Perspectives on the Pursuit of Professional Learning: Insights from Teachers who are Mothers

Emma Aoife O'Brien

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UCL Institute of Education
University College London

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I, Emma Aoife O’Brien, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

ABSTRACT

The majority of teachers in England are women and many will become mothers at some point during their careers. As most women undertake the main caring role in the family, it is important to investigate their experience of pursuing professional learning whilst raising their children.

In 2016 I interviewed six teachers who are mothers of children under ten years to explore their experiences of pursuing professional learning. The research concerns the following questions: how do the teachers who are mothers regard professional learning and its pursuit? What have been their experiences and what challenges have they encountered when pursuing professional learning? And how have they responded to challenges in order to pursue professional learning?

The theoretical framework of the research comprises a Bourdieusian analytical lens underpinned by a materialist feminist perspective whilst drawing on life history approaches and thematic analysis. The women are introduced through six portraits, before moving to a presentation of data where thematic analysis is employed to compare and contrast the women's experiences. Extending the analysis, I harness Bourdieu's *theory of practice* to magnify the women's narratives and consider their experiences of pursuing professional learning in Bourdieusian terms. The methodology combining life history and thematic analysis methods with Bourdieu's *theory of practice* working in concert with materialist feminism, offers an original contribution to the discourse around women's professional learning experiences, as teachers who are mothers.

My thesis asserts the need to cultivate a greater understanding of the professional needs of teachers who are mothers and to recalibrate perceptions of women teaching part-time. A primary audience is senior leadership in schools; those best placed to inculcate the changes needed to support teachers in their pursuit of professional learning. However, the impact of raising children on mothers' potential to pursue professional learning necessitates crucial conversations amongst policy makers, stakeholders, professional learning providers, and in wider society.

IMPACT STATEMENT

Having presented my work at the #Women*Ed* annual conference in October 2016 and at the annual BERA conference in September 2017, there is interest in the experiences of women. This thesis highlights the necessity for greater understanding of the needs of women teachers who are mothers, particularly those teaching part-time. My research can open up critical conversations in schools and in wider society with the purpose of 'reframing debates', 'contributing to the understanding of policy issues' and 'influencing the development of policy [and] practice' and 'altering behaviour' (ESRC, n.d). I suggest that my research has implications for the following:

Policy makers

'Every teacher deserves access to high quality and purposeful development opportunities throughout their career' (Gibb, 2016). Policy makers need to consider what this might look like for teachers who are mothers and how access is not merely providing professional learning but also facilitating the pursuit of such opportunities.

Stakeholders

Organisations such as The Chartered College of Teaching, Teacher Development Trust and #Women*Ed,* in tandem with teaching unions, need to develop the provision of a range of strategies to support women teachers who are mothers as they seek out and procure meaningful professional learning.

School leadership

School leadership teams need to consider the ability of all staff to pursue opportunities when planning for professional learning and avoid scheduling CPD that may result in the exclusion of part-time teachers. Whether or not teaching part-time, the needs of teachers who are mothers must be taken into account; building opportunities into the working day rather than after school should be considered.

Professional development providers

Providers should avoid programming courses at weekends or during holiday time and aim to counsel schools of the necessity to consider the needs of staff with caring responsibilities. Providers need to argue the importance of teachers' entitlement to professional development commensurate with other professions.

Women teachers

Whilst this thesis has focused on six women, their stories may encourage others to reflect on their professional learning needs and ask for increased support from school

leadership to develop professionally. It is also my hope that participating in this research has been a professional learning experience for the women involved.

Societal impact

It is vital that professional learning opportunities meet the individual needs of teachers. In addition, the implications in our communities where mothers' potential to pursue professional learning is impacted when caring for children demands important conversations in schools and wider society.

Academic impact

In terms of furthering vital conversations within and across these groups, my use of a life history research method, thematic analysis and materialist feminism combined with Bourdieu's *theory of practice* offers a new theoretical perspective in the discourse around women's professional learning experiences as teachers who are mothers. In addition, having conceptualised women teachers' experiences in terms of home and school field, this new theoretical perspective could open up future exploration of teacher wellbeing in the school field and how this impacts the home field.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BERA	British Education Research Association
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
G&T	Gifted and Talented
GTCE	General Teaching Council for England
GTP	Graduate Teacher Programme
INSET	In-Service training
NCT	National Childbirth Trust
NCTL	National College for Teaching and Leadership
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
TDA	Training and Development Agency
TDT	Teacher Development Trust
TES	Times Educational Supplement
TRA	Teacher Regulation Agency
TTA	Teacher Training Agency

PERSPECTIVES ON THE PURSUIT OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: INSIGHTS FROM TEACHERS WHO ARE MOTHERS

PART 1: CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1: RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

This thesis investigates the issue of women teachers engaged in the work of mothering whilst pursuing professional learning.

Working in teacher professional development at the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education, I am interested in the experiences of teachers as they engage in professional learning. My previous research in 2012 explored how a male teacher perceived the impact of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) on his professional life and in 2014 I interviewed two female teachers, Katie and Charlotte[1], about their experiences of CPD.

The words of Katie have stayed with me. An experienced teacher of over thirty years, she spoke of the challenge of pursuing professional learning when raising her children,

> ... I can remember not reading any books for quite a long period of time. Now I read avidly, I'll get through a book a week, maybe two and I didn't do any of that for, oh I don't know now, a few years and it's a horrible place, like being in a desert and as soon as they were old enough or they were reading (inaudible), I can remember, I didn't really do any courses or anything like that and then when he got a job, when he finished the PhD he was out commuting long hours and long distances ... (O'Brien, 2014: 51)[2].

Katie's children are now grown, but at the time of the study Charlotte was contemplating how she might balance her career with a future family[3] and I was struck by the role motherhood might play in determining women teachers' experiences of professional learning. I began to wonder whether the experiences of women raising families whilst teaching now are any different to Katie's.

With Katie's words uppermost in my mind, I wanted to explore the experiences of women teachers with young children as they pursue professional learning. In doing so a life history approach has been employed (Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Goodson, 1992: 6) – an appropriate method for my research question and one that prioritises teachers' voices – reflective of the esteem in which I hold individuals' life stories.

Trained as a history teacher, people's stories have always been important to me, indeed 'everyone has stories to tell. No life can truly be considered uneventful or boring' (Goodson and Sikes, 2001: 4). This sense of valuing life stories has grown over the years with my work in Holocaust education at the Imperial War Museum and latterly

[1] Pseudonyms.
[2] Quote from my earlier research reused with participant's permission (11 July 2016).
[3] Reference to the conversation used with the participant's permission (15 July 2016).

the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education, where so often I have encountered the stories of people's lives cut short. My passion for people's stories has led me towards using a life history approach throughout my doctoral studies. Whilst working on this thesis I have been reminded of how important it is to immerse one-self in the narratives of others, 'to enter into the distinctive personal history to attempt to gain an understanding – at once unique and general – of each life story' (Bourdieu, 1999: 614).

Epistemologically, social constructionism underpins the thesis and this is paired with realist ontology (discussed in Chapter 3). This reflects my interest in the meanings people make when reflecting on their experiences of pursuing professional learning. Given my conviction concerning the importance of listening to teachers' voices (Goodson, 1991: 36) and to hear from women teachers themselves about the material inequality many face when pursuing professional learning, employing a feminist theory is crucial and fits well with a life history approach (Goodson and Sikes, 2001: 10; Coffey, 1999: 12).

Jackson *et al*. (2011: 8) citing Acker (1994), state that feminist research 'aims to show an awareness of women's injustices; to improve women's lives, to highlight the centrality of women; to replace existing knowledges; and to consider the position of the researcher and the researched'. My research reflects this aspiration. In addition to this feminist foundation, Bourdieu's *theory of practice* has been central to my thinking and provides the analytical lens in the thesis.

Whilst my research methodology has been developed in response to the research question, the above touches on my positionality as a researcher, in the acknowledgment that,

> Fieldwork always starts from where we are. We do not come to a setting without an identity, constructed and shaped by complex social processes. We bring to a setting disciplinary knowledge and theoretical frameworks. We also bring a self which is, among other things, gendered, sexual, occupational, generational – located in time and space (Coffey, 1999: 158).

The researcher is 'the ultimate in research instruments' (Coffey, 1999: 161) and who the researcher is 'makes a difference at all levels of the research' (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994: 423), therefore it is important for the reader to know something of the researcher if they are to understand the research (Chase, 2005: 666). With this in mind I include a self-portrait alongside the portraits of my research participants in Chapter 5. Additionally, in light of the Bourdieusian analytical lens I apply in the thesis, I discuss

Bourdieu's *participant objectivation* in Chapter 9 and further reflect on my role and place in the research.

Opfer and Pedder (2010) outlined 'two issues' in accessing CPD. They cited the 'primary barrier to participation' as the 'lack of varied opportunities' offered to teachers (Opfer and Pedder, 2010: 458) and the twin barriers of 'school-level conditions' (such as budget) and 'teacher perceptions', such as the lack of interest of 'older colleagues' (Opfer and Pedder, 2010: 464). They reported that teachers in their survey and 'qualitative "snapshots"' of twelve schools 'did not perceive gender to be an issue in opportunities for CPD' (Opfer and Pedder, 2010: 458-459). Gender may not be an issue regarding opportunities for CPD, but what if it is a factor in pursuing those opportunities? Opfer and Pedder (2010) may not have identified gender as an issue, however their focus was not on the pursuit of learning but the opportunities made available.

In 2014 more than one million women were working in teaching and education roles (Penfold and Foxton, 2015a: 1). Given that the majority of teachers are women (DfE, 2011a; 2013a; 2015a; 2017a: 7) likely to be mothers at some point during their careers, and taking the main caring role in the family (Walsh, 2011: 140), I suggest that it is important to investigate their experience of pursuing professional learning – not only the opportunities made available to them – in order to ensure accessibility.

A call for evidence in September 2015 (DfE, 2015b) regarding creating a teachers' professional development standard, indicated a growing interest in 'what makes for effective professional development', with a focus on 'the types of professional development that works best', and 'the culture and environment in schools that best support it'. This last point is crucial and needs to be considered in the context of women teachers with young children balancing the demands of raising a family and pursuing professional learning opportunities presented to them.

The research comprises four strands[4]:

1. How do the six women teachers who are mothers regard professional learning and its pursuit?
2. What have been the various experiences of the women when pursuing professional learning?

[4] The overarching title of the thesis is inspired by the titles of Barbara Cole's (2004) book 'Mother-Teachers: Insights into inclusion' and Jane Ribben's PhD thesis 'Accounting for Our Children: differing perspectives on 'family life' in middle income households' (in Ribbens, 1994: 3-4).

3. What challenges have the women encountered when pursuing professional learning?
4. How have the women responded to the challenges faced in order to pursue professional learning?

To begin, I explain the thinking that underpins the wording of my thesis title in much the same way as Ribbens (1994: 1). The word *perspectives* was chosen because I wanted to communicate that the research is based on the views of women and that I recognise the subjective nature of their experiences. The notion of *insights* suggests we are invited into the participants' world through the narratives of their experiences. Meanwhile, I settled on the word *pursuit* rather than access as I explore the experience of pursuing rather than accessing professional learning.

Given that I work within teacher professional development, and this research aims to contribute to professional knowledge, it has been important to focus my research specifically on the professional learning of the teachers. In this study, *professional learning* encompasses formal professional development and broader informal planned and unplanned learning opportunities in which teachers engage. For the purposes of this research, by *teacher* I mean a qualified teacher, currently working part-time or full-time, in a state secondary school.

Finally the term *mother* requires comment. The socially constructed notion of motherhood can be seen to be one aspect (of many) of the identities held by the participants. I have focused my research on six women teachers who identify as mothers and perceive themselves immersed in the work of mothering children aged 10 years old or younger.

In his introduction to Sikes' work 'Parents who Teach' (1997: xi), Hargreaves writes,

> Teachers teach in the way they do not just because of the skills they have or have not learned. The ways they teach are also grounded in their backgrounds, their biographies, in the kinds of teachers they have become. Their careers – their hopes and dreams, their opportunities and aspirations, or the frustration of these things – are also important for teachers' commitment, enthusiasm and morale.

Hargreaves places the experience of parenting as 'one of the most widespread influences on teachers' work' (in Sikes, 1997: xiii). Therefore, I argue that we need to investigate how teachers who are mothers pursue professional learning.

Whilst a significant audience for this research is professional development providers, a primary audience is senior leadership teams in schools. It is hoped that this research

will encourage senior leaders to reflect on the experiences presented in this thesis, and consider how they might best support women teachers in schools raising their families whilst also pursuing professional learning.

Meanwhile, policy makers and stakeholders such as The Chartered College of Teaching, the Teacher Development Trust, #Women*Ed* and teaching unions, can build on this research and develop the provision of a range of strategies to support teachers who are mothers as they pursue meaningful professional learning.

The stories of the six women in this research may also resonate with other teachers who are mothers and encourage them to reflect on their professional learning needs. In doing so, it is my hope that these women will ask for the support they need from their school leaders to develop professionally.

The methodology and theoretical foundations of the research rest on a coalescence of life history approaches, thematic analysis, materialist feminism and Bourdieu's *theory of practice.* This combination offers an original contribution to the discourse around women's professional learning experiences, as teachers who are mothers.

The thesis asserts it is essential to cultivate a greater understanding of the professional needs of teachers who are mothers and that this will require a recalibration of the perception of teachers working part-time. In addition, it is crucial to recognise the need to support teachers' professional learning on an individual basis, acknowledging their professional and personal life stages. As such, conversations need to take place amongst policy makers, stakeholders, professional learning providers, and in wider society.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the key concepts and theories that inform my research. Initially the notion of motherhood is explored and then discussed in relation to paid employment with specific reference to teaching. I then move to define professional development and professional learning, outlining their relationship and acknowledging their convergence and divergence.

Having defined my key concepts, I progress to sketch an outline of materialist feminism before offering an exposition of Bourdieu's *theory of practice*. Thus, I outline my theoretical framework before discussing in Chapter 3 how I use these theoretical perspectives in concert whilst drawing on a life history method.

Motherhood

There is much written about mothers: Mothers and their experiences of motherhood and child-rearing (Miller, 2005; Phoenix and Woollett, 1991; Ribbens, 1994; Ribbens, 1998; Woollett and Phoenix, 1991a); mothers and their interactions with their children's schooling (Cole, 2004; David, 1993); working mothers (Tizard, 1991); academic mothers (Pillay, 2007); mothers who are teachers (Grumet, 1988; Sikes, 1997), mothers who are students (Hughes, 1993); and mothers as life-long learners (Walsh, 2011).

There has been a significant amount of literature theorising motherhood and mothering with the aim of offering conceptual models or conducting empirical research on the mothering experience. As I consider some of this work it is worth noting that the women participants in the research were born in the 1970s and 1980s and that their own experiences of being mothered would have been in the context of the earlier writings. Meanwhile the youngest children in the group were born around 2014 and the eldest 2006. The use of literature spanning such a period of time fits with my use of a life history approach and the Bourdieusian thinking tool, *habitus* (see page 31).

Woollett and Phoenix (1991a: 30-31) outline theorising models of mothering developed during the period 1945-1991. They cite Baldwin (1948) who suggested that mothering could be described in terms of combining mothers' attitudes towards 'control' and 'democracy'. They also describe the work of Baumrind (1967, 1973), who argued that 'an account of mothering required consideration of four dimensions in combination:

control, clarity of communication, nurturance and demands for mature behaviour', these dimensions then 'cluster[ing] into three patterns: permissive, authoritarian and authoritative' with authoritative mothers (high in all dimensions) regarded as the most effective (ibid.). Despite Baumrind's work being more than twenty years old at the time of their writing, Woollett and Phoenix indicated that her ideas were still influential regarding what was to be considered as good parenting citing an NSPCC guide of 1989 (ibid.).

Woollett and Phoenix (1991a: 31) note that whilst these kinds of matrices were being developed as ways to analyse mothering, there was little research on why mothers mother in the way they do. Mothers' perceptions of their child rearing was given more attention by Newson and Newson (1968 and 1976) who interviewed women about their experiences of raising children and this brought out two themes described by Woollett and Phoenix (ibid.) as: 'controlling children and ensuring their compliance' and 'child-centredness'. In the 1970s and 1980s researchers' attention turned to 'mother-child interactions' with the focus on young children, resulting in a conceptualisation developed around 'responsiveness' and 'sensitivity' but lacking consideration of the impact of mothering on mothers themselves (Woollett and Phoenix, 1991a: 33-34).

In charting the developments in how mothering and motherhood had been conceptualised from 1945 to 1991, Woollett and Phoenix (1991a) highlight that psychological theories have varied. However, they argue that historically the focus had been on child development and from this were extrapolated ideas on how mothers should mother. This led to mothering norms that included,

> strong feelings of attachment, taking major responsibility for their children's care, staying at home while their children are young and being sensitively responsive to their behaviour and individuality (Woollett and Phoenix, 1991a: 44).

Woollett and Phoenix (ibid.) conclude that 'many of these assumptions about how women should mother have passed into general use and are included in professional advice to mothers', advice that fails to take fully into account women's individual experiences or specific circumstances.

Writing a decade later, Arendell (2000: 1192) highlights that 'scholarly work on mothering focuses on the person who does the relational and logistical work of childrearing', and 'definitions of mothering', centre around the 'social practices of nurturing and caring for dependent children'. Addressing the developments in theorising motherhood, Arendell (2000) discusses the notion of '*intensive mothering'* where 'mothering is exclusive, wholly child centred, emotionally involving, and time-

consuming' (Hays in Arendell, 2000: 1194), noting this ideology 'both assumes and reinforces the traditional gender-based division of labor' (Fineman in Arendell, 2000: 1194). The work of mothers has also been conceptualised, involved as they are in '"maternal practice" – the nurturing, protecting and training of their children' (Arendell, 2000: 1194). 'Maternal practice' requires mothers, 'through dynamic interaction with their children' to 'foster and shape a profound ... deeply meaningful connection' (Oberman and Josselson in Arendell, 2000: 1194) with the result that '"mothering is learned in the process of interaction with the individual mothered"' (Barnard and Martell in Arendell, 2000: 1194). In discussing these various theorisations, Arendell acknowledges that some theorists have argued that mothering is not a private relationship between mother and child, but sits within specific contexts; the intersection of social, cultural, economic, political, ethnic and class contexts impact the meanings women make when mothering, and how they come to understand motherhood (Arendell, 2000: 1194-1195).

In her research on the experience of transitioning to motherhood, Miller (2007) notes that the new mothers she interviewed framed their experiences in terms of three discourses, the two '"official"' discourses of '"the medical discourse and natural childbirth discourse"' (Cosslett in Miller, 2007: 338) and 'a third, "unofficial popular discourse" comprising "old wives" tales and based on maternal experiences of childbirth' (Cosslett in Miller, 2007: 338-9). Miller (2007: 338) explains how the first two focus on positive stories of mothering experiences 'and underpin stereotypes of the "good mother"'.

These official frameworks focus on 'a woman's ... predisposition to instinctively know and be able to care for her child' whilst also featuring 'the need for expert medical guidance' (Miller, 2007: 339). Miller observes that whilst discourses can be challenged, and may exist alongside other discourses, or be revised in light of work that can show how 'taken-for-granted aspects of reproduction and mothering practices result from contemporary "pseudo-scientific directives" and "managed constructs"' (Duden in Miller, 2007: 339), nonetheless they are still regarded as '"true"' (Elvin-Nowak and Thomsson in Miller, 2007: 339). Expectations of motherhood, particularly before having one's own children can end up resting on 'notions of "nature", "instinct", and experts knowing best' (Oakley in Miller, 2007: 339). Ideas such as these combined with the expectation that the female body is designed for child bearing and a '"good mother"' can naturally 'meet [her] child's needs' (Miller, 2007: 340) are especially difficult constructs to dismantle when they are so powerfully embedded. Meanwhile,

experiences that don't conform to the 'good mothering discourses' are not voiced and leave the constructs in place (Cosslett in Miller, 2007: 340).

It is upon having children that women are able to consider their own experiences in light of societal discourses. With regards to Miller's (2012: 43) longitudinal research with 17 women, she highlights that 'for all the women, transition to motherhood was different to how they had envisaged it – often harder and lonelier' although she has also acknowledged that some strands of official discourse are 'impervious' to challenge (Miller, 2007: 355) and that 'the ways in which mothering and motherhood are configured in the West ... shapes what can and cannot be said about [women's] experiences' (Miller: 2005: 160).

Whilst Woollett and Phoenix (1991a), Arendell (2000), Miller (2007) and Brunton *et al.* (2011), offer insights into some of the conceptual frameworks used to theorise mothering and motherhood, Ribbens (1994:96) developed 'a heuristic device' when working with her six participants, pairing them under three headings to ease navigation of the mothering experiences they described.

Ribbens (1994: 95-96) explains that the heading 'Fitting Children into Adult Frameworks' prioritises the notion that 'children have to learn to fit in with adult beliefs and patterns within the household', whilst 'Fitting in around the Children', establishes childhood as a 'special, almost magical time' and 'children have special needs to which adults should respond and adapt their own expectations of household patterns'. A third heading (Ribbens, 1994: 136), 'Overview of the Portraits', communicates more 'ambivalent' accounts from the final pair with 'more mixed imagery' employed by the women. It is important to note that even when the paired women shared commonalities of mothering approaches, their interpretations of the overarching ideas that Ribbens used for categorisation still exhibited notable contrasts and all the women 'expressed degrees of ambivalence and mixed views' (Ribbens, 1994: 96). Whilst this device helps to explore the experiences of the women, like other frameworks, it does not offer a definitive model of the experience of motherhood.

I now turn to the relationship between motherhood and paid employment outside the home. In doing so I touch on the intersection between motherhood and teaching.

Motherhood and employment

In researching 'balancing caring and paid work', Miller (2012: 40) notes her preferred use of the term '"work-life balance"' whilst acknowledging alternative constructions such as '"work-family balance"' and '"family-friendly working"' that 'reflect neo-liberal discourses of autonomy, individualism and choice'. In this thesis I have chosen to refer to home-school balance and avoid the juxtaposition of work with life. Work can be found both in the domestic (private) and working (public) domains – Lewis (1991: 196) suggests that the term '"working mother"' implies that 'childcare is not work'. I explore the balance the participants seek to create between the work of mothering in the home and the work of teaching in the school, whilst life is also experienced in both domains.

The expectation to 'work flexibly, fitting their work around family needs', falls to mothers (Perrons *et al.,* in Miller, 2012: 40). It is the '"*who*"' that is of vital importance in the discourse around '*who* is actually expected or enabled to work flexibly' and that by asking '"who"' we are forced to examine more carefully 'family lives, policy shifts, and societal constructions of motherhood and fatherhood' (Miller 2012: 40). Any changes in expectations of the roles mothers and fathers undertake in the family and paid employment appear slow (Smith, 2016: 105; Miller, 2012: 40), with 'a man's decision to devote more time to his family continu[ing] to be a "personal choice" (McRobbie, 2009: 81) ... for a woman it is the norm or the socially expected decision' (Smith, 2016: 105).

A 'sexual division-of-labour' analysis (Tong, 2014: 113) may point to the disparity in the work traditionally undertaken by men and women in the home. In discussing Young's (1981) 'sexual division-of-labor' analysis, Tong (ibid.) explores the idea that because capitalism identifies women as a '"secondary"' workforce, a patriarchal system promulgates the belief that 'women are needed at home in a way men are not', indeed, 'men are freer to work outside the home than women are'. It may be that women choose to focus less on progressing their careers when their children are young – as such this raises questions as to why they would make this choice. As Tong (2014:117-118) asks,

> *why* is it that *women* limit their paid work outside the home in ways that men do not? Is it because women do not want to work long hours outside the home? ... Or is it because women think it is their responsibility rather than men's to take time off work to rear their children properly …?'[5]

[5] Miller (2012: 51) reminds us that a mother working outside the home may not be a choice 'but an economic necessity'.

Even with recent changes in maternity and paternity policy (Gov.UK, n.d a), the changes necessitated by such policies 'can be difficult to achieve at the individual/household level', given that 'these directives' are not 'value-free' (Miller, 2012: 40) but reach into people's homes and touch the very heart of 'societal expectations' and gendered norms and practices around organising family life and paid employment (Miller, 2012: 51).

In terms of the intersection between motherhood and teaching, Sikes (1997) found in her research that parents can feel the experience of parenting contributes positively to their practice as teachers, and in her conclusion explains her desire to,

> acknowledge that some of the knowledge, skills, and understandings which can accrue from the experience of motherhood ... cannot but help to have a positive impact upon how many, if not most teachers who are parents, teach (Sikes, 1997: 134).

In earlier work based on research for an ESRC funded project on teachers' careers, Sikes (1985: 50) notes 'women who have returned after having children often come back into school as "mums"' and that 'all mid-career women with children' mentioned the '"advantage"' being '"mum"' brought with it. They felt it brought 'greater understanding and sympathy'.

Meanwhile, Smith's (2016: 91) later research with 40 women teachers revealed 'home-work conflicts in their daily lives' including logistical issues of childcare arrangements and school commitments, and 'feeling unable to take time off work to care for sick children'. Smith (2016: 92) also noted a 'tendency for harsh self-judgment' and 'feelings of guilt' about not being around enough for their children. Huberman *et al.* (1993: 68) notes that for women teachers with 11-19 years of experience, an emphasis on their private life came through in his research as he explains 'for a third of these women, family life takes precedence over school life as soon as children appear on the scene. The theme of "searching for a balance with my private life" is prominent'.

Thornton and Bricheno (2009: 168) argue there is 'little doubt that men still disproportionately occupy senior leadership positions in ... schools and achieve disproportionate power and status vis-à-vis women' whilst many of Smith's participants 'perceived that having a family had limited the extent to which they had been able to focus on their career, and had impeded their career progression' (Smith, 2016: 91).

Professional development and professional learning

I next outline my thinking on the concepts professional development and professional learning and highlight that I continue to use them both in the thesis. In Chapter 6 participants' experiences of motherhood and teaching are explored and particular attention is paid to the opportunities participants pursue and experience, hence the purpose of the following section is to set out my definition of these terms.

I assert that professional learning is the holistic development of the teacher as a whole person, encompassing professional and personal growth throughout one's career. Meanwhile professional development sits within professional learning with a tighter remit and focus on classroom practice. My conception of professional learning fits with Bourdieu's *habitus* and a life history approach to research which 'demands holism' (Goodson and Sikes, 2001: 10). A life history method can also offer insight into why teachers experience professional development in the way they do (Goodson and Sikes, 2001).

In this study I work with Day's (1999) definition of professional development[6],

> Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process through which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives (Day, 1999: 4).

Regarding professional learning, my definition extends Day's definition of professional development to include deliberate and incidental opportunities where teachers can expand their professional experiences, that not only lead to an enhancement of classroom practice but a wider professional practice in a whole-school context, leading to greater whole-school responsibility and leadership. This reflects the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011b: 13) where there is an expectation of teachers to 'make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school'.

For the purposes of this thesis, my use of the term professional learning encompasses the holistic development of the teacher as a person and practitioner within their school

[6] Having used this definition throughout my doctoral studies.

environment; it is broader than professional development in terms of teacher practice and outcome and so I suggest that professional development sits within professional learning. Therefore this study considers not only professional development programmes but a wide range of professional learning opportunities that introduce new perspectives on one's academic discipline, pedagogical approaches or education more generally, such as reading literature (fiction and non-fiction) or exploring social media for new insights or advice. I continue to make reference to both professional development and professional learning throughout.

The Standard for Teacher Professional Development (DfE, 2016a: 5) refers to 'Direct Professional Development' and 'Indirect Professional Development', the former 'directly seeks to improve specific pupil outcomes', the latter 'links to pupils' outcomes less clearly, and may contribute by helping to improve the running of school or by developing teachers in other ways' (such as 'attending education conferences to increase awareness of new ideas'). I think this distinction is unhelpful. Whilst ultimately a teacher's purpose to improve practice is to benefit students, compartmentalisation of teacher practice where professional development focused on 'pupil outcomes' is deemed separate from the wider holistic development of the teacher as professional and person, destabilizes the notion of the professional teacher and places the focus on teacher '*as* practice' (Goodson, 1991: 38), thereby risking the development of 'teacher-as-person' (ibid.: 41).

Professional learning should meet the needs of the teacher and their career aspirations and potential as well as the needs of students. The Standard for Teachers' Professional Development (DfE, 2016a: 11) acknowledges that 'effective leadership of professional development balances school, subject and individual teachers' priorities'. Weston and Clay (2018: 161) argue 'in the last five years, the language around professional development has changed' with the development of 'grassroots movements' and demand for evidence-based CPD, however they also note 'teachers and students are being failed by competing pressures and lack of resources' (ibid.).

Day (1999: 1) argues, 'the nature of teaching demands that teachers engage in continuing career-long professional development, but particular needs and the ways in which they may be met will vary according to ... personal and professional histories'. Importantly, Goodall *et al.* (2005: 24) reason that 'matching appropriate professional development provision to particular professional needs is essential if effective learning is to take place'. Therefore, understanding of teachers' personal lives is essential in

order to offer them appropriate professional development and learning opportunities (Goodson and Sikes, 2001: 60).

Throughout my doctoral studies I have reflected on the notion that the experiences of the 'teacher-as-person' (Goodson, 1991: 41) are significant in constructing the teacher-as-professional (Day *et al*., 2006: 85; Day, 1999: 2; Hansen, 1995: 129; Hargreaves in Huberman, 1993: viii). Goodson (1991: 41) has pondered, 'how would you design a project to appeal to the teacher-as-person rather than to the teacher-as-educator?' and suggested that teacher professional development be reconceptualised to move 'from the teacher-as-practice to the teacher-as-person' (ibid.). In this thesis I move to delve deeper into an aspect of 'teacher-as-person' to focus on teacher-as-mother.

Moving from the concepts of motherhood, professional development and professional learning, I next discuss the theoretical perspective materialist feminism, used in this thesis to underpin Bourdieu's *theory of practice*.

Materialist feminism

Thornton and Bricheno (2009: 168-169) state that in schools 'men disproportionately achieve promotion and occupy positions where they manage the majority of the workforce who are women'. There are a range of factors why this situation continues, with Thornton and Bricheno (2009: 168) citing social perceptions of gendered roles with the qualities of leadership and power assigned to men. However, I would argue an additional factor is the inability of some teachers who are mothers to pursue professional development that will lead to promotion and leadership. This material inequality of female teachers feeling compelled to choose between family and career, the lack of progression to leadership positions in schools, and the day-to-day experience of having to balance teaching with 'additional responsibilities of the home' unlike their male counterparts (Thornton and Bricheno, 2009: 173), connects with materialist feminism that,

> approaches discourse as largely a question of ... social relations which are grounded in the material conditions of any given society. These material conditions are examined not only in terms of gender but also in relation to the actual lives of women. One of the most important ways that material feminists have sought to uncover these relations is through historical materialism which, from a feminist perspective, claims that social conditions of gender are historically situated and are subject to intervention and change (Sullivan, 1999: 1).

Whilst the development of materialist feminism was a response to the limitations of a conventional Marxist interpretation of why women find themselves unequal participants in society, it may itself be held up to criticism if one concludes that materialist feminism ignores the argument that a binary gender structure with fixed categories of men and women is a social and cultural construction (Jackson, 2001: 285). However, Jackson cautions that in the endeavour to deconstruct the category of '"women"' and acknowledge that a 'universal womanhood' is imagined (Flax in Jackson, 2001: 285) we lose 'touch with material social structures and practices' and fail to recognise that '"women"' and '"men"' are '*social* categories' and 'products of a structural hierarchy' (Jackson, 2001: 285). Difference and similarity exist between women's lives and we must avoid assuming homogeneity of lived experience, so 'whilst "woman" is a socially and politically constructed category, the ontological basis of which lies in a set of experiences rooted in the material world' (Letherby, 1994: 528), it is important to acknowledge that women 'do not all share one single ... material reality' (Stanley and Wise in Letherby, 1994: 528) and material inequality is experienced in different ways.

Bourdieu's *theory of practice*

In this thesis I apply Bourdieu's *theory of practice* comprising his thinking tools of *habitus, field* and *capital* (with particular reference to *symbolic capital*) and his concepts of *hysteresis, doxa* and *symbolic violence*. The following is an exposition of Bourdieu's thinking tools and concepts to ground his work before discussing its application in Chapter 3 and employing it as my analytical lens in chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Bourdieu defines *habitus* as 'a socialized subjectivity' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 126); it is a person's disposition and the intrinsic optic through which life is perceived – although this is not set but constantly evolving (Maton, 2012: 52). Maton (2012: 50) suggests that the term '"disposition"' is key as it brings together for Bourdieu the ideas of 'structure and tendency'. Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* communicates the twin notions of the '"*result of an organising action"' and '"a way of being, a habitual state* ... and, in particular*, a predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination"' (*Bourdieu in Maton*,* 2012: 50, original emphasis*).* In this thesis, I have taken *habitus* to mean the '"way of being"' (Bourdieu in Maton, 2012: 50) of the whole person when I write about the participants, this state based on 'an acquired system of generative schemes' (Bourdieu, 1990a: 55).

The disposition is the result of past experiences that shape an individual's perceptions and in turn go on to influence their future decisions and practices with resulting consequent experiences – which further feed their *habitus*. Bourdieu (1990a: 54) describes *habitus* as 'a product of history, produc[ing] individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history'. Whilst *habitus* is reproducing, the individual is likely to repeat practices in response to 'false anticipation' (Bourdieu, 1990a: 62) of future *field* conditions – 'in a sense pre-adapted to their demands' (Bourdieu, 1990a: 54) – this is certainly not to suggest that individuals choose unequal treatment. The 'structures characterizing a determinate class of conditions of existence produce the structures of the *habitus*' (Bourdieu, 1990a: 54) and the world in which *habitus* works 'is a world of already realized ends – procedures to follow, paths to take' (Bourdieu, 1990a: 53). Equally, Lawler (2004: 112) cautions,

> The emphasis on history can make the concept of habitus appear as the carrier of the weight of dead generations, a means of more or less straightforward reproduction. However, it is important to note that habitus is not determining, but generative.

Whilst Lawler (2004: 124) agrees with those who regard Bourdieu as pessimistic, she does not see this pessimism as determinism and neither does McNay (1999: 103) who writes, 'while an agent might be predisposed to act in certain ways, the potentiality for innovation or creative action is never foreclosed.' And whilst Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 133) continues to underline the significance of social conditions he does acknowledge, 'habitus is not the fate that some people read into it ... it is durable but not eternal!'

Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 135) reminds us that 'habitus reveals itself ... only in reference to a definite situation. It is only *in the relation* to certain structures that habitus produces given discourses or practices'. The significance of *habitus* therefore lies in its relation to *field* (Maton, 2012: 60); indeed an exploration of *habitus* whilst ignoring its relation to *field* would result in a 'stripp[ing] of its relational structure, its crucial relationship with field in generating practices' (Maton, 2012: 62).

Habitus and *field* are mutually dependent and influencing; *habitus* responding to *field* – but only so far as an individual is able to respond, their *habitus* both the quintessential lens and blind to options available (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 126; Maton, 2012: 51) – and *field* shaping *habitus*. As Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 127, original emphasis) explains, 'the relation between habitus and field operates in two ways. On one side, it is a relation of *conditioning*: the field structures the habitus ... On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or *cognitive construction'.*

Habitus is 'the social embodied ... "at home" in the field it inhabits' being at once the product of the field and constituting it (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 128). Maton (2012: 50) elaborates on Bourdieu's equation depicting the relationship between *habitus* and *field* explaining, 'one's practice results from relations between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field)'.

Field then, is the social space in which sits *habitus.* It is the site of the 'game' of life in which we are engaged with its implicit 'regularities' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 98; Bourdieu, 1990b: 64-65). We play out our positions according to the *capital* we are able to muster to our cause (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 99), but *field* only operates in relation to the situated *habitus.* Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97) defines *field* as 'a network, or a configuration of objective relations between positions'. Each *field* has 'its own logic, and it is the field which both informs and sets certain limits on practice' (Adkins, 2004a: 193). However, although the *field* sets limits, 'the actions of agents also shapes [*sic*] the habitus of the field and hence the field itself' (Adkins,

2004a: 194). By playing the 'game', the 'agents' (or 'players') concede 'the game is worth playing' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 98) as they,

> contend for the various goods and resources which are considered and recognised [capital which in turn translates as symbolic capital] to be of value within this specific field of action. In doing so players both shape the habitus of that field and the forms of action which are constitutive of that field (Adkins, 2004a: 194).

