all the doors, keep the bathroom door open so no one walked into the wrong bedroom by accident and seen the mess and I would literally pick everything out of the bathroom and chuck it in the spare room and shut the door (Natalie).

Natalie is making herself the external other here. There are pressures to make her house look lovely and this is her way of doing this. Closing the door on messy rooms allows the women to control the impression they want to give and leaving the bathroom door open means this impression will not be ruined. This

practice of closing doors on messy rooms occurs in many of the women's homes. The back region, rooms such as bedrooms or rooms not intended to be seen can be closed off to visitors and like backstage in a theatre is not accessible by visitors,

> Hannah: if there was plates in the sink and there food on plates lying around I would be bothered, I would be like oh god, put everything in the kitchen and shut the kitchen door
> Gemma: Why would you be bothered about it?
> Hannah: I think its cos its what people think of you I think, they'd think God she is a messy person she doesn't even tidy up

Again it was apparent that the women felt a messy home would reflect badly upon them and so want manage the impression they want to give.

Goffman's later work on frame analysis is also useful in understanding why this occurs. Manning (1992) suggests that *Frame Analysis* is a reworking of the themes from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, which shows people manipulating social situations in order to achieve certain goals, yet *Frame Analysis* is useful as it can help further our understanding of what is going on in the home, as our observations for Goffman, are understandable only in terms of the frames we put around them. That is, we can only understand the actions and/or meanings associated with behaviour in the home e.g. how/why domestic work tasks are done, by looking at it in the frame of the home. How we choose to act can be dependent upon how someone reads a frame. For Goffman, 'The underlying message of frame analysis is, then, that the procedures whereby we persuade others that what they see is real or genuine are precisely the same procedures whereby we cheat, deceive, or manipulate them' (1974:120). The women are aware of the gains to be made by manipulating framing assumptions. Being aware of visitors calling allows the women time to clean their homes and present in the correct way so that a good impression is given. Even if they only present certain rooms in their house to visitors by closing the doors on messy rooms, by having the front region of the house clean and tidy, it gives the overall impression that the whole house will be the same. This is what Goffman terms impression management. Even if downstairs is different to upstairs the impression given is that the whole house is tidy. 'A frame is

fabricated when it is organised by a party in such a way that others will have false ideas about what is happening in the frame' (1974:83). Goffman uses the term anchors to show how trust in frames is maintained through the use of various procedures that anchor frame activity. Anchors ensure that the frame's purported meaning and its actual meaning remain identical and anchors use a series of devices to convince us that what appears to be real is real. As I have shown, some of the women spoke about how other people have said to them on more than one occasion that their homes are lovely. If an impression is formed over multiple visits then if some rooms are messy, when the doors are shut, the assumption is even stronger that those other rooms would be the same standard of cleanliness. The overall impression given is that the whole of the house is tidy. I want to suggest that the question here then is not whether it's true or false that a whole house is tidy, but rather whether the performance is convincing.

5. Conclusion

This chapter represents my attempt to make sense of the women's domestic working lives through the use of the gender as a performance/ the 'doing gender' approach. The originality of this research lies in my explanation as to why the women in this study do the majority of the domestic work in their homes. The women do most of the work for a number of reasons. This included the social norm that it is natural for women to do domestic work, that pleasure in the form of value and claiming a respectable identity can be gained through doing domestic work. For many of the women that their worth as a woman is strongly associated with the home through the domestic work they do. Through doing domestic work and presenting their homes in a certain way because this represents a work ethic (a tidy home is indication of work being done), an understanding of knowing and valuing the 'right' things, including knowing how to present their home to visitors, in effect how to avoid critical impressions from a judgemental other. This means domestic work plays a crucial role in the construction of the women's identity. My contribution to the domestic division of labour debate is that these issues and the significance of unpaid domestic work practices to the women's identity construction contribute to an unequal domestic

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division of labour. I argued that through engagement with domestic work, gender is both produced and performed in a classed way. Gender is accomplished by doing domestic work (doing the majority of the work and doing gender specific tasks). The women give a gendered performance and as these performances are repeated over and over, this repetition produces gender. West and Zimmerman argue that key to understanding accomplishment is accountability. Similar to Goffman's concept of impression management, accountability for West and Zimmerman is important as our actions, (domestic practices in this instance) are legitimated or discredited by others. Similarily Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny (2011) argue that the domestic division of labour remains unequal is because there remain barriers in place stopping change, which they suggest lie at the interactional level. Doing domestic work produces a clean and tidy home, but I have also demonstrated in this chapter the importance of interaction in that doing domestic work also produces sets of relations between people, such as those between the women and their partner, between mother and daughter and with an imaginary and/or real 'other'. Whoever the 'audience', whether that be other women or even themselves, the women self observe their behaviour. A classed gendered performance of respectability is given to others but identity is also about becoming intelligible to oneself. In terms of accountability, it is the individual women who 'do gender' in a classed way, but it is the process of rendering something accountable in both interactional and institutional. It is other individuals (the audience) who legitimate the women's practices, but it is wider ideas about appropriate female behaviour which influences the women's everyday domestic practices. Both wider gender and class structures are important here.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Gender identities and gender relations are complex and vary over space and time and across different social class, regional and age groups. Through an examination the women's everyday home and working lives (with a focus on community, home and work), this thesis offers a specific local exploration of what it is like, and what it means, to be a young woman living in the region today. As the women are between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one, the focus here is on a particular period, the early stage of their working lives. This cohort represents a group who are experiencing new social roles such as leaving full-time education for the first time, moving out of the parental home, perhaps settling down with a partner and combining paid work with motherhood and/or domestic work. This made them an interesting group to study to explore the relationship between work, gender and social class. in this final chapter I explore this relationship and present a summary of the interlinking themes and document the processes of gendering and classing in the women's lives, while also addressing the implications of the research findings and analysis for sociology.