Adkins explains that 'agents' are mostly unaware of their role in constituting the *field:* given, as Bourdieu argues, that practice is an unconscious 'feel for the game', it is a 'pre-reflexive, non-cognitive form of knowledge which often cannot be explicitly articulated' (Adkins, 2004a: 194). Indeed 'empirically one does not "see" a habitus but rather the *effects* of a habitus in the practices and beliefs to which it gives rise' (Maton, 2012: 61); *habitus* is therefore made corporeal in the *field*.

Capital only exists within the field, that is, its value is determined by the *field* and manifested through the playing of the 'game'. The value of acquired *capital* bestows power and enables its possessor (the 'agent') to '*exist*' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 98); the 'moves' the 'player' makes depend on her acquired (and growing) capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 99). Moore (2012: 102) suggests it 'can be understood as the "energy" that drives the development of a field through time. Capital in action is the enactment of the principle of the field. It is the realization in specific forms of power in general'. Capital exists in different forms, '*objectified'*, '*embodied'* and also expressed in the form of *habitus*, 'continuous with each other, as "moments" of one thing rather than three different varieties of the thing' (Moore, 2012: 102-103).

Discussion of *habitus*, *field* and *capital* apart from one another cannot reflect Bourdieu's relational thinking. In fact, he argues 'habitus, field and capital can be defined, but only within the theoretical system they constitute, not in isolation' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 96). For the purposes of this study I am concerned with two *fields*, that of home and school although the focus of the research is the school field. *Habitus* is the teachers' *habitus, symbolic capital* the teachers' position, power or currency held within their school – '*objectified'*, '*embodied'* and '*realiz[ed']* (within *habitus*) (Moore, 2012: 102-103, original emphasis). As a final point, it is important to note Thomson's (2012: 72) caveat that Bourdieu intended the concept of *field* to be 'a scholastic device' in the effort to 'make sense of the world' and that 'there is no equivalent material place to a field, although all of the people, practices, institutions ... in social fields do have a physical manifestation and can be investigated'.

Therefore, although the physical spaces of home and school exist for my participants, it is the notions of these situations with which I am concerned.

Hysteresis is a useful way to understand the 'disruption between *habitus* and *field'* (Hardy, 2012a: 135) that can occur due to a 'dislocation of *habitus*' and/or 'field restructuring' (Hardy, 2012a: 126). For the purposes of this thesis it offers a helpful way to understand the dissonant position of the *habitus* within the school field that some of the participants experience upon returning to teaching after maternity leave. This thesis demonstrates 'changes in *habitus*, however sought after, can result in instability in field position and a painful struggle to maintain a desirable place in the *field*' (Hardy, 2012a: 137).

Doxa is another Bourdieusian concept employed in the thesis: 'an uncontested acceptance of the daily lifeworld' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 73). This unquestioned belief in some sort of natural order of things has significant implications, Bourdieu arguing that 'the best illustration of the political import of doxa is arguably the symbolic violence exercised upon women' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 74).

Symbolic violence is a 'generally unperceived form of violence and, in contrast to systems in which force is needed to maintain social hierarchy, is an effective and efficient form of domination in that members of the dominant classes need exert little energy to maintain their dominance' (Schubert, 2012: 180). According to Schubert, Bourdieu argues that society and its people are ordered through a system of categorisations and *symbolic violence* arises when 'we misrecognize as natural those systems of classification that are actually culturally arbitrary and historical' (Schubert, 2012: 180). In believing in a natural order,

> members of the dominant classes need only go about their normal daily lives, adhering to the rules of the system that provides them their positions of privilege. Hierarchies and systems of domination are then reproduced to the extent that the dominant and the dominated perceive these systems to be legitimate, and thus think and act in their own best interests within the context of the system itself (Schubert, 2012: 180).

A final component of a Bourdieusian approach is to acknowledge the centrality of reflexivity within one's own research. Bourdieu's theory of reflexivity spans the entirety of his work from the 1960s to 2000 and as such the concept has evolved through a period of 'significant intellectual, political and economic change' (Deer, 2012: 196). It is also important to acknowledge that he advocated a reflexivity he considered more developed than the reflexive practice purported essential by anthropologists and ethnographers, something which he referred to as '"the diary disease"' (Geertz in

Bourdieu, 2003: 282). With his reflexivity '"device"' of *participant objectivation* (Bourdieu, 2003: 281), Bourdieu aims to ensure the researcher is aware of her positionality to manage her own relationship with the research (Deer, 2012: 197).

PART 2: METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

Bourdieu's *theory of practice,* working in concert with a materialist feminist theoretical perspective, underpins my research methodology. In addition, I employ a life history approach (Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Goodson, 1992: 6) and thematic analysis.

With regards to the method of data collection, the focus is on women and their experiences whilst endeavouring to avoid any exploitation of them as 'objects of knowledge' (Westkott, 1990: 63). One could argue that my data collection procedure, resting as it does on a participatory and collaborative process of in-depth conversations to elicit narratives and highlight the centrality of the participant's voice (Borland, 1991), is feminist practice itself – although much of the aforementioned can be found in other research methods. Crotty (1998: 176-177) notes the discussion around whether there are 'distinctive feminist methodologies ... unique to feminist researchers'; certainly, I have found life history methods resonate with what might be termed 'feminist methodology' or 'feminist standpoint epistemology' (McCall, 1992: 860). Given that I am also utilising a Bourdieusian analytical lens in this study, one might regard the feminist aspect of my research as driven by a 'feminist habitus' (ibid.).

My use of a feminist theory developed in response to the needs of this study. As I was interested in the participants' perceptions, they were encouraged during the interviews to narrate their experiences in as much detail as possible; in the context of my research, it is the 'internal coherence as experienced by the person, rather than external criteria of truth or validity' with which I am most concerned (Atkinson, 1998: 61). I wanted to 'hear what women had to say in their own terms' (discussion of Belenky's work in Levesque-Lopman, 2000: 111) in recognition that '"women themselves are experts in understanding their own lives"' (Hancock in Greer, 1991: 61).

Anderson and Jack (1991: 23) highlight how oral history interviews necessitate 'a shift in methodology from information gathering ... to interaction, where the focus is on ... the dynamic unfolding of the subject's viewpoint'. This interactivity needn't be intrusive in its attempt to clarify and 'document the experience that lies outside the boundaries of acceptability' (Anderson and Jack, 1991: 11). Indeed, they caution,

> The researcher must always remain attentive to the moral dimension of interviewing and aware that she is there to follow the narrator's lead, to honor her integrity and privacy, not to intrude into areas that the narrator has chosen to hold back ... while, at the same time, offering her the

> freedom to express her own thoughts and experiences ... (Anderson and Jack, 1991: 25).

Inspired by research published by Ipsos MORI (2012) (commissioned by The Fawcett Society) which comprises the film '"who has that?"' and a companion report, '"who has that?" – Women's perceptions of equality in the 21st century' (Ipsos MORI, 2012), I was keen to produce research where the voices of individual women can be heard and the issues they face acknowledged.

For the purposes of this research, I draw on ideas from materialist feminism whilst exploring the experiences of women rearing children when working in the domestic sphere and simultaneously pursuing professional learning whilst working within a professional context, even though Adkins (2004b: 6) is cautious about 'the assumption that femininity has a "home"' and McNay (1999: 112) argues,

> The social realization of masculine and feminine identities can no longer be mapped on to a straightforward division between the public and private not least because the relationship between the two realms has become more complex in late modernity.

The epistemological underpinning of this study is one of constructionism, whilst the ontological framing is realist (Crotty, 1998). Whilst the material fact of women's inequality exists in the workforce and home, the experience of working in the private and public spheres and its resulting meaning is dependent on the individuals who construct this meaning.

Gimenez (2000: 14-15) posits that today's materialist feminism cannot deal with the material, when it entails what she regards as the relativist notions of social constructionism. She asserts that the material is 'objective' and 'independent of the subject's consciousness' (Gimenez, 2000: 15) and therefore not compatible with social constructionism. Crotty (1998: 64) however, argues that constructionism should not be pitched against realism in the first place.

It is entirely possible for this research to be both concerned with the construction of meaning made by the participants as they narrate their experiences and with the objective conditions women face in pursuing professional learning whilst raising a family – as Gimenez (2000: 15) argues, 'the oppression of women is not a story ... or a form of interpreting or reading the world'. Bourdieu meanwhile, transcends a binary objectivist/subjectivist approach (Grenfell, 1996: 288) and moves us to 'a science of the *dialectical* relations between the objective structures ... and the structured dispositions within which those structures are actualized and which tend to reproduce them'

(Bourdieu, 1977: 3). The thesis therefore examines the subjective experiences of the women and the positions of their *habitus* within the structure of the school field.

Alongside materialist feminism I also consider the intersection of various aspects of the participants' lives through a life history approach, Jackson (2001: 284) reassuring us that,

> 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 and social inequalities and everyday social practices.

Through my research, each participant revealed her own unique experiences in her pursuit of professional learning. The participants' individualities were drawn out most clearly with the biographical approach employed in the interviews and the portraits the women penned of themselves to act as stimulus for our interviews. However, I suggest that whilst there is no 'universal womanhood' (Flax in Jackson, 2001: 285) and women do not make up a class in themselves, women teachers make up a professional group.

This study is concerned with women's material inequality and its effect on their professional learning. My research explores whether it is the case that, for these six women teachers, when engaged in raising a young family, they have found the pursuit of professional learning to be a challenge. However, as Lovell (2004: 50-51) cautions, '"materialism" always carries the danger of representing the power that is rooted in economic relations as somehow "more real" than symbolic power. But if Bourdieu establishes anything it is the deep power of *symbolic* violence' and that this 'structures relationships of *domination*'.

In looking at the experiences of the participants, the research is positioned within 'a materialist feminist understanding of gender as a hierarchical social division rather than simply a cultural distinction' (Jackson, 2001: 290). Alongside this materialist feminist underpinning is my use of a biographical approach to data collection and presentation. If we take the view that the 'self is not a fixed structure' but exists and manifests in response to other social beings and 'is always in "process"' (Jackson, 2001: 288) then one might argue that a Bourdieusian-type reflexivity is at its core, 'provid[ing] us with a way of examining the positions from which we speak' (Skeggs, 2004: 21). Jackson suggests (2001: 288) that subjectivity is a 'product of individual, socially located, biographies', so too, Bourdieu's *habitus* is the product of 'one's life course' (Maton, 2012: 52). In light of works such as Goodson and Sikes (2001) and Atkinson (1998), this research is imbued with a life history approach.

By a life history approach, I mean I talked with teachers about their lives; experiences of raising a young family; of being mothers; of being mothered; their experiences of being teachers; and of pursuing professional learning. Similar to Sikes' (1997: 16) use of a life history approach, I 'collected stories told by teachers who are parents about how they believe having children ... has had implications ... for their work'. As Goodson (1992: 6) explains, 'the life history is the life story located within its historical context'. This insistence on contextualisation sits well with a Bourdieusian approach. As such, I am cognisant of the participants' narratives situated in the landscape of the UK and teacher workforce (see Appendix 1), their experiences in the context of teacher professional development outlined in Chapter 6, and am mindful of the prevailing discourses on motherhood discussed in Chapter 2. Finally, it is a Bourdieusian lens that I apply to the women's experiences, whilst acknowledging their historical context.

Bourdieu (2007) firmly asserts in his 'Sketch for a Self-Analysis' his criticism of the genre of biography, considering it to be a neatly packaged narrative constructed in hindsight (Bourdieu, 1990a: 55). Nonetheless, biography plays an essential part in *habitus* and in the *reflexivity* he undertakes and encourages.

Jackson (2001: 288) is also aware of the construction of our biographies through narrative, stating,

> the present significantly reshapes the past as we reconstruct our memories, our sense of who we are through the stories we tell to ourselves and others. Experience is thus constantly worked over, interpreted, theorised through the narrative forms and devices available to us.

At the same time, our present and possible futures are viewed through the lens of our *habitus*, formed through past experiences, which leads to expectations of the future. I am aware the participants often made sense of their experiences as they narrated them during the interviews. Jackson (2001: 288) argues that this notion of the self sits well 'with a materialist perspective' as it 'locates individual subjectivities and biographies within specific historical, social and cultural contexts, linking the self to the actualities of social existence'.

Within a feminist arena Bourdieu's work is not without its limitations, with his '"objective"' methods and reference to '"truth"' jarring against the feminist preference 'to emphasize partial "truths" and situated knowledges' (McCall, 1992: 856), and the criticism of reproducing his own androcentrism, which he purports to overcome with his *reflexivity* (Witz, 2004). However, I find that Skeggs (2004) offers a convincing argument for why I should use Bourdieu's *theory of practice* in my work. Skeggs (2004: 21)

suggests that Bourdieu can offer an '*explanatory power* that is not offered elsewhere' and outlines three 'major strands' as follows: his ability to connect 'objective structures to subjective experience'; his offer of a 'metaphoric social space in which human beings embody and carry with them ... different capitals', thus enabling consideration of 'different types of values and mobility'; and lastly his notion of *reflexivity* which provides the tool to examine our own positionality, which Skeggs describes as 'a requirement that has always been at the heart of feminists' critiques of masculine-dominated research agendas' (ibid.).

The foundational literature for my research is a coalescence of materialist feminism, life history approaches and Bourdieu's *theory of practice*. Bourdieu's thinking tool, *habitus*, sits well with life history, itself a product of the history of an individual (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 128). Meanwhile, the marriage of materialist feminism and Bourdieu's thinking is effective when one considers Bourdieu's 'appropriation of themes from Marx' such as his focus on 'the practical activity involved in the production and reproduction of social life' (Brubaker, 1985: 748). However, the connection I make between materialist feminism and Bourdieu is not because of any shared Marxist genesis, (both with their own critiques of Marxism) but because Bourdieu focuses in on the 'symbolic and the material dimensions of social life' (Brubaker, 1985: 748). Taking Brubaker's explanation of Bourdieu's analysis of class and inserting the terms gender and material we have the following,

> [Gender] divisions are defined not by differing relations to the means of production, but by differing [material] conditions of existence, differing systems of dispositions produced by differing conditioning, and differing endowments of power or capital (Brubaker, 1985: 761).

When considering the participants' experiences, I undertake a life history approach in Chapter 5 and a thematic analysis approach in Chapter 6, before employing a Bourdieusian lens in chapters 7 and 8. However, the values of feminism, life history methods and Bourdieu infuse the thesis as a whole.

The melding of approaches follows other researchers who have worked 'with', 'against' 'and through Bourdieu to put his theories to different uses, reformulating and using them eclectically (often combined with other theories)' (Skeggs, 2004: 20). This is not, Skeggs (ibid.) reassures us, 'as messy as it sounds', and she goes on to say, 'Bourdieu himself argued for the flexibility of his theories and the necessity of inconsistency'.

Combining Bourdieu's *theory of practice* with materialist feminist and life history approaches, I employ Bourdieu's process of a three-level methodology comprising; 'construction of the research object', 'field analysis' and 'participant objectivation' (Grenfell, 2012: 219-226). Within the level of field analysis is a further three-level approach as outlined by Grenfell (2012: 221):

I. Analyse the position of the field *vis-à-vis* the field of power.
II. Map out the objective structure of relations between the positions occupied by agents who compete for the legitimate forms of specific authority of which the field is a site.
III. Analyse the habitus of agents.

Grenfell (1996) and Hardy (2012b) provide examples of the stages of 'field analysis' applied although they both employ the stages in reverse order in their own research, contra to Bourdieu's suggested approach (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 104-105). Ultimately, Hardy (2012b: 239-240) argues that 'what is crucial to Bourdieu's theory of practice is that any analysis be relational' and that Bourdieu's 'relational thinking tools, field, habitus and capital, should be used together'. Hardy's and Grenfell's use of the three-level approach demonstrates that the order in which they are performed can change and the weight bestowed on each of the levels of analysis depends on the object of the research (Hardy, 2012b: 240). In light of this flexibility, I have repurposed the three levels to suit my field analysis in chapters 7 and 8 as follows:

I. Analyse the position of the field *vis-à-vis* the field of power.
II. Analyse the *habitus* of the participants.
III. Analyse the positions of the *habitus* in the *field*.

Meanwhile, Bourdieu's (2003: 281) reflexive '"device"' or *participant objectivation,* provides the tool with which to acknowledge my positionality (Skeggs 2004: 21) in Chapter 9.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODS

Sample

In developing my sample I decided to work with six women and conduct two interviews with each of them. I wanted to interview all the women more than once so that we could delve deeper, explore further and revisit conversations as necessary. In light of my utilisation of a feminist approach and life history work, I wanted to include as much of the women's own words in the main body of the thesis as possible. I judged that material from twelve interviews would enable me to include the voices of the participants in the text rather than relegate them to the appendices.

In my search for research participants I had considered the possibility of generating participants from the online community Mumsnet (see Appendix 2), but in order to maximise the potential for diversity of the six teachers, I endeavoured to source participants from a combination of places to ensure a range of experiences, backgrounds and views. I also decided not to contact possible research participants via the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education, as I wanted to source participants independently from my specific role at the Centre.

Several factors were important criteria for the sample. I was looking for women who are qualified teachers teaching in state secondary schools. As my background is secondary school teaching and I work with secondary school teachers, I am familiar with their professional context. Geographical location was also a key factor in the sample. I wanted to focus the location of the schools within easy distance of the M25 London orbital so that the women had similar geographical contexts and the group was bounded by geography.

I focused my sample on six women teachers who perceive themselves to be immersed in the work of mothering, whether this is mothering their biological, adopted or step children and where their children live in the same household as them. As per the Office for National Statistics 2013 report's definition of mothers, I did not include in my sample search foster mothers, or 'those whose children live in a separate household' (ONS, 2013: 16).

I welcomed the possible variety of family arrangements and expected parenting contexts to be unique to each of the participants; whether this be married or co-habiting

in a heterosexual or same-sex partnership, in a blended family or whilst single, separated, widowed or divorced.

I sought women with children within the following age groups (two mothers per age group): 0-under 3, 3-under 5 and 5-10. The age of children was the fundamental aspect of the sampling as the rationale for the age groups is related to stages at which caring demands on the mother's time during the working day decrease. As of January 2013, 94% of the three-year old population and 98% of the four-year old population benefitted from 'some funded early education' (DfE, 2013b: 1) and 5-10 year olds are in school in Key Stages 1 and 2. In addition, research into women's participation in the labour market in 2014 showed,

> as the age of the dependent child increases so does the participation rate for women, as 83.8% of women with dependent children aged between 16 and 18 in 2014 were participating in the labour market. The rate for those with dependent children aged 5-10 and 11-15 were similar, at 78.8% and 81.5% respectively in the final quarter of 2014 (Penfold and Foxton, 2015a: 7).

Meanwhile, 'the participation rate for women with young dependent children, aged between 0 and 4, has been much lower that the other three dependent child age groups, with 65% participating in 2014' (Penfold and Foxton, 2015a: 8). One might also regard the age range up to 10 years (Year 6) as a natural conclusion to primary education. Beyond this, the process of a child moving into secondary education (Year 7 in Key Stage 3) may usher in another period of change in the dynamics and routine of family life.

During the autumn term of 2015 I sought out suitable participants. I attended the #Women*Ed*[7] conference in October 2015 and used cards I had created for networking purposes (see Appendix 3). I also devised and had designed a flyer that went out on Twitter and Facebook in November 2015 (see Appendix 4). Various Twitter users promoted my call for participants including one who had 9,121 followers at the time. The flyer was also emailed to former colleagues in the Education Department at Imperial War Museum London (IWM) and I posted it on a closed IWM online forum.

The various promotional activities led to 28 expressions of interest. I followed these up, resulting in 13 pre-interview telephone conversations of approximately 45 minutes to one hour each. These conversations centred on me explaining the research further and ascertaining potential participants' suitability and their interest. Each conversation

[7] #Women*Ed* (n.d) is a movement 'connect[ing] existing and aspiring leaders in education' and campaigns to ensure 'a more equitable balance in terms of gender and ethnicity at leadership level across all sectors of education'.

covered a number of key issues, roughly following a script (see Appendix 5). The table in Appendix 6 details the outcome of garnering participant interest. Ultimately, one participant was secured via Twitter, two through attending a conference, two through Facebook (one of whom I knew prior to the research) and one through a mutual contact.

The final group of women[8] comprises:

Two women with children aged 0-under 3: Joanne and Samantha
Two women with children aged 3-under 5: Sarah and Karen
Two women with children aged 5-10: Claire and Nicola

Of the group:

Three teach full-time: Karen, Nicola and Joanne
Three teach part-time: Sarah, Samantha and Claire

Two hold senior leadership positions: Joanne and Nicola
Two are heads of department: Karen and Claire (job share)
Two are classroom teachers: Sarah and Samantha

[8] All pseudonyms.

Data collection

As I was interested in exploring the subjective experiences of the women, a qualitative approach was most suited to respond to my research questions. So, I employed 'semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews' (Levesque-Lopman, 2000: 110-111), allowing space for narrative (Miller, 2005; Sikes, 1997) and for the women to tell their life stories. I also developed an interview schedule for Interview 1 to act as a prompt if needed (see Appendix 7). The approach I followed is best outlined by Mason (2002: 225), where 'the style is conversational, flexible and fluid, and the purpose is achieved through active engagement by interviewer and interviewee around relevant issues, topics and experiences during the interview itself'. This approach prioritised the research participants as individuals with agency.

Prior to the interviews I asked the participants to send me a pen portrait of themselves of around 200-400 words (King and Horrocks, 2010: 183). This was to facilitate some insight into how they described themselves and what aspects of their lives and identity they chose to highlight. It was also to ensure that factual information participants regarded as important was collected so that the subsequent conversations could focus on their experiences. I also planned to use their portrait as a starting point for discussion in the first of the two interviews and to ease into conversation about experiences of being a mother of young children when pursuing professional learning.

Having initially considered group interviews I decided against this strategy because of the potential sensitivity of the conversations and the practical considerations of being able to gather together at one time and in one place, women who, by the very nature of them being asked to participate, would be busy working mothers.

Once participants were fully briefed and their consent secured, the spring term of 2016 was spent collecting data. Each interview was approximately one hour long. The location of the interviews was of the participants' choosing. Four participants were interviewed in their homes and two in their schools. The first interviews took place in January and February 2016.

After the initial round of interviews, I interviewed the six teachers once more, in March of the same year, sometimes building on our first conversation to discuss their experiences in more depth and seek 'further clarification' where needed (Levesque-Lopman, 2000: 117). The transcripts from Interview 1 were shared with the teachers prior to the second interview so that we could explore points from the first interview

during our second meeting and both sets of transcriptions were shared for member checking purposes (Kaiser, 2012: 463).

As a woman without children I was initially concerned that I would not be able to engage in reciprocal conversations. However, I came to regard this as a potentially positive aspect in my research, as I felt there was perhaps less chance of 'tak[ing] mutual understanding for granted' (Sikes, 1997: 30) and increased opportunity for me to clarify and ask questions in an attempt to 'understand the world as it is for other people' (Sikes, 1997: 30).

Data handling

Interviews were audio recorded and the interviews transcribed by a transcriber who had signed a confidentiality agreement prior to starting the work (see Appendix 8). Having listened to each audio file twice, checking against the transcripts and making corrections and adding further details such as my interjections and pauses, whilst also tidying up the transcripts to remove repetitions or false starts, I sent the final versions of the transcripts for the interviewees to read through and verify.

Braun and Clarke (2006: 87) highlight that some researchers such as Bird argue the importance of acknowledging the transcription process as a key part of the process of analysis, and that creating an interview transcript should be 'recognised as an *interpretive* act, where meanings are created, rather than simply a mechanical one of putting spoken sounds on paper' (Lapadat and Lindsay in Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87-88). Bourdieu (1999: 621-623) likens the transcription process to '*translation*', 'interpretation' or a 'rewriting', with 'the transition from the oral to the written'. Whilst I utilised the services of a transcriber to initially create the transcripts, I was conscious of the decisions I was making and the analytical process already underway as I created the final transcripts that I would come to code. Figure 1 outlines the process of data handling.

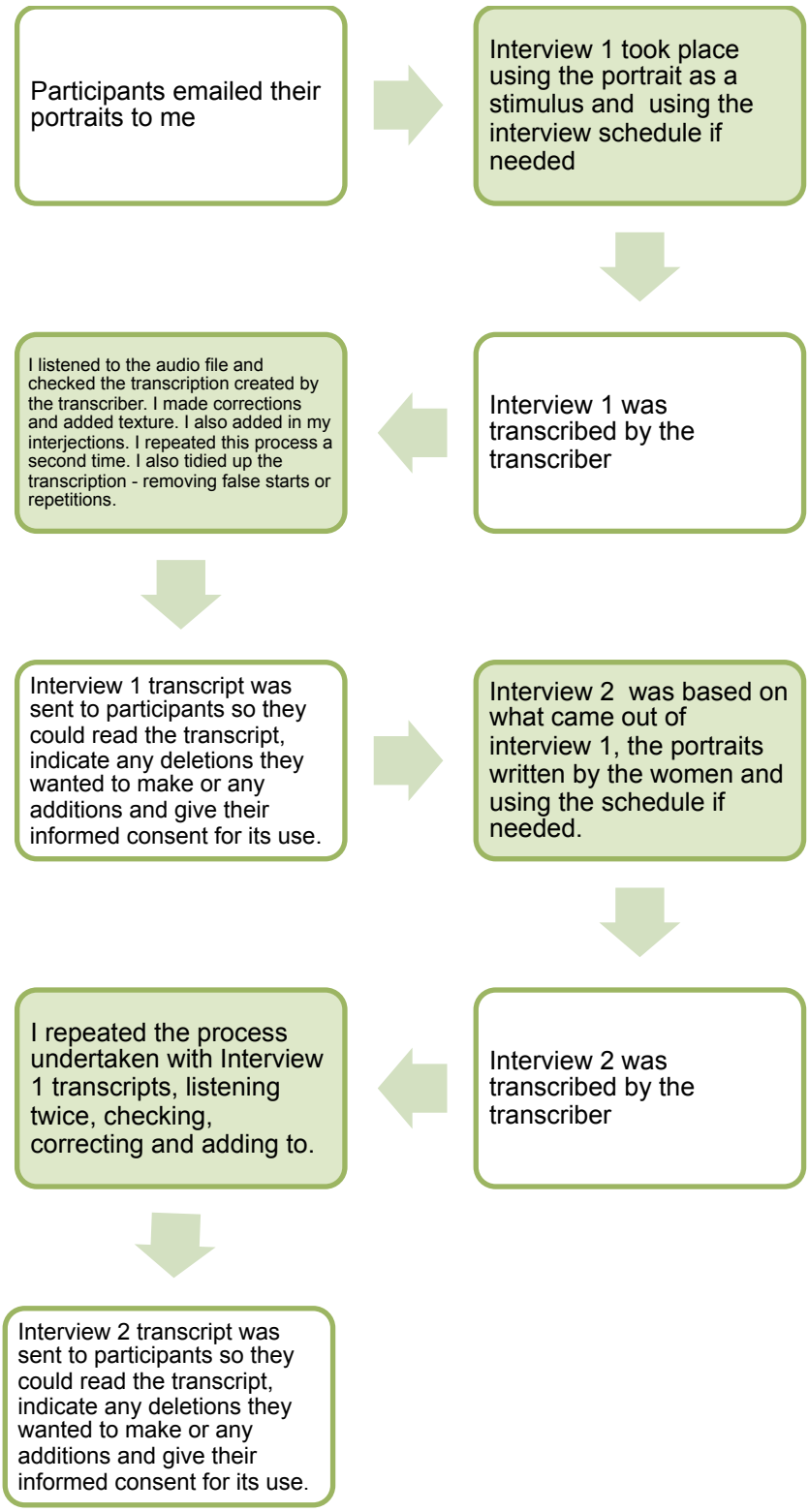

Fig. 1: Flow diagram showing data handling

Analysis

Stage one: thematic analysis to present the data

A thematic analysis approach was employed to organise and present the data in Chapter 6. This approach was founded on the framework discussed by King and Horrocks (2010: 152-159). I also took account of the work done by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Gibbs (2007). Figure 2 outlines the stages of analysis in detail.

Fig. 2: Flow diagram showing data analysis

Figure 2 suggests a much more linear process than actually took place; as Braun and Clarke (2006: 86) explain, 'analysis is not a *linear* process of simply moving from one phase to the next. Instead it is more *recursive* process, where movement is back and forth as needed, throughout the phases'.

I was also mindful of Gibbs' (2007: 42) warning that one needs to 'move away from descriptions, especially using respondent's terms, to a more categorical, analytic and theoretical level of coding'. Referencing the 2001 work of Taylor and Ussher, Braun and Clarke (2006: 80) remind us that themes do not merely emerge from the data and that 'an account of themes "emerging" or being "discovered" is a passive account of the process of analysis, and it denies the *active* role the researcher always plays in identifying patterns/themes, selecting which are of interest, and reporting them to the readers'. My agency is not only apparent in the themes I devised but also in their organisation, such as moving some initial themes in order to create the final two overarching themes of domestic context and professional learning.

Braun and Clarke (2006: 96) offer criteria for coding and one of their stages is to have all relevant extracts from the themes collated. There is good reason to be cautious with this approach however. There is a danger of taking the sentences and paragraphs out of context and it is important to be mindful of the whole conversation at all times when considering an extract (Silverman, 2007: 70). This issue is a key reason why I decided to code my transcripts manually rather than use software such as NVivo. Meanwhile, Braun and Clarke (2006: 89) are mindful of the importance of context and advise coding data 'inclusively', keeping some surrounding data to avoid the loss of context.

In light of these concerns, whilst I employed thematic analysis – writing summary descriptions of what was talked about, developing initial and overarching themes and discussion topics – I returned to the whole interview transcript when writing up, to view the sentences under discussion in context. The final initial and overarching themes drawn from the interviews were devised through a rigorous process of thematic analysis. I have used these themes as a vehicle to present data in Chapter 6 and as a way to compare and contrast the participants' various experiences. The overarching themes of domestic context and professional learning, with their attending initial themes, are outlined in figure 3. A fuller account of the coding process can be found in Appendix 9.

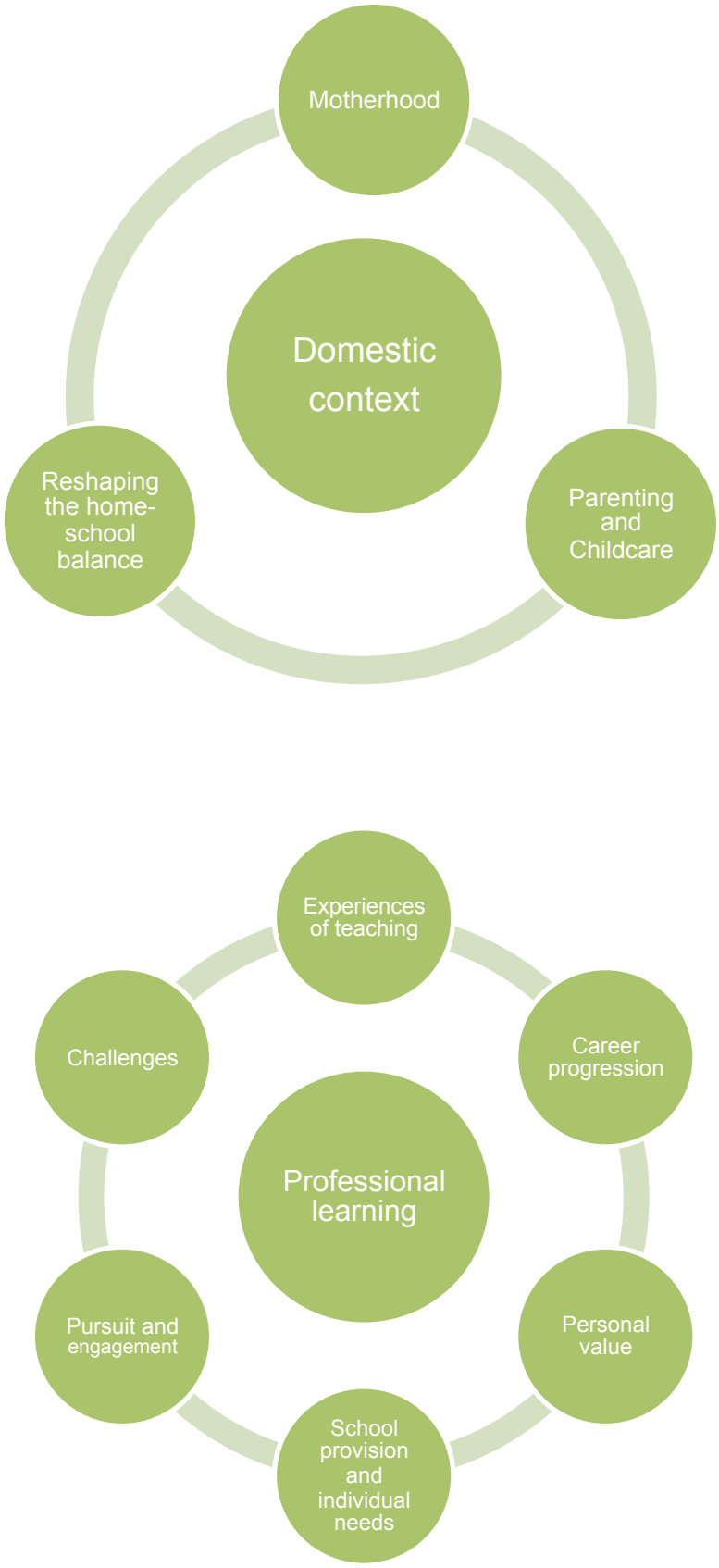

Fig. 3: Diagram of overarching and initial themes

Stage two: analysis for discussion – employing a Bourdieusian lens

Chapter 6 presents the data thematically to offer a sense of the experiences of the women as a whole. In chapters 7 and 8 I apply a Bourdieusian lens to delve deeper into the women's experiences and extend the analysis. Material from the interviews is considered in terms of Bourdieu's *thinking tools* of *field, capital and habitus* with the attending Bourdieusian concepts of *doxa*, *hysteresis and symbolic violence.* In Bourdieusian language, domestic context becomes the home field and professional learning becomes the school field.

Whilst Chapter 7 considers the women in Bourdieusian terms, Chapter 8 offers detailed Bourdieusian analysis of a selection of examples from the women's experiences in the belief that 'analysing in detail a brief incident or conversation may turn out to offer a key to understanding everyday interaction in our field settings' (Silverman, 2007: 21). The selection of examples were chosen because of how they relate to a Bourdieusian perspective; therefore, compared to other chapters, in Chapter 8 there is a more varied coverage of the women's experiences, dependent on whether their experiences could be discussed in terms of a consonant or dissonant position of the *habitus.*

Ethical considerations

In seeking out participants, I did not draw on teachers via the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education although I was prepared to consider participants who have connections to the Centre or teachers with whom I might have worked in the past (see Appendix 10).

Prior to the first interviews, a letter providing information about the research and a copy of the BERA guidelines (2011) were sent to each participant to confirm her consent[9]. The consent was 'on-going' (Miller and Bell, 2005) and participants received another letter prior to the second interview and a third letter after the second interview [10]. Whilst aware of the two stages of interviews, the six participants were asked to confirm their continued involvement after the first interview, once they had a sense of what the research involved. This was to help maximise their ability to give 'informed consent' given that exploratory research has possibly unforeseen outcomes (Malone, 2003). Throughout, participants were assured that at any point in the process they could withdraw from the research or amend the interview transcripts.

Aware of the sensitive nature of the kinds of in-depth interviews I was keen to undertake, I wanted to speak with individuals about their experiences on a one-to-one basis. Whilst participants do have a choice regarding what to disclose (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 230), I kept in mind the importance of prioritising my ethical responsibility towards them over collecting data (Atkinson, 1998: 61-62).