1. Making Invisible Lives Visible

One of the initial justifications for and importance of this piece of research was to address the lack of focus by sociologists on the lives of young women living in former mining communities. Through this piece of research, by focusing on the lives of a group of women living in former mining communities, I have begun to correct this problem. Although this is a small scale study of life in one area of the UK, I hope this local account will become part of a larger body of literature which aims to understand the lives of young women living in former mining localities across the UK, to make the lives of an under-researched group visible. An important strength of this study is that it also offers a 'different story' about life in former mining communities. Rather than presenting a heroic account of the male masculine manual worker, or addressing the lives of women in relation to their male partners, or the work process rather than the home, I aimed to

understand the everyday lives of a group of women living in one such locality by focusing on the women's community, work and family lives.

In keeping with placing importance on the local context of women's lives, Maynard (1995) argued for feminist sociologists to produce 'middle order' theories which emphasise the specifics of given social contexts, institutions and relationships to offer general grounded generalisations integrated with empirical research. As a feminist sociologist doing empirical research I analysed 'the localised contexts of women's everyday existence and the meanings (the) women give to their lives without losing sight of structural patterns of domination and subordination' (Jackson 1999:4.2). In this chapter I point to the specifics of the women's lives in a local social context and the meanings the women give to their lives. The study of the everyday is crucial as investigation into daily interactions, practices and behaviours can reveal understanding of larger social structures (Crowe and Pope 2008). Although social structures, both class and gender operate on an everyday level. Everyday institutions and practices are classed and gendered. Everyday sites such as the home and places of work are where the classing and gendering of individuals and relationships take place (Bradley 2007). By beginning analysis at the level of the everyday, by analysing the women's practices in everyday sites, allowed larger structural class and gender inequalities to be seen playing out.

2. Reviving and Reintegration

A further contribution this thesis makes is the demonstration of the continued importance of the sociological study of work in a climate where work has become less central, having being pushed aside by other sociological concerns (Strangleman 2005, Halford & Strangleman 2009). Throughout this thesis I have demonstrated how crucial the continued importance of the sociological study of work is in three ways. First because of the central role work plays in the women's lives in terms of their everyday practices, second because work remains one of the main mechanisms in the reproduction of social inequalities and third because work is significant in the women's in identity formation. I return to these shortly. One of the main arguments this thesis presents is that despite arguments proclaiming the end of work's ability to provide identity

(Casey 1995, Rifkin 1995), the women's classed gender identities are substantially produced through engagement with different types of work. Both employment and domestic work are major sources of identity for the women. The women attach positive value to work. By doing work, whether domestic or paid, allows the women to take value from that work and claim a respectable identity. In terms of paid work the women take a positive identity from paid work because of the value they place on being in employment. Working represents a commitment to work, hard work and self-reliance; values they associate with a respectable identity, while the women's strong work commitment results in paid work being central to the women's sense of self. Similarly in terms of domestic work value as a good wife and/or mother is gained from the result of doing domestic work, having a clean, tidy home. Work was also shown to be a feature of the women's social class identification. The women linked, the need to work and type of employment with social class position, while a strong commitment to work and not relying upon state benefits (alongside family background) allowed the women to claim a respectable working-class identity[65]. As such, the sociological study of work remains as relevant as ever.

However as Halford and Strangleman suggest, there is a need for a reintegration of the study of work with other sociological agendas. As well as this reintegration, reviving the study of work, it is also of crucial importance because as made clear throughout this thesis, to understand both the women's working lives and how work is key to their identity formation; we have to connect this to gender and social class. We continue to need a sociology of work to fully understand the pervasive influence work has on people's lives especially as the organisation of work and the cultural values with which paid and domestic work have been associated remain gendered, while what happens in the labour market is intrinsically bound up with male and female roles in the family and unpaid work more broadly. The need to connect the study of work with gender and class was especially made evident in my suggestion that a recognition of the value the women attach to work in general and the actual work they do, is crucial in enabling an understanding of the women's pursuit of respectability. Here we saw wider social structures of class and gender playing out in the

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[65] I shortly return to the influence the mining community heritage has on this.

women's everyday lives and why integrating the study of work with a performative understanding of gender and new understandings of social class is both necessary and possible. 'Performance' is a useful concept to use but as social life is not simply characterised by male domination, inequalities emerge along other lines, an integration with new understandings of social class was needed. This integration was also important so that new debates about social class do not negate work and continue to engage with employment and domestic work. Hebson argues that new debates about social class do not engage with employment research. I would argue they fail to engage with debates about domestic work. This thesis has begun to redress this balance. The originality of this thesis thus lies in my integration of the study of work with other sociological agendas which will hopefully allow the study of work in one way to continue and thrive. This allows through this thesis to contribute in new ways to sociological knowledge. In the rest of this chapter I reiterate my key arguments and focus on the linked themes running throughout the analysis chapters. The themes all relate to the importance work plays in the women's lives both in terms of their everyday practices and the women's identity construction. Through engagement with different types of work, gender is 'done' in a classed way.

3. Doing Work: Doing Gender

Work as an everyday activity is both gendered and gendering. Paid work is gendered in that although the women are engaged in a variety of different occupations, it was apparent that vertical and horizontal segregation are features of the women's labour market participation. In chapter two I detailed how in the UK women continue to be unequal to men in paid work in, in terms of occupation type, hours worked and unequal pay. This research showed the same pattern. First, horizontal segregation was evident here as all of the women's work histories are heavily concentrated in female dominated positions. Second, there is an indication of vertical segregation as only six of the women hold professional positions. Although some work in professional occupations and some earn more than their male partners, most of the women work in female dominated occupations and earn less than their partners, while many of

the mothers reduced their employment working hours to part-time on returning to work after the birth of a child.

Gendered expectations surrounding the care of children were also evident. The women took a relatively short time out of the labour market to have children and it has been suggested that motherhood disrupts women's working lives less than in the past (Rubery *et al.* 1998). However inequalities because of the gendered expectations around parenting remain. Mothering still has an associated primary caring role for the women living in this region. Women adjust their working time because they feel responsible for caring obligations. Also as the majority of the women earn less than their partners, it is the women, not their partners who if possible reduce their working hours to reduce the impact on the household budget. Women's employment position both horizontally and vertically impacts upon decisions about who should care for children. This was also clear when we see that is mainly female family members (grandmothers and aunts) who help care for their children. 'Choice' about returning to work part-time is made on the fact that the women want to care for children and often earn less than men. 'The so-called 'choices' parents make about who is the primary earner and who takes time out to look after the children are still being made on a playing field that is not level or equal between men and women' (Scott, Crompton & Lyonette 2010:9).

Domestic work is gendered in that traditional domestic gender practices were apparent in most of the women's homes as the women do most of the domestic work, do tasks coded as female and take overall responsibility for the work in their homes. Women have traditionally been seen as being naturally disposed to female occupations and domestic work. However as was seen in the last chapter, women are not naturally skilled to be able to successfully carry out domestic work. There was hidden training involved from other female family members. Gender inequalities in the labour market are seen playing out in the lives of these women. Wider gender structures shape the women's employment, parenting and domestic practices. Gender and class inequalities through participation in work continue to be features of this group of women's lives. By working in female occupations and doing most of the domestic work, because the women constantly repeat these female coded roles, the women 'do

gender' through the work that they do. This constant doing and re-doing of these different forms of female coded work reproduce gender and using Butler's argument make the women female. The women are engaged in gendered work in that they do female associated work, but I also argued that gender is produced through engagement with different types of work.

Women have been cementing their labour market participation in increasing numbers and as a result, work-based identities are assuming greater significance in women's conceptions of themselves (McDowell 2006). This was certainly shown to be the case here. The home and workplace are sites where our gendered sense of self is constituted. A gendered sense of self is made through the work done in these sites. Work is gendering in that engagement in work produces a gendered performance. To fully understand this and to show how the women's classed gender identity is substantially produced through engagement with paid and unpaid work, I drew on performativity theory and the 'doing gender' approach while recognising that social class must be considered alongside gender. As well as repetition being key to the doing gender approach, interaction with and recognition from others is also key in identity formation. In each of the data chapters the importance work plays in the women's pursuit of a respectable identity is apparent. But why is this important to the women? To understand this performance and hence identity formation through the women's engagement with work, we have to look at the value the women attach to work. A respectable identity has to be claimed in relation to others. Work is crucial in an understanding of the women's pursuit of a respectable identity as the work people do (or don't do), influences how the women view themselves and others. There is a lot at stake in practices of identity and being recognised as a particular kind of person. The women felt it was very important to be seen as a worker. As working-class women, this is important as historically the working-class has been characterised as being lazy, workshy and without value. However many have a strong commitment to paid work as positive value is associated with working for a living. The women felt able to claim a respectable identity from being a worker because as discussed being in paid work has value in itself as it means the women are contributing to society and are not reliant upon state benefits. The women were highly aware of the social stigma

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attached to those who choose to be unemployed and rely on state benefits and wanted to distance themselves from being seen in this way.