I was also aware that asking participants to collaborate in the research process placed an additional burden on busy working mothers. Potential participants were approached with transparency about what their involvement could mean (Birch and Miller, 2005: 101). Whilst I asked each participant to validate her portrait, accepting the invitation to read and comment on other chapters, was entirely optional (no one offered comments).

Each participant was asked to confirm my portrait of her in July 2017, and duly did so. This was for ethical reasons but also a form of '"respondent validation"' (Ribbens, 1994: 94): if the participants were unable to recognise themselves in these 'verbal pictures' then I could not claim the work as portraits (ibid.). Each participant was then sent all six portraits in order for them to gain a wider understanding of the group they

[9] The various authors cited on this page have been foundational for my ethical approach throughout the EdD programme. A new ethical issue arose in terms of quoting from Twitter. The work by Williams, Burnap and Sloan (2017) was helpful in this regard.
[10] The letters outline information provided to the participants. They are based on Goodson and Sikes' (2001: 27) advice to create a document outlining the research relationship. See Appendix 11.

were part of in December 2017. A draft of Chapter 6 was sent to the participants to read and comment on in December 2017. Drafts of chapters 7, 8, and 9 were sent to the participants to read and comment on in January 2018, mindful of Goodson's (1991: 44) advice, 'the teacher's power of veto should be agreed on early and implemented, where necessary, late'.

Though involvement in the research inevitably required some work, it was my hope that the participants might find reflecting on their experiences as teachers and mothers pursuing professional learning, thought-provoking. I would like to think that the opportunity to take part in this research was a valuable professional learning experience itself.

Whilst the nature of research participant anonymity is complex and one's research ethics are riven between providing anonymity and acknowledging the individual voices who contribute to the research (David, 2014: 19), I took measures[11] to ensure the participants' anonymity but I was also honest about participants needing to have realistic expectations regarding anonymity (see consent letter 1 in Appendix 11).

The ethics work underpinning the research demonstrates a feminist approach and also reflects the concerns Bourdieu raised in his work on *symbolic violence* (Schubert, 2012: 194). For me it is also about treating participants fairly and building relationships. Bourdieu (2007: 63) describes a loyalty to his participants and this thesis has been bounded by the working relationships I have developed with the participants, mindful of 'future relations' and the ways in which the research might be understood (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994: 423).

After the interviews spanning January-March 2016, I kept the participants updated with how my work was developing. I informed them of a session I was leading in October 2016 at the #Women*Ed* conference and I shared the abstract for my presentation at the 2017 BERA conference.

[11] Such as using pseudonyms, approximations for years and dates, school subjects are not disclosed.

Presenting the research

Keen to acknowledge participants' individual life histories through creating portraits, I also wanted to compare and contrast their experiences thematically before utilising a Bourdieusian analytical lens. Ultimately, I have been able to accomplish all three ambitions.

The thesis acknowledges the participants as individuals with their portraits in Chapter 5. Drawing from the interviews, I developed a number of initial themes and these are discussed in Chapter 6, under the overarching themes of domestic context and professional learning. Only after having provided a sense of the women and their whole experience in Chapter 6 do I move on to applying a Bourdieusian lens in chapters 7 and 8.

Silverman (2007: 37) criticises the omission of context or acknowledgement that meaning is made by both speakers during the interview process, therefore I include the context of the conversations and, where possible, my questions. Like Ribbens (1994: 94), 'I have sought to stay as close as possible to the women's own descriptions' resulting in 'long direct quotations in places'.

In addition to long stretches of talk, in Chapter 9 I ensure participants' thoughts on taking part in the research are noted. I include a significant amount of verbatim quotations for a number of reasons (Corden and Sainsbury, 2006). From the perspective of feminist methodology, allowing the voices of the women to come through has been crucial. The participant voice is vital in light of Bourdieu's concern regarding 'representation and the symbolic violence that academic researchers ... can do to research subjects by speaking on their behalf' (Schubert, 2012: 194).

I have been mindful of the ethical issues in making public conversations I had with the participants. Bourdieu (1999: 623) reminds us of the responsibility of the researcher, arguing that in addition to the transmission of the text, we create risk when readers construct their own meanings from the research. Bourdieu (1999: 624) argues it is important 'to intervene in the presentation of the transcriptions both by providing headings and subheadings and, above all, prefatory sections, to provide the reader with tools for a comprehensive reading'. Like Sikes (1997: xvi), I also use the pronoun 'I' as I want to make transparent the role I have played in interpreting the stories told to me and as she explains, 'I want to accept responsibility for what is written'.

PART 3: DATA PRESENTATION

CHAPTER 5: PARTICIPANT PORTRAITS

In this chapter I provide six portraits[12] of the teachers before moving on to present themes drawn from the interview data (for the ease of the reader, a chart with key features for each participant appears in Appendix 12).

As with Cole (2004: 16) and her research with six 'mother-teachers', once the interviews were underway it became evident that the research participants were all married, in long-term heterosexual relationships. Four of the women identified as middle class, one identified as working class with another unspecified. Five of the participants identified as 'White British', in terms of how they might answer a census question; one of them explaining that only in the context of a form would she identify as 'White British' rather than just 'British' and another saying she would only ever think about class or ethnicity as categories of identity if asked. One participant, in an ethnically mixed marriage, spoke of being 'white' and 'English', and reflected on this not being something she really considered, sensitive to the fact that it was likely the result of not having to, being part of a majority ethnic group.

The final group of participants comprises those women who initially answered my call for participation and who later agreed to participate. Like Cole (2004: 16), I recognise that having participants from a more diverse range of groups might have offered different perspectives, but echo her hope that readers may be able to connect in their own way to the experiences of the participants in the research.

I also want to emphasise that those who participated in the research should not be held up as representatives of any particular group, whether that is white women, middle-class women, mothers, teachers or however else one might isolate an aspect of their identities.

[12] All names are pseudonyms. Ages are given as approximations or within a range. Dates in the portraits are not precise in order to provide anonymity. In order to increase anonymity I devised a strategy regarding pseudonyms. I provided lists of names of the top 10 male and female names for 1964, 1974 and 1984 (ONS, n.d). The participants chose pseudonyms for themselves and their partners from the decade in which they were born. Children's names were chosen by the participants from lists I provided of the top 10 male and female names for 2004 (ONS, 2004) and 2014 (ONS, 2015). The participants chose pseudonyms for their children from the decade in which they were born.

Introduction to the portraits

My participants are professional women who are in no need of someone to speak for them, although I hope that participation in the research has offered them an opportunity to reflect on their lives and careers so far. However it must be acknowledged that the portraits are my representations of the women who participated in the research. In their creation I felt a moral responsibility to do justice to the participants' experiences, hence I hoped they saw something of themselves in the portraits I shared with them. Whilst the participants were asked to validate the portraits I have drawn of them, it should be noted that these are a mere fleeting reflection of the person they shared with me in the context of an interview which had a clear research focus on women as teachers and mothers pursuing professional learning. Had the research been about other aspects of their lives, another account might have been rendered.

Each of the women should be regarded as a complex individual with her own specific experiences. As with Cole's (2004: vii) work, 'while the stories suggest many similarities of experience, they also challenge any notion of women as an homogeneous group'. All of the women acknowledged the work it takes to be both the mother and teacher they want to be but they have all chosen different routes to make their home and school lives work for them. The options open to them have not always been straightforward or necessarily foreseen, but they have had to make choices nonetheless. The accounts of their experiences encourage us to consider the needs of teachers who are mothers pursuing professional learning whilst raising a family and to ask what are the issues and how should we respond?

Communicating others' life experiences has necessitated a strong ethical dimension to this work. My obligation to present my research participants fairly and sensitively has been a constant concern, though their lives have moved on since our interviews. As I think about the six women, it is in the knowledge I am thinking of the people they were two years ago. It has served me well to note Hansen's (1995: xvii) observation that presentation of his own research participants reflects only a moment in time, and that in our attempt to represent the lives of others, we can really only strive to glimpse the challenges they face.

Samantha

Marrying her husband in her NQT[13] year, Samantha and Michael have been married around ten years. Samantha is in her early thirties and the couple have two daughters, Poppy around four and Lily, the youngest child in the group, aged under two years old.

Samantha is the youngest of three children, with an older sister and brother. Raised as a Catholic, her faith remains an important part of her life, and her primary and A Level education was undertaken in Catholic schools. Her parents have what Samantha describes a 'traditional' marriage. When Samantha was growing up her mother worked part-time in a variety of roles doing 'bits and bobs' and summers were spent at the beach on the south-coast with her father joining the family at weekends. Samantha still has family on the coast and now carries on the holidays with Michael, keen to inculcate in her daughters the same sense of happiness at the beach she enjoyed. With Samantha working part-time and Michael working full-time, they share the parenting of the children, both fully involved in the bedtime routine. Michael was the first in his company to take extended paternity leave when their eldest daughter Poppy was born, and still remembers fondly the baby massage classes.

Originally Samantha had been interested in a family liaison role at her school, having completed a degree and never planning to become a teacher. However, she was offered a place to train at the school as a teacher on the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) and remained for the ensuing years. Teaching for the last 11 years or so, Samantha works part time as a classroom teacher, on a .6 timetable.

Prior to working part-time, Samantha had progressed to Head of Year. She had not intended to reduce her timetable or to give up her responsibility as Head of Year when Poppy was born, and she returned to the role when Poppy was approximately 18 weeks old. However, after several of months struggling to work full-time with additional responsibilities, look after a baby and continue to breastfeed, Samantha decided to give up her role as Head of Year and work part-time, for the sake of good mental health and work-life balance. This decision has had financial implications such as not being able to move to a larger house, but Samantha and Michael believe it to be the best decision for their family.

When we first met, Samantha was teaching an A Level subject in a single-sex grammar school and her students are in Key Stage 5[14]. By the time of our second

[13] Newly Qualified Teacher.
[14] Years 12 and 13 (ages 16-18).

interview in March 2016 she had secured a new part-time role in a local private Catholic school, and was planning to teach a lower school subject in addition to her A Level classes. She was looking forward to moving to a school where her faith would sit within the ethos of the school, and was considering the possibility of her daughters attending the preparatory school in time.

Samantha has had a number of opportunities to undertake professional development courses over the years. She acknowledges that she is more likely to engage in professional learning if it is a structured programme rather than more informal learning. A key part of her professional learning has been to undertake external exam board marking. Her reasons for engaging in professional learning have changed from an interest in career progression to classroom best practice since she had her children, and her focus currently tends to be more on her classes than on whole school issues.

Joanne

Having married her university sweetheart David, Joanne is in her late thirties and has two sons, Jack aged around three years and Harry around two. Joanne and David have been married some six years or so and have plans for a third child in the future.

Joanne identifies as coming from a working class background and was educated in a state comprehensive. Her father left school and went into the merchant navy before working in a variety of manual roles. Her mother worked full-time in a range of jobs. Joanne's mother's siblings went to grammar schools but her mother did not and this may have left Joanne's mother with a possible lack of confidence in her abilities. Joanne wonders whether this has contributed to her own lack of self-belief even though she is very successful in her chosen career. Her promotions have tended to be internal, and without external interviews she sometimes feels she has not taken a standard route, although she recognises that her progression has been based on her proven track record.

Having undertaken a degree, Joanne decided upon a teaching career. Education for Joanne was a good experience but the system was not so kind to her younger brother who had special educational needs or to her mother who fought long and hard to get Joanne's brother the support he needed. Her brother's experience of the education system made Joanne want to teach and ensure that education meets the needs of everyone. Hence her decision to work in what she regards as challenging schools and her palpable passion for teaching.

Joanne has spent around fifteen years in teaching and is currently working full-time as Senior Assistant Head in an academy. She continues to teach some classes but acknowledges her job has vastly changed from day-to-day teaching in the classroom. A key factor in Joanne's ability to work at a demanding senior level with two young children is David's role as 'stay-at-home dad', working full-time in the home. During Joanne's first pregnancy at a previous school, David was made redundant and with a small inheritance they were able to enjoy her 10 months or so maternity leave together. This early experience of relishing family life combined with the fact that Joanne returned to a new full-time role as Subject Coordinator, pregnant with their second child, encouraged the couple to reassess their work-life options. Having witnessed other families struggle to balance childcare and work, and without family nearby, the couple decided it would make sense for their growing family and financially, if David worked in the home and Joanne returned to full-time work at school. Joanne's second

maternity leave was much shorter than her first at around five months. Whilst she breastfed both sons, Joanne continued with her second son for longer in light of the fact that she was spending less time at home with him. Joanne and David have been looking at options for school for their eldest son Jack and at some point, David intends to return to work outside the home, although their plans for a third child in the future will have some bearing on this decision.

Joanne has had experience of a variety of professional learning opportunities and has clear ideas on what makes good professional development. She expects professional development courses to have high quality resources and speakers although she has begun to question the limited financial value of one teacher attending a course in order to cascade to others in the school. As a senior leader, Joanne leads on staff professional development. She has worked on the school's coaching programme and encourages teachers to engage with educational research and use social media such as Twitter to follow developments in education.

Sarah

Sarah is around 40 and has been married to Robert for almost a decade. They have twin boys Jacob and Thomas aged around four-five years old.

Sarah grew up with a sister in a middle class family and was privately educated. Her father 'did well for himself' and her mother stayed at home until Sarah was about twelve and then worked in a library. Sarah believes her mother possibly lacks confidence and wonders whether this has contributed to her own self-doubts, even though she knows her colleagues hold her in high regard and her mother is proud of her. She feels it is important for her sons to see their mother working outside the home, with her own career.

Whilst having a family was really important to Sarah, and the couple went through several years of IVF treatment, she has not necessarily found the total fulfilment in motherhood that she was led to expect. Sarah had around 14 months maternity leave. She enjoyed her time away from work and felt she had an opportunity to live life at a slower pace. She was however, glad to return to work, if not to the hectic school schedule. Having young children, she misses the freedom to travel but is enjoying a newly discovered interest in her work, developing as a teacher professionally and being part of her school community.

Sarah has a real passion for her subject and always knew she wanted to study it at university. Enjoying the company of young people and wanting to do something with her degree, she decided to train as a teacher. She loved the training, and still enjoys her work 16 or so years on, although she explains that it has become increasingly demanding over the years.

Sarah works as a part-time classroom teacher on a .8 timetable in a successful academy. She has been at the school over 10 years and was a head of department for around six of those years. She initially returned to work three days a week and gave up her role as Head of Department when she had her sons. She now works four days a week – enough to hold a head of department role in her school – and she is sometimes frustrated and ponders what she could achieve with the department if she held the position now. Sarah does not consider herself to be particularly ambitious but she did want to progress to lead a department, and now the boys are older, she misses the role somewhat. In many ways though, Sarah is not looking for promotion but for opportunities to explore and express her creativity. As her sons grow she has begun to consider where she might direct her energies next and has contemplated exploring her

interests in writing and counselling. Sarah sometimes wonders if she should look to gain experience in another school, but she has built good relationships with her colleagues, students and their parents, and does not think she could find a nicer school in which to work.

Her husband Robert also works part-time and with Sarah the main wage earner, he is very ‘hands-on’ raising the boys. Sarah believes he has found real fulfilment in being a father. She credits him with making it possible for her to do the hours required in the week to get her job done.

Sarah’s engagement with professional learning mostly rests with her department in the school. The department benefits from having early career teachers and one of them also sits on the school’s teaching and learning team so colleagues are always trying out new ideas and sharing good practice. Sarah also mentors student teachers which brings its own professional learning experiences. Professional development on a more formal basis has been harder to engage with as Sarah finds after school professional development sessions challenging to attend when she has to prepare for the following day and has her sons to look after.

Karen

At the time of our meeting Karen is in her late thirties and she has one child, a little boy around the age of three or four named Oscar. Karen met her husband Richard at a company where they both worked before she changed careers and they have been married for around six years.

Describing herself as middle class, Karen is the only child of a successful freelance journalist mother and a business-owning father and was privately educated. Karen thinks of her marriage as 'traditional' with her taking on the majority of childcare responsibility. Both Karen and Richard work full-time and moved to their current home in order to be closer to parents and parents-in-law for the family support they both, but especially Richard, feel to be essential to raising a family of their own.

Karen took around eight months maternity leave in her previous school before returning full-time as a classroom teacher and was promoted to Head of Department a year later. She wanted to return to work as she felt the need to, but as she and Richard had a longer-term plan to relocate, she needed to return to her school as soon as possible in order not to have to pay back any maternity pay. In order to keep a 'connection' with Oscar whilst also working full-time, Karen continued to breastfeed him until he was just over a year old. Karen was keen to return to work full-time, enjoying the freedom from domesticity it offered and does not remember ever feeling that working full-time and caring for a small baby was 'too much'. With Oscar turning four, Karen and Richard have been considering his next stage of schooling. Discussions have centred on the choice of Karen's own school with its provision of co-education from 4-18 or a private preparatory school, something Karen's parents are keen on.

For Karen, teaching was not the career path she had initially envisioned. She had never originally wanted to be a teacher, unclear about what she wanted to do upon leaving university. Her future initially had been in advertising. Whilst she didn't get to make best use of her skills, Karen also came to feel that advertising was all about 'making money for the client' and she wanted to do something 'worthwhile', 'give something back' and make 'a difference'. Karen subsequently undertook a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Rather than an initial career choice, teaching for Karen has become a vocation. She has taught for around eight years and became Head of Department at a Voluntary aided Roman Catholic School a couple of years ago. Her own faith is important to her and Karen takes Oscar to Mass every week.

Happy with the level of her school responsibilities and cautious about taking on work or professional learning that might impact family life, Karen is nonetheless interested in promotion and had made this clear to her headteacher. She perceives opportunities to be on the horizon as her school was newly opened in the last few years and she can see her career developing in line with the growth of the school. Her immediate focus has been to consolidate firm foundations for her department before moving towards senior management. Karen plans for this to be her last school: with potential for promotion and the school being so close to home that she can cycle to and from work and drop off Oscar at the child minders in around 15 minutes, the school meets her professional and family needs.

Initially it appears that Karen does not really undertake professional development but whilst formal courses are not something she regularly attends, she has found social media such as Twitter to be helpful in extending her professional thinking and practice.

Claire

Claire is married to James, having met several years ago and sharing a mutual interest in photography. Claire is in her early forties and the couple have two children William aged nine-ten years and Joseph aged eight-nine years. The boys are the oldest children in the research participant group.

When the boys were little, the couple shared more of the childcare but these days James works full-time and long hours and Claire works part-time to be able to be around for their children. With the boys at school, she relies on afterschool clubs for childcare until she can pick them up in the early evening. Claire is the youngest of three children and had a middle-class upbringing with a private education. She has no family close by with one brother having passed away and the other not living near. Both Claire's and James' parents live some distance away, and she is conscious of not having family support with childcare. She had her sons close together as having a family was a priority for her. Claire took a year's maternity leave in her previous school with her first child and during that time became pregnant, returning to work full-time as Head of Department for three months before taking her second maternity leave. Upon her return to the school part-time she was told she could not retain the position of department head in a part-time capacity and so worked for a couple of years as a classroom teacher before moving schools. During her first maternity leave, Claire thinks she experienced 'baby blues' given the enormous change to every-day life a new-born baby brings. Certainly, she feels her return to work was important when motherhood can be so intense. Her return was motivated by a desire to continue to teach and for financial reasons.

Claire started out in advertising and later moved into teaching, having completed a PGCE. An inspirational encounter with a guest speaker during her own A Level education and the difference this woman made to Claire's experience of education, inspired Claire to make a difference to others.

Claire's identity as a teacher is complex. Teaching enables Claire to explore her own creativity and she identifies with her subject more than as a teacher generally. Working on a .5 timetable Claire job shares the post of Head of Department at a single-sex grammar school. She feels lucky to be in the 'rare' position of being part-time and holding a position of responsibility and describes this as having the 'perfect balance' although this has meant fewer opportunities to move schools. She is keen to keep

advancing in her career, having taught for over 15 years, but feels that being part-time has somewhat reduced the professional learning opportunities made available to her.

As an experienced teacher at the top of the Upper Pay Scale Claire wants more whole school and leadership opportunities. Whilst Claire is keen to maintain a robust CV, she does not want to take on more days teaching at school at the expense of family life. At the time of the interviews, decision-making about her son's secondary school place and options open to them including whether Claire might move to teach full-time in a private school and have the boys join her there, was a key issue in Claire's mind.

Claire has a positive attitude towards professional learning and is keen to demonstrate that she is motivated and interested in whole school issues. She feels that teachers should be encouraged to be independent and take control of their professional development, pursuing professional learning that interests them. To this end, Claire has pursued a number of professional learning opportunities including exam board marking which necessitated taking her baby to the residential exam board training and breastfeeding him in the breaks.

Nicola

Nicola is in her mid-thirties and met her husband Matthew at university. They have been married for over ten years and have a daughter, Megan, aged between six-seven years old.

Growing up with an older brother in a middle class household and educated in a comprehensive school, Nicola explains that her father comes from a working class background. Her father, the first in his family to go to university, worked hard and attained a PhD. Her mother worked as a seamstress, much of the time in the home, so was always around, and in Nicola's eyes, made motherhood look easy. She had a very supportive and happy childhood and she credits this with the sense of grounding she now enjoys as an adult.

Nicola and Matthew were the first of their friends to have children and consequently she had no one around to tell her how much hard work being a mother could be. For a long time Nicola had the idea that when she became a mother she would stay at home with her children, partly because this is essentially what her own mother had managed to organise and also because she did not like the idea of her children staying with other people while she worked. Her ideas about how she would parent in the future have not developed as expected, partly because she did not continue to feel this way once she became a mother. Nicola took nine months' maternity leave before returning to work as Head of Year and found that while she enjoyed parts of her leave and had a good relationship with her daughter, other aspects were 'hard going' and being a mother was challenging. She found being on her own with a baby all day intense and it did not suit her being at home. Consequently, Nicola was happy to return to work full-time when financial considerations also required her to do so. Upon her return to teaching Nicola came to value time at work for the space it gave her to think.

Both she and her husband Matthew work full-time and with Megan at school they make grateful use of Megan's paternal grandmother to help with childcare. Megan's transition from nursery to primary school was more difficult than Nicola had anticipated. With the nursery being close to Nicola's place of work, she had found it easy to drop Megan off and pick her up but with the move to a school further away there was the question of after school childcare. Nicola was not comfortable with the provision available and so now Megan has a child minder three times a week and her grandmother twice a week.

Having completed a degree and a PGCE, Nicola has been teaching for around 14 years. It was after graduating that she considered teaching and worked as a Teaching

Assistant before applying to train as a teacher. She has taught in her school for a number of years but it has undergone substantial change over this time ensuring a varied range of professional experiences for Nicola. The school recently became an academy with co-educational provision 11-18. Nicola works within the school's senior leadership team as an Assistant Principal with responsibility for special educational needs provision.

A recent promotion to senior leadership has required Nicola to undertake significant professional learning and study for a diploma related to her work in special educational needs (SEN). Nicola surprised herself in attaining a senior position and says that career wise, her main aim is to focus on doing her best in her new role. Matthew has fully supported Nicola's professional development studies during the past year, taking Megan out at weekends to give Nicola the quiet she needs to undertake the work required to complete the diploma. Nicola describes Matthew as 'an excellent father' who is very involved in raising Megan and loves spending time with her.

A researcher's self-portrait

I met my husband at university. Now in my mid-forties we have been married for over 20 years and do not have children. I have a very similar profile to my participants in that I am a white, British, middle-class female professional.

I grew up as an only child, educated for the most part in a state secondary modern school, changing to a grammar school for A Levels. I had not planned to teach. When choosing an undergraduate degree course, amongst other things, I contemplated law or history, finally deciding upon history. Whilst pondering a law conversion course during my undergraduate studies, a friend inspired me with talk of her plans to train to teach and I changed direction. I completed a PGCE in 1994 and taught for five terms at a girls' comprehensive school before leaving teaching to work in the commercial sector in recruitment. Whilst working in recruitment I completed a Masters degree in 'Museums and Galleries in Education'. I subsequently returned to teaching, working at a girls' grammar school, and taught for almost four and half years. During my time at the school I became Head of History. I left the school to move to the education department at Imperial War Museum London, working with the Holocaust Exhibition and Crimes Against Humanity exhibition, ending my time there in 2010 with responsibility for leading the formal education programme for Holocaust education and related teacher professional development. The role involved periods of considerable international travel and my husband maintained our stable home life throughout this time. Working full-time running his own business, he now continues to manage our home whilst there is still an element of travel for my current full-time role working at the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education. Like some of the other women in this study, my husband makes it possible for me to do the work I do, and as with all the women, this account is a simplified and partial narrative of a complex life.

CHAPTER 6: A THEMATIC APPROACH

In this chapter I compare and contrast the women's experiences using a thematic approach before employing a Bourdieusian analytical lens with a materialist feminist theoretical underpinning in Chapters 7 and 8. Using themes developed when coding the interview transcripts, I first address the overarching theme of domestic context before moving to discuss professional learning.

Domestic context

In writing about the home-school balance, I explore the balance of labour in different spaces – mother in the home, and teacher in the school – and how being a mother impacts being a teacher. All of the participants have one thing in common: 'daily', they navigate what Grumet (1988: xv) calls a 'passage between the so-called public and private worlds',

> They go back and forth between the experience of domesticity and the experience of teaching, between being with one's own children and being with the children of others, between being the child of one's own mother and the teacher of another mother's child, between feeling and form, family and colleagues (ibid.).

Motherhood

Participants' mothers

During the interviews, all of the women except for Claire talked about the work their mothers did. Karen's mother was a freelance journalist who worked around Karen, although Karen described her as 'career focused',

> ... she was a freelance journalist, my dad had his own business, she was the breadwinner when they met and for the first ... six years of my life ... she was quite successful when she was younger, and hence why she married late I guess, because she was quite career focused (Int. 1).

Nicola's mother also worked full-time, much of the time from home, fitting around her children,

> ... she wasn't really a stay-at-home mum ... mum was a seamstress ... but a lot of that was ... done at home, so she was around a lot, and I really valued that (Int. 1).

Meanwhile Joanne remembers,

> ... mum's always worked for various garages ... I always remember mum bringing work home ... and going into work on a Saturday with mum and having to sit in the back offices of the garage ... I'd be given computer paper to doodle and work on (int.1).

In contrast, Samantha's mother worked part-time as a swimming teacher at Samantha's school and undertook other part-time work,

> ... she had worked part-time in a sweetie shop when we were little, she was an Avon lady before that, so possibly even before I was born, she has always done swimming teaching for lessons after school time, that sort of thing, and life saving. But she definitely never worked full-time when we were little, it was always bits and bobs of jobs (Int. 1).

Once she had children, Sarah's mother did not work outside the home until Sarah was around twelve, although she would have liked her mother to be have been more career minded,

> ... I often say to her "I wish you'd worked", but she was part of that generation ... she did work a bit when I was maybe ten, twelve, she ... worked in a library part-time and she worked, obviously, before she had us, but really bringing up kids in the '70s, most of her friends didn't work. But I think it's good to have a mum that works as a role model, because I do think that gives confidence to your kids (Int. 2).

Being a mother

Claire always wanted to be a mother and her ideas about being a mother intersect with her views on working outside the home,

> ... it ... was very much a decision that I wanted to be a mother and I didn't want to work. So I was scared about going back to work, and therefore not being a proper mother, and at the time financially we needed me to go back to work ... I still wanted to work, but I didn't want to work full-time ... (Int. 1).

When the boys were 'very little' Claire and her husband who was freelancing at the time, shared the childcare which was a 'perfect' arrangement as the boys 'had their parents looking after them at all times'. When I asked whether she was happy for either parent to stay at home with the children, Claire answered that her preference was that she was the main carer, although she recognised the benefits of spending time outside the home, when child rearing can be so intense.

With her children growing older Claire continues to feel it is important to teach part-time in order to be available at home to support her children,

> At the moment I still feel quite strongly that I need to provide for my children ... my eldest is in Year 5 ... in September he's going to be taking his 11+ ... that's

> why I was quite happy to take one less day this year, because it meant that I would be home for an extra day to then...um...crack the whip at home with the schoolwork (laughs) (Int. 1)[15].

When I asked Joanne 'what is it to be a mother?' she replied,

> ... it's just amazing, it's probably like the best parts of being a teacher ... you get to guide and shape every aspect of that person's life ... the welcome that I get at the end of each day when I get through the door, the screaming, it only lasts five minutes ... but ... they are just so happy to see you .... I think I can use a lot of what I've learnt by teaching young people with them (Int. 1).

Meanwhile, Samantha describes being a mother as,

> ... knowing that the girls are having a well-rounded life and that they're happy doing it. I think a large part of it is teaching them to recognise the world as it is, and be open to different things, and being polite around it, that's very important. But I think the experiences they have ... the days that I have them, it's giving them something different, so we have different clubs and activities ... we're seeing different people. Even things like going to Tesco's, we've got a shopping list on the computer ... it's got the word and the picture, and they've got their own shopping trolley ... and they do the shopping, and it's great fun. I love all of that. What's being a mum? It's great fun, it really is (Int. 1).

Having thought she would be a stay-at-home mother, based on her experience of being mothered, Nicola's plans did not turn out this way,

> ... I say that maybe I changed my mind ... part of it was probably financial ... we live ... in quite different times, and I probably couldn't have afforded to be a stay-at-home mum ... but ... right at the very early stage I found being a mother quite challenging, not that I didn't love Megan and that we didn't have a really good relationship with each other, but by the end of the day it was pretty full-on, and ... it certainly didn't really suit me being at home ... (Int. 1).

For both Nicola and Sarah, their expectations of motherhood were challenged. Nicola commented,

> ... I just had this idyllic vision of what it would be like to be a mum, and that your baby would be in the cot, (laughter) and you'd be able to take her down to the coffee shop ... we did loads of lovely things together, but ... I found it quite hard work, and I think part of that is because most of my friends are workers ... I had people who were on the NCT[16] course who I met, but they weren't my real kind of true friends ... so it wasn't like meeting up with mates all the time. And you are with a child that can't really respond, and you can't really engage with ... for me I didn't naturally coo at that ... I loved parts of it but I found it quite hard going (Int. 1).

With her twin sons at school, Sarah feels comfortable being at work. She has been surprised that she has not enjoyed being a mother at home more, remarking,

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[15] The '11+' is an examination taken in Year 6 for entry into grammar school. See Appendix 13 for types of schools.
[16] National Childbirth Trust

> ... it's not stimulating having children. So I spent all my time before I had children ... wishing I could work part-time and didn't want my life just to be about work, and then ... I realised once I had kids, oh my God ... it's not that I particularly want to use my brain loads ... it's just that I don't think having children's that fulfilling.
>
> ... people said ... "you'll have a purpose to your life" ... But ... we struggled to have them, so then people started saying "there's lots of things you can do if you don't have children".
>
> ... I do remember thinking "what will I do?" ... I've always liked travelling but suddenly I don't want to travel anymore, I just want to have children. And then you have your children and you love them (pause), but I could never be a stay-at-home mum (Int. 1).

Conversely, Nicola's expectations of motherhood were based on what was not said. She and Matthew were the first of their friends to have children. Her own mother had,

> ... seemed to make easy work of it as far as I could tell ...

and she mused,

> ... I never had anybody around me that would ever have told me that motherhood was hard work (Int. 1).

Being a mother comprises a particular kind of domestic work for Karen,

K ... I think being a mother really is about ... making dinner, it's about thinking about everything, so making packed lunches, putting clothes out ...

E Is this what you do?

K Yes, it's what I do ... Making sure that everyone is happy, and I don't feel, by making everyone happy that I am not, but I don't conversely feel making everyone happy makes me happy ... So it's not ... "I must make everyone happy for me to be happy" ... it just happens (Int. 1).

Meanwhile, Karen alluded to societal pressures on women to mother in a certain way commenting,

> There's a lot of pressure ... Mothers, women put so much pressure on each other and themselves and they've got to do things like everyone else does ... it's a bit silly really, but I'm guilty of it as well (Int. 2).

In some of the conversations there was a sense that becoming a mother brought a recalibration of identity. With her sons' transition to school, Sarah feels more like 'herself' again but she highlighted the challenge women face in potentially 'losing' themselves as they take on a new role and identity as a mother commenting,

> I definitely think as the woman you are the one more likely to feel like you've lost yourself a bit. I don't think men feel it in the same way. I might be totally wrong, I'm sure some men do ... and from talking to friends, yeah, definitely think that (Int. 2).

Samantha explained that after having children there was a period of readjustment, and she had to reconsider her identity,

> ... after having a child ... you almost have to work out who you are again, and that's physically as well, you have to get back used to, your body doesn't feel like your body anymore, and you're very tired (laughs) ... so as well as going back into the workplace and working out your place in the workplace again ... it is an extra struggle ... (Int. 2).

Claire's priority was to establish her identity as a mother,

> I basically had them quite close together to try and be clear in my mind that I was a mother I suppose, first and foremost (Int.1).

Although she still experienced having to negotiate a significant shift after having her first child,

> ... you are thrown out of your life, your normal day to day life, and you are having to suddenly look after this little thing that desperately needs you ... I was full-time working before ... it's a big change and I think a lot of working women, it's a difficult change ... one minute you are in control of your career and the next thing you are trying to control something that is unpredictable ... (Int. 1).

With Claire, Samantha and Joanne, our conversations touched on how their roles as teachers intersected with being a mother. When we met, Claire was engaged with preparing her eldest son William for the 11+ entry examination for the local grammar school, Samantha described using shopping as an opportunity to teach with words and pictures and Joanne acknowledged using her teaching experience with her sons.

The notion that being a mother is demanding work was discernible, as was the need to redefine relationships with oneself and others upon becoming a mother. It seems that there are expectations of ways to be a mother, whether this is a social construction or a political one (Phoenix and Woollett, 1991), and there are also different maternal approaches as discussed by Ribbens (1994) and Woollett and Phoenix (1991a). The participants demonstrated a range of approaches, dependent on a variety of factors including: their own experiences of being mothered; family circumstances; their marriages; professional situations; and, significantly, the choices afforded to them.

Parenting and childcare[17]

Childcare provision varied according not only to the practical situation of family living nearby but also the age of the children and the options available to the women[18]. For many of the participants, when we spoke, their children were on the cusp of significant change. Karen was thinking about Oscar starting school and Samantha and Joanne were thinking about their eldest children starting school. Samantha was happy with either the local Catholic primary or the independent school she was moving to – this arrangement potentially making the logistics of childcare easier. Karen also had childcare in mind and was contemplating the local independent school or her own school so Oscar could travel in with her every day. Joanne had already made a decision and was planning to send Jack to the local primary school. Employing her professional understanding of Ofsted[19] and impressed by the headteacher's knowledge of educating boys, Joanne was confident the school could meet Jack's needs. Meanwhile, Claire was facing a period of change with William preparing to move from primary to secondary school. Only Sarah and Nicola were in a period of stability with their children at primary school. Sarah had found the transition fairly straightforward but Nicola had found the first year challenging.

Until speaking with my participants, I had assumed that as children got older and subsequently more independent, teachers who are mothers would find it easier to engage in work outside the home. However it became clear that as their children grew older the women found parenting becoming more complicated, not less. This was either due to logistical issues of childcare as described by Joanne,

> ... when you've got a very ... young child ... if you have no option you can put them in a nursery from seven o'clock in the morning until six o'clock at night, and you've got full-time childcare. When they get to school age you've got to get them to school for quarter past nine, well most people start work at nine o'clock, and they finish at quarter past three, so then you've got to find a child minder that's willing to take them from quarter past three to six ... logistically I think that's even more, more of a difficult thing to manage ... (Int. 2).

and Nicola,

> ... when she went to school, we obviously had the issue of what happens ... after school ... the school doesn't have an after-school club, but they had another school attached, which is about twenty minutes down the road, that she

[17] When discussing parenting, I am referring to the rearing of children whereas the term childcare refers to the practical childcare arrangements needed for a child's supervision.
[18] The childcare arrangements the participants had devised at the time of the interviews are outlined in Appendix 14.
[19] Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

> would go to ... and then I would go and pick her up from there. But I felt very unsettled the first term because ... she was still really young, and she'd walk ... twenty minutes after school to go there, which was probably quite a lot for her, and ... there were lots and lots of older children there ... when I went to pick her up I felt quite unsettled with it ... there didn't seem to be really any kind of structure ... the food that they got wasn't quite what I thought it was gonna be ... I just wasn't really very comfortable with it ... so we ended up going down the road of a child minder ... (Int.1).

Or due to the anticipated change in the nature of their children's needs, as described by Claire,

E ... when both boys are at secondary school, would you consider then going full-time?

C ... I do wonder if I will ... I don't know how our home life is going to be ... I don't know how demanding it will be as a parent. But I have had one friend tell me that actually it gets more demanding as they get older, because they then need to talk to you ... they have more issues as they get older, and so actually if you are around that's really helpful (Int. 2).

and Karen,

> ... as he gets older there's going to be all the ... demands on parents like homework and reading and stuff (Int. 1).

These parenting and childcare matters are set within the context of all the women being married in long-term heterosexual relationships and it is interesting to see the range of co-parenting strategies as well as some common themes. Whilst Joanne's husband David is a stay-at-home father, Sarah, Nicola and Samantha also described their partners as very involved in parenting, Sarah declaring,

> ... I'm lucky, he's a great dad ... he doesn't mind playing Transformers for hours on end (laughs) (Int. 2).
>
> ... he's good, he's so hands on it's ridiculous, he always was from when they were born, he was like right in there changing nappies, he just loved it, from the minute they were born he loved it (Int. 2).

and Nicola commenting,

> Every minute that he spends with Megan he loves and he relishes ... they have such good fun together, he makes her laugh ... he's not just the fun dad but he does all these play stories and they get all the teddies out and he plays these stories for hours with her and it doesn't bore him, he becomes a child with her and he loves it (Int. 1).

whilst Samantha's husband Michael would have been happy to work part-time,

> E Did you ever discuss the possibility of him going part-time and you remaining full-time?

> S Yes. And he would have been very keen to have done that (laughs). He would have been very happy to. He loves being a daddy ... (Int. 1).

Claire and Karen meanwhile, undertake the larger part of the caring work in their families. James, Claire's husband, has found it challenging to arrange flexible hours to help with childcare arrangements, something Claire says James finds upsetting – although she also wonders whether he needs to ask his employers for more flexibility. Karen tends to take on most of the domestic responsibility and looks to Richard only for help with childcare arrangements when necessary, commenting,

> I think we have a very traditional relationship ... I am the cook ... the mother figure and he is the alpha male (Int. 1).

Whilst there is an element of Claire and Karen choosing to organise their home life in their particular ways, there is also tension if day-to-day plans don't run smoothly. For both Claire and Karen this manifests itself when their children are ill and there is discussion about who will need to stay home, given that both husbands can work from home and both wives, being classroom teachers, cannot.

Regardless of how the work of caring is organised, something that stood out was how several of the women – Samantha, Sarah, Nicola and Karen – described their husbands as creative at play or fun or the 'softer' parent while Nicola, Sarah and Karen described themselves as the 'organiser' in the family. Nicola explains,

> ... I'm more the kind of "well you need to do this, du du du du" ... (Int. 1).

Sarah observes,

> I'm the sort of organiser, but I think that's quite normal in lots of households (Int. 1).

and Karen agrees,

> ... I'm the stricter parent, my husband, as he admits, is the softer touch, but I guess, talking to a lot of my peers and my friends I think that's quite common really (Int. 1).

Research into British social attitudes (Scott and Clery, 2013) demonstrated that there is still an expectation that it should be the woman (in a heterosexual relationship) who does the significant work of caring in the family. Each family has had to find their own way through the complexities of parenting in light of the demands of home and school life, but it is important to note the societal context in which the participants have had to make their choices, as well as the dynamics of their own marriages (see Appendix 1).

Whether there is close family nearby to help with childcare has been a factor in decision making but what is interesting is the continued existence of a discourse about how involved fathers are in the raising of their own children. It has been argued that the act of describing the effectiveness of fathers indicates the norm that mothers are still expected to take the main care giving role and in 1983 Boulton (in Woollett and Phoenix, 1991b: 219) argued ‘it is because the norm is for mothers to do everything for their children that anything fathers do gets noticed and assumes significance’.

Reshaping the home-school balance

Return to teaching after maternity leave

There were varied experiences upon returning to teaching. Samantha spoke of the dislocation she felt after even a short time away,

E ... what is it like to go back into a school after maternity leave?

S It's quite scary going back, because you were very much in control and then you're not.

E What do you mean by that?

S Well before I went on maternity leave with Poppy I very much knew my position in the school, I felt on top of a lot of things, people would ask me for advice and then you would go back in and things had changed. There's staff there who don't know who you are (laughs) (Int. 1).

Whereas, Nicola felt returning to school was not any harder than staying at home,

> ... I don't remember it being harder than being off, let's put it that way (Int. 1).

It also felt more comfortable back at school,

> ... I suppose once I went back to work even though it had other challenges it, it was probably more, it felt maybe ... (pause) more comfortable for me (Int. 1).

Sarah was also glad to return to teaching and since going back has realised how important her job is to her sense of worth and fulfilment,

> I think I feel I get more of my sense of worth maybe from my job (Int. 2).
>
> ... don't think I realised actually how work does give you, that sense of fulfilment. I think I thought bringing up kids would do that more than it probably has done (Int. 2).

A supportive school environment has been crucial to the women's experiences of returning to school. Nicola found her return fairly straightforward,

> I think there's always that slight anxiety when you go on maternity leave because somebody takes over your job ... I don't remember really feeling too worried about it, but I think there is that feeling ... how am I going to be received coming back? ... You kind of feel a bit sensitive to the fact that you are being maybe judged against what somebody else has done. But I had a good set of colleagues and friends who made me feel a part of it again when I came back ... (Int. 1).

Nicola also appreciated the space it gave her away from home,

> ... I think that being at school ... was the one place ... where I could completely switch off and not be thinking about my child, and I quite valued that (Int. 1).

Returning to work (in her previous school) with Oscar nearing eight months old, Karen also found the return manageable, and like Nicola, found her workplace to be supportive and respite from her domestic responsibilities,

K ... I didn't feel guilty about going back because I wanted to, and I knew that the sooner I got back the sooner I could potentially leave [to relocate], and in fact I ended up staying there longer because, I loved the school, the head and I had a great relationship, she promoted me, she was amazing to me ... if I needed to leave there was not a problem, if I needed to come in late there was not a problem ...

E A very supportive environment.

K Yeah ... So that's why I ... stayed a little bit longer. I really wanted to keep the breastfeeding going because I felt it was a really nice connection to have. Maybe I did feel subconsciously guilty ... maybe I felt that at least if I was still breastfeeding I was still there ... I don't recall ever being tired; I guess I just ... ran on adrenaline a lot. And I really loved going into work because it meant I could have a cup of tea when it was hot, I could go to the loo without the door open, and I used to enjoy my commute because I had an hour and fifteen minutes each way that I could just read the paper, or listen to the radio, or read a book, or do marking ... I didn't ever feel "my God this is too much doing everything" ... I don't think I ever felt that it was too much (Int. 1).

Samantha didn't feel nearly as supported upon her return. Resuming her full-time role as Head of Year when her first child Poppy was 18 weeks old, Samantha felt pressure from senior leadership to maintain her pre-maternity performance,

> There was definitely a degree of "check that Samantha's still doing it" ... I ... felt quite bullied by [a] member of senior management at the time, and I said something to my line manager ... and it did all stop (Int. 1).

Meanwhile Joanne and Claire had a very particular experience returning to school after their first maternity leaves, because both returned (both in schools prior to their current ones) pregnant with their second child. Claire initially returned to her role as head of department, whilst Joanne returned to her school in a new role. Joanne was concerned about how her news would be received,

E So you were genuinely concerned that your pregnancy might put you in a vulnerable position?

J Definitely, definitely. And I knew I was taking a big risk coming back already pregnant anyway, it doesn't put you in a very good light, "oh you've already been off for nine months and now you are going off again" ... The way I view it, I gave [several] years of my life to that school ... I have limited time to have my family now because I've given so much, not just to the school, but also just the timeline ... you have to ... feel a bit selfish and actually I am entitled to maternity leave (Int. 1).

And Claire was left feeling that her news was not well received at all,

C ... the fact that I went back to work pregnant ... (laughs) ... was a bit difficult.

E You've mentioned ... that it didn't go down very well ...

C No, didn't go down very well.

> ... I think I appreciate from their side that it could look a bit ... you go on one maternity leave and then you come back for a bit and then you go on a second. And I felt very strongly that, "why can't I?" ... I do think it's important that you, it's fair that if you are entitled to that you shouldn't feel bad about it. So it did annoy me that ... it was viewed badly ...

E How do you know it was, was anything said?

C ... the head was ... very quiet and said "yes, OK". He didn't say congratulations, so I took that as a sign ... (Int. 1).

Finding balance

The idea of balancing school and home life came up in all of the conversations. Samantha found that teaching full-time she could not get the balance she was looking for,

> I thought I could manage it. I went back to work when Poppy was very tiny, and was full-time, and had every intention of staying full-time and continuing, but ... I couldn't get the balance right ... for me ... I have to be part-time, and I don't have any intention of, while they're school age at least, working full-time, because I'll want to have that contact with school, even if it's just one day that I can do school drop-off and pick-up, that's, I think very important, and important part of being a parent ... I know other people can do the balance, but I don't feel that I can (Int. 1).

One solution Joanne has found is to ensure complete focus on the task in hand when at school or at home, although she is also torn between the needs of her sons and the demands of school,

> You have to put things in little boxes in a way, so when I'm here, from quarter past seven to whatever time I leave, I'm here, and when I get home, even if it is just that half an hour when I'm at home before they go to bed, that's when they get me (Int.1).

Karen employs the same approach, explaining,

> ... I try to make whatever I'm doing what I'm doing ... (Int. 2).

Claire expressed that by working part-time, as Samantha has also done, she felt that she had found balance between school and home,

> ... I didn't want to work full-time ... I wanted to be influential in the way my children were brought up, and to share moments ... I haven't regretted that at all

> ... I love the fact that I can do two or three days of work a week, I think the balance is perfect (Int. 2).

But Sarah acknowledged that her working outside the home part-time is not necessarily the answer,

> ... I just do think it's really hard actually, if you're a woman with kids, I still think it's hard to do your jobs, your work and your looking after your kids ... It's almost easier in a household to have somebody as the working person and somebody as the home person. Robert and I are both part-time and sometimes your roles get confused and you feel like you are not doing either job well (Int. 2).

Balancing time across part-time teaching and family commitments also came up. Where once lunchtime meetings had not been a problem, Samantha now regarded time as precious and something she tried to protect in order to be able to focus on her priorities, whether that was her classroom teaching or family,

> Before having the girls ... I would put myself forward for lots, but now my lunchtimes are far more precious because then I can be getting things done, or actually I often sit for half an hour and don't do anything because I don't have that time when I get home, whereas before I didn't mind that I was meeting at lunchtime ... (Int. 1).

Meanwhile attending evening events presents its own issues as Claire described,

> ... going to the school production's always really difficult, because I live so far away but also I then have to get someone to look after my children, so it's always the two things that are very difficult. So then I feel like I'm not the sort of teacher that goes and supports colleagues. So I do feel that's a bit difficult (Int. 2).

Lack of understanding regarding the ability of parents to stay late can result in damaged relationships as the narrative below shows. When a comment intended for one colleague was inadvertently relayed to the mothers in question, Samantha related,

> ... all of the department members are in the WhatsApp group, two of them are mothers ... the two mothers had to leave at ten to five because their children's nursery closes at five, and one of the other members of staff said, thinking she was obviously mentioning it to just one other, rather than the whole group ... "I can't believe they left, duh, duh, duh ...". But they had no option. And so they were there just saying "we've always had a really good relationship and we've ... helped out on the performances. That was only the dress rehearsal". And they were really, really hurt by it (Int. 2).

Nicola and Karen who both teach full-time have also faced the challenge of finding balance. Nicola acknowledged that promotion had brought longer hours and more meetings. Whilst Karen, even with her endeavours to keep weekends family focused, ponders her attempts to find balance,

> ... a lot of the time as a working mother you feel like "am I there enough for my child, or am I constantly at work?" Well I do feel like I'm there enough (Int. 1).

Whilst Nicola explained,

> ... I suppose the one sort of niggle for me a bit is just that maybe she can't do the clubs ... that if I was able to be at school pick-up at three o'clock ... she would be able to do. But I don't ever feel like she doesn't get enough love or time from us really (Int. 2).

Nicola, Karen, Sarah and Joanne are not the only mothers to question whether they are 'there enough' but Nicola highlights that ultimately this is a question only individual mothers can answer,

> ... I chat a lot, obviously, to other mums in school about the difficulties and getting the balance right ... there's lots of people that have chosen to go part-time ... you're then discussing "well is that the right way to go? Is it the right approach to take a bit of time out and (pause) be there a bit more?", but I suppose you just have to do what's right and what works for you really (Int. 2).

The experience of returning to school after maternity leave varied for the participants. Returning to school after their first maternity leaves left Claire disappointed in the headteacher's attitude to her news and Joanne feeling vulnerable professionally. Both women feel that they had given much to their school communities and it was only fair that they should be able to take up their entitlement to maternity benefits when they were ready to have their families. Karen, Nicola and Sarah returned with relative ease whereas it was an especially difficult transition for Samantha.

Claire, Sarah and Samantha eventually moved from teaching full-time before having children to teaching part-time after having children. Karen has continued to teach full-time but is not keen to undertake professional development that will help her move to Senior Leadership Team (SLT) status if it will encroach on family life.

From a school's perspective, Nicola and Joanne's availability has not changed. Joanne continues to work in school full-time, her husband a stay-at-home father; Nicola continues at school full-time and with Matthew's support undertakes the additional formal study required to fulfil her new role.

In sum, the varied and different ways discussed in the interviews of managing the commitments of home and school life are complex. All of the women are finding their way, all of them striving for balance.

Professional learning

During the interviews various understandings of professional development and professional learning were shared by the participants. Karen described CPD as a course one might attend and had not initially considered the possibility that professional development could be broader than this and generate from a range of opportunities; including initiatives she developed herself. Nicola spoke of professional development in terms of mentoring and formal study but also of constant engagement in school training and discussions. Sarah conceptualised professional development as constantly learning one's 'craft' whilst Joanne defined it as developing the 'skills' and 'practices' of teaching. Through discussion Samantha acknowledged that reading around her subject could be regarded as professional development and Claire explained it is her 'duty' to ensure one is up-to-date with current subject knowledge and emphasized the importance of self-improvement. Meanwhile, Samantha perceives the role of teaching to comprise different elements (pastoral and academic) and that professional development mirrors these twin aspects.

As discussed in Chapter 2, my definition of professional learning rests on Day's (1999: 4) definition of professional development, additionally encompassing wider informal or incidental opportunities for professional learning and the broader holistic development of the 'teacher-as-person' (Goodson, 1991: 41) that comes with experiences of teaching throughout one's career.

Experiences of teaching

Workload

Meeting for the first interview in January 2016, Karen explained she experiences peaks and troughs in teaching but, having been at her current school a little while, she felt she had a better home-school balance. However, she observed,

> ... the problem is I think with teaching ... there is always something else to do, and you've just got to stop, because you could just work 24/7 and you've just got to say "no, it's enough" (Int. 2).

Karen described a busy but workable situation, however others were less convinced. Sarah had been concerned that in her first interview she had not communicated effectively the real stresses of the job, saying,

> ... I think I made out that my job was <u>not</u> that stressful ... actually now (laughter) I'm suddenly really stressed in my job. So I was just thinking "oh my God I kind

> of made out everything was kind of OK because Robert could do the childcare", and that does give me a chance to do my work and stay late, and recently I have been working eight till six at school, like every night for the last three or four weeks, but even then I can't keep up ... in the last interview ... I don't think I made it clear how hard it was to juggle everything ... (Int. 2).

Joanne also spoke of developing strategies to keep on top of an intensive marking load,

> ... you just have to now teach yourself ... "that's good enough, that's going to serve the purpose of that lesson, that marking is enough for them", because I do over mark (Int. 1).

When working as a head of department and managing an additional subject, Nicola considered working part-time to get work done and avoid having to work the entire weekend. Now, with less teaching as an Assistant Principal, Nicola faces different workload challenges with late SLT meetings and greater whole school responsibility.

Prior to giving up her role as Head of Year and deciding to teach part-time, Samantha found all her non-contact time[20] and breaks were taken up with the requirements of the role, leaving her at the end of the school day with all her planning and marking still to do,

> So workload for a normal teacher, I think it's already enough of a balance, you still already are taking lots of work home ... once you add responsibilities on, any of your free periods I used doing that responsibility ... I had an allowance of (pause) six lessons ... to do the job, but it was every lunchtime, form time, all of my frees, and I would be at school until at least half five every day, and I then hadn't done any planning or marking so all planning and marking was coming home (Int. 2).

Even teaching part-time, Sarah sometimes does school work at weekends and on her day off. She also uses her non-contact time to mentor PGCE students and explains there is not enough time to do her job: this impacts on her ability to attend professional development sessions on top of her class work when she has her sons to tend to at home,

> ... essentially, and I don't think this just applies to me, and mums ... teachers don't have enough time in the day to do their job. If I could just teach three lessons a day instead of four and I had the extra two lessons to plan and mark, my job would be doable (Int. 2).

Claire regularly does school work on days off,

> ... my Key Stage 3 marking I tend to do that on my days off, and then I have to jiggle my ... A Level marking, after school or sometimes I negotiate with my husband ... and he takes the kids to the child minder in the morning and I go in super early and blitz the marking before school (Int. 1).

[20] Periods in the school week not time-tabled for teaching.

and even though Karen felt that she had recently got her workload under control at the time we met, she also works at the weekend,

> ... I still work at the weekends, I do bits and pieces, but I don't work during the day at the weekend, it will always be when Oscar is in bed (Int. 2).

In addition to workload, Sarah and Claire talked about the challenges of implementing the changes in the A Level and GCSE syllabi. Alongside this was concern about the pressure to get results, an issue that Samantha and Claire were conscious of in a grammar school environment, and a challenge mentioned by Joanne and Sarah.

As a senior leader, Joanne aims to find ways for all staff to manage their workload,

> ... I look for ways within work, I ... think, "well if I can make this work, if this is easy for me, it should be easy for everyone else" ...I ... think about the care of staff ... and how we make it ... possible for working parents (Int. 1).

To be able to balance family life and undertake additional professional responsibility, Samantha summed up,

> I guess the job would have to fit within work hours, and if the job fitted in the working hours then I think it would be possible (Int. 2).

Teaching part-time

Sarah is one of several part-time staff at her school and does not feel especially unusual in her context. Meanwhile Joanne and Nicola, whilst not part-time, mused that teaching part-time brings its own challenges. Perceiving that working part-time might require the ability to 'switch on and off', Karen was not sure whether she could teach part-time, commenting,

> ... I don't know whether ... I'm really a part-time person, I'm kind of all or nothing (laughter) (Int. 1).

In the same conversation however, Karen spoke of a part-time colleague who 'can't switch on and off either'. Separately, Joanne talked about a part-time colleague planning to leave teaching because her experience is one of full-time teaching on part-time pay.

Meanwhile, Nicola noted the demands of keeping up with school work and even then being unlikely to be rewarded with promotion,

> ... I don't think at the moment there seems to be much chance of you being a senior leader and being part-time (Int. 1).

Claire feels that being part-time has been a barrier to career progression and moving into a senior leadership role, even though she undertakes plenty of CPD. She has also found her choice of schools limited because of the difficulty in finding part-time roles and both she and Samantha believe part-time teachers are perceived to be more difficult to timetable, even if this is not explicitly vocalised.

Whilst Samantha has continued to benefit from engaging in professional development provided by her school, it seems that being part-time in many ways has left her feeling less valued than if she taught full-time. This sense of being devalued has come from being allocated a timetable with poor rooming and losing her car-parking space,

> ... they have a few criteria ... it's on responsibility and length of service, now length of service in that school I'm right up there but because I'm part-time I'm still not even considered for that ... (Int. 2).

Rewards

Whilst the women spoke about significant demands and pressures, there was also mention of the rewards of teaching. On a practical basis, though Nicola has used the holidays to complete her professional studies, all of the other participants mentioned the importance of the school holidays for family life. For the most part however, the rewards of teaching mostly focused on relationships with colleagues, students and parents. Samantha talked about enjoying being in the classroom; Claire about working with her sixth form and the benefits of challenging herself creatively; and Karen reminisced fondly about past students,

> ... there were two classes in particular that I absolutely loved, and saw them every so often when I'd go to a thing at the sixth form college ... they'd come back and we had a lovely relationship ... they did a little baby shower when I left, they were such lovely girls ... I do think about them, I think "I wonder what they are doing now?" (Int. 1).

Sarah chose teaching precisely because she liked young people and she spoke of having good relationships with her students in her current school and enjoying being among young people. Meanwhile Joanne explained that she found working with students from challenging backgrounds especially rewarding,

> You don't get to hear all of them [success stories] all the time because lots of kids just lose contact, but you'd like to think that if you hadn't had that impact, maybe they wouldn't have quite got as far as they have got, which can be quite selfish, but that's the payoff, when you have the hair-pulling moments ... (Int. 1).

In discussing their experiences of teaching, the conversations came to revolve around three aspects: workload, teaching part-time and the rewards of teaching. Whilst all of the women found teaching rewarding, what stood out was the perceived impact working in school part-time has on individual teachers. Opportunities to progress, choice of schools and timetabling considerations were some of the things adversely affected. It seems that it is teaching part-time rather than being a mother *per se* that has the most significant effect on the wider experience of teaching and opportunities for professional growth.

Career progression

Karen is interested in progressing her career but is not sure in what direction. She knows that she is not especially interested in a pastoral role but has not particularly enjoyed working with data. A little while ago she looked at applying for an assistant head position at her school. Having discussed the role with the headteacher they decided it was best she consolidate her department before looking for promotion, although Karen made it clear that she did not want to miss out on any potential opportunities. A question remains regarding whether Karen will choose to pursue the opportunities when they arise, given that committing to any required professional development would need careful consideration. Having watched a friend undertake professional development for senior leadership Karen explained,

> ... that is where I might choose my family life over my professional development, because it seems like she's having to do a lot of extra reading and extra work and evening ... sessions ... I would have to look at the ... demands of that kind of thing before I committed to it ... (Int. 1).

Meanwhile Claire has found that she has had to make an unexpected choice between her career and family life. When asked whether she thought the perception was that being part-time made her less committed, she answered,

> Um, it's probably just a matter of it being a bit of a hurdle, "so what if Claire isn't in on the day?" So there must be a bit of that, just the physically not being in the school when they want the meeting to happen, or restricting when the pre-meeting happens to talk about what they are going to deliver. But I would say that the people who are full-time, I'm pretty sure it's very clear from the leadership who they are thinking about who would get promoted, and as a part-time ... I'd never be able to go any higher (Int. 2).

Samantha also spoke of the unexpected choice she has had to make,

> So before I had the girls it was definitely about career progression ... the more responsibility I got I just loved it, I loved being head of year ... I could really see myself going up ... it's really nice to feel important ... in an organisation ... and I wanted to continue going that way ... but then when I had the girls and I went back to work and I realised actually that feeling had gone, (pause) I just wanted to be a good teacher, I wanted to know that I wasn't failing students, I didn't have the desire to move up, I did start to look at the families of people in senior leaderships ... most ... had broken marriages, and were on second marriages ... I realised "no, I don't want <u>that</u>" (Int. 2).

Sarah has also made choices, and at the time of our meetings she was reflecting on where she was 'at' and what she ultimately hopes to achieve. We discussed how rather than seeking promotion, she was possibly looking sideways for more creative opportunities. Whilst it was important for Sarah to communicate how hard it is to juggle school work and family life, she also suggested that it is not raising a young family that

has held her back from any aspirations she might have had but a lack of confidence. Sarah wonders whether it would be too convenient an excuse to claim her children were the reason for lack of career progression, although this does not take away from the challenges she faces in raising twin boys,

> ... I think having children ... it almost gives you the excuse to - "that's why I didn't go up, I had my children" ... it justifies it a bit for you. And I'm not sure if it really is the having children that stopped me ... I think you can have children and still be in those positions ... there's an assistant head at our school now for example who's got a two year old. She got that job after she'd had her kid. So I think it's about you more (Int. 1).

This appears to be an overly self-critical assessment of her situation. Sarah perceives she has choice and that having children does not factor into opportunities or their subsequent uptake and yet only a little while later she shares a story of four women teachers in her school. Out of four women, three were to ultimately relinquish their pre-maternity levels of responsibility. One could argue, as Sarah does, that opportunities were not denied to the women because they had had children. However, it seems that it became harder for those women to maintain their pursuit of opportunities, something Sarah appears to begin to mentally register as she comes towards the end of her story,

> ... there were four of us at school who all had our kids at the same time ... out of the four of us, two went back into their positions of responsibility, one has since dropped ... so two went back as head of department and two of us dropped it. So (pause) I think that ... shows that in some respects that it was up to us to make those decisions, it wasn't just because we'd had the kids that those opportunities were denied us particularly. Maybe it made it harder, but (pause) mm (Int. 1).

Meanwhile Joanne and Nicola have found that they have been presented with opportunities for progression. Joanne experienced internal promotions whilst Nicola was approached to apply for her current position and the required SENCo[21] training was provided as part of the role.

The exchange with Karen highlights that whilst opportunities for professional learning and career advancement might present themselves, if pursuing these opportunities means a woman has to choose between spending time with her family and additional hours working, it places her in an untenable position. Teaching full-time, Karen has to choose carefully what additional work she can fit around her family. Teaching part-time, Claire has found that she has had to make an entirely unexpected choice between her career and family life. Ultimately, Samantha found that whilst she had initially intended

[21] Special Educational Needs Coordinator

to continue developing her career after having Poppy, she found she could not get the balance between home and school that she wanted. Sarah continues to ponder what she might yet achieve.

Joanne and Nicola, the most senior teachers, have worked hard to attain their promotions, Nicola an Assistant Principal and Joanne a Senior Assistant Head. Nicola, supported by her husband, has undertaken additional study for her new role and Joanne, with her husband full-time at home, is able to take on the demands of a senior role. Could it be said that it was a fully supported return to school after maternity leave that paved the way for further career development? Certainly Nicola felt supported upon her return, but Joanne's return (to her previous school) was far less comfortable. As far as their schools are concerned, it appears nothing has really changed. It might be argued that a factor that has enabled Nicola and Joanne to pursue professional learning and their careers, is that their schools have not had to engage with them as teachers who are mothers with young children.

The personal value of professional learning

Joanne is very clear on what makes teacher professional development worthwhile: aside from being evidence-based, she listed other important factors during our conversation, such as leaving a CPD course,

> feeling that you'd really learnt something, and you'd got things you could apply straightaway ... you'd leave enthused ...

Courses would feature,

> Nice venues, nice food, nice presentation and materials ...

and be delivered by ex-teachers,

> ... because only a teacher, only somebody that's walked it will be able to stand up, and have any validity with what they have to say ... (Int. 2).

Even though she was engaged in formal professional study, Nicola argued,

> I think probably one of the most purposeful things with professional development is mentoring ... where you get people ... come in and actually watch you, and you get those discussions and talking about your performance ... (Int. 1).

For Karen, her focus is on the importance of networking opportunities. Whilst she would like more opportunities to engage in professional development and is concerned that she is not doing as much as she would like, Karen has to be convinced a professional development course will add to her practice,

> ... unless it's something that I feel <u>really</u> strongly about, that I can <u>really</u> demonstrate impact on a day to day basis ... I would be put off by it really (Int.1).

There were mixed views on the relationship between professional development and career progression. Nicola's new role as Assistant Principal with responsibility for Special Educational Needs requires formal professional learning and therefore there was a direct correlation between her ability to perform her new role and the professional development she was engaged in when we met, as she explained,

> ... at the moment, priority would be the new area ... everything now, for my focus, would want to be skilling myself up more and more in the role that I'm in (Int. 1).

However, Joanne said she would not identify a particular course that has led to a specific promotion for her and Karen did not think that not doing CPD would necessarily stop her progressing although she did feel it was a necessary support,

> ... I don't know ... whether if I didn't do anything, it would stop me progressing, but for me ... I need the theory to support the practice ... (Int. 2).

Whilst Sarah acknowledged a connection between professional learning and career progression, she also feels that in her current school she could progress without having done lots of professional development, saying that this is because the quality of her work is known – although in another school this wouldn't necessarily be the case,

> ... say I wanted to be an assistant head in my school, I don't think I'd have had to have shown that I've done loads of professional development stuff particularly ... I think I could move up within my school without loads of extra professional development. Maybe if I was going to another school it might be different ... (Int. 1).

Since having her children Samantha has thought about professional development in terms of her classroom practice, rather than progressing her career,

> ... there hasn't been any thought about it being progression for my career, but ... there is a worry of things getting stale ... the benefit for me keeping up on top of the game ... knowing that when it comes to observations ... I will still be up on the outstanding side of things, ... that's important to me, but ... it's more because I know that that will have an impact in the classroom. So it's more to do with the classroom, it hasn't been to do with career progression, (pause) recently. (Int. 2).

Meanwhile, Claire is conscious of how her career might develop,

> I think I'm always aware that I want to have things that look good on my CV ... that show ... I'm motivated or ... interested in whole school issues that make me better than the ... other people (Int. 2).

The autonomy with which the teachers experienced their professional learning was also mixed. Joanne believes that professional development should be tailored to individual needs but she also acknowledged that early in one's career this kind of support is not necessarily the norm,

> ... professional development, when you are an NQT it gets done to you ... doing your teacher training it gets done to you, "this is what you have to read and this is what you have to know, and this is the way you have to design your lessons, etc." And then you get offered, my experience was "oh you know, would you like to go on this Inset ...?" And I went on some amazing Insets ...(Int. 2).

When I asked Nicola how she came to undertake the professional development she has she mused,

> ... I'd like to think that it was all me going "yeah, I'm really interested in", but it probably wasn't ... I think it's more ... maybe through the appraisal way, or through different things that have cropped up, people have said "oh we are thinking of putting you forward for this"... (Int. 1)

Claire feels that teachers should be encouraged to take control of their professional development, taking the initiative and pursuing professional learning that interests them,

> ... I view it as something that you should decide if you are interested and do that one, rather than being told to do something ... you encourage your employees to take control of their professional development (Int. 1).

The personal value each of the women derived from professional development; their thoughts on what makes CPD worthwhile; the relationship between professional learning and career progression; and the level of professional learning autonomy they experienced, varied.

There were mixed views on the relationship between CPD and career progression, how much professional learning is needed to progress, and what its focus should be. Perhaps this also relates to the stage of motherhood, rather than career, the teachers were experiencing at the time of our interviews. Samantha's focus was on her classes rather than whole school considerations and she was keen to maintain her classroom practice that has been deemed outstanding and avoid becoming 'stale'. Perhaps because Claire's children are older than Samantha's she is more focused on whole school issues and ensuring her *curriculum vitae* is substantial enough to support her career.

School provision and individual needs

Joanne feels that she is not directed by her school to do certain kinds of professional development although she acknowledges that the school has whole school targets to meet. Samantha explained her school leads the professional development agenda; CPD options are provided, from which teachers are asked to select. According to Samantha, this depends on what the expectations are at the time, what is required and what is on offer. Claire also explained that her school offers professional development and teachers are required to do a certain number of hours; teachers also have to show that they are making progress in an area that meets the school's improvement plan (SIP). Nicola's school also provides professional development although she acknowledges that there is not a wealth of choice and the appraisal process has been a factor in what professional development she has done. Again, with a whole school focus, Karen noted that school CPD provision tends to be tailored to generic whole school issues rather than subject specific. In Claire's experience, the school determines what activity counts as professional development. She explains that her school would not count informal professional learning, that professional learning has to 'add value' and that her school expects teachers to have their subject knowledge as they can only attend one subject-based course a year.

Given that the schools tend to lead on the CPD agenda, most of the women talked of regular professional development slots in the school calendar. Claire spoke of staff meetings geared towards achieving set goals, options offered across the school and regular Wednesday professional development on generic issues. Joanne, Sarah, Nicola and Karen all described their respective schools harnessing the expertise and specialisms of their own staff to present on topics and issues throughout the week. It is this constant school input that Nicola finds so beneficial even though she acknowledges,

> ... obviously it's just people within the academy, so ... it's not like you are bringing someone else in to go "'boom', what if you tried this?" But ... I think it is really good to have that perpetual ... consistent professional development where you are training and you're discussing things (Int. 1).

Nicola's school paid for her to do the SENCo course and they have also bought in time from an educational psychologist to do training with her, so her specific professional learning needs are being acknowledged. Another instance of individual needs accounted for is a successful coaching programme tailored to individuals' needs where people are matched with coaches who have the most appropriate skills to support them, as described by Joanne.

Less in touch with the needs of individuals, Claire commented that if a teacher's needs are not in line with her school's SIP, she would need to undertake the professional learning independently, explaining,

> ... the school ... would just expect you to ... have your subject knowledge ... if you had a weakness you could justify that you needed to do something, but they wouldn't fund that.

whilst more abstract needs,

> ... would just be something that you do in your own time (Int. 1).

Meanwhile, when her focus is on the needs of her A Level classes, Samantha finds having to undertake generic whole school professional learning, dealing with issues with which she has no real involvement, a distraction from teaching her subject,

> ... I can see that there are benefits but that doesn't stop it getting frustrating at times when you are doing it, whereas before I could see more benefit from it, because I was more involved with the whole school. It's quite selfish I guess, ... but that's just where ... I am at the moment ... I want to do that classroom job well, and so other things detract from it ... (Int.1).

Perhaps reflecting their senior positions, Nicola and Joanne seem to have experienced a more tailored approached to their professional learning needs. Joanne doesn't feel directed to undertake specified CPD and Nicola has moved into a role benefitting from formal professional study whilst the school has also paid for additional support.

Whilst whole school needs may be effectively addressed by weekly internal sessions that can keep staff refreshed and up-to-date, the individual needs of ordinary classroom teachers also need to be met if professional learning is to be professionally relevant and personally fulfilling.

Pursuit and engagement

Active and incidental pursuit

In identifying CPD needs, Claire explained that teachers in her school attend their appraisal meetings having critically reflected on their development needs. Samantha too, mentioned identifying areas for development when preparing her self-review for her appraisal meeting and the need for professional development support with a change of exam specification. Claire had realised the need to become more familiar with current thinking on assessment, having been struck by seeing an assistant head reading a TES[22] publication and Karen has identified a need to 'sit down' with someone who can show her how to use data more effectively to support her students. Sarah wants to learn more about current thinking on teaching and learning whilst Nicola thinks an area to learn more about in the future could be testing for SEN provision. Joanne meanwhile is interested in research-based practice.

In order to actively pursue CPD, Karen and a colleague informally cover each other's lessons to help them pursue professional learning although she had not found much she wanted to pursue in earnest when I asked whether she had much time to explore professional development or learning,

> ... I have to say that I'm really bad at it, mainly because it's just everything that's associated with it, it's not really to do with the family demands, it's to do with the demands of finding the right things, or looking for the right things, sorting out cover, and then what you come back to is always a shambles ... (Int. 1).

In Karen's old school, when performing the Gifted and Talented coordinator role, Karen proactively undertook a course to support this work. Recently however, her active pursuit of professional learning has been via social media and she has found using Twitter to be the most productive use of her time. Karen uses Twitter to develop helpful associations with other teachers, garner ideas and gather information about professional development opportunities.

Joanne also uses Twitter extensively, keeping abreast of developments, accessing answers to issues quickly and dipping in and out for inspiration. Joanne has found following pertinent Twitter chats where one can also search the hashtag later for a roundup of the discussion helpful, and she encourages staff to make use of Twitter and teacher blogs.

[22] Times Educational Supplement.