The women take value and a positive identity from being a 'worker' in the employed sense but they also take value from the work they do in the other areas of their lives. Goffman argued that the presentation of the self is given for an audience, even if that audience is only an imaginary one. Identity is about becoming intelligible to yourself and to others. As Butler (2004) argues, becoming intelligible involves engaging with current forms of social recognition which requires repetition over time. The women give a successful performance of respectable identity through engagement with paid and domestic work. Current social recognition requires women to be workers even when they are mothers. It was apparent in the mothers' accounts that their participation in paid work enabled them in their eyes to be better mothers. Government policies construct both mothers and fathers as workers (Brannen 1999, McDowell *et.al.* 2005). Through these policies both parents are expected to provide materially for children (Miller 1997 in Walby 1999). Paid work is an increasingly large part of everyday life for women with full-time work being seen by government as something all adults without caring responsibilities can and should be doing (McDowell et al 2005). Mothers are now encouraged to work. Across Europe, governments are encouraging women's employment even when their children are young (Crompton 2006). The idea that women should work to provide financially for themselves and their families as we have seen, is apparent in the women's accounts. The development of 'social citizenship' has placed as much emphasis on obligations as on rights, the prime obligation being work as a means of self-reliance which as Morris (1999) suggests, this places women in an ambiguous position. Women she argues either earn their 'public' citizenship rights by their own paid employment or they perform their 'private' family obligations and remain dependent. A separation of identities as mothers and workers is at least partially undermined in these women's accounts. Work needs to be 'seen' being done for recognition to occur. The women feel their 'private' role as a mother is not recognised so the place importance on their 'public' contribution as in part they do not want to be associated with those women who choose not to work and hence do not contribute to society. The

women get something from paid work that they don't get from motherhood. This issue stems from the fact that the women are not able to full participate fully in the labour market unlike men. As the women cannot equally participate in the labour market, as long as the main responsibility for caring resides with women, the women feel their contribution is not as great and so want to be recognised as contributing to society through being in employment. Part-time work was seen as the ideal solution to this as it allowed the women to hold a respectable identity as a mother and a worker.

Despite domestic work being seen as inherently less valuable as it is regarded as unskilled, the women themselves place high value on their domestic efforts. This is because there is great value and prestige attached to having a clean home. To have a clean, tidy home is evidence of work being done, and indicates that a woman is not lazy. as identity construction requires interaction, repetition and recognition, for the women's respectable identity to be validated, a correct performance of domesticity in the eyes of others has to be given. For example doing domestic work and presenting a clean and tidy home offers a presentation of the self; that of a respectable woman and good wife and/or mother. When the women are complimented on their homes they have successfully given a correct display of domesticity. Yet as we have seen this relationship with an 'other' whether a real or an invisible external other means the women regulate their own behaviour. Overall the work the women do; paid, domestic, mothering all tie together to present a respectable identity to the social world. In effect through doing work the women show the outside world that they have value. I argued that understanding the domestic division of labour in this way allows for new ways of thinking about why the women in this research do the majority of domestic work. Understanding the domestic division of labour is complex. Reasons women do most of the work range from and include expectations about the role of women in the home to the influence of paid working hours. What is shown to be significant here are the pleasures and dangers associated with doing and not doing domestic work. The significance of these domestic work practices must also be grounded in an understanding of the intersection of gender with social class because doing domestic work for the women is about more than the labour; it is about accruing value from having

and offering an impression of a clean and tidy home in order to present a respectable self. The dangers of not doing domestic work or offering a failed performance of domesticity means a respectable identity cannot be claimed. This thesis has clearly demonstrated that gender and class heavily influence doing domestic work, being a worker and/or being a working mother. The women give a successful performance of respectable identity through engagement with paid and domestic work. What is significant here, is that I have argued that the gendered and classed nature of these different types of work all play a crucial role in the construction of the women's identity. But more than this, gender and class inequalities are significant features in the women's identity construction. The fact that the women's working lives are gendered and classed influence who they are. Their identity construction is based on inequalities, gendered expectations about women's role in society and an attempt to avoid the social stigma of un-respectability. Work arrangements have a key role in the construction and reproduction of class and gender relations.

4. Respectful and Disrespectful 'Others'

Throughout the thesis we have seen the influence of both real and an imaginary external other on the women's working practices and values. Through discussions of 'others', in this case both economically marginal and middle-class women, the women presented and made sense of their own class location. Influenced by Lawler (2005b)'s paper on expressions of disgust at white working-class existence and what this may be able to tell us about middle-class identities and identifications, I argue that the women's disapproval/disgust of economically marginal groups can inform our understanding of the women's class identities and class identifications. We can in part understand the women's class identity through their disassociation with economically marginal groups. This imaginary other is presented by some of the women as a tool to distance them from the economically marginalised, excluding them from critical widely-held views about the undeserving poor. Lawler argues in her discussion of middle-class identities, the issue here is not simply about the women looking down on people, but more importantly is about how the women 'work to produce (in this case identities) that rely on *not* being the repellent and disgusting 'other'