Nicola finds Twitter harder to navigate, cautious about who to follow and prefers TED Talks[23]. Meanwhile she actively selected her SENCo course from a range of offers, explaining,

> ... there were several different courses. The head was really good and he said "look, you look into it and think about which sort of course you want to do". So I could have done a completely online course, and there was one ... quite a lot cheaper than the one that I'm doing, but I just didn't really like the idea of it being really remote ... and not really having that ... personal contact ... (Int. 2).

A clear example of active pursuit of professional learning is demonstrated by Claire's exploration of an opportunity to extend her leadership experience,

> ... so I emailed my line manager and ... I cc'd in the person who line manages her, and just asked if I could get involved a bit more to try and meet my performance management target, and the woman above my line manager was very keen, and responded very promptly, and already with an idea in mind, which ... really ... interested ... and excited me ... (Int. 2).

Incidental professional learning, experienced when engaged in other activities not ostensibly undertaken for professional development purposes, was also mentioned by several of the women. Karen talked about her experience of leading CPD for some PGCE students that in turn was professional learning for her in terms of leadership. So too, Sarah has found that mentoring PGCE students in her school has led to her own professional learning. She has found mentoring an excellent opportunity to observe others teaching and reflect on her own practice as well update herself on current pedagogical theory and benefit from new ideas. Samantha has benefitted from hearing guest speakers whom she has invited to speak to her own students or from accompanying her students to conferences and Claire's own creative practice bloomed when working on a project with her A Level students. Joanne meanwhile has learnt much from people she has worked with and credits a particular line manager for her own leadership style.

Engagement

All of the women described a variety of professional development experiences they were engaged in at the time of our meeting or reflected on past professional learning they had taken up. Nicola was in the midst of a course – assessed through written assignments – leading to a professional qualification. This was a course new SENCos have to complete within three years of taking up the role. To make the most of the

[23] TED (Technology, entertainment and design) (n.d) is an organisation that communicates ideas through presentations called 'TED Talks'.

training, Nicola decided to do the course within the first year of her new job. Although this meant further pressure in addition to learning her new role, she felt that it would help her to forge a successful department from the beginning of her tenure. Whilst the school covered the costs of the course, most of the studying had to be done in her own time.

External exam marking was mentioned by three of the women as a worthwhile professional learning experience. Although she had not done much subject specific professional development, Nicola had found external exam marking training to be very helpful, saying,

> ... I wanted to find out ... what the students needed to do to get the grades ... I said to the school "can I be an examiner?" So I did that training to help inform my teaching (Int.1).

Samantha and Claire (a team leader) have also been very involved in external exam marking and have found this experience to be very beneficial in terms of professional learning. Samantha described how the experience has helped with her workload because it gives her confidence when marking her own students' work. Equally, it gives her students confidence when they know that she externally examines. Samantha can fit external marking into her home-life as it is online and she can fit it around the rest of her commitments, explaining,

> ... I can do it once the girls are in bed ... I then sit at the computer ... I can do it then so it doesn't interfere with anything else. I can put it into my own time ... I can just literally make it fit where I want to, and because it's for that limited time you know that you've got that time that you're going to be working the extra hours, but I can fit it in bits and pieces.
>
> ... there'll be some days when I don't get any marking done, and then other days that I'll get quite a lot more done. I've actually never had an exam set where I've finished everything ... but I've always done enough for it to be worthwhile for the board and myself, and they are quite understanding, so I always say to my team leader "I've got two young children, and so it won't happen before this time" ... on my days that I'm not at work I'm mummy, and I won't work when they are around, I'll always wait for them to nap or be asleep in the evening (Int. 1).

The women also spoke more generally about their engagement in professional learning. Samantha spoke of the mentoring she had received and how this had helped her with her Head of Year role. Joanne had taken up a range of professional learning opportunities attending conferences such as researchED and Karen talked about a recent webinar for GCSE that she had attended. Meanwhile, Sarah described the importance of encountering fresh ideas and how she benefitted from having early career teachers in the department, given they are,

> ... always just talking about how we can make things better (Int. 1).

Identifying one's professional development needs requires self-awareness and this came through in the interviews. This awareness was the result of a formal appraisal process or day-to-day observation of the school environment and professional reflection. The women demonstrated that as '"learning professionals"' (Guile and Lucas in Cunningham, 2008: 162) they have a positive attitude to professional learning and actively seek out opportunities to develop their practice. Cunningham (ibid.) suggests that such active pursuit implicitly relates to '*formalised* learning*'* and that opportunities for 'informal' or 'unplanned' learning – what I have called incidental pursuit – are less 'well accommodated'. All of the women identified specific needs and the range of professional learning activities they had engaged in when we met indicates how diverse the needs of teachers are and raises questions about how individual practitioners can effectively be supported throughout their careers.

Challenges

Accessing professional development was raised in conversation with Claire when she told me of her attempt several years ago to access an overnight residential course she needed attend to work as an external examiner,

> ... I ... had to do a training in February for the moderating which was happening in the June, and my child at the time ... was still requiring a lot of breastfeeding, so I took him to the training event with my husband, and he took him off in the pushchair and then delivered him when I needed feeding, I nipped off in the breaks, and I didn't miss anything but there was definite strong feeling that I shouldn't have brought my child ...
>
> ... I was the first to do this ... but I felt I needed to be trained otherwise I couldn't work in June, and I don't think it's fair that just because I'm breastfeeding in February it means that I can't do a job in June, so I just asked and I think because you ask they have to accommodate ... But for about two or three years, every year, it was brought up – "oh is that someone bringing a baby in?" ... "They shouldn't be allowed to have babies at this" (Int. 2).

In addition to institutional attitudes such as described above, other institutional issues were mentioned. Joanne, Nicola and Karen touched on how school budgets impact what professional development courses might be made available to teachers, and Joanne and Karen spoke about the challenge of implementing learning once back in daily school life.

Aside from examples of institutional challenges, the competing commitments of family and professional life were also raised. Some of the women spoke of having to think about family needs when considering engaging in professional learning.

Karen explained she was not prepared to attend a Saturday course,

> ... I think I work enough during the week, and I work at the weekends as well, so Saturday daytime I wasn't prepared to give it up ... again it was cost, but I don't think it was that expensive, but it was the fact that it was the weekend (Int. 2).

Claire also commented that when looking at professional development she would need to consider whether it was at the weekend. Sarah also feels a tension between professional and family needs,

> Out of hours when you are feeling anyway a bit bad that you're maybe not home enough for your kids is never going to help you ... that time, five o'clock to seven o'clock is important, you're giving your kids dinner, you're getting them in their bath, you're getting them ready for bed ... I tend not to give them their dinner, Robert does that, but I'm home six, half six, then I'm bathing them and putting them to bed. And then it's ... eight o'clock by the time that's all finished ... it's pretty difficult to do stuff after school (Int. 2).

For Nicola, the age of her daughter Megan has been a factor – as well as her workload – in a decision to undertake further study,

E So would you consider doing this course if Megan had been much younger?

N I think I would have found it hard ... I think that she's now at the stage where ... she's much more independent ... I can ... manage this course, because it's part of the work I'm doing ... (Int. 1).

Joanne attends weekend CPD but is always mindful of what value it will be, given that attending weekend CPD impacts her family, explaining,

> ... that's the goodwill of my husband again, because I'm not being directed by the school to come and do a Saturday school, I'm saying "I really want go to this", and he goes "off you go then". And off I go. But, you know, his first question when I get through the door is "was that good, did you get a lot out of it?" And I go "yeah! It was great ..." ... when he sees things are of value to me, he's fine with it (Int.1).

The challenge of accessing professional learning opportunities was raised, with the financial cost and the constraint of school budgets often mentioned. It is however the issue of competing home and school commitments that all of the participants have to consider and navigate. With the development of CPD provision increasingly being offered at weekends, Webster (2017) argues that this puts additional pressure on those who have caring responsibilities and questions whether CPD risks 'drifting from professional entitlement to niche pastime'.

PART 4: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER 7: A BOURDIEUSIAN LENS

As discussed in Chapter 3, Bourdieu (Grenfell, 2012: 219-226) developed a three-level research methodology: 'construction of the research object', 'field analysis', and 'participant objectivation'.

I have conceptualised the research so that the locus of professional learning becomes the school field and the context in which the participants or 'agents' are engaged in parenting is the home field. The overarching themes of domestic context and professional learning explored in Chapter 6 become home field and school field respectively in the following chapters.

Several of the women speak about their experiences in a range of schools, not solely the one they currently work in. Whilst the schools the women mention do physically exist, they are more than merely physical spaces when constructed as notions of social space. The issues drawn from the research are not to be seen as necessarily a specific school's issue, but a societal one, given that all the schools are situated within a 'field of power' (Thomson, 2012: 70) When talking about the school field, I have in mind not only the physical environments in which the women work, but also the metaphysical properties conceptualised by the idea of school.

Within 'field analysis' is a further three-level approach (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 104-105), comprising analysis of: the school field 'vis-à-vis the field of power'; the *habitus* of the participants; and the positions of the *habitus* in the *field.* It is through Bourdieu's 'field analysis' that I explore the research question and its underpinning strands[24]. In Chapter 7 I offer an overview of 'the field of power' before moving to reflect on the women's *habitus* in response to motherhood and how they negotiate their position as teacher in the school field.

[24] Outlined in Chapter 1.

The school field *vis-à-vis the field of power*

On 17 March 2016 the 'Schools White Paper: Educational Excellence Everywhere' (DfE, 2016b) was released. The paper included a number of clauses focused on raising standards of professional development. These were to ensure teacher access to professional development, demonstration of CPD provider compliance with a defined standard of practice, and incorporated the accreditation of CPD courses and programmes. According to the 2016 Schools White Paper (DfE, 2016b: 35), a new Standard for Teachers' Professional Development would 'set out a gold standard for effective CPD, helping schools to identify good practice, raising expectations among teachers, schools and providers and ... used to challenge ineffective practice and improve quality'. This paper was released on the last day of the interviews I undertook for this thesis and was to herald a possible future for professional learning. It indicated a perceived need to raise the standard of professional development and learning made available to teachers.

In addition to the professionalisation of teacher CPD, a new professional body, succeeded the College of Teachers and launched as the Chartered College of Teaching in January 2017, with Dame Alison Peacock as its Chief Executive. The Department for Education gave £5 million over four years to enable the Chartered College to become established. In 2016 clause 2.52 of the Schools White Paper had outlined its vision for the new body, stating,

> The new College of Teaching will be a professional body like those in other high status professions such as law and medicine. It will be a voluntary membership organisation, independent of government, run by teachers for teachers. The College will lead the profession in taking responsibility for its own improvement, supporting its members' development and – much like the medical colleges – promoting the use of evidence to improve professional practice (DfE, 2016b: 37).

The inception of a new professional body was not without its critics. There had already been a professional body – The General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) – established in 1998 and abolished in 2012. Whilst the GTCE did not prevail, the 1988 institution of 'Baker Days'[25] requiring teachers to undertake in-service training has continued in some form or other, demonstrating an on-going commitment to at least the notion of teacher professional development.

[25] In-service training days (originally 'Baker Days') were introduced by Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State for Education 1986-1989.

The approach towards teacher professional development provision has not been consistent, with a range of blueprints over the years. In 2005 the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) turned into the Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA). Under the stewardship of Nick Gibb[26], in 2012 the TDA was replaced by the Teaching Agency, charged to 'perform a crucial role by ensuring the recruitment, supply, initial training and development of teachers' (DfE, 2012: 2). In 2013, the Teaching Agency was combined with the National College for School Leadership, and The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) was born. Sponsored by the DfE, an aspect of the NCTL's role was to 'improve the quality of the education and early years workforce' (NCTL, 2016). April 2018 ushered in another change. The work of the NCTL was 'repurposed' (Gov.UK, n.d b) with the creation of the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) to regulate the profession, with other functions of the NCTL moving to the DfE. The merging of NCTL and DfE staff into one team aimed to 'support teachers at every stage of their career' (DfE, 2017b).

One of the most significant developments relating to teacher professional development was the launch in 2012 of the Teacher Development Trust (TDT). In 2016 it stated the following on its website,

> The Trust believes that demand for professional learning should be driven by the aspiration teachers have for the children they teach and the passion they bring to their work.
>
> We are determined to bring about radical improvement in the quality of the on-going training that teachers receive based on the evidence of what creates effective learning (Teacher Development Trust, 2016).

In 2015 the TDT published the emerging findings of a review they had commissioned of reviews regarding 'effective professional development' for teachers, entitled 'Developing Great Teaching' (Cordingley *et al.*, 2015).

The above efforts, added to a new non-statutory Standard for Teacher Professional Development (DfE, 2016a), demonstrate a sustained and growing discourse around teacher professional development. Meanwhile professional learning is not only invaluable for teachers' career progression but also for a sense of wellbeing (Williamson, 2018; Peacock in Weston and Clay, 2018: xiii). It seems that there are many professional learning opportunities available to teachers but as demonstrated in Chapter 6, teachers who are mothers are not necessarily in a position to pursue them.

[26] Minister of State for Schools 2010-2012, Minister of State for School Reform 2014-2015, Minister of State for Schools 2015-2016.

Robertson (1992: 43) argues that women have specific needs that should be considered 'within the conceptualization, design and delivery of staff development programmes', asserting, 'gender sensitive approaches are essential if the goals of staff development are to be achieved' (ibid.).

In March 2016 an initiative was announced that there would be guidance on women leading in education and information on a coaching scheme, instituted by the former Education Secretary for the Conservative government, Nicky Morgan, to address the lack of women leaders in education (McTague, 2016; DfE, 2016c).

School leadership is becoming increasingly expected to acknowledge the specific professional needs of teachers with the development of the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development (DfE, 2016a). In an online blog post, David Weston (2016), Chief Executive of the TDT and chair of the CPD expert group appointed by the DfE to write the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development, stressed the importance of ensuring CPD be 'responsive' to individual needs.

Meanwhile the Ofsted grade description for outstanding 'effectiveness of leadership and management' includes the statement 'staff ... feel deeply involved in their own professional development' (Ofsted, 2018: 47). Yet, during the period the interviews were conducted, I was not aware of anything over the years which had explicitly addressed part-time teachers (most likely to be teachers who are mothers) and how CPD might meet their specific needs. I was surprised by the absence in the discourse on professional learning of the issue of women in leadership – given the coverage of 'missing' women leaders in education published around the same time – (The Future Leaders Trust, 2015) or part-time teachers in Weston's post (2016) or in another earlier blog post where he wrote 'the most effective schools see professional development as a key leadership priority, with a CPD programme which balances clear alignment to school and department development with individual needs' (Weston, 2015). Data presented in Chapter 6 suggests that part-time working appears to have a significant impact on the ability of the participants to pursue professional learning opportunities, and yet this was not being addressed at the time the participants were engaged in professional learning experiences.

Whilst there is certainly discourse regarding flexible working for teachers, notably advocated by #Women*Ed*, there is a need for a change in attitude towards part-time workers. This is slowly being addressed with the advent of policy papers such as the government's (Gov.UK, 2017a) 'Increasing flexible working opportunities in schools'. However, the issue of professional learning requires a greater response from schools

than merely offering flexibility of employment. Ostensibly, Claire's situation might be regarded as a success, given that she teaches part-time, undertakes more than her allocation of required CPD and has negotiated a job share as head of department. But Claire is still frustrated in her attempts to broaden her professional experiences and thereby increase her professional learning.

Since the interviews, on 30th October 2017 Weston (2017a) made a pledge on Twitter on behalf of the TDT to 'do more to help find ways to make CPD work for part time staff', and in light of the government's (Gov.UK, 2017a) policy paper, in December 2017 the TDT (2017) announced, 'we at TDT have pledged to provide more guidance for continuous professional development (CPD) leads on how to accommodate part time staff and review existing advice, to check that it is part time friendly'.

The *habitus* of the participants

Whether one is a parent or not, we bring our whole selves to our teaching (Hansen, 2001; Palmer, 1998). Becoming a mother impacts the *habitus*, broadening one's life experience and potentially changing the position of the *habitus* in the school field. For the six participants the amount and significance of change varied, and this in turn had an impact on their experiences in the school field and consequently their ability to pursue professional learning.

The women experienced developments in their *habitus* after having their children. Prior to motherhood, all the women taught full-time. With the experience of rearing children yet to impact upon their experience of teaching, they were unaware of the choices some of them would face upon returning to school; previously unrequired to contemplate their position in the field. As Bourdieu puts it,

> social reality exists, so to speak twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a "fish in water": it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 127).

With the arrival of a child, maternity leave and the subsequent return to teaching, some of the women experienced disconnectedness or *hysteresis* within the school field.

The *habitus* is both a product of the life history of an individual and the lens through which one perceives one's options and choices. Interestingly, the three women who work full-time outside the home have mothers who worked full-time – even if they arranged their work around their children, like Nicola and Karen's mothers – and the part-time teachers have mothers who worked part-time. The women were conscious of the choices their mothers made and sometimes explicitly related these choices to their own mothering decisions,

E So because of your experience growing up, in your head you had this idea that you wanted to be a stay-at-home mum.

N Yeah (Int.1).

Sarah explained that it is important for her sons to see her working outside the home – wishing her own mother had done so – and Karen pondered that perhaps she and her mother have more in common than she thought, commenting,

> ... when I was younger ... I always felt that she was quite selfish ... she went back to work very quickly ... I had a nanny from quite young ... maybe not selfish is the right word, but maybe she needed to work, a bit like I needed, I went back to

> work when Oscar was seven and a half months. I wanted to, but also I needed to ... I had to go back for a certain time in order to not pay maternity payback (Int. 1).

In wondering whether she is there enough for Oscar, Karen pondered her own mother's choices,

> But I do feel that her working, I certainly don't feel that it did me any harm, I don't feel like she was never there, well I felt she was always there ... I feel like she was there enough, she always used to cook dinner, she used to work around me, I know that now, but I don't remember when I was younger ever feeling, ever thinking "well where is she?" (Int.1).

I noticed this connection between mother and daughter during a period of data analysis. I had not discussed Claire's mother's employment with Claire, so in an email[27] I wrote,

> ... we never talked about it, but when you were growing up did your mother work outside the home and if so was it part-time/full-time? ... I have noticed that the women who work part-time had mothers who worked part-time when they were children, and the women who work full-time had mothers who weren't at home ... but I wasn't sure in your case.

Claire replied straightaway,

> It is interesting the comparison you have noticed between working mothers and their mothers as I do think there is a link there. My mother was a stay-at-home mum. I definitely would agree that this has shaped my view of motherhood and why I don't want to work full time.

It makes sense for us to consider the mothers of the participants when thinking about their *habitus* and how they might negotiate their relationship with the *fields* of home and school. Whilst Bourdieu (2001: 90) notes Hoffman's observation that daughters of working mothers are 'less attached to the traditional model of a woman's role', it is important to acknowledge that there is more complexity involved than simply re-treading our mothers' pathways. The ways in which my research participants live out their various identities as wife, mother and teacher can be both traditional and newly designed for the specific context of their set of family dynamics.

It is also worth remembering that one's *habitus* is only revealed in response to the *field*. Only in relation to the school field does the *habitus* become visible (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 135). It is through decision-making regarding paid employment practices that we see something of the participants' *habitus* regarding their perspectives on motherhood. This perspective can change given that the *habitus* is

[27] Email correspondence 2 July 2017.

fluid and responsive to circumstance. Indeed, *habitus* and *field* are not only products of each other but are also self-producing – although not determinant. The possibility of a change in attitude in the future towards teaching full-time could be seen in conversations with Claire and Samantha. Although both were keen to remain part-time teachers to support the needs of their children, they were also willing to contemplate working full-time if they worked in the same school their children attended, thus still being available for school pick ups and the like. The *habitus* is in constant development or evolution, ever reproduced and producing, dependent on the experiences of the individual. It is also time specific according to the current positioning of the agent therefore,

> the agent transcends the immediate present via practical mobilization of the past and practical anticipation of the future inscribed in the present in a state of objective potentiality. Because it implies a practical reference to the future implied in the past of which it is a product, habitus temporalizes itself in the very act through which it is realized (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 138)

Time, therefore, is a key issue for Bourdieu and the social space Bourdieu constructs in which 'agents' act takes into account not only the 'volume and structure of capital possessed' by them but also the 'evolution over time of these two properties' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 137).

Given Bourdieu's interest in the evolution over time of *symbolic capital*, the age of the participants' children may also have a bearing. Certainly Huberman *et al*. (1993: 256) suggest that the 'best years' for women in teaching correspond to a 'less demanding family life'. I had assumed that as children grow older, this would enable mothers to work more outside of the home, and this is borne out by research into women in the labour market (ONS, 2013: 4). But it seems that as children get older they have different needs (which Claire and Karen already anticipate) and the logistics regarding childcare become more complicated, especially if the children in the family are of varying ages and phases in their education. Collecting older children from school or even after school clubs in good time raises stress levels, as Claire can attest. It also makes it impossible to stay for afterschool commitments and as we saw in Chapter 6, this can lead to tensions in relationships between colleagues, as revealed in an inadvertent sharing of a WhatsApp message.

Some of the participants talked about the embodied experience of motherhood, the breastfeeding, or change in one's body. Bourdieu's notion of *hexis*[28]*,* that *habitus* is embodied, can offer a powerful way to conceive of gender although McNay argues that the potential for this is not fully realised in Bourdieu's work (McNay in McLeod, 2005: 21). McLeod (2005: 21) notes the difference between Bourdieu and McNay, writing 'he attributes a durability to gender norms, while McNay argues for greater recognition of the instability of gender norms'. Indeed McNay (1999: 107) comments,

> Although he is undoubtedly right to stress the ingrained nature of gender norms, he significantly underestimates the ambiguities and dissonances that exist in the way men and women occupy masculine and feminine positions.

Given the shortfall some perceive in Bourdieu's work for tackling gender (Skeggs, 2004; Witz, 2004), applying a feminist lens to Bourdieu's concept of a bodily *hexis* can remind us to take note of the differences, as well as the similarities, in how the six participants navigate their experiences of motherhood, each one's *habitus* an individual state of being.

Something apparent for some of the women was how their work as teachers intersected with motherhood. The emotional investment in their children's education was clear, which is consistent with Lawler's observation, '"children's needs, and especially their emotional needs, are the point of motherhood"' (in Reay, 2004: 59) and relationship work is the province of women (Bourdieu in Reay, 2004: 60). For example, Claire was investing significant 'emotional capital' (Reay, 2000) in preparing William for entry into grammar school; Samantha utilises every day experiences such as shopping to teach her daughters literacy skills; and Joanne's school experience is deployed with her own children. Reay (2000: 572) explains 'emotional capital can be understood as the stock of emotional resources ... which children [can] draw upon'. The work of Allatt (in Reay, 2000: 572) highlights the 'emotional capital' discernible in families '"particularly in the way mothers devoted their skills gained from their formal education to the advancement of their children"' and this can be seen in the ways in which some of the participants employ their teaching experience when mothering.

One might wonder whether there is a teacher *habitus* and a mother *habitus*. Whilst some have written in these terms and employed other adjectives, Bourdieu did not separate out different aspects of the *habitus* in his writings (Maton, 2012: 62). I have

[28] 'Bodily *hexis* is political mythology realized, *em-bodied*, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking, and thereby of *feeling* and *thinking*' (Bourdieu, 1977: 93-94).

not separated out a teacher *habitus* and mother *habitus,* given my life history approach and holistic conceptualisation of professional learning, but entwine the participants' work in their domestic context (home field) and professional learning context (school field) even though I am mindful of McCall's (1992: 848) observation,

> Although Bourdieu acknowledges the role of mothering, especially in regard to the cultural capital transmitted from mother to her children, he never combines this aspect of woman's habitus with that associated ... with her work in the paid labor force. Nor does he account for any dimension in the relationship between spouses with respect to their work.

However, it is interesting to at least consider distinguishing between a mother and teacher *habitus.* If one was to isolate a mother *habitus*, the women's experiences of being mothered lends an insight into their choices about working and mothering.

Meanwhile, the participants' reasons for teaching, what they say teaching means to them and what they identify as the rewards of teaching, give an indication of a teacher *habitu*s. Reasons for going into teaching were similar, even if the routes varied. Both Karen and Claire worked in advertising before taking up teaching. Karen came to feel that advertising was all about 'making money for the client' and she wanted to 'give something back'. Although not her initial career choice, teaching for Karen became a vocation. For Claire, it was an earlier encounter with a visiting speaker during her own A Level education that ultimately inspired her to change jobs and make a difference to others. Samantha had not intended to teach initially and Joanne applied for a PGCE course late in her final year of university. Joanne's brother's experience of the education system made Joanne want to teach and ensure that education meets the needs of everyone. Sarah's passion for her subject combined with a liking of young people led to her training to be a teacher, whilst Nicola worked as a teaching assistant to ensure the decision to teach was right for her.

Three aspects arose when the women talked about what it means to teach: a sense of vocation or value in teaching, relationships and making a difference to students' lives. Joanne and Nicola spoke of teaching as a vocation whilst Karen felt teaching had developed into a vocation. Sarah stated that there is a 'value' to teaching. In different ways they all talked about how teaching could make a difference to young people and some expanded that relationships were a key part of this work. Joanne, Claire and Sarah spoke about the centrality of relationships with students, Sarah arguing that relationships were key if students were to want to learn in your classroom. Sarah talked about the importance of listening to students' needs, whilst Samantha highlighted the importance of being approachable and offering 'a kind ear'.

Claire, Nicola and Karen all spoke of wanting to make a difference. The notion of making a difference had many faces during the interviews. Sarah spoke of imparting knowledge; Claire of passing something on and helping students achieve success; Samantha of supporting students in their exams whilst also preparing students for the world; Joanne spoke of teaching being about giving young people opportunities; whilst Nicola spoke of making opportunities available in 'a creative and exciting way'.

The importance of relationships with colleagues, students and parents featured throughout the conversations. In one interview I also encountered the idea of legacy. During our first interview Joanne and I talked about the fact that she had written in her portrait that she wanted to work 'in a field that would have a lasting legacy and would positively influence the lives of others'.

If one were to isolate a teacher *habitus* for each of the participants, it is clear that their experience of teaching is strongly felt and lived. In fact, there is an emotional component to be considered within the teacher experience as discussed by Hargreaves (1998) and Day and Leitch (2001), and mentioned by Sarah, Joanne and Samantha.

What is interesting when considering the competing demands of school field and home field on the participants' mental and physical resources, is not that Bourdieu would seek to divide their *habitus* into teacher *habitus* and mother *habitus,* but that he posits whilst the *habitus* contributes meaning to the *field*, it is also the product of the conditions of the *field*. What may be most pertinent to the women in this study is his observation that we experience the 'intersection' of an array of *fields* and the degree of this intersection and any conflict is 'at the root of a divided or even torn habitus' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 127). When the women speak of the challenges of finding balance between the home field and the school field in Chapter 6, of striving to be the mothers and teachers they want to be, we are witnessing Bourdieu's 'torn habitus'.

We can see this 'torn habitus' explicitly when the notion of guilt creeps into the conversations, the women concerned with being present enough for their children. Karen wondered if she 'subconsciously' felt guilty about returning to school; Nicola has chatted to other mothers about 'the right way to go'; Joanne is torn between the competing needs of home and school; Sarah feels 'a bit bad that you're maybe not home enough for your kids'; and Samantha struggled to find balance, commenting,

> ... if people do carry on working full-time and they do still have good relationships with their children then they do still have well-rounded children, so they've managed that at least ... I didn't feel that mentally I could stay full-time (Int. 1).

These feelings are the expression of the women's 'torn habitus*'* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 127) revealed through the twin demands of home field and school field impacted by a *doxa* which situates women firmly as the main carers but with the demands of their teaching careers ever present. One might say that these feelings around guilt, instructed by *doxa,* are a form of *symbolic violence*, something Sarah intuitively recognised when she commented on the different reception she and her husband Robert would receive if either of them were to holiday without the family,

> If Robert was to say he wanted to go away on holiday for two weeks with his friends nobody would really bat an eyelid. If I was to say that and leave my kids at home people would be like "ooh she's leaving her kids" ... (Int. 2).

There are tensions and uncertainties that infuse the choices that all the women have made. In deciding to teach part-time, Claire and Samantha experienced having to choose between a career and family life though they did not expect to find themselves in this position. Whilst Claire and Karen choose to be the main carers of their children, Claire spoke of stressful mornings if one of her sons falls ill, necessitating the question of who will stay home with their sick child. Meanwhile, Karen is sometimes frustrated with Richard's assumption (as she perceives it) that his job is more important than hers. This is not an uncommon tension where work is perceived to be '"different depending on whether it is performed by men or women"' (Maruani in Bourdieu, 2001: 60). Bourdieu (2001: 60) suggests that work performed by men in the public sphere is perceived as 'noble and difficult' and yet the same work undertaken by women in the private sphere becomes 'insignificant' and 'easy', such as his comparison between 'chef' and 'cook'. If work continues to be characterised through 'sexual division', as Bourdieu argues, then work such as teaching children will be regarded as merely an 'extension of ... domestic functions' (Bourdieu, 2001: 94). This only serves to weaken perception of the work that women do and in fact, Bourdieu (2001: 91) argues, where work is regarded as 'feminized', men either leave or are not attracted to this kind of work, further devaluing that occupation.

Joanne is concerned that people might think David has given up his career for her as they decided he would stay at home with the children – a caring role usually expected of the mother – whilst she teaches full-time. As such, Joanne is conscious of the societal expectations (see Appendix 1) she and David are working against. Miller

(2012: 47) notes new parents' sense that 'caring for a baby was hard but largely undervalued ... work ... evaluated differently to "real" work outside the home'. This disjuncture between societal value of raising a family and women's own belief in the contribution of child rearing is a familiar experience for many women (Brunton *et al.,* 2011: 26), whilst Sarah's observation highlights her sense that the work of caring is undervalued,

> ... I don't think maybe there's a sense of value attached to it, particularly, and I don't think I even find that, and yet when you think about it you're ... raising human beings (Int. 2).

One may wonder how inequality might play out in relationships between men and women. In his 'postscript on domination and love'*,* Bourdieu (2001: 111-112) answers the question – but what of love between men and women? Happily, he suggests that trust between loving individuals can result in 'a suspension of the struggle for symbolic power' where there is an 'abdicat[ion] of the intention of dominating',

> [as] he or she freely hands his or her freedom to a master who in turn hands over his or her own, coinciding with him or her in an act of free alienation that is indefinitely asserted (through the non-redundant repetition of 'I love you') (Bourdieu, 2001: 112).

The choices, of course, sit in a wider social context than the family unit or partnership and there is a feeling in British society that women should work outside the home part-time and take up the main caring role in the family (Scott and Clery, 2013: 124). The expectation is that women will have to find solutions to the issue of childcare rather than their male partners; they are faced with having to choose between career and family but men are not. This is where we see *doxa* instructed; that is, the unacknowledged assumption that the woman in a heterosexual partnership will be the one to change her work practices upon becoming a parent. In addition, as the *habitus* of women enable *doxa* to continue, we see *symbolic violence* unfold.

Bourdieu explains that *doxa* cannot be easily overcome and not with 'will alone', suggesting that 'this is because the effect and conditions of its efficacy are durably and deeply embedded in the body in the form of dispositions', especially 'in the case of relations of kinship' (Bourdieu, 2001: 39). Bourdieu is careful to underline that this does not 'mak[e] women responsible for their own domination' (Bourdieu, 2001: 39).

He argues,

> It has to be acknowledged both that the 'submissive' dispositions that are sometimes used to 'blame the victim' are the product of the objective structures, and also that these structures only derive their efficacy from the dispositions which they trigger and which help to reproduce them. Symbolic power cannot be exercised without the contribution of those who undergo it and who only undergo it because they *construct* it as such ... Far from being the conscious, free, deliberate act of an isolated 'subject', this practical construction is itself the effect of a power, durably embedded in the bodies of the dominated in the form of schemes of perception and dispositions ... which *sensitize* them to certain symbolic manifestations of power (Bourdieu, 2001: 40).

Whilst we can urge employers to offer flexible working practices to mothers and fathers and highlight challenges government policy and societal attitudes may cause families, from a Bourdieusian perspective the changes also need to happen in the home field. Whilst parents continue to model these material compromises to their children, the *habitus* of the next generation is formed: the *doxa* that it is the mother rather than the father who fits work outside the home around family at the expense of career aspirations will continue, as Bourdieu (2001: 85) argues, 'the family ... play[s] the most important part in the reproduction of masculine domination ... it is here that early experience of the sexual division of labour and the legitimate representation of that division ... imposes itself'. Intuitively, it seems, the women in the group know this to be the case, hence they all continue to teach, in varying capacities, a couple also explicitly articulating the importance for children to witness their mothers working outside the home.

Whilst family structures are key, Bourdieu reminds us that family units sit within societal structure. He is careful not to hold women accountable for their circumstances, and also argues that men are trapped too, albeit in a different position; whilst benefitting from these social structures, they are also '"dominated by their domination"' (Marx in Bourdieu, 2001: 69). Changes in the home can only happen if there is societal support, that is, the structures are in place to enable men to play more of an active role in the rearing of their children (as with Samantha's husband Michael taking extended paternity leave) and that role is encouraged in society.

The marriages are all different regarding how the women respond to their family needs. Whilst Karen teaches full-time and is a head of department, she describes her marriage as 'traditional'. Claire's husband James works long hours with a long commute and it seems his employer is less flexible than the couple would like when it

comes to family life. Sarah, Joanne, Nicola and Samantha all credit their husbands with supporting them in their jobs. Sarah explains how Robert takes up much of the childcare that helps her to do her job, whilst Joanne's husband David enables her to work in a senior leadership position. Nicola acknowledges Matthew's support as she has undertaken professional study for her new role, and Samantha's husband Michael might have easily been the one to stay at home, had she not felt the need to teach part-time.

Having considered participants' *habitus* we begin to see the intersection of home field and school field and various points of tension as the *habitus* moves between them. Continuing with Bourdieu's 'field analysis', the following chapter moves to analyse the positions of the women's *habitus* in their specific professional contexts, namely, the school field.

CHAPTER 8: POSITIONS OF *HABITUS*

The analysis in this chapter revolves around the positions of the teachers' *habitus* in their individual professional contexts of the school field. It is through Bourdieu's concepts of *hysteresis, doxa, symbolic capital* and *symbolic violence* that I explore a selection of experiences that demonstrate the positions of the participants' *habitus*. In doing so I employ descriptors to categorise the position of the participants' *habitus* within the school field as depicted in figure 4. It is possible to experience different positionings of *habitus* within the school field concurrently and separately. Under the two categories below, I explore some of the experiences articulated in the interviews.