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(2005b:431). In effect, the women regard those who they see as economically marginal as lacking in something; lacking pride, taste and respectability. The women counteract this through the different types of work they do. . I argued that exploring the women's identification with a respectable other, the middle-class, was also crucial in understanding the women's class identification. When dis-identifying with the middle-class the women were not disapproving or disgusted at their tastes or choices about paid work, instead the women felt they could not be middle-class because of something lacking in themselves, whether it be material assets or cultural tastes. The women felt they could not accrue value in the same way that middle-class women do so aim to be respectable through the work that they do and by keeping a clean home. Sayer (2005) notes that people's normative concerns in relation to class go beyond unequal distribution of material goods to questions of just what is good in terms of ways of life, practices and behaviours that people see as desirable and I would add undesirable. Sayer argues that class (and I would add, 'doing work', because of the positive value the women attach to work), affects how others value them and respond to them, which in turn affects their sense of self-worth as 'we are evaluative beings continually monitoring and assessing out behaviour and that of others, needing their approval and respect' (Sayer 2005:1). While the influence of an external imaginary other allows the women to dis-identify with those individuals from economically marginal groups an external other also means they scrutinise their own behaviour. This was particularly evident in chapters four, five and six. This dis-identification with 'others' is an important feature of the creation of classed gendered identities. I suggested that claims that stable identities based on familial social class have been replaced with multiple, fragmented more uncertain identities based on lifestyle and consumer choices are unfounded. Beck argues that individuals are no longer firmly rooted in 'given' social identities that provide social bases for what people think, that individualisation disengages class culture from class position (Beck 2007). This has not been shown to be the case here. The fact that the women came from working-class backgrounds had a major impact on their identification as working-class. They believed that your class position at birth could not change. The implications of this are that the women will then

constantly be aiming for a respectable identity, to distant themselves from the negative associations with being working-class. For example the women will constantly feel the need to offer a correct performance of domesticity so not to be judged as unrespectable. Yet we see a contradiction in the women's accounts as the strong working-class identity attached to the area the women live in and the long working-class pride associated with a strong work ethic, mean the women are happy to identify as working-class. This identification as working-class but constant aim to be seen as respectable may be explained because traditionally this strong working-class identity tied to a strong work ethic was connected to the working lives of men and not women. Women are judged in very different ways to men. Women were judged on their homes, mothering practices and engagement with paid work. These feelings of judgement continue in the women's accounts resulting in the pursuit to be seen as respectable in all areas of their lives.

5. Work, Class and Gender and Place

Looking at the women's lives predominantly through a work lens allowed me to see complexities of the women's working lives on a daily basis. Throughout the analysis chapters we saw how paid work, domestic work and parenting are all interlinked. But more than this we saw how work in the women's lives in interconnected across different sites and with different people whether that be with family members and partners through childcare practices or through domestic work with women doing work for their partners and the influence of outsiders on the women's construction and presentation of their homes. This research displayed empirically two of the main arguments in the new sociology of work approach, the interconnectedness of work and the conceptualisation that work is embedded in other domains and entangled in other sorts of social relations. The new sociology of work approach was adopted as (Pettinger et al. 2005) place great emphasis on the relationship between work and social class, and between work and gender relations. The intersection of class and gender in the analysis of young women's lives was so strong. Paid and unpaid work relations are entangled with gender, class and place. This research has recast and reconfirmed older patterns of gendered inequalities.

The women's lives are in part structured by their class position. To fully understand the women's lives the pervasive influence of both gender and class on their lives must be acknowledged. Gender and social class are active, ongoing, negotiable sets of practices that vary across time and space. Place was an important part of the research as the everyday localised context of the women's lives was apparent. Traditional mining communities were characterised by their close-knot nature. This remained a feature of the women's lives. As I was interested in the kinds of networks the women belong to and what form they take, I used Spencer and Pahl's (2006) notion of personal communities to help understand the women's relationships with family and friends. The women have small but close-knit personal communities. First I demonstrated the women have strong attachments to family members, and that the mother-daughter relationship was particularly strong. The women have strong attachments to family in part due to the need for support but also living close to family allows the women to have regular contact. As has long been a characteristic of life in working-class communities, family support in the form of informal childcare was crucial in allowing some of the women to return to work. I argued that these strong family attachments impact on the nature of women's friendships. Feelings of community belonging or attachment for the women were also linked to family stemming from the close relationship they have with family and because they live nearby.

I argued that work influences so many parts of the women's lives, even their relationship with community. Work continues to affect community relations but in a very different way from when the coalmines were open. Parker argues that ,

> Much of the historical relevance of class revolves around a
> predominantly male industrialised workplace. Coal and steel, particularly
> in the North East England, conjure up the idea of working classed
> communities and it is through this predominantly male industrial male
> space that class is imbued with heroic virtue, stability and community
> (2010:16).

Rather than work (in this case coal mining) being a source of commonality for both workers and families, the lack of an industry where a large proportion of

the community are employed, men and women are now employed in a variety of occupations, many of which who have to travel outside of their home town. This alongside some movement out of home towns (although only small, often staying in the same County) means that there is not a single industry to bring people together, actors are out at work (often outside of the community) which doesn't provide people with the opportunity to get to know each other. Engagement with employment alongside their domestic responsibilities allows the women little time, after spending time with family/partners and friends, to then socialise or be able to be active in the community. As has been shown, for the women, community involvement is active, something which takes time and effort, something which the women said they couldn't commit to because of their work responsibilities. One of the significant findings of this research was that for the women in this study there is a lack of significance of the mining heritage in their daily lives. In one sense this is due to the busy nature of their lives, they are just trying to manage their different responsibilities on a daily basis. The mining heritage in terms of closeness to family, family support networks and a history of a strong work ethic and working-class pride all have a structuring structure on the women's lives but it is not something that the women use in any significant way to make sense of their own lives.

Finally I want to reiterate that class and gender relations need to be understood as 'lived', that is seen through social relations within the home, workplace and community. A focus on the women's everyday working lives and an exploration of the women's personal communities has allowed me to explore how for these women, class and gender are lived. By looking at how the social relations of gender and class are lived, social, economic and cultural forces reveal themselves in the lived reality of the women's lives and how they connect to issues of identity and social structure. Inequalities can be seen being lived. Work remains one of the main mechanisms in the reproduction of social inequalities and there remain major connections between divisions of labour and the social construction of multiple identities. Addressing the everyday localised context of women's lives as I do in this thesis highlights the key role work plays in the lives of this group of women, in terms of their everyday

practices, reproducing inequalities and in the creation of and understanding of their classed gendered position and identity.

APPENDIX A: Time Diary Discussion and Example

The interviews carried out were intended to be complemented by time diary data. However for reasons discussed below, they did not form part of the analysis. Because I do refer to the time dairy material in chapter six I want to briefly discuss their use in sociology. Time is now a major issue in sociology (Crow & Heath 2002). A consideration of the distribution of time has provided new insights into the workings of people's lives, especially in terms of how people balance employment with care and domestic responsibilities (Jarvis 2005). As I was interested in 'working time', specifically time spent on domestic work, I hoped the time diary method would be useful in establishing what domestic work the women do, if tasks are done alone or shared, and obviously how much time is spent doing those tasks. Time use data, collected in the form of diaries gives information on patterns of daily activities (Sullivan 1996). Time diaries are an alternative relatively underused method of data collection yet I felt they would complement the interview material in two ways. The first, as a method, time diaries can provide rich data on respondent's behaviour (Corti 1993). Second I felt their use important as by asking the women to keep a record of what they did and how long they spent on domestic tasks, I was able to compare the results with the amount of domestic work the women estimated they did in the interview. This was important as Press and Townsley (1998) argue that studies have consistently found that when individuals are asked direct questions about domestic work time, estimates are higher than when time diaries are employed to ascertain the same information. This method provides estimates more accurate than the short cut method of general responses from interviews (Marni and Shelton 1993). By asking the women to complete a time diary, I hoped precise estimates would be given leading to a more accurate description being recorded as this method is less subject to memory problems hence it provides more valid and reliable data (Bryman 2004). Although respondents can give fairly reasonable general estimates of the time they have spent on routine activities, the reporting burden is more difficult when it comes to domestic tasks (Bianchi *et al.* 2000). Time spent on domestic work is therefore better estimated with time diary data.

The diary used in this research was loosely based on an example from Gershuny (2000) used to account for patterns of convergence and divergence of time use across different countries, social classes and gender. Unlike usual time diaries that ask respondents to document all the activities they have carried out in a certain time period, from eating to sleeping, I was solely interested in domestic work. As I was interested in the actual amount of time the women were spending doing domestic work, the estimates derived from the time diaries are based on the women's reporting of their domestic work tasks during each day, how long they spent on each task and if it was done alone over the space of one week. The women were provided with an example of a completed time diary so there would be no confusion as to how the diary was to be completed. I did not provide the women with a list of the domestic work I wanted recording as I wanted to see what they classed as 'housework'. This was because in my previous research (Metcalfe 2005), the women made small but important distinctions between tasks that I would have classed as one task.

I attempted to integrate the time diary with the interviews by discussing the women's diary entries at the second interview. When this was possible it proved very successful. The women were often surprised at the total amount of time they spent doing domestic work over the space of a week. Many commented they didn't realise they did so much, even comparing hours spent to a having a part-time job, while for others seeing what they did down on paper confirmed how much they thought they did. Unfortunately not all of the women submitted their time diary. When I interviewed the women twice, the diary was completed for my return whereas many of the women who I only interviewed once failed to return the diary to me even after I contacted them to see if this would be possible. Consequently, I was not able to use the time diary material as fully as intended, although despite this the diary material is still interesting. The data indicated that when compared to their interview estimates, estimates were wrong, being both over and under estimated. The diaries also showed when domestic work is done, which tasks take up the most time and which tasks are carried out the most.

Time Diary Example

Over 7 days could you please fill in this time diary. In the first column if you write down the task you did (any task that you consider as housework), in the second column write if you did it by yourself or with someone and in the third column how long it took.

Thanks

Day One

What task were you doing	Was anyone else involved	Time spent
Washing Up Drying Pots	*Yes*	*10 minutes*
Washing Floor	*No*	*6 minutes*
Ironing	*No*	*40 minutes*

Day Two

What task were you doing	Was anyone else involved	Time spent
Laundry	*No*	10 minutes
Grocery Shopping	*Yes*	1 hour 10 minutes

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

Begin by thanking them for taking part.