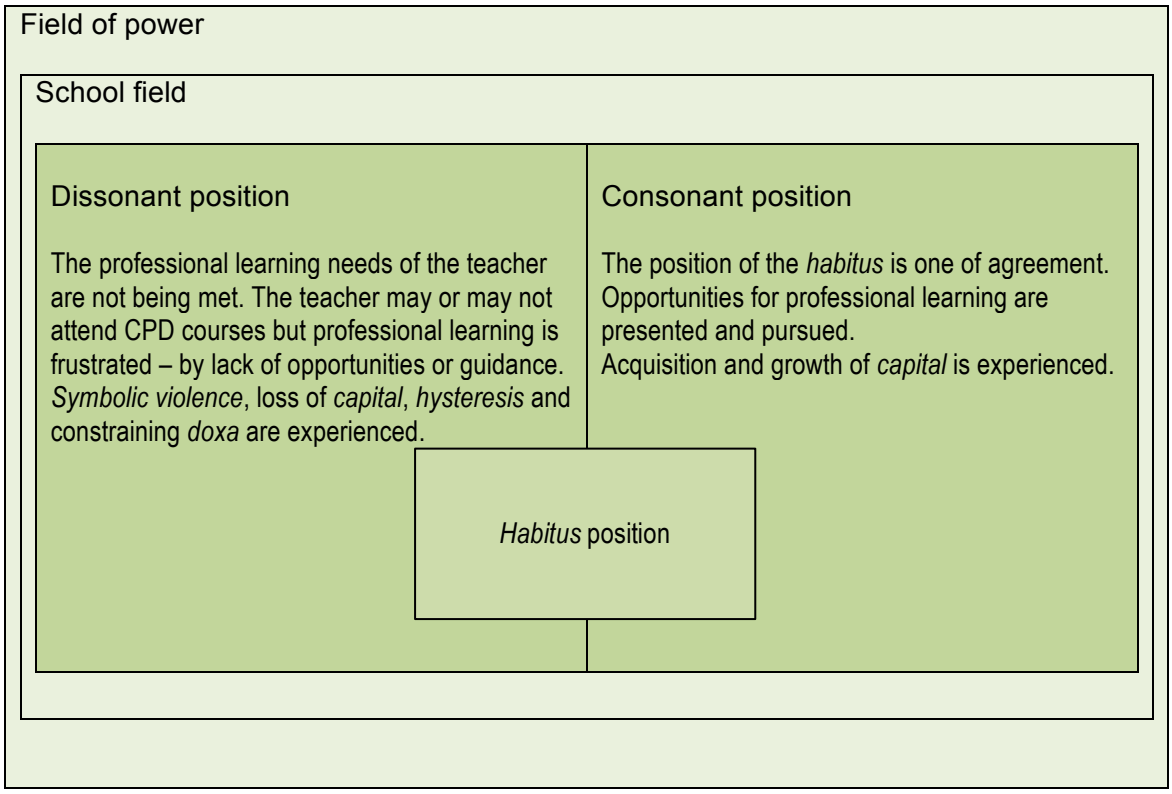

Fig. 4: Diagram outlining the definition of dissonant and consonant positions of the *habitus*

Dissonant position

We see instances of the loss of *symbolic capital* in the interviews, thus moving the *habitus* into a dissonant position within the school field. Upon moving to part-time teaching and relinquishing her position as Head of Year, Samantha was to discover she had lost her allocated car-parking space,

> [another teacher] has been back, this is her second week, and she said to me yesterday "it's a lovely welcome back" ... so she was head of department, and just small things like the car park, there aren't enough spaces ... so they built it onto the field ... you have to walk through a bog to get there, and so she's returned and this is exactly what I went through, from being head of department to "you haven't got a parking space anymore, just go and see if you can find one down in the bog"... (Int. 2).

Although this may seem a minor inconvenience it works as a strong signifier to staff of the *symbolic capital* a teacher does or does not hold within the school field. It communicated to Samantha a clear message of being less valued. Her longevity of service in the school did not count anymore when combined with her part-time designation.

Claire also experienced a loss of *symbolic capital* that she felt was connected to her working in school part-time. Whilst Claire had been excited by an opportunity she had created to take the lead on staff CPD for assessment and extend her leadership experience, she was disappointed to find that upon attending the assessment meeting she found herself unexpectedly sharing the leadership,

> ... when I went along to the meeting there was a second person leading it as well, and she was in the same management line as me, and she had been asked to join in and support ... I felt a bit disgruntled that she had been asked to do it, and I don't know why she was, but she is the head of a different department, and I <u>do</u> think it's 'cause she's full-time, and so her career <u>needs</u> developing, and I don't think mine does (Int. 2).

She felt that this arrangement was due to the perception that her full-time colleague needed opportunities for professional development. There were other working groups that had only one leader whilst the assessment group had two, so not only was this sharing of leadership disappointing for Claire, it sent a message to the staff about who has what *symbolic capital* or voice to lead.

Although Claire does a lot of formal CPD courses, she does not attain the whole school professional opportunities that she would like which could lead to broader professional learning and leadership possibilities commensurate with her teaching experience. This reflects Bourdieu's (2001: 107) observation that 'the success of the domestic

undertaking is often achieved at the price of partial or total renunciation of major professional success'.

This extract from the second interview with Claire demonstrates the dissonant position of her *habitus* within the school field and highlights the loss of her *symbolic capital*, and her experience of *symbolic violence* within the prevailing *doxa*,

C And a few years ago actually I was feeling much more vocal about how annoying it was ... because I felt that I had the skills to be able to lead say whole school things, or the skills to be able to do a higher management role, and I didn't understand why I couldn't do that on a part-time basis. And I've got a friend who's a deputy, and I've got a friend who's a headteacher, and they were like "well you are part-time, how could you do it?" So I felt like I had ideas above my station. And I still don't quite see why you can't, although I think I've accepted that you can't ...

E So how did you feel as it started to dawn on you that perhaps making the family choice might have meant that you were not going to be able to pursue a career as much as you want?

C Well it makes you feel a bit like Emmeline Pankhurst doesn't it (laughter), standing up ... but ... you don't want to become a troublemaker. I think I might've said the odd thing to the head and I've said to my line manager, that it's a shame that women with these skills can't use them. You have to make the choice, I think you do have to make that choice. It's just too much like hard work for the leadership to think about how to make a part-time person be useful. It's much easier if you're full-time. 'Cause whole school issues happen Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, I suppose. But I did think that there must be little, I went to the head actually and said "there must be some things that I could do that I could take and work on my days off" ... she, at the time, sounded interested ... she did say at the time that there was availability of teaching and learning responsibilities, money, a pot of money to provide one-off kind of jobs that people could do. But it never came. Whether I could've been a bit more assertive and decided something, but I didn't, and nothing did become available ... (Int. 2).

Claire feels she has the skills to be able to lead on whole school issues or undertake a more senior management role but has struggled against the *doxa* that such positions cannot be held by those working in the school part-time. Friends who hold deputy and headteacher positions indicated that this level of seniority is just not available to her on the basis of the number of days she works. Left feeling at once frustrated and undermined she has acquiesced but still yearns for more, jokingly alluding to Emmeline Pankhurst in her struggle for professional learning.

One can see those with *symbolic capital* maintaining this structure in the school field whilst those with less strive for more. Bourdieu describes it thus,

> *social agents* ... are bearers of capitals and, depending on their trajectory and on the position they occupy in the field by virtue of their endowment ... in capital, they have a propensity to orient themselves actively either toward the preservation of the distribution of capital or

> toward the subversion of this distribution (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 108-109).

It is interesting to note Claire's reference to Emmeline Pankhurst when Bourdieu makes the point that whilst one cannot say that all 'small capital holders are necessarily revolutionaries', nonetheless, Claire's frustration and experience mirrors 'a general proposition that applies to social space as a whole' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 109). Bourdieu conceptualises the *field* as 'the locus of relations of force ... and of struggles aimed at transforming it' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 103). It is in the above example we see *habitus* in a dissonant position articulated in terms desirous of improved *capital.*

Examples of *symbolic violence* raised in the interviews, came with Joanne's experience of returning to school after her first maternity leave pregnant with her second child (as described in Chapter 6) and the professional vulnerability she sensed, especially when she experienced a lesson observation undertaken by the headteacher after several months away from the classroom. This encounter led to her delaying news of her second pregnancy until she felt more professionally secure.

In turn, as highlighted in Chapter 6, Claire's sense that news of her pregnancy was unwelcome was derived from what her headteacher did not say. Bourdieu argues that conversations are not merely exchanges of language but possible moments of struggle for *symbolic power*. In these circumstances both women held unequal *symbolic capital* when facing their former headteachers given their 'asymmetric positions in the distribution of the relevant capital' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 145).

Other examples of *symbolic violence* such as Claire having to fight against potential exclusion from a training course because she was breastfeeding (described in Chapter 6), demonstrate the consequences of a *doxa* that the site of the course was not a suitable place for babies. Meanwhile, Samantha's experience of feeling monitored after she returned from her first maternity leave reveals a complex situation where it was other mothers who applied pressure, something which confused and disappointed Samantha, although Bourdieu (2001: 93) might suggest this shows how women 'remain *separated from each other*',

> One day ... Poppy wouldn't take a bottle. I was still breastfeeding her and she ... would not take any milk during the day at all while I was at work ... so Michael had brought her in for me to feed her during my lunch break. I'd already had a lock fitted to my office ... so they'd been very supportive ... so I ... fed her in my lunch break. But I know that after that there had been a discussion in senior leadership to make sure that "Samantha didn't make that a habit".

> ... I don't see why I wouldn't have been able to have fed my baby in my lunch break ... why it would be seen to become a habit when it had only happened once ... I just felt like it was "well let's add this, let's add that", and it was like it was applying pressure to see ... what it would take to make me break is how I'd felt that summer term. Whether that's fair or not fair, that was how I felt ...
>
> ... I can't understand it, especially because it was all made up of females who had children. And so that's what I don't understand, because surely ... if you know that someone's going to struggle coming back into the workplace my natural thing would be "let's set up a mentor who can help with that", not watch to check that things are being done ... (Int. 1).

Bourdieu's concept of *symbolic violence* is crucial to this thesis because whilst society might opine that opportunities are open to all genders of teacher, the ability to pursue them is less equal than one might suppose. In *symbolic violence*, Bourdieu uncovers and names an unperceived violence that suffuses the experience of the women I spoke to. Whilst '"symbolic domination ... is something you absorb like air"' (Bourdieu and Eagleton in Schubert, 2012: 192), in raising our awareness of this domination by stealth, we are reminded that society is a construction that relies on historically fabricated hierarchies 'which result in violence which is symbolically expressed' (Schubert, 2012: 192). Schubert (2012: 192) goes on to argue that it this *'constructedness'* that opens up opportunity for political response and ultimately reconstruction of a fairer society.

In addition to loss of *symbolic* capital, challenging prevailing *doxa* and experiencing *symbolic violence*, having a child can propel a new mother into *hysteresis.* Claire spoke of suddenly being 'thrown out of your life' when she had her first child, but it was upon returning to work that Samantha experienced being '"out of sync"' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 130).

This extract from the first interview with Samantha demonstrates the dissonant position of her *habitus* within the school field and highlights Bourdieu's concept of *hysteresis*,

> ...it's balancing ... you're a different person ... you've stepped out, things have changed ... then you are going back in, things have changed within the school, there's new things there but you are expected to still be up at the same level, even with things that you haven't been there for ... where you've been seen to be a leading practitioner ... within what you are doing, things have changed but you're still expected to be up there, you're still expected to be one of the outstanding members, but you haven't <u>had</u> that training and you don't know what some of these things are, and it's quite daunting ... (Int. 1).

Samantha spoke of the change she went through as a new mother but whilst she had been away on maternity leave the school had also changed. She describes the

disorientation of finding the workplace changed and the expectation to be a leading practitioner still evident even though she had not been at the school when the training had taken place. Combined with sleep deprivation, usual when looking after a new-born baby, Samantha's return to work at school was difficult. It is this experience of *hysteresis* that moved her *habitus* into a dissonant position in the school field.

As I have already intimated, it is not the amount of formal CPD the women undertake that is necessarily an issue but, as Joanne has rightly noted, it is the value this professional learning lends. Claire does plenty of formal CPD and often exceeds her school's required hours, but she still wants more opportunities to grow professionally. Whilst Samantha has been sent on a range of CPD days, this has not necessarily met her specific needs and her senior management has sometimes been unclear as to what she should gain from attending courses.

Consonant position

The school field is where we see the participants develop their professional learning or *symbolic capital,* securing their *habitus* in a consonant position. In working towards gaining *capital*, we saw in Chapter 6 Nicola undertake the SEN diploma for her new role and Claire attending a residential professional development course for external exam board marking. Seeking to develop *symbolic capital* furnishes better professional opportunities and *symbolic power* (Bourdieu, 1989: 21), and indicates *interest* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 116) whereby it is clear that the teacher values the professional learning she might undertake in the school field.

By gaining *symbolic capital*, teachers can secure an empowering position in the school field. Endeavours to increase *capital* should not be seen as a conscious strategy but the *habitus* exhibiting a '"feel for the game"' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 128), although Bourdieu acknowledges that there can be a level of conscious decision-making,

> The lines of action suggested by habitus may very well be accompanied by a strategic calculation of costs and benefits, which tends to carry out at a conscious level the operations that habitus carries out in its own way (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 131).

We see examples of this cost–benefit analysis when Karen says in Chapter 6,

> I might choose my family life over my professional development

and,

> I would have to look at the kind of demands of that kind of thing before I committed to it (Int. 1).

or when Joanne talks about the value of a weekend course or Claire and Sarah say they consider whether courses take place at the weekend, therefore impacting family life. The very act of a cost–benefit analysis and the ensuing decision reveals, of course, the *habitus* at work.

During the interviews there were instances where the women's *habitus* was in a consonant position within their school field. The most obvious examples were of opportunities to develop *symbolic capital* through professional learning such as Nicola undertaking a professional diploma paid for by the school. Whilst the school covered the costs of the course, most of the work had to be done in her own time – meaning weekend and holiday study.

This extract from the first interview with Nicola demonstrates how her *habitus* is situated in a consonant position within the school field as her *symbolic capital* is developed,

N It's a professional qualification ... it's a third of an MA basically, so if I decided then to complete the MA in SEN I could ... use the credits and continue on.

E And the school is paying for that?

N The school is paying for that, and it's a year course ...

... there's three critical reflections that I need to do, which are essentially ... write-ups about things that I'm currently doing, and what the theory is on it, and how that has informed decisions that I've made in certain areas to what I do. And those are a thousand-five-hundred words each. And then there's a five-thousand-word active research piece that I have to do ...

E So what time has the school given you to do this?

N ... the course is ten days, so you have ten days to do it, but nine of those days are university days and one of them is a day for working on it ... I haven't really spoken to the head about it ... I'm not going to get a day a week or anything like that to do it. At the moment I've been doing it in my own time ... if I started to get concerned that I wasn't going to be able to complete it ... I would ... speak to them ... I haven't got a massive teaching timetable, but obviously the SENCo role takes up a lot of your time ... there's no specific time ... that's been assigned to doing the work ...

E So if you are doing it in your own time I'm assuming evenings, weekends.

N Weekends really ... I can do a bit during the week, but actually sitting down and writing, and having that headspace, I'm not very good at doing that sort of thing in the evening, I'm just too tired after a day's work, my head's not really in it ... it's been at the weekends ... also the holidays, so this Christmas holiday Megan went and stayed with my mum and dad for about two or three days ... that was really good because I could spend two days just totally focused on the work (Int. 1).

Although Claire was later disappointed to find herself sharing the leadership role in the project described below (a disappointment she expresses later in Interview 2), this interview extract highlights the consonant position of her *habitus* within the school field as an opportunity she sought out to grow her *symbolic capital* opened up,

> ... it's just encouraging isn't it, to have someone positive, so she suggested we meet ... and we just talked through assessment and she came up with some ideas of how I could be involved in creating something that had a whole school emphasis, so getting student voice and surveying how they view assessment, to help teachers across the school to maybe consider their use of language within their assessment of work, so that it has a more positive influence on the students and therefore their outcomes in the future. And she suggested I lead a optional CPD.

> ... and create ... an article to go in the staff update ... really good things, and we had a really lively, positive, discussion, which went really well I thought. And ... engaged me and gave me energy to pursue it ... I'm quite excited by that at the moment (Int. 2).

Other examples of consonance are Joanne attending conferences at weekends where she comes back enthused and inspired, as described in Chapter 6. Attendance is of her own volition, and perhaps it is this element of choice rather than requirement by her school that is a factor in her professional satisfaction.

It is a sense of opportunity and professional growth that is so important for the women I spoke to. Whilst disappointed to find she was sharing leadership of professional development for her colleagues on assessment, Claire nonetheless had been reinvigorated by the prospect of broadening her professional experience and meeting her performance management targets.

Meanwhile a feeling of autonomy, agency and choice can lead to a consonant position, as demonstrated in Karen's thoughts on promotion,

> ... that's the good thing about being at a growing school ... positions come up and there's opportunities ... last year, the position of assistant head came up, and I did say to, my line manager ... the head, who ... has been really really good to me every time I've needed to leave, or pick up, or when Oscar was ill in October and I had to leave he was absolutely fine, he was very supportive, I did say to him "should I go for it or is it too soon?" And we ... talked about it between us, and we came to the conclusion that actually I was probably best consolidating the department ... I do remember saying to him "I don't want to miss out on any potential opportunities", and he said "well there will be more opportunities, because as we grow" ... senior leadership is a possibility, but ... I don't know whether it's just a bit too much paperwork and admin (Int. 1).

Samantha was also looking forward with anticipation to future possibilities in her next school. Moving to an independent school in the autumn term, Samantha felt that perhaps with a smaller school, she might be able to resume some of the whole-school work she had given up after the birth of Poppy, work that she had at one time found so rewarding.

Challenging any assumption that professional development interest might wane with the demands of motherhood, Sarah's interest has actually grown since she had her children and her *habitus* has moved to a consonant position in the school field,

> ... I think before I had my kids I wasn't really, that bothered. I just wanted to do my job and for other things in my life to be important. But now ... I am interested in ... I want to learn about ... the ... current thinking in teaching and learning ... so I feel like I've kind of got a good und[erstanding] which I didn't have before I had the kids ... (Int. 1).

Since having her children, Sarah has come to realise how important her job is to her,

> I think I've changed in what I think, because I don't think I realised before I had kids how much I enjoyed my job. Now I've got kids I've realised (laughs). I don't think that's true for everyone. I think I am lucky in this school that I work in. It's such a nice school (Int. 1).

For Sarah, raising children is not necessarily as fulfilling a role as prospective mothers might be led to believe. Perhaps this lack of complete fulfilment can go towards an explanation of her move towards a consonant position regarding her attitude to professional development and renewed interest in her teaching career. However, it is important to remember that Sarah's recent involvement in professional learning has been facilitated through early-career teachers joining her department, sharing new ideas and practice. As a mother of young children, like others, it is still difficult to attend events or sessions after school.

CHAPTER 9: *PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVATION*

Participant objectivation, Bourdieu argues, requires in-depth reflexivity. He asserts that it requires the researcher to undertake more than a consideration of her '"lived experience"' and relationship with the research participants. It is not enough for the researcher to consider her 'biographical particularities' or 'the *Zeitgeist* that inspires [her] work'. Bourdieu expects from the researcher more than a thorough self-analysis; he demands an examination of 'the social conditions' of the production of research constructions (Bourdieu, 2003: 282). It is not the researcher performing the research that is to be objectivized, but 'the social world' that has shaped the researcher. It is 'not only her social origins, her position and trajectory in social space, her social and religious memberships and beliefs, gender, age, nationality' of which the researcher is called to be mindful, but 'her particular position ... within her professional universe' (Bourdieu, 2003: 283).

In many ways the context of my 'professional universe' (ibid.) is rather straightforward. Undertaking a professional doctorate has meant a focus on professional practice and with this, the issue of what my research might mean for women teachers, for the participants themselves, for school leaders and CPD providers.

As a doctoral student, I am bounded by the constraints of a thesis. Bourdieu (2003: 285) argues that researchers immersed in their specific academic disciplines have been unaware of the particular ways of thinking 'to which they are each unknowingly wedded'. However, I am acutely aware of my disciplinary thinking. Having completed a history degree and trained as a history teacher, working with teachers of other school subjects over the last few years has revealed to me how much I think in historical disciplinary terms.

I have come to realise that my professional work, working with the history of the Holocaust, is an aspect of my life history that has been an influence in my approach to research. A feminist perspective, desire to reduce *symbolic violence* and my personal values, have led to an inclusive, participant-centred methodology. However, I also feel an imperative to ensure a research process based on respect for the participants as fellow human beings, given that I am immersed in 'encountering histories of woeful disregard' (Britzman, 2000: 204)[29]. Even my decision to leave the last words to the

[29] Of course it is not a prerequisite to immerse oneself in traumatic history to ensure an ethical approach to one's participants. Gibbs (2007: 101) sets out 'two principles': 'that you should avoid harming your participants and that your research should produce some positive and identifiable benefit'.

participants before concluding the thesis points to practice in Holocaust education pedagogy whereby the individual stories are prioritised and subjects are given an explicit voice.

The researcher and the research

Bourdieu's reflexivity necessitates recognition and acknowledgement of the work of construction and once one is aware of this construction, the expectation is that the researcher 'strives to discover and master as completely as possible the nature of [the] inevitable acts of construction and the equally inevitable effects those acts produce' (Bourdieu, 1999: 608). Even as I try to articulate my relationship to the research and the participants, I am aware of being bounded by my own life experience and subjectivity (Elliott, 2011: 1; Chiseri-Strater, 1996). In this way, I can only offer a partial account of my research participants and am aware that any reminiscences of our encounters are constructions resting on the limits of my language and perceived through the only eyes I have. Even with these limitations, I believe there is value in making transparent the struggle in seeing beyond the constraints of one's own *habitus*.

Having no children of my own, I wondered if some of the women I spoke to were surprised when I mentioned this. Some may ask why I have pursued this research if it does not specifically apply to my professional context. My interest has been generated from participants' concerns in earlier research (O'Brien, 2014).

Regarding our relationship, the participants were the experts and I the novice, sometimes asking for clarity and explanation of terms in which mothers may be more conversant. It is my hope that perhaps this exchange of power went some way to creating more of a sense of balance during the interviews and *'to reduce as much as possible the symbolic violence exerted through* [the] *relationship'* (Bourdieu, 1999: 609 original emphasis).

As an ex-teacher I have empathy for the teachers I have interviewed. I see myself as a teacher although my professional identity is now a complex mesh of ex-teacher, ex-museum educator, teacher-educator and doctoral student. I admire the women for continuing to work in what I know to be a demanding occupation and in addition to their professional work they navigate the complexities of marriage and motherhood.

Participant reflections on the interviews

Reflexivity, for Bourdieu, is the sole province of the researcher as she attempts to recognise her own positionality in order to 'control the effects and influence of [her] own relation to the object of research' (Deer, 2012: 197). Whilst a Bourdieusian approach might 'decisively break with agents' self-understandings' (Brubaker, 1985: 754), my use of a feminist perspective on *reflexivity* makes for a more empowering approach. Mindful of the *symbolic violence* inadvertently perpetrated on participants when the researcher speaks for them (Schubert, 2012: 194), I have aimed to act as 'midwi[fe] for women's words' (Minister, 1991: 39).

With the above in mind I include some of the women's reflections on the interviews, aware that their words are still my mediated selection. Bourdieu might consider it 'a mistake to attribute reflexive qualities to [participants'] common sense perception and understanding, even when there is an element of self-criticism' (Deer, 2012: 205), given the *doxa* the observations may be rooted in. However, Bourdieu (1999: 615) does recognise that participants can undertake *'self-analysis'* or that they use the interview opportunity to explore their experiences and thoughts in a moment of 'self-examination'.

McNay argues that the experience of dissonance between *habitus* and *field* can generate insight into one's *habitus*, prompting and enabling change to take place (in McLeod, 2005: 23). McLeod (2005: 23) finds this suggestion 'somewhat utopian' and brings Adkins' arguments for women's reflexivity to the discussion. Adkins (in McLeod, 2005: 23) suggests that 'such dispositions neither necessarily signal nor translate to a dramatic transformation of gender'. In a contemporary setting, self-reflection that continues to sit alongside '"traditional"' notions of gender appear to Adkins to be a more realistic proposal. I suggest that it is the coalescence of the experience of *hysteresis* – and the experience of the *habitus* in a dissonant position in the *field* – with the opportunity to talk these experiences through (*reflexivity*), that can bring fruitful re-imaginings of future possibilities for some women. Through the interview process the participants experienced an opportunity to reflect on their lives, and for some, articulating their reflections offered the opportunity to blend new and old ways of being.

Samantha and Sarah reflected on the process of participating in the research itself and the thoughts this raised. Samantha reflected on the process of writing her portrait in preparation for our first interview and how this encouraged her to contemplate changes

in her thinking towards teaching not only after having children but also between having her daughters Poppy and Lily,

> ... the interesting thing for me was looking back at, and recognising, my own motivations for things where I hadn't thought about it in that way before ...
>
> ... how I felt about [teaching] before having the girls and then how that's changed since, but also change between each of the girls as well ... (Int. 1).

So too, Sarah found the interview process interesting commenting,

> It's quite interesting talking because you have different thoughts ... you are working it through in your head, and it's something that I've been thinking about recently, like "where am I at" ... (Int. 1).

Meanwhile, Claire made explicit the role the interviewer inevitably plays in an interview context and talked about how I had come to impact perceptions of herself.

Karen found the process strange, but also enjoyable,

> ... it's quite nice to actually have an hour just talking about yourself, because you don't really do that ... it was ... a nice thing to read ... your own thoughts ... it's very narcissistic I suppose, "oh it's nice to read about me and it's nice to have an hour just to talk about myself", but as I say it's very rare that you do that ... it was quite refreshing, nice experience (Int. 2).

Professionally, Karen was prompted to consider her engagement in professional development and Nicola had pondered her career path,

> ... maybe made me think a little bit more about the decisions I've made and ... how you end up where you do, it's been quite reflective, so I've had the opportunity to think about the path that I've taken, and how that seems to be quite random really ... (Int. 2).

Perhaps most profoundly, Joanne contemplated how quickly the years had passed and this enabled her as a senior leader to counsel an early-career teacher, reminding her to pursue personal as well as professional dreams, saying,

> ... I think it's enabled me when I'm talking to her to say "put those things first" ... (Int. 2).

PART 5: CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Strengths and limitations of the research

I make no claim to generalisations on the basis of the experiences of six women teachers, but Cole (2004: vii), in her work, 'through the stories [of six women] ... seeks to offer … the lived experiences of the mother-teachers, with the intention of encouraging readers to reflect on their own professional understandings and practices'. I have sought to do something similar.

Although the research rests on six participants and cannot be said to be an extensive or wide-ranging sample, it is worth noting Bourdieu's argument that *'the opposition between the universal and the unique, between nomothetic analysis and idiographic description, is a false antinomy'* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 75 original emphasis). In engaging with people's stories the reader may experience connection with others (Wellington, 2000: 100) and through this connection become an active participant in deciding the 'value' of the work (Wellington, 2000: 99).

There are limits to the research in terms of numbers of women interviewed and the age-range of their children. With the geographical base being London and the South East it is important to note the specificity of this region and teachers' experiences living and working in the South East of England may not reflect the experiences of teachers around the country; particularly in rural areas where professional development opportunities may be less available. Equally, this geographical region can also act as a clear site for the research and offer a helpful boundary.

The research is also constrained by the sample. All the women are white, married in heterosexual relationships with four of the six identifying as middle-class with three of those privately educated. A more diverse sample may have yielded a range of additional experiences. However, in a small group, it is pleasing to have an equal number of women working part-time and full-time with two classroom teachers, two heads of department and two senior leaders so that a range of professional experiences were discussed. In addition, it is especially pleasing to have included a couple where the husband is a stay-at-home father and the mother works full-time. As with Miller's (2007: 342) work, there is still real diversity of experience in such an 'apparently homogeneous group'.

Braun and Clarke (2006: 95) suggest that without a robust process thematic analysis can be open to the criticism of '"an anything goes"' approach and that perhaps this method, wide-ranging in its application, lacks the 'kudos' of other more '"branded"' forms of analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 97). A significant concern though, is the method's possible 'limited interpretative power beyond mere description if it is not used within an existing framework that anchors the analytic claims that are made' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 97). In light of these issues, I have been rigorous in my approach, ensuring that 'the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 96), and have used the most appropriate method for my research question rather than be drawn into '"methodolatry"' (Holloway and Todres in Braun and Clarke, 2006: 97). Whilst I have used thematic analysis specifically to organise and present my data, it is however my use of Bourdieu's *theory of practice* (in translation), underpinned by a materialist feminist theoretical perspective, which provides the distinct analytical lens.

Responding to the research questions

Bourdieu's work does not aim to produce 'a general discourse on the social world' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 159) but to examine particular research questions. In using his *theory of practice* I have attempted to theorise the experiences of the six research participants in order to harness their insights gained from pursuing professional learning and consider how their specific experiences might help us to think about more universal issues.

With regards to the research questions outlined in Chapter 1, all of the women appreciate the value of professional learning and its pursuit for a variety of reasons. Their needs are diverse and complex and their experiences range widely from undertaking a formal qualification to using social media.

For some of the women I interviewed, the kinds of challenges Katie (quoted at the start of the thesis) faced when balancing home and school life around 30 years ago remain. When her children were small Katie undertook the main caring role whilst also teaching full-time. Whilst there has been a steady decline over the years in the notion of gender based roles in the home (Scott and Clery, 2013: 115), research in 2012 suggested that 'the public retains a view that there should be a gender divide in terms of caring responsibilities: the shift [in attitudes] has been in accepting the idea that a mother works part-time, rather than not at all' (Scott and Clery, 2013: 124). In 2017 Attar Taylor and Scott (2018: 56) found that whilst there has been a steady 'move away from conservative views of men as breadwinners and women as homemakers ... the past five years have seen little change in views on whether mothers should work (see Appendix 1).

The experiences of the women I interviewed, combined with the findings of research into British social attitudes, lead me to believe that there is still work to be done in terms of changing societal expectations that women will automatically take on the role of main carer in the home and adapt their work patterns accordingly.

The only two women (who also hold the senior leadership positions in the group) who have continued to fully benefit from professional learning and develop their careers (at a time when they have children under the age of 10 years), are also the only two for whom – from their school's perspective – nothing has changed regarding their personal and professional circumstances. However, all the participants have had to negotiate

the competing demands of school and home fields, namely professional and domestic life. Where opportunities have been presented, they have placed some of the women in an untenable position; choosing between school and home commitments.

Of those who work part-time, some feel they are perceived differently from their full-time counterparts, are treated differently, are less able to pursue professional development opportunities that their full-time colleagues access or that their specific professional learning needs are not acknowledged.

Strength, resourcefulness and perseverance play key roles as the participants navigate a route through the various challenges they encounter when pursuing professional learning. Exam marking in the evenings; studying during school holidays; creative use of social media; engaging in online activities; seeking out opportunities or seeing them in the everyday; and attending a residential course whilst breastfeeding, all indicate sheer determination to pursue professional learning.

Considering impact

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) defines research impact as '"the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy"' (ESRC, n.d). Within this definition they explain the forms impact can take, listing academic impact as 'the ... contribution ... research makes in shifting understanding ...' and economic and societal impact as 'the ... contribution ... research makes to society and the economy, and benefits to individuals, organisations and/or nations' (ESRC, n.d). The following outlines the potential academic and societal impact of my research including its 'conceptual' and 'instrumental' contribution (ESRC, n.d).

Societal impact

At the time of the interviews in March 2016, Nicky Morgan (the then Education Secretary for the Conservative government) highlighted the need for more support for women teachers returning to work after maternity leave (McTague, 2016). A year on, in March 2017, the former Education Secretary for the Conservative government – Justine Greening – in a speech to the Association of School and College Leaders, addressed the importance of schools embracing flexible working (Gov.UK, 2017b).

Whilst there is discourse regarding flexible working for women teachers, there is also a need for a change in attitude towards teaching part-time with the burgeoning realisation of the loss of talent and experience when part-time women teachers are not suitably professionally developed.

However, there are reasons to be cautious as we tread the path of flexible working. All three of the part-time teachers I interviewed were engaged and involved in some form of professional learning. Women teaching part-time should be able to pursue the same opportunities for professional learning as their full-time colleagues; part-time working does not necessarily equate to a lesser interest in developing professionally as we see with my research participants,

Meanwhile, Evertsson (2012: 139) regards any 'lower work commitment as a way of temporarily adjusting to the difficulties of combining work and family during the early pre-school years' and 'after the first few pre-school years, mothers' work commitment is not significantly different from the work commitment of childless women' (Evertsson, 2012: 150).

Whilst it is important to support women who are mothers teaching part-time, it is also crucial to avoid subscribing to a *doxa* that mothers should work part-time and 'the unquestioned and unspoken assumption that women will take primary responsibility for childcare' (Smith, 2016: 83). Smith argues that promoting flexible work practice to women raises its own issues,

> Stategies that are ostensibly devised to 'support' working mothers, such as childcare provision or flexible working hours, can convey implicit messages that reinforce the expectation that mothers *should* find ways to manage the dual load, reifying rather than dismantling the notion that women with children and a career must take charge of both (Smith, 2016: 109-110).

In trying to pursue professional learning and undertake the main role as carer, there is a danger that maintaining the "'dual responsibility'" (McRobbie in Smith, 2016: 110) of school and home can result in a withdrawal from the professional environment, '"scaling down ... ambition in favour of a discourse of managing", as ... women ... are "counseled to request flexibility of [their] employer [s]"' (McRobbie in Smith, 2016: 110). This *doxa* 'works to protect masculine hegemony, as the fundamental assumption that women care for children remains intact' (Smith, 2016: 110).

It is vital to acknowledge the professional learning needs of teachers at specific stages of their professional and domestic lives. In taking into account professional and personal life phases, it is important to acknowledge that the needs of teachers may vary according to the ages of their children, as demonstrated in the group of women I interviewed. It is also crucial to meet the specific needs of mothers teaching part-time. Given that the majority of teachers in England are women and most of them will have a family, most if not all, will face the challenge of pursuing professional learning whilst rearing children. If we are to retain teachers (Simons, 2016) and ensure a workforce fully engaged in seeking to continually improve upon their professional practice, we need to meet their individual needs.

In 2017, Greening (Gov.UK, 2017b) stated,

> We have these great, amazing teachers, just beginning to really get their careers underway and then, often once a family gets started, there's this huge risk that careers stall or worse still they leave. I want to work ... to see how we can deliver a culture shift on this, particularly because new generation teachers will expect teaching to adapt as they change their lives.

Whilst we need to meet the professional needs of women teachers seeking balance between home and school, our efforts should not perpetuate a *doxa* that women automatically carry the responsibility of childcare. The introduction of shared parental

leave in 2015 (Gov.UK, n.d a) is a step towards a more equal approach to parenting, although this is yet to be widely taken up, a recent article in The Sunday Times commenting, 'less than 8% of eligible families have signed up for the government's "shared parental leave" since it began in 2015' (Burgess, 2018).

A conversation is needed not only about the necessity for professional development to prioritise the individual needs of the teacher (Earley, 2010: 482), but about the wider implications of a society in which mothers' potential to pursue professional learning is impacted in the school field when caring for children. Smith (2016: 112) argues,

> There is a need to move towards discourses of androgyny in the construction of parenting, teaching and school leadership, if we are to maximise the involvement of men and women in raising and teaching our children and leading our schools.

This is especially important when children may witness the modelling of gender stereotypes in our schools, where men undertake the leadership positions and women the supporting roles (Coleman in Smith, 2016: 111), thus impacting the developing *habitus* of future generations and perpetuating a *doxa* of gender-based work. This is particularly pertinent as research (Chambers *et al*., 2018: iv) has shown that 'children's aspirations are often shaped, moulded and restricted by gender stereotyping, socio-economic background and, importantly, who they know'.

Academic impact

In terms of furthering the discourse, whilst many writers (Adkins, 2004a; Adkins 2004b; Lovell, 2004; McCall, 1992; McLeod, 2005; McNay, 1999; Skeggs, 2004; Witz, 2004; Reay, 2000; Reay, 2004) have explored Bourdieu's work to consider feminist issues, my approach has been to combine a life history research method and thematic analysis with Bourdieu's *theory of practice*, underpinned by materialist feminism, to offer a new theoretical perspective upon women's professional learning experiences as teachers who are mothers.

Conceptual and instrumental impact

Having presented my work at the #Women*Ed* annual conference in October 2016 for practising teachers, and at the annual BERA conference in September 2017 for educational researchers, there is interest in the experiences of women. I am not suggesting that one should extrapolate from such experiences to invoke general policy changes. However, I do argue that this research can open up critical conversations in schools and in wider society with the purpose of 'reframing debates', 'contributing to the understanding of policy issues' and 'influencing the development of policy [and] practice' and 'altering behaviour' (ESRC, n.d). I suggest that my research has implications for the following groups:

Policy makers

In a letter from Nick Gibb, Minister of State for Schools, to David Weston, Chief Executive of the Teacher Development Trust and chair of the Expert Group that produced the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development, Gibb stated, 'every teacher deserves access to high quality and purposeful development opportunities throughout their career' (Gibb, 2016). In considering women's experiences, policy makers need to consider what this might look like for teachers who are mothers and acknowledge that access is not merely providing professional learning but also facilitating the pursuit of such opportunities.