A. Background Information (to add to what know before the interview)

1. Where do you live
2. Age
3. What is your marital status
4. Household composition
5. Educational qualifications
6. If have children are they at school etc.

B. Class Identification

Tell the participant about the research and why wanted them to take part.

I am doing this piece of research as I am interested in how young women today manage their daily lives. I am looking at the North East and particularly former mining areas as they have very working class and traditional gender backgrounds when the pits were open and now that they have been closed for some time I want to see if young women's lives are like today. I am also interested in young women as they are often ignored when people talk about young adults and this is normally done in reference to young men who are seen as victims of de-industrialisation who now cannot find work. So the reason I wanted people who had a connection to the mine was so that they came from a working class background.

Here can maybe start off by asking 'does class exist' 'is class still important'.

1. Does it mean anything to you to be a daughter / granddaughter of a miner?
2. Which class would you say the majority of people who live in Seaham belong to?
3. And what about you, which class would you say you belong to?
4. What is it that makes you (working/middle) class?

5. Possibility of asking about class position of parents/partner

C. Community and Belonging?

I would now like to ask you about what its like living in Seaham (or insert place name):

1. How long have you lived in Seaham
   - How long have you been living in your current home
   - What type of house do you live in
   - Rented or privately owned
   - If always lived here, how many times moved
   - If not always lived here, where and why moved here
   - Do you always think you will live here
   - Do you like living here
   - What are the best and worst things about living here

2. (If not talking) What is e.g. housing like around here
   - Transport
   - Job prospects
   - Medical facilities
   - Police
   - Social life
   - pubs
   - Schools
   - Social Services
   - Sports facilities

3. How do you think Seaham has changed in recent years?
4. Do you know your neighbours? – Names, friendly with them or not, people in their street
5. Do you live near your family?
   - Who (parents, siblings etc) and where do they live

- If yes how close/ no how far away
- How often do you see parents, siblings, other family members…
- Is this good that live/see them or a bad thing!

6. Do you live near your friends
  - Who and where do they live
  - If yes how close/ no how far away
  - Where do you know your friends from
  - How often do you see your friends
  - Who do you socialise with the most
  - Do you have a best friend

Bearing all those things in mind do you feel that you a part of a community or feel as though you belong to a community?
  - Do you feel you belong (in what ways do you feel you belong/ do not belong)
  - What is it that you do or experience to make you feel like you belong or do not belong
  - Do you shop/ go out drinking/ socialise in the town – if not where do they go and why

7. If have children – I would now like to ask you about who cares for your children.
  - Do any of your family and friends help look after your children on a regular basis or even just occasionally say babysitting?
  - Paid carer / nursery/ school. Who pays for the childcare (her, him, joint, benefits, how much does it cost?)
  - Do you ever help to look after any of your friends or families children

Paid Employment:

D. Your Work Now – For those in paid employment

1. I would now like to ask you about your work. Do you have a paid job?
   - Where , what, how long been there, hours, regular working pattern
   - Part / full time, permanent /temporary
2. I would now like to ask you what your job means to you. Do you like your job?
   - What is/isn't it that you particularly like or dislike
   - How satisfied in job
3. Do you feel it is important to be working?
   - Why do you go to work
4. Do your friends have similar jobs?
5. Do you see yourself staying in your present job?
   - Yes/no why

For those not in paid employment:

You told me on the phone that you do not have a job; I would now like to ask you about that,

1. How long have you not been working or have you never had a paid job?
2. Have you chosen not to work or would you consider yourself unemployed?

For those chosen not to work:
1. Can you tell me why you have chosen not to have a paid job?
   - Was it an easy decision to make, how did you make the decision, was it made in conjunction with your partner, how does he feel about you not working, does partner expect her to take care of the home, how manage financially – does he give you money
2. Do you intend to go back to work at any point?
3. Do you consider yourself as a housewife?

For those women who are unemployed
1. Have you been unemployed before?
2. What is it like being unemployed? How does it make you feel?

- Money, how spend time

3. How does your partner feel about you being unemployed?

- Expected to take care of the home, supportive

E. Work Aspirations

(italics for those not in paid employment when options)

1. Can you tell me about previous jobs you have had
   - Types of work
   - Why left
2. Any other types of work want to do / *what type of work do you want or at looking at, are you looking for work*
3. Did you always want to work in …? / *have you always wanted to do that*
4. *Do you think it is difficult to find work?*
5. *Do you think it is important to be working?*
6. When you were did you think you would be in the position you are today?
   - What did you want to do when younger/school leaving age
   - Did parents point you in any direction

If have children:

1. How did having children effect your working life
   - Do they envisage it changing again as kids get older

If don't have children

2. Do you see yourself having children?
3. How do you think it will effect your working life

F. Work / Life Balance

1. Does work take up a lot of your time?

2. Do you ever feel work conflicts with other areas of your life?

- Does it impinge on time with children/ partner/family/ friends

3. Do you have plenty of spare time to be able to do what you want?

G. Partner's Work

Does your partner work?