Stakeholders

In October 2018 The Chartered College of Teaching with the TDT and Sheffield Hallam University, embarked upon a consultation process initiating a project to 'design ... a system to quality assure the provision of continuing professional development for teachers' (Weston, 2018). This project aims to 'provide school leaders and teachers with an easy-to-use system for finding high-quality, impactful CPD' (Weston, 2018). Organisations such as The Chartered College of Teaching, Teacher Development Trust and #Women*Ed,* in tandem with teaching unions, need to build on resources like this and develop the provision of a range of strategies to support teachers who are mothers as they seek out and procure meaningful professional learning.

School leadership

A primary audience for this thesis is school leaders – those best placed to implement the changes needed in schools to support teachers in their pursuit of professional learning. The Standard for Teachers' Professional Development (DfE, 2016a: 11)

states, 'effective leadership of professional development ... involves leaders modelling and championing effective professional development as an expectation for all'. In planning for teachers' professional learning, school leadership teams need to take into account the ability of all staff to pursue opportunities. On a practical basis this means not always scheduling learning opportunities on the same day each week every term, thereby excluding part-time teachers who are rarely in school that day. Even if not teaching part-time, the needs of teachers with children must be taken into account and building opportunities into the teaching day rather than after school hours should be considered. Upon returning to work after parental leave teachers need support from school leaders as they transition back into school. An initiative such as maternity coaching can be a way to retain valuable staff and acknowledge their development needs (Andrews, 2018). Ultimately, 'schools should be compassionate and flexible employers' (Mroz, 2018) who work towards an inclusive environment for all teachers.

Professional development providers

Professional development providers need to avoid programming courses at weekends or during holiday time, and aim to counsel and remind schools of the necessity to consider the needs of staff with caring responsibilities. Webster (2017) argues that failure to protect professional development may lead to an inadvertent '"knowledge and practice quality" gap between those attending these [weekend] events and those who ... can't'. With school budgets for CPD diminishing (Weston, 2017b), it may well be difficult for CPD providers to argue that teachers should not be expected to undertake their professional learning entirely in their own time, but in the long-term there is a risk that CPD may become a 'self-funded, weekend-only, minority pursuit' (Webster, 2017).

Women teachers

The experiences shared in this research may also speak to women teachers who are mothers. Whilst Bourdieu acknowledges that research participants are 'the *product of history*' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 136), he rejects the notion that the *habitus* is deterministic. I contend that if women are enabled, they can use 'such analyses precisely to step back and gain distance from dispositions' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 136). Bourdieu goes on to suggest,

> It is difficult to control the first inclination of habitus, but reflexive analysis, which teaches that we are the ones who endow the situation with part of the potency it has over us, allows us to alter our perception of the situation and thereby our reaction to it. It enables us to monitor, up to a certain point, some of the determinisms that operate through the relation of immediate complicity between position and dispositions (ibid.).

Future work

During the interviews Joanne, Sarah and Samantha discussed the challenges of workload not only in the context of women with young children but of wider concern for teachers generally. In her final interview, in addition to raising concerns about promotion opportunities for women of childbearing age, Joanne talked about the increasing teacher workload to the detriment of teachers and students. Sellen's (2016: 7) findings show that 'workload presents a significant barrier to accessing professional development according to 60 per cent of teachers in England'. Given Sellen's (2016: 10) conclusions that teachers working 'excessive' hours 'should be a cause for concern for professional development and teaching quality as well as for the wellbeing of teachers themselves', I suggest that investigating women teachers' wellbeing would be a vital extension to my research. Having conceptualised women teachers' experiences in terms of home and school field, this new theoretical perspective could be applied to open up future exploration of teacher wellbeing in the school field and how this impacts the home field.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE

The following paints a broad-brush picture of the society which the participants inhabit. The youngest children in the research group were born around 2014, it is therefore aposite to touch on some pertinent statistics leading up to and around this period to draw an impression of the UK workforce in general and teacher workforce in England specifically, to provide a social context for the women's accounts.

A consideration of gender in the UK workforce in general

In the last quarter of 2014, '79.0% of people aged between 16 and the State Pension Age in the UK were participating in the labour market' (Penfold and Foxton, 2015b: 8)[1] – this accounts for 83.3% of men and 74.5% of women (Penfold and Foxton, 2015b: 9) and 'of the main reasons given for being inactive in the final quarter of 2014, 40.7% of women gave "looking after the family/home" as their main reason' (Penfold and Foxton, 2015a: 6).

If we compare engagement in the labour market of women with and without 'dependent' children[2] in 2014, '74.1% of women aged 16-State Pension Age with dependent children were participating in the labour market. This compares to 75.0% of women with no dependent children' (Penfold and Foxton, 2015a: 6). However, women with dependent children have been more likely to work part-time than full-time (ONS, 2011: 2). We also see a difference in employment between mothers and those without children dependent on the age of the children, as 'the employment gap ... narrow[s] ... at older ages, reflecting that the children in the family would be older, making it easier for women to return to work' (ONS, 2013: 8).

A comparison of women's participation rates with men, where couples (in heterosexual relationships) have dependent children, demonstrates that the male partner is more likely to be in employment than the female (ONS, 2014: 9). 'Focusing on women up to the age of 49, for those with children, their employment rates were lower than those

[1] Participating in the labour market means to be 'employed or unemployed and actively seeking work' (Penfold and Foxton, 2015b: 16).
[2] 'Dependent children are children aged under 16 and those aged 16 to 18 who have never married and are in full-time education' (ONS, 2014: 13).

without children. For men the opposite occured as men with children were more likely to work than those without' (ONS, 2013: 7).

These statistics regarding behaviours mirror research into attitudes in British society. Scott and Clery (2013: 124) found that the 'most popular approach' to organising family and work life with children under school age was for 'the mother to work part-time and the father to work full-time' and that there was 'minimal support for role reversal[3]: less than one per cent think that the father should stay at home or work part-time while the mother works full-time'. Meanwhile, both parents working full-time was seen by 47% of respondents as 'the least desirable way of organising things' and both parents 'splitting the breadwinner and carer roles equally (with both parents working part-time)' also had 'minimal support'.

Since the research into British social attitudes in 2012 (Scott and Clery, 2013) there has been further research in 2017. According to Attar Taylor and Scott (2018: 65), when asked about a mother of a child under school age, the most common view in 2012 was that she should work part-time (43%), followed by the view she should stay at home (33%) with only 5% suggesting that she should work full-time. In 2017 (Attar Taylor and Scott, 2018: 65) research into attitudes revealed some movement with 38% suggesting the mother of a child under school age should work part-time, 33% still suggesting she stay at home and 7% opting for working full-time. Once the youngest child has started school however, a majority think that a mother should work part-time (52% in 2012 and 49% in 2017) or full-time (28% in 2012 and 27% in 2017) with only 2% (in both 2012 and 2017) suggesting a mother stay at home (as time has gone on there has been an increase in respondants selecting the survey answer 'can't choose'). Whilst there has been a steady decline in the idea of gender based roles in the home (Scott and Clery, 2013: 115; Attar Taylor and Scott, 2018: 56), the change in attitude regarding caring responsibilities has been in accepting the idea that a mother works part-time instead of staying at home. There is still a societal expectation that the woman will be the main carer of young children within a heterosexual relationship.

Having children appears to not only impact the amount of time women spend working outside the home but also their potential for career progression and earning capacity; 'the percentage of women in the highest paid [earners] reduces after the average age that women tend to give birth to their first child' (ONS, 2013: 14). The Labour Force Survey did not explore the reasons for this but the Office for National Statistics states

[3] If a traditional view of the division of gender roles is deemed '"A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family"' (Scott and Clery, 2013: 122).

that this decline 'may be due to several factors such as women choosing to focus more on family life than careers. Alternatively, or in addition, some employers may not offer women the same career opportunities as men' (ONS, 2013: 14).

In 2003 'a father's statutory entitlement to two weeks paid paternity leave was introduced' and in 2011 fathers were able to 'share paid maternity leave up to a total of six months' (Miller 2012: 41). Despite the encouragement of women back into the work place and fathers to be more involved in their children's care, women are still the 'primary care givers' (ibid.).

Miller notes Hobson and Fahlén's observation made in 2009 (in Miller, 2012: 41),

> The discernible trends in the UK are that policy changes providing new rights for (some) fathers 'have not translated into significant increases in the take-up' of parental leave, and women continue to be expected to take responsibility for reconciling *their* employment and family life.

Several years on from Miller's article little has changed. 2015 saw the advent of shared parental leave (SPL) (Gov.UK, n.d a). A year later, The Telegraph newspaper ran the headline 'Why are only 1 in 100 men taking up shared parental leave?' (Kemp, 2016). Whilst the article referred to a survey of all male employees at the 200 companies surveyed by 'My Family Care and the Women's Business Council' – some of whom would not have been eligible for shared parental leave – the issue remains that shared parental leave has not been as successful as hoped. Two years on and 'People Management'[4] reported a continuing low take-up (although as with the afore-mentioned survey, the study did not track how many employees were new parents eligible for shared parental leave) (Calnan, 2017). More recently, an article in 2018 stated that 'less than 8% of eligible families have signed up for the government's "shared parental leave" since it began in 2015' (Burgess, 2018).

There are many reasons why more couples are not taking up shared parental leave in Britain. In addition to the belief that women should be the main carers in the family there is '"some anecdotal evidence that some working dads fear discrimination, and that their career prospects may suffer if they pursue SPL, and others who are the main breadwinner in the family say it is simply not an affordable option"' (Calnan, 2017). It is not the remit of this thesis to examine such matters as the complex reasons for why shared parental leave is not being taken up by more couples, suffice to say, this is the context in which my research participants are situated.

[4] The official magazine of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

The teacher workforce in England

In 2010 women made up the majority of the teaching workforce (DfE, 2011a: 18). Information regarding staff working in all publicly funded schools[5] published in 2013 stated that in November 2012, 73.3% of the number of full and part-time regular teachers were female (DfE, 2013a: 3) and yet leadership roles within schools were disproportionally performed by men, with only 65.1% of the number of full and part-time headteachers being women (DfE, 2013a: 3). This is perhaps the effect of what Lupton (in Walsh, 2011: 138) calls the '"glass escalator"', which 'operates to elevate men to positions of authority' (Walsh, 2011: 138).

A couple of years on women accounted for 74%[6] of all teachers in 2014 with 62% of secondary school teachers being women (DfE, 2015a: 7)[7] yet as the former Education Secretary for the Conservative government Nicky Morgan stated in March 2016, there is a '"crippling waste of talent"' (McTague, 2016) when only 37% of secondary school heads are women. In an earlier article in the Times Educational Supplement, Mroz (2015) reflected,

> the teaching workforce is 74 per cent female, yet women take only 65 per cent of headships; in secondary schools that figure is even worse at just 36 per cent. Numerous factors are cited as holding women back, including sexism, both overt and covert. Schools may see themselves as havens of fairness and equality but society still has a long way to go. And it is, of course, from wider society that the governors who appoint our headteachers are recruited. Motherhood is another of the reasons given. "Women still carry out the majority of childcare," says superhead Dame Sally Coates ..."This is the biggest factor in preventing them from applying for headship".

As teachers who are mothers balance the dual roles of raising their children and educating the children of others (Grumet, 1988), they face the challenge of pursuing professional learning in order to develop their potential for promotion. This pursuit may require additional working hours outside the home. The 1,700 'missing' female headteachers highlighted by The Future Leaders Trust (2015) may be partly the result of male teachers being more able or willing to undertake the additional hours of work outside the home to engage in professional development, thereby accessing the professional development needed to advance their careers. If women teachers'

[5] The document lists within 'publicly funded schools': 'Local Authority (LA) maintained schools, academy schools (including Free Schools) and City Technology Colleges' (DfE, 2013a: 8).
[6] 73.8% according to the DfE report of 2017 (DfE, 2017a: 8).
[7] In November 2015 this number was 73.8% (DfE, 2017a: 8) and in November 2016 – the year I interviewed the participants – 73.9% of full-time teachers were women and 62.5% were Secondary teachers (DfE, 2017a: 7).

promotion prospects flounder, as Mroz (2015) observes, this is both a school and wider societal issue.

Women teachers who are mothers are writing about the challenges they face. In one piece[8] entitled 'Hello baby, goodbye teaching: how to get mums back into the classroom' (Patel, 2016), assistant headteacher Geeta Aashish Patel reflects on the challenges of balancing her role as a senior leader with raising three children. She additionally notes the work of Jonathan Simons of the Policy Exchange think tank, stating 'more than a quarter of working age teachers who left the profession between 2008-2012 were women aged 30-39. Simons believes this is maternity related' (Patel, 2016). It seems loss of potential leaders is only part of the problem; some schools are losing women teachers with young families altogether.

[8] The details of which were kindly sent to me by one of my research participants.

APPENDIX 2: DEVELOPING A SAMPLE

During the process of developing the thesis proposal, early plans had been to interview twelve women teachers individually: Six teachers who were mothers with young children under the age of ten years (group A) and six teachers with adult children who are no-longer dependents (group B). From this initial group of twelve I had planned to do a 'more intense follow-up' (Ribbens, 1994: 93) with six of the teachers; three with younger children and three with adult children. In the write up of the research I had also envisaged sketching six portraits of the participants involved in the follow-up interviews.

When presenting the analysis, after an initial discussion of the two groups, looking at the similarities and differences of experience within them, I had planned to compare and contrast the experiences of the six 'in-depth' teachers across the two groups, using the other six interviews to add light and shade where appropriate. This strategy was an adaptation of Ribbens' (1994) work. The underpinning rationale was to compare and contrast the experiences of women with children under ten and those with adult children, therefore resulting in a cross-generational piece of research, considering whether experiences of pursuing professional learning had changed for the (probably) younger women. However, whilst the question of whether anything has changed for women teachers pursuing professional learning in the last 15-20 years is an important issue, the scope of this endeavour came to be too far-reaching for a 45,000 word thesis where the context for political, social, professional and policy landscapes would need to be drawn for both cohorts of women (I am grateful to Dr Andy Pearce for highlighting this point to me). Therefore in the final thesis proposal the remit of the research was paired down to focus on women teachers with dependent children.

In developing my plans I considered narrowing my method to conducting interviews with twelve women once. These teachers were to be mothers with young children under the age of ten years. From this initial group of twelve I planned to do a further interview with six of the teachers in order to discuss their experiences in more detail. Twelve soon became six: I decided that I wanted to interview all women more than once so that we could revisit conversations as necessary. It became clear that 18-24 interviews would result in an amount of data too great for a 45,000 word thesis to do the women justice whilst selecting some women and not others for a second conversation would raise the methodological and ethical issues of what criteria to employ when selecting the six teachers to re-interview (whilst rejecting the others). I had also considered interviewing eight women and then re-interviewing a selected four, but whilst this would have garnered a more workable number of twelve interviews it

would still have raised the issues discussed. I finally decided to interview six participants twice and configure my thesis around all six women.

Regarding sourcing participants, I considered approaching the Mumsnet online community to seek out research participants who were qualified teachers. This forum was of particular interest as research on the site garnered respondents from 'a comparatively older group of mothers' with the average age of 'Mumsnetters' being 36 (Pedersen and Smithson, 2013: 101). Additionally the site seems to 'attract a high number of working mothers' with 'only 21% of respondents' (to an online survey) identifying 'as full-time stay-at-home mothers' (Pedersen and Smithson, 2013: 101). Pedersen and Smithson (2013: 101) also comment that 'the high educational achievement of the average Mumsnetter should also be noted. In the Mumsnet census of 2009, 34% of respondents had a university degree, 27% a postgraduate and 14% were undertaking postgraduate studies'. Pedersen and Smithson (2013: 101) summarise the profile of Mumsnet users with the following,

> It can therefore be suggested that Mumsnet attracts – or retains – an older, often well-educated user who is likely to be over the initial stages of pregnancy and first-time parenthood.

There is also evidence of interest in feminism within the community with the topic being added in 2010 (Pedersen and Smithson, 2013: 102) although threads on feminism remain 'a small minority' and 'much of the advice on threads such as "Relationships" ... is traditional in tone' (Pedersen and Smithson, 2013: 103). These features might have increased the likelihood of generating from this group qualified working teachers who are mothers and who might have been interested in taking part in my research. However, I decided against sourcing participants from Mumsnet in order to maximise the possibility of diversity in my sample.

APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE 'NETWORKING' CARD

Moo business cards – moo.com
Thanks to Andrew O'Brien for photography.

APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE FLYER – 2ND VERSION

Thanks to Andrew O'Brien for the design of the flyer.

APPENDIX 5: TELEPHONE FORM

Telephone form for initial conversations – to use as a prompt to help ensure topics are covered.

Name:

Telephone number: Date of phone call: Time of phone call:

Thanks for interest

To inform	**To find out**
Working title of research: Feminist perspective	Where teaching at the moment? **Geographical location?** **Currently teaching?** **Establish State school or Independent – find out type of school.** Where living?
Looking for 6 women If you are happy to go ahead then I'd send you a letter for your consent outlining the below:	How long been teaching? **Establish QTS – type of qual?** Full or part time?
2 interviews – biographical – more like a conversation about your life and work.	Why interested in the research?

Up to you what you bring up but it may be personal stuff about how you feel about your work, being a mother, a teacher etc. It can be great to talk about what has gone well and reflect on your career/life but it might also raise issues you feel sad/regretful about. You can stop the conversation at any point or not answer questions. The questions are really open so you decide what you want to talk about and what is important. You can always withdraw from the research at any point.	**Establish contact**
To start with I'd ask you to write a portrait about yourself – before we meet and send this to me so that the first interview begins by building on the portrait – up to you what you include. About your identity – who you are, what essential facets/elements would you include? Can be 200 words or much longer – up to you. We'd then have the first interview.	Ages of child/children now/Dec 31 2015? **Child lives with them?**
Recorded & transcribed (most likely by a transcriber).	
I'll send the transcript to you – tidied up without the ums and ahs. This can be good as you can confirm you are happy with the contents and you can also say if you want anything removed. But it can also be daunting reading yourself back and seeing yourself from the 'outside'	
I can email and or post transcripts etc. to you (password protected)	
After the first interview I'd check again to make sure that you are happy to continue with the research – it's hard to know what it will be like until you've done the first interview. If you then want to withdraw that's	

absolutely fine. Then we'd have the second interview, building on the first.	
Again it would be transcribed and I'd send you the transcript for you to confirm/amend.	
In terms of your time we'd be looking at: 30 mins to write your portrait 1 hour to read transcript 1 1 hour to read transcript 2 30 mins to read the portrait I eventually write up about you when introducing you to the reader of the thesis. = 3 hours You might also want to read the draft chapters that talk about you – this is optional and may take around another couple of hours – this would be much later in the process	What do you think about this amount of time?
Anonymity/confidentiality The transcriber would hear the audio recordings but it would just be me and them. I will change your name in the write up (advise her to not name people when talking) and take care that your identity cannot be worked out – however – someone who knows you, if they were to read it – might 'work you out' given that the work is about the individual experiences. I will password protect documents but as you know email is never 100% secure as anything can be 'hacked' into. I can just post things if you prefer	I need a password from her I need a pseudonym from her

Mention Facebook – if they've gone public.	
Future relations: As I provide CPD you need to think how you might feel if you've told me something private (even if you later withdraw it from the research – I know that information) and then you come on a course in the future. Or – we see each other socially. Or it turns out we have mutual friends – I will not discuss your interview with anyone other than my supervisor and if you choose to read the chapters about you in the thesis (which would be great) then you can have a say about what I write – and I'd never write anything about you that I wouldn't be happy for you to read – but it's how you feel about any future relations that's important. The thesis will be available to the general public.	

Next steps:

Have a think about it. If you could let me know by ..... if you want to go ahead – fine if not – but I'd appreciate if you could let me know. If you do, I'll send you a letter to confirm your consent. Once you have signed it and sent it back retaining a copy for yourself we can then begin (with you writing a portrait of yourself).

APPENDIX 6: OUTCOME OF GARNERING PARTICIPANT INTEREST

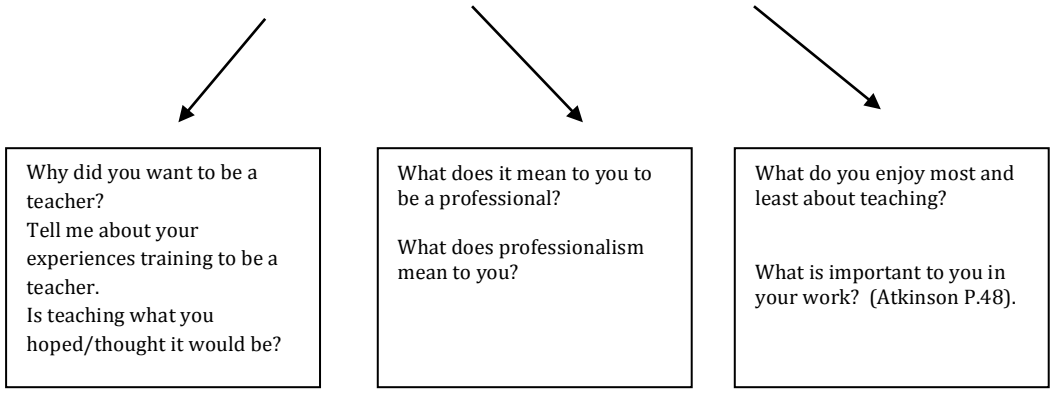
Expressions of interest	28
Telephone conversations (pre-interview conversations) connected to the expressions of interest	13
Potential participants rejected (due to geography, teaching in an independent school, age of children) after the telephone conversation	3
Potential participants who decided to decline taking their interest further after the telephone conversation	3
Potential participants who agreed to be on standby should someone withdraw	1
Potential participants who agreed to participate in the research	6

Fig. 1: Table showing the outcome of generating research participants

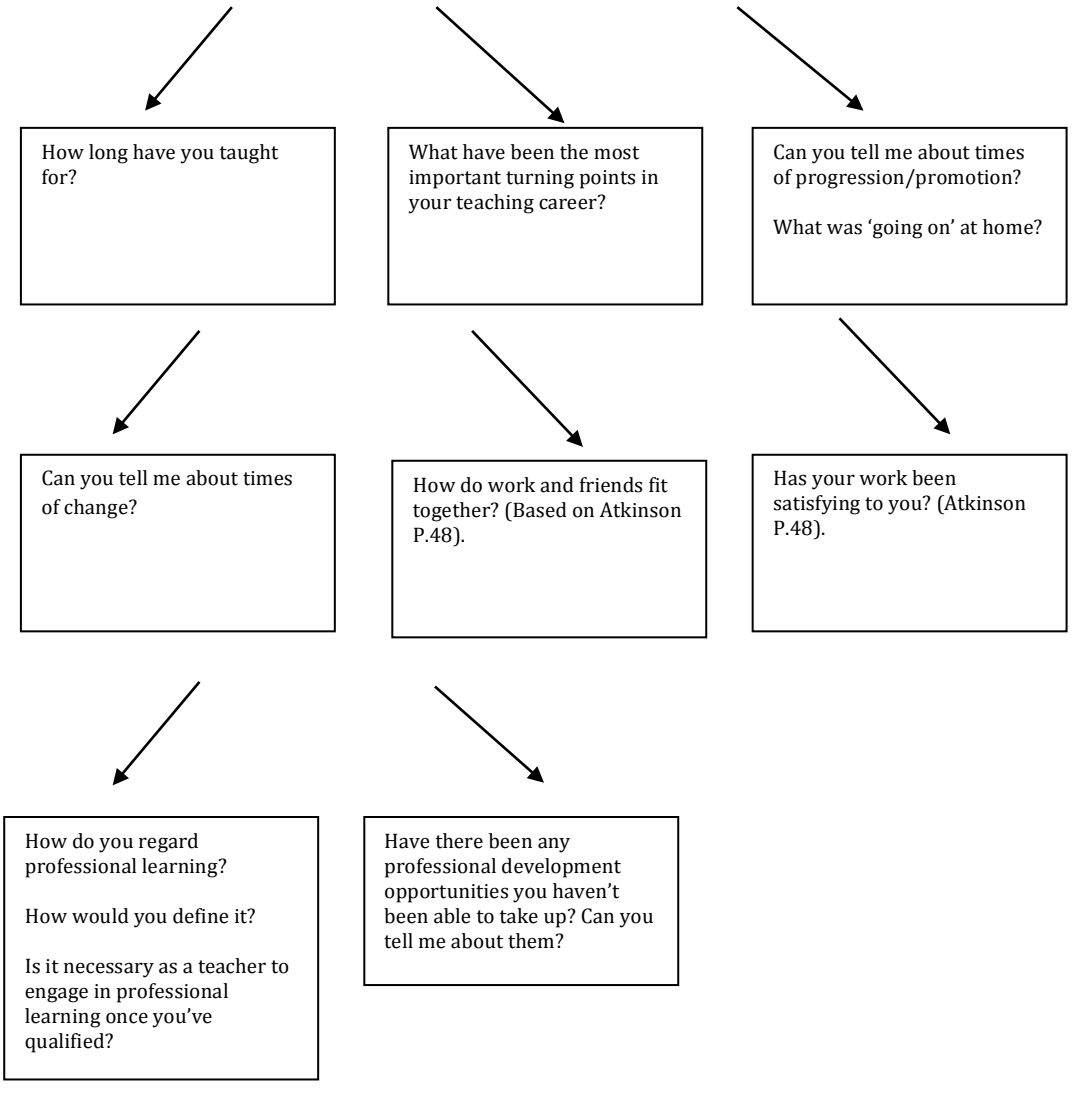
APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW PROMPT

The participants will be invited to narrate their individual experiences of professional learning and raising a family. There is no set interview schedule – these are the kinds of questions participants may be asked, based on the work of Atkinson (1998) and Sikes (1997).

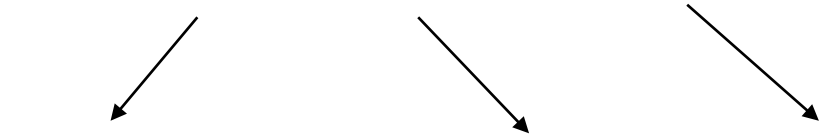
Teacher identity



Career and life



Continuing Professional Development



What have been your experiences of professional learning?

Can you remember your first experience of CPD? Can you describe it?

Can you describe any relationships you see between your experience of CPD and how your career has developed?

What have been your most memorable experiences of CPD?

How have these experiences impacted you?

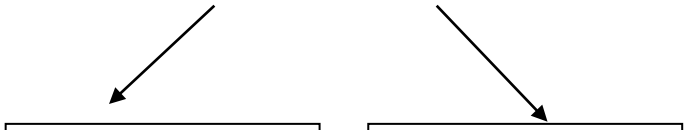
What have you 'taken away' from them?

What CPD have you chosen to undertake?

Why did you choose this?

Looking back

When you look back over your life and career so far...



What has been the most important learning experience in your life? What did it teach you? (Atkinson P.51).

Who shaped and influenced your life the most? (Atkinson P.46).

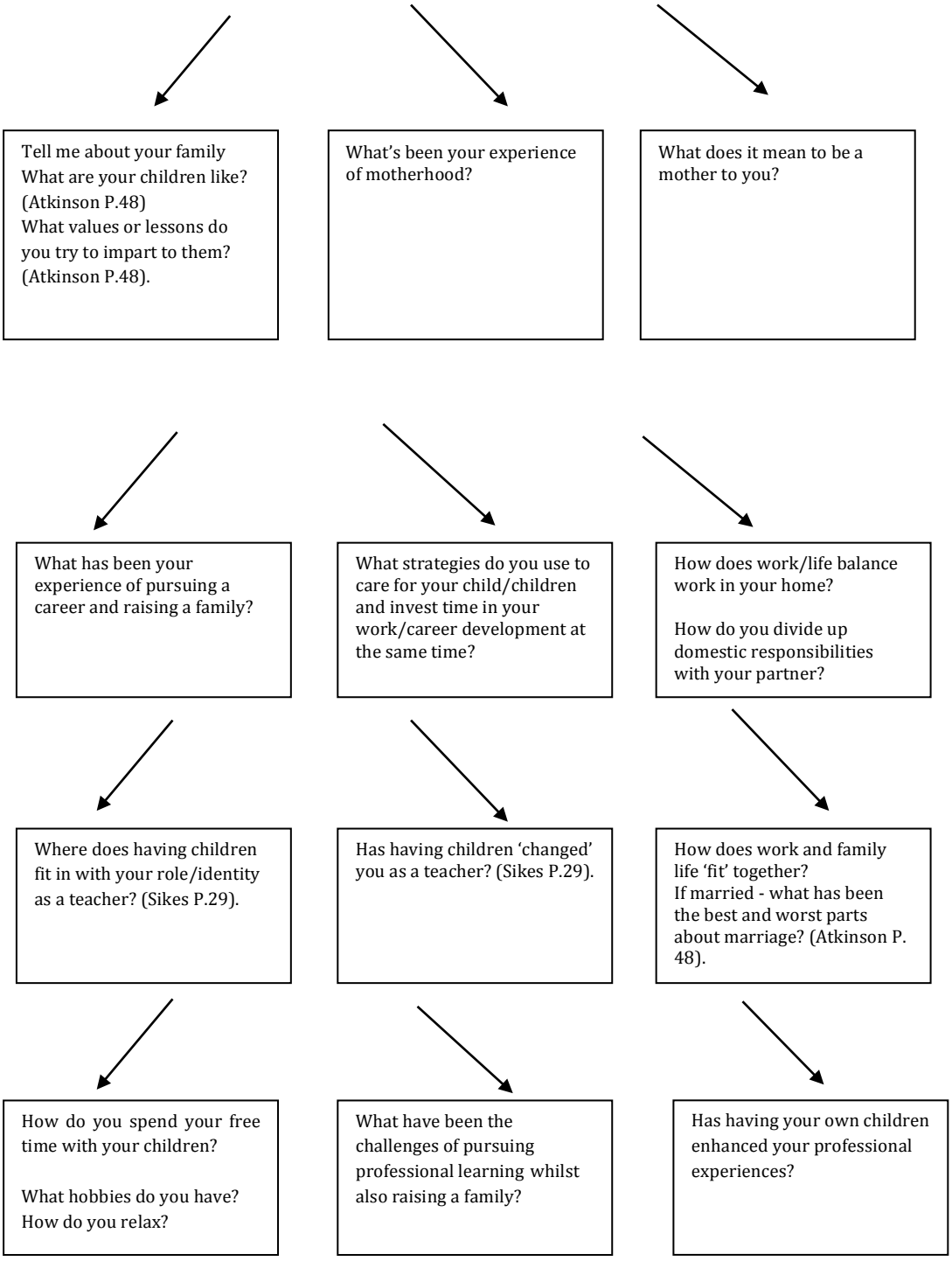
Are you satisfied with the life choices you have made? Is there anything you would change? (Atkinson P.51).

Looking towards the future

What do you see for yourself in 10 years time? (Atkinson P.53).

What are your hopes for the future?

Motherhood, mothering experiences, family life



Closing questions - (Based on Atkinson P.53).

How do you feel at the end of this interview? Is there anything we've left out that you feel is important to talk about? Do you feel you have given a fair picture of yourself? (Atkinson P.53). What do you think of the process we have just been through? How might the process be better next time?

APPENDIX 8: TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement *

Thesis working title: Perspectives on the Pursuit of Professional Learning: Insights from Teachers who are Mothers.

This study is being undertaken by Emma O'Brien (Researcher), an EdD student at UCL Institute of Education. The purpose of the research is to explore the experiences of women teachers as they pursue professional learning whilst raising a young family.

As a transcriber of this research, I understand that I will be hearing recordings of confidential interviews. The information on these recordings has been revealed by interviewees who agreed to participate in this research on the condition that the contents of their interviews would be treated confidentially, and that the transcriber would listen to their interviews in the strictest of confidence. I understand that I have a responsibility to honour this confidentially agreement.

I agree not to share any information on these recordings, in any way, about any party, with anyone except the Researcher of this project. Any violation of this and the terms detailed below would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards and I confirm that I will adhere to the agreement in full.

I, _____ agree to:

1. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the content of the interviews in any form or format (e.g. WAV files, CDs, MP3 files, transcripts) with anyone other than the Researcher.

2. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g. WAV files, CDs, MP3 files, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession.

3. Return all research information in any form or format (e.g. WAV files, CDs, MP3 files, transcripts) to the Researcher when I have completed the transcription tasks.

4. After consulting with the Researcher, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the Researcher (e.g. CDs, information stored on my computer hard drive, emails with attachments such as MP3 files or transcripts).

The above pertains to electronic and hard-copy material.

Transcriber (print name) (signature) (date)

.....

Researcher: Emma O'Brien

..... Sunday 10th January 2016

* Adapted from an example found at UK Data Archive (n.d).

APPENDIX 9: THE THEMATIC CODING PROCESS

The following gives a full account of the coding process undertaken for the presentation of data in Chapter 6.

As outlined in figure 2, for each participant I created tables that organised the content of the interviews under the overarching themes of life history, domestic context, professional identity and experience of professional learning. Each overarching theme contained several initial themes as detailed below. As I refined my thinking the wording of these initial themes evolved – for example, being a mother became motherhood and career choices developed into career decisions and this later became career progression.