If yes:

- What, where, wage (similar if also working)
- Who is the main breadwinner
- Whose job is most important in your home

If no:

- Is he looking for work or chosen not to work (how was that decision made)
- How long been unemployed, previous work, what looking for
- What is it like being sole earner – bills, money, housework
- How do you feel about your partner not working

Ask both:

- Who pays the household bills / who is responsible for this
- Do you have a joint bank account

H. Parent's Paid Work

1. When you were younger did you Mam have a paid job

- What, part / full time
- Did she work when very young i.e. waited until went to school.
- In your lifetime has she always worked
- Also ask about how this related to home life

2. Do you think your working life is different from your mother's when she was your age – in what ways?

DOMESTIC WORK

I would like to talk to you about housework today so I will be asking you about who does what in your home and your feelings about housework.

A   Domestic Routine

1. I would like to begin by asking you to tell me about what you do on an ordinary day. Was yesterday and ordinary day? If no –why not a normal day and then go onto ask what a normal day would consist of. *If yes* can you tell me what you did beginning with when you got up (ask why they do their tasks on certain days, certain times)
2. Could you tell me what happens during the rest of the week
3. And at the weekend
4. Is that pretty routine or does it vary from week to week
5. I can see from the time diary that you have given me that you do …

From the activities given in the time diary ask if they mostly do that task or do they share it or does someone else mostly do it.

If haven't mentioned all from the list below ask the same about the missing activities: who does them, her, him or share

- Food shopping
- Dusting
- Vacuuming
- Washing the car
- Cleaning
- Laundry – washing clothes
- Gardening
- Ironing
- Cooking (and deciding what to have)
- Household Repairs
- Washing Up

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6. How many hours do you think you spend doing housework in a week

7. When does partner do his housework

8. Overall then who would you say does the most housework in your home

9. Who do you think is responsible for housework in your home – doing it and arranging /organising what needs to be done – who do you think should be responsible. How does that make you feel

Attitudes towards housework

10. Why do you / your partner do most of the housework or why do you share

11. Are you happy with how housework is done in your home

- Are you happy with who does what/ the situation

- How do you think he feel about it

- Who do you think should be doing the housework

- Do you wish your partner did more or you do more

- How do you decide who does what

- When first moved in did you discuss who would do what

- Has it ever caused arguments

- Do you do things differently

12. Does anyone else do housework in your home –children/cleaner etc.

13. For single mothers – what is it like having to do all the housework yourself (if do)

14. Do you like having to do/doing housework

15. Are there any tasks you particularly like or dislike – why

16. How do you feel when your house is untidy, messy or dirty – do you mind or not. Would you be bothered if your house was messy or dirty when you had visitors?

17. What would you think about someone if you went to their house and it was messy or dirty and you thought it needed cleaning?

Children

1. Did the way housework was done in your home change after you had your first child? – How - Did more, got more help?

2. Is it difficult keeping your home tidy with children? Constantly tidying? How it makes them feel

3. Do any of the children help you with the housework – how and what? Will you expect them to do more as get older? Do they girls and boys do different things?

Friends and Family

1. If you think about your friends who have their own homes, who does the housework in their homes? Do you discuss housework with them?

1. When you were younger and lived with your parents who did the housework

    - What did Mam, Dad, you, siblings do

2. Does how you do your housework differ from how your parents do their housework, and how they did it when you were still at home

End of Schedule.

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

Newcastle University

E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Information Sheet

Research Project: Young Women's Everyday Home and Working Lives

Researcher: Gemma Metcalfe, Newcastle University

Before taking part in the research will you please read the following information as before deciding to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being carried out and what taking part will involve. Please ask if there is anything you are unsure about.

1. About me

I am a PhD student at Newcastle University and my PhD is based in Sociology. My email address is Gemma.Metcalfe@ncl.ac.uk and my telephone number is 07806335794. This piece of research is being supervised by lecturers in Sociology (Dr. Stephanie Lawler) and in Geography (Dr. Alison Stenning). This piece of research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

2. What is the research about?

The research is interested in looking at the everyday home and working lives of young women living in former mining communities in the North East. I am interested in how young women today manage their daily lives in relation to work, housework and childcare.

3. What is involved in taking part?

To take part in the research you will be interviewed on two separate occasions (or one longer session if that would be more suitable) where I will talk to you for approximately one to one and a half hours about work, housework, childcare, work life balance and about where you live (please note you do not have to be employed to take part). You are also required to complete over the space of a week a time diary where you are asked to record what housework you have done and how long it took.

4. Criteria

I am looking to interview young women:

- Aged 18-30
- Who live in a former mining community
- Live with their partner and/or children
- Have a parent, grand or great grand parent who worked at the coal mine (although this is not essential).

4. Taking Part

If you decide that you would like to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and will also be asked to sign a consent form.

Your identity will be kept anonymous – your name will be changed. Information given in the interviews will be confidential. I would also like to tape record the interviews.

£15 in Boots gift vouchers will be given at the second interview as thanks for taking part.

5. What will the research be used for?

The research will be used to write my doctoral thesis and the research generated from the interviews and time diaries will also be presented at academic conferences and in academic journals.

Thank you,

Gemma

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