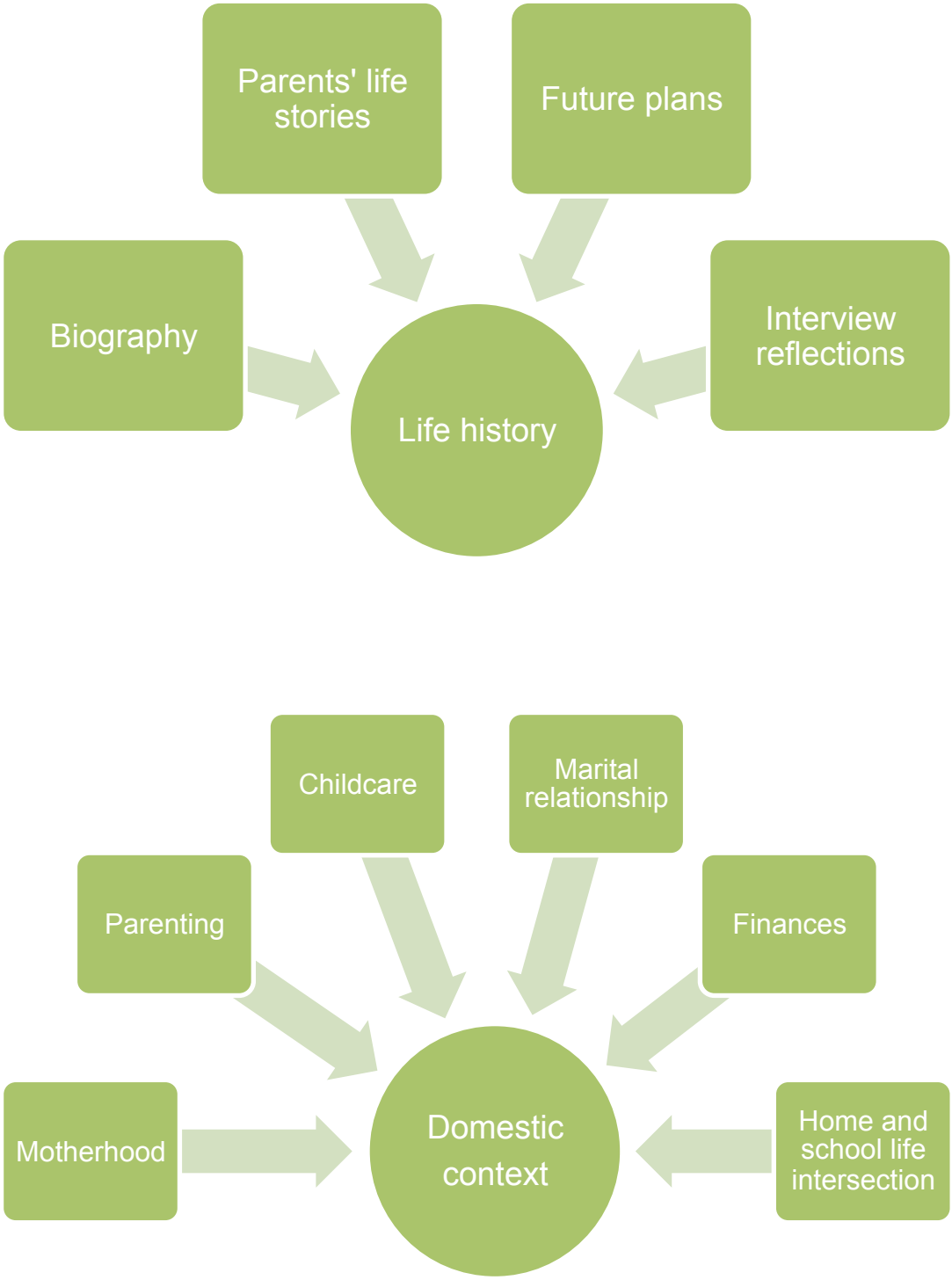


Fig. 2: Diagram of initial and overarching themes

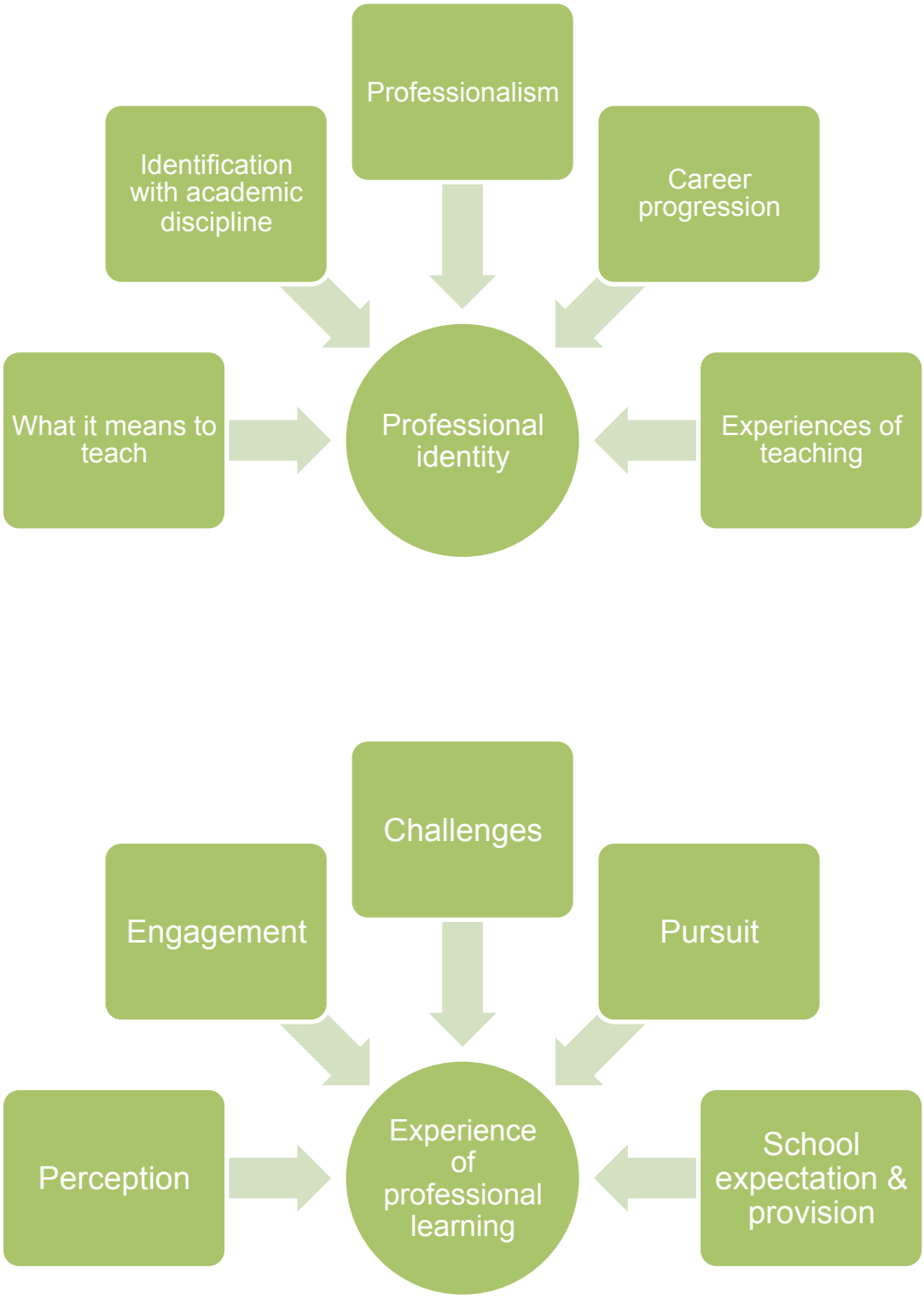


Fig. 2: Diagram of initial and overarching themes

Overarching and initial themes

For clarity I expand upon my thinking underpinning some of the themes developed during the coding process.

Life history

A life story is the initial account that once contextualised becomes life history; 'the crucial focus for life history work is to locate the teacher's own life story alongside a broader contextual analysis' (Goodson, 1992: 6). Given that the details of the parents' lives are not in themselves presented for analysis but act as a context for the life history of the participant, I situated the initial theme of parents' life stories under the overarching theme of life history (of the participant).

The initial theme interview reflections comprised the comments participants made during the interviews indicating moments of reflexivity and self-analysis. I included these as part of the overarching theme of life history because the experience of the interviews themselves, participation in the research and thoughts prompted by my presence became part of the women's life experience. Meanwhile, the theme of future plans featured under the overarching theme life history; whilst the future is always yet to happen, notions of the future form part of one's perspective on the present.

Domestic context

Under the overarching theme of domestic context were placed the initial themes parenting and childcare. Parenting in this context refers to the raising or rearing of children whereas childcare refers to the pragmatic childcare arrangements needed for a child's supervision. Under this overarching theme I included the theme of home and school life intersection.

Professional identity

I included a number of initial themes under the overarching theme of professional identity. Whilst it became clear that for several women the subjects they teach are part of their teacher identity, I haven't written about participants' teaching subjects in order to maintain anonymity.

Experience of professional learning

Under the overarching theme of experience of professional learning were placed the initial themes of engagement and pursuit. Engagement refers to substantive examples of professional learning undertaken by the participants, whilst pursuit refers to the

participants identifying professional learning needs, active and incidental pursuit of professional learning and the seeking out and procurement of professional learning.

Having developed from the transcripts the initial and overarching themes, I compared and contrasted what the participants said for each initial theme. Where there was a lot of material and complexity, and for initial themes especially pertinent to the research question, I drew up further analytical tables to look across the women's experiences. The initial themes that lent themselves to this additional process of comparison are listed below in figure 3.

Overarching theme	Life history	Domestic context	Professional identity	Experience of professional learning
Initial theme		Parenting Motherhood Home and school life intersection	What it means to teach Experiences of teaching	Perception Engagement Challenges Pursuit School expectation and provision

Fig. 3: Table showing initial themes compared

Through comparing and contrasting the participants' experiences some initial themes were subsequently developed in order to provide discussion topics. These were drawn from the process of looking across the initial themes for all of the women, and some initial themes such as pursuit and engagement were paired together. See figure 4 for an outline.

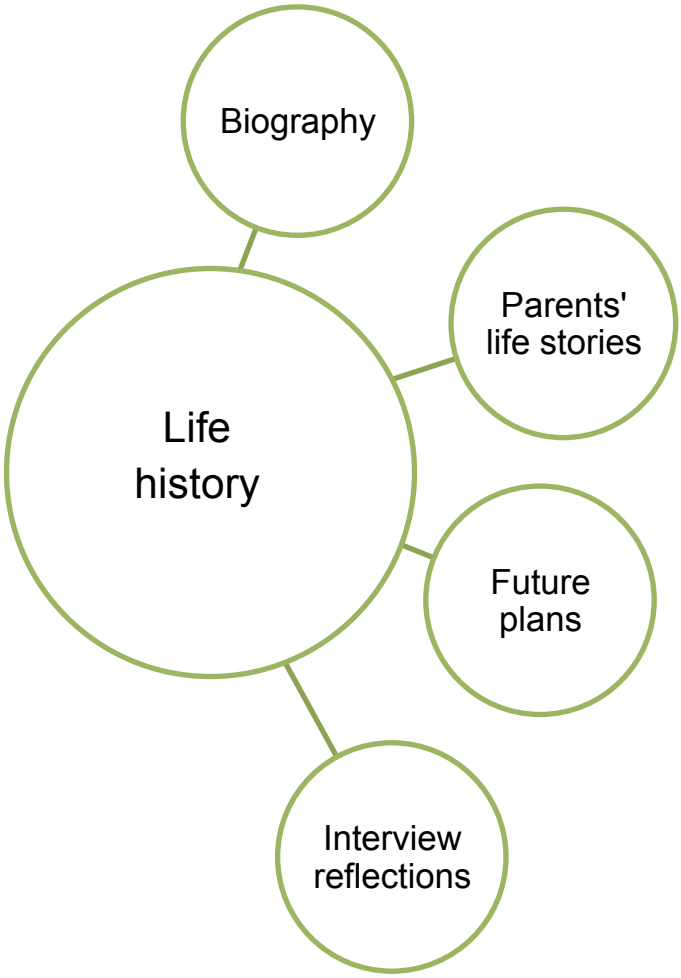


Fig. 4: Diagram showing development of discussion topics from initial themes

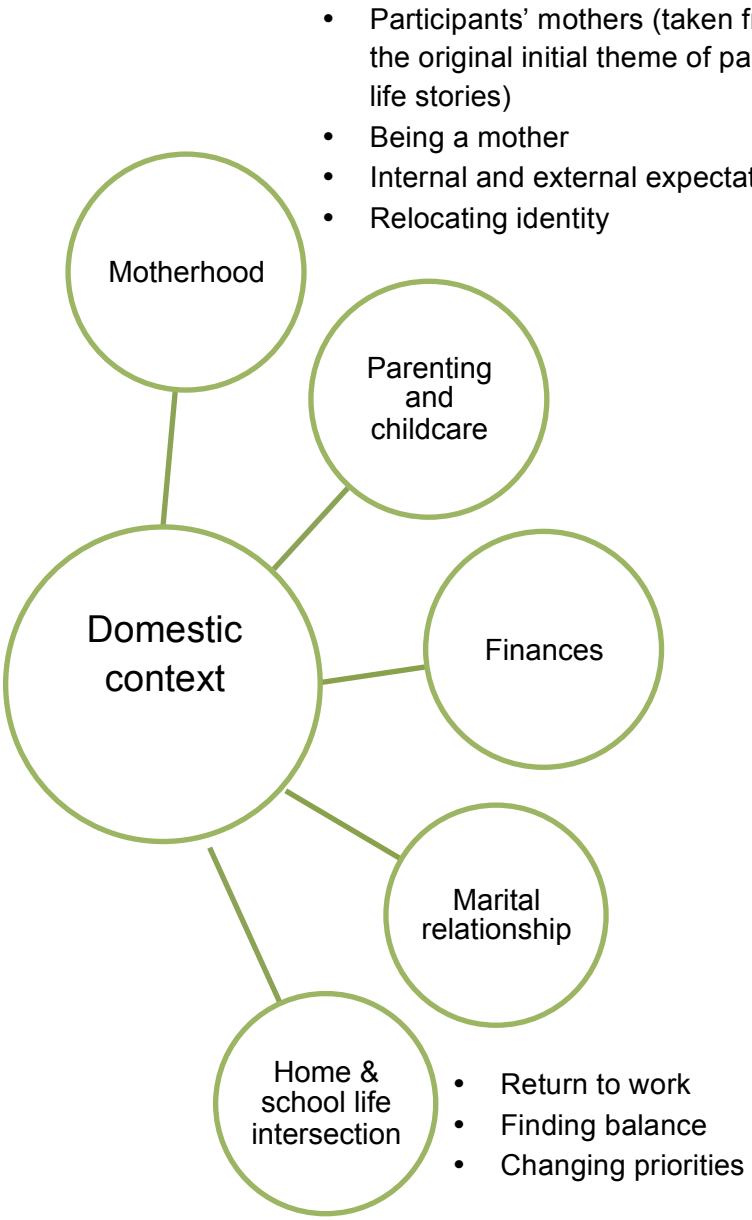


Fig. 4: Diagram showing development of discussion topics from initial themes

Fig. 4: Diagram showing development of discussion topics from initial themes

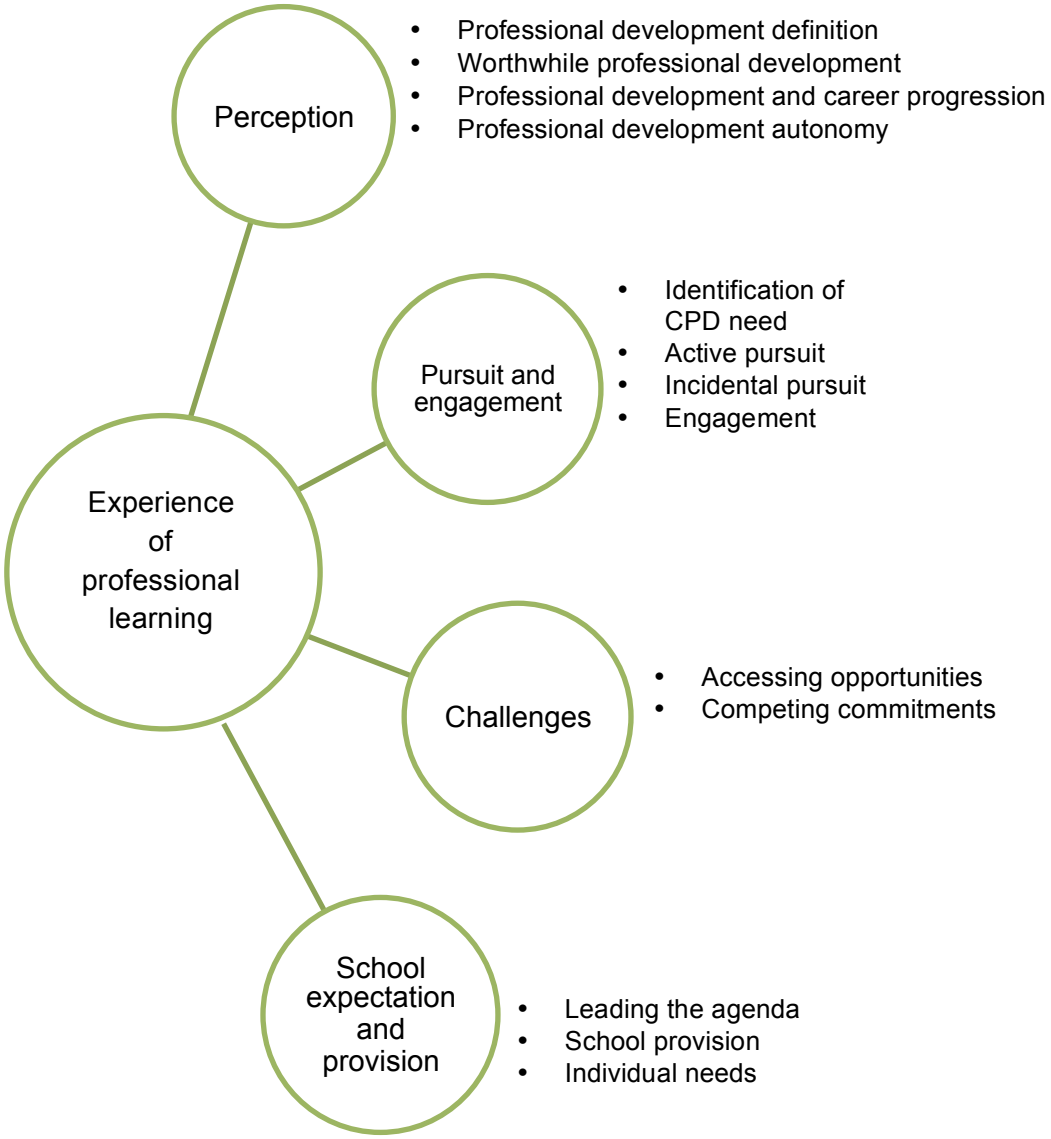


Fig. 4: Diagram showing development of discussion topics from initial themes

The coding procedure was an iterative process, evolving as my thinking developed. I amended, refined and repositioned the summary descriptions and themes in my coding tables as required. Throughout the process I mulled over the transcripts, continually reflecting on various pieces of text, 'creating more texts ... like summaries, précis, memos, notes and drafts' (Gibbs, 2007: 4). This work resulted in the following developments.

Life history

Given the substantial portraits of my six participants in Chapter 5, the overarching theme life history does not feature in Chapter 6 but data from the initial theme of interview reflections is employed in Chapter 9.

The initial theme parent's life stories was developed into a discussion topic, renamed participants' mothers and moved to sit within the initial theme of motherhood under the overarching theme domestic context.

Domestic context

The initial themes parenting and childcare were paired together. As the themes marital relationship and finances are touched on in the portraits, they are not subject to further treatment in Chapter 6. The initial theme Home and school life intersection eventually developed into the theme reshaping the home-school balance.

Professional identity

As the focus of the thesis is on the pursuit of professional learning, rather than the construction and development of professional identity – entwined as this may be with professional learning – I decided to focus on the two key overarching themes of domestic context and experience of professional learning and therefore the overarching theme of professional identity is not explored.

I moved the initial themes career progression and experiences of teaching – originally part of the overarching theme of professional identity – to sit under the overarching theme experience of professional learning, as professional learning can be a factor in career progression and experiences of teaching inform professional development pursuit and engagement. The issues under the initial theme what it means to teach are discussed in Chapter 7, when considering the participants' *habitus.*

Experience of professional learning

The overarching theme of experience of professional learning was renamed professional learning and expanded to comprise the initial themes of experiences of teaching and career progression in addition to the themes perception (renamed personal value), pursuit and engagement, challenges, and school expectation and provision (renamed school provision and individual needs). Figure 5 summarises the further thematic analysis developments.

Initial themes	Overarching themes	Developments during the analysis procedure
	Life history	Not discussed as a separate theme
Biography		Features in Chapter 5.
Parent's life stories		An element of this theme was re-named participants' mothers, and moved to sit as a discussion topic under the theme of motherhood.
Future plans		Not discussed in thesis
Interview reflections		Discussed in Chapter 9.
	Domestic context	
Motherhood		Expectations & experiences, being a mother, expectations and societal pressures, relocating identity.
Parenting and childcare		Two themes paired together.
Marital relationship		Discussed in Chapter 7.
Finances		Not discussed as a separate theme.
Home & school life intersection		Renamed reshaping the home-school balance and comprising: return to work, finding balance, changing priorities.
	Professional identity	Not discussed as a separate theme.
What it means to teach		A sense of vocation, relationships, 'making a difference' is discussed in Chapter 7.
Professionalism		Not discussed as a separate theme.
Career progression		Moved to experience of professional learning.
Identification with academic discipline		Not discussed to preserve anonymity.
Experiences of teaching		Moved to experience of professional learning comprising: demands, rewards, demands of part-time working.
	Experience of professional learning	Renamed professional learning.
Perception		Renamed personal value comprising: CPD definitions, worthwhile CPD, CPD & career progression, CPD autonomy.
Pursuit and engagement		Comprising: identification of CPD need, active pursuit, incidental pursuit, engagement.
Challenges		Comprising: accessing opportunities, competing commitments.
School expectation & provision		Renamed school provision and individual needs comprising: leading the agenda, school provision, individual needs.

Fig. 5: Table showing development of thematic analysis

The diagram in figure 6 shows how the two main overarching themes with their initial themes and discussion topics developed over time and were further refined as I moved towards finalising the data presentation.

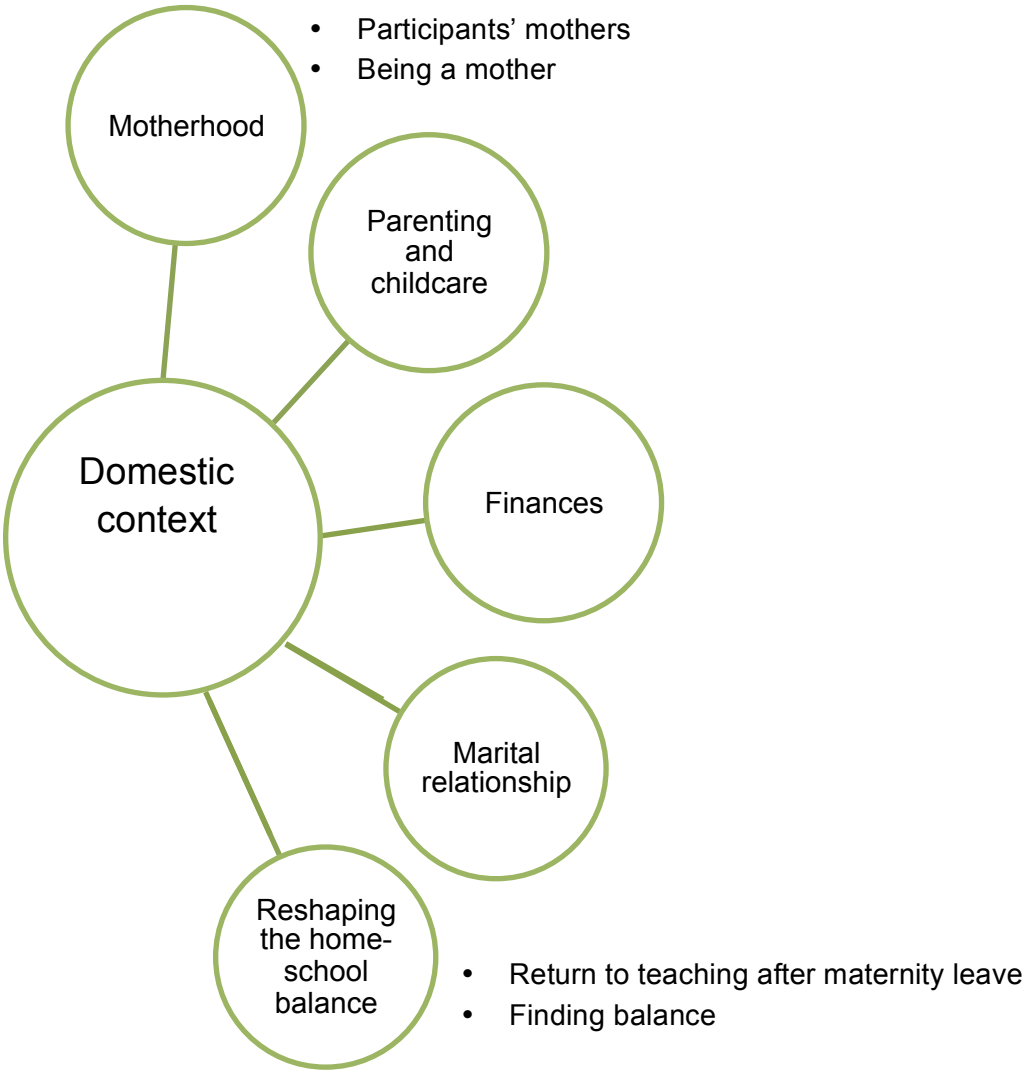


Fig. 6: Diagram showing further refinement of initial themes and discussion topics

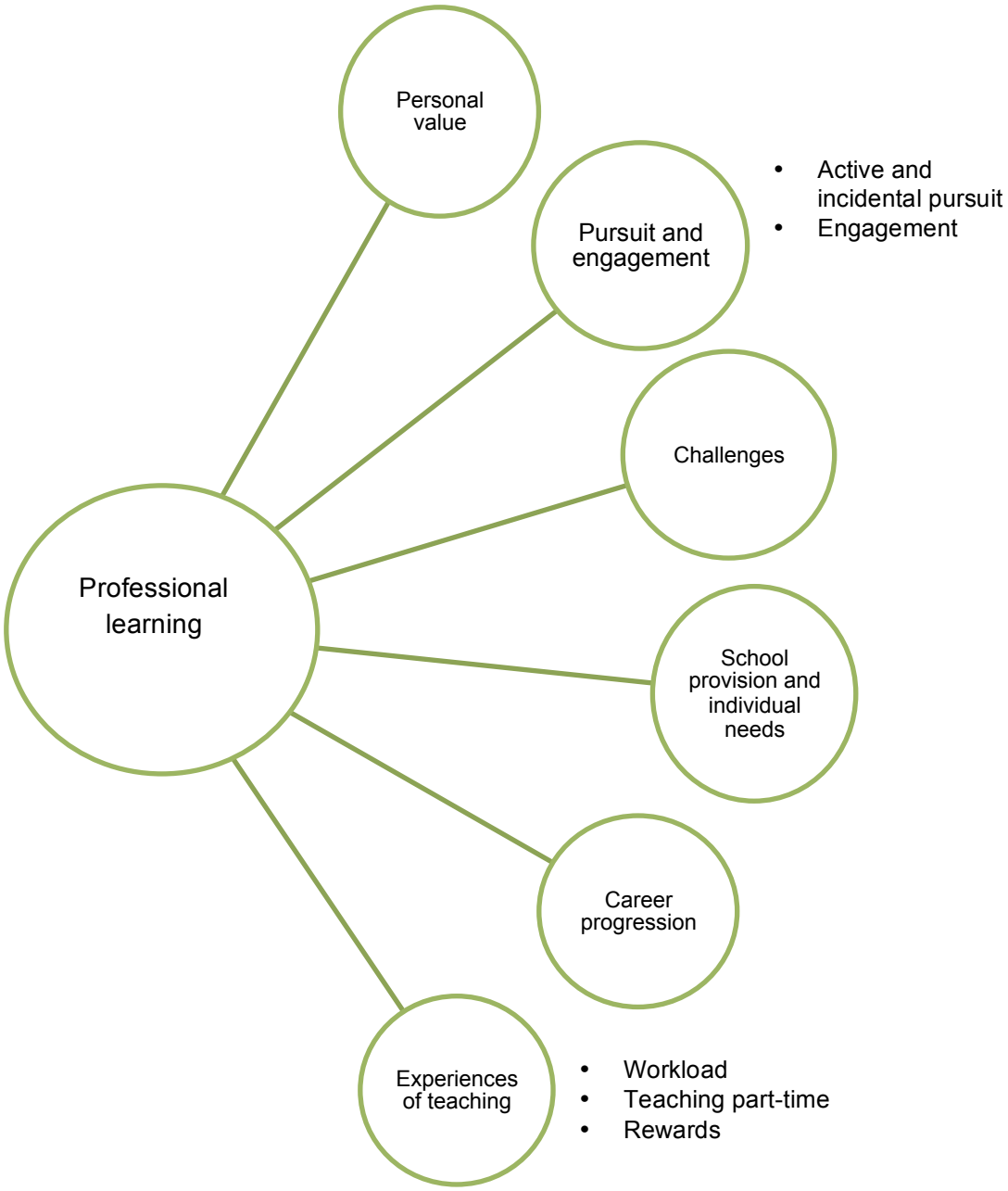


Fig. 6: Diagram showing further refinement of initial themes and discussion topics

The diagram in figure 7 below shows the final two overarching themes and initial themes written up in Chapter 6 on data presentation.

Fig.7: Diagram of the final two overarching themes and initial themes for presentation

APPENDIX 10: WORKING AT THE CENTRE FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

I was aware that interested teachers might have engaged with the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education but I made it clear to participants that the research was not related to any evaluation of the Centre's programmes or its staff.

Before embarking on the interviews, I highlighted that there was a possibility of participants attending a UCL Centre for Holocaust Education programme that I might lead in the future. One cannot know the trajectory of someone's career but I raised this with potential participants so they could decide whether to proceed to work with me on the research.

APPENDIX 11: CONSENT LETTERS

Consent letter 1

December 6th 2015

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to work with me on my doctoral research thesis: (working title) 'Perspectives on the Pursuit of Professional Learning: Insights from Teachers who are Mothers'.

As explained in our phone conversation, although I am a lecturer at the Centre for Holocaust Education at UCL Institute of Education, I am **not** undertaking this research on behalf of the Centre; I am an EdD student at UCL Institute of Education and with your collaboration I plan to write a piece of research which explores the experiences of six women teachers as they pursue their careers (in particular professional learning) whilst raising a family.

The **research process** will involve your participation in 2 one-hour audio-recorded interviews during winter and spring of 2016. During these interviews I will be keen to hear your reflections on your experiences of pursuing professional learning whilst caring for your children. The research does **not** aim to evaluate any particular programme you may have experienced but rather to offer a space for you to reflect on your professional development and life experience more generally.

Each of the recorded interviews will be transcribed by a transcriber (who will have signed a confidentiality agreement). I will then send the (password protected) transcripts to you for you to confirm the contents. Using the transcript of interview 1, we can agree on what we would like to talk about in more depth in our second meeting. I'll also highlight text I think would be good for us to talk about which might be helpful if you don't have much time to read through transcript 1, but I am also happy to be guided by you on what you'd like to talk about in the second interview. Throughout the research process I will also keep notes of my thoughts and observations about any decisions we make.

In addition to the interviews and the reading of their subsequent transcripts, I will also need you to write a brief portrait of yourself, which we will talk about in the first interview. Later in the research process, I will ask you to validate a portrait I write of you. I anticipate the approximate following amount of time being required of you during 2016: 2 hours of interviewing, 2 hours reading the transcripts, 30 minutes writing your portrait and 30 minutes reading the portrait I eventually write of you. In addition you will be invited to read/comment on draft chapters of the thesis specifically related to you if you choose (likely to be in the autumn/winter of 2016).

Interpretation of Data
Although I may have some ideas prior to the research on what themes might come up in our conversations, I will generate additional themes from the interviews when I come to analyse them.

How will the research be used?
The thesis will be publicly available and the research findings will be disseminated to colleagues involved in teacher professional development as well as other organisations who focus on equality for women. It is hoped that this research will encourage those who work with women teachers who are mothers, to reflect on their work and consider how we might best support women teachers in their pursuit of professional learning.

Please give careful consideration to the following:
It can be challenging to take time out of a busy schedule to reflect on one's career and this can bring unexpected thoughts or regrets (and triumphs!). Our conversations (depending entirely on what you want to share) may elicit very personal (possibly difficult) reflections on your relationships with your colleagues, children and partners, and possibly raise some private feelings about parenting and what it means to you to be a mother and a teacher. However, I hope you will relish the opportunity to talk about your professional development and career to

date and to take the time for yourself to reflect on your life more generally. I also would like to think that participating in the research process could be a worthwhile professional and life experience in itself.

Please be aware that:

- Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and at any point you can change the direction of the conversation, stop talking or halt the interview.
- You have the right to withdraw from the research process at any time without penalty.
- Your thoughts regarding expectations of me will be sought and respected and before the interviews we will clarify any concerns you may have and agree a way forward with which you are comfortable.
- You are asked to collaborate in the research, but you can control the level of your commitment.
- You have the right to have material removed from the interview transcripts.
- I will listen to the interview recordings and a transcription service will be employed but no one else will hear the recordings. My doctoral supervisor may read the anonymised transcripts.
- I may use anonymised extracts from any email correspondence in the thesis (for example if we discuss the transcripts and our thoughts/interpretations). Please be aware that electronic correspondence cannot be guaranteed totally secure from hacking.
- I will use anonymised extracts/quotes from the transcripts of our interviews to illustrate points in the thesis.
- I will include anonymised extracts from the transcripts in the appendices of the thesis (to demonstrate my workings).
- I plan to write a 'portrait' of each of the six women participants to introduce them to the reader. You will be asked to validate the 'portrait' I write of you.
- I will make every effort to ensure that you are anonymous in the thesis and that your identity cannot be 'worked out'. However it is important to understand the nature of this piece of research; it is always possible that if someone who knows you were to read the thesis, they may still 'recognise' you given the research is looking at particular professional and life experiences which may be unique to you.
- The interview sound files will be your property (if you would like a copy please let me know) and I will destroy all copies of the sound files once they are no longer necessary (I anticipate a year after I have successfully completed my doctorate).
- The transcripts of the interviews are a joint enterprise. I will destroy the transcripts once they are no longer required (I anticipate a year after successful completion of my doctorate).
- I will ask for your permission if the research is to be used for anything other than the thesis and its related dissemination/the usual sharing of academic findings, all of which are anonymised.
- A draft of chapters relating to you will be sent for you to comment on if you choose (this is optional). This does mean that the other five participants in the research may be reading these draft chapters too.
- You will be provided with a copy of the finished thesis after the successful completion of my doctorate.
- The ethics application for this research has been approved by two reviewers at UCL Institute of Education.

Participant statement

I agree that

- I have read the notes written above and understand what the study involves.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the research process immediately at anytime.
- I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this study.
- I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- I agree that the research project has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part.

Signature.....Printed Name.....

Date.....

A second agreement will be sent with the transcript of interview 1 in preparation for Interview 2.

Please note I will be adhering to research guidance provided by the British Educational Research Association and enclose a copy of their 'Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research 2011' for your information. Please be aware that UCL Institute of Education, University of London, has a code of practice for responding to complaints from research participants about the ethical conduct of research undertaken. Information about this can be found at: https://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/policiesProcedures/42255.html

Thank you again for agreeing to work with me.

Very best wishes

Emma

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Emma O'Brien

Consent letter 2

February 27th 2016

Dear

Thank you for continuing to agree to work with me on my doctoral research thesis: (working title) 'Perspectives on the Pursuit of Professional Learning: Insights from Teachers who are Mothers'.

The aim of my work remains to conduct a piece of research that explores the experiences of six women teachers as they pursue their careers (in particular professional learning) whilst raising a family. The study continues to be for a doctoral thesis on the EdD programme at UCL Institute of Education and is not on behalf of the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education, although I am also a Lecturer at the Centre.

This letter of consent builds on the previous letter you signed prior to undertaking Interview 1 and outlines the rest of the work. The next part of the research process will involve your participation in a second one-hour audio-recorded interview during March 2016. During this second interview we can discuss topics that came up in the first interview, which I think may be interesting to talk about further, but they are by no means the only things we can explore in our next meeting. We can also talk about other things you mentioned in your portrait that we didn't get round to discussing in the first interview and anything else you think is important to cover and would like to discuss.

As with the first interview, the second interview recording will be transcribed by a transcriber, and again I will send the (password protected) transcript to you for you to confirm the contents.

In addition to this second interview and the reading of the subsequent transcript to confirm the contents, I will ask you to confirm a portrait I write of you which will introduce each research participant to the reader of the thesis. I anticipate the following remaining (approximate) amount of time being required of you during 2016: 1 hour of interviewing, 1 hour reading the transcript of Interview 2, 30 minutes reading the portrait I write of you. In addition you will be invited to read/comment on draft chapters of the thesis specifically related to you if you choose (likely to be in the autumn/winter of 2016).

Please consider the following

Participation

- Continued participation in this research is entirely voluntary and at any point you can change the direction of the conversation, stop talking or halt the interview.
- You have the right to withdraw from the research process at any time.
- Your thoughts regarding expectations of me will be sought and respected and before the interviews we will clarify any concerns you may have and agree a way forward with which you are comfortable.
- You are asked to collaborate in the research, but you can control the level of your commitment.
- A draft of chapters relating to you will be sent for you to comment on if you choose (this is optional).

Interviews and transcripts

- You have the right to have material removed from the interview transcripts.
- I will listen to the interview recordings and a transcriber will be used but no one else will hear the recordings
- My doctoral supervisor may read the anonymised transcripts.
- The interview sound files will be your property (if you would like a copy please let me know) and I will destroy all copies of the sound files once they are no longer necessary (I anticipate a year after I have successfully completed my doctorate).

- The transcripts of the interviews are a joint enterprise. I will destroy the transcripts once they are no longer required (I anticipate a year after successful completion of my doctorate)

Thesis

- I may use anonymised extracts from any email correspondence in the thesis (for example if we discuss the transcripts and our thoughts/interpretations). Please be aware that electronic correspondence cannot be guaranteed totally secure from hacking.
- I will use anonymised extracts/quotes from the transcripts of the two interviews in the thesis.
- I will include anonymised extracts from the transcripts of the two interviews in the appendices of the thesis.
- I will write a 'portrait' of each of the six women participants to introduce them to the reader. The portrait I write of you will be based on our two interviews.
- I may also want to use information from the portrait/profile you sent me that hasn't been discussed in the interviews to inform the portrait I write of you, but this would only be with your permission and we would discuss your feelings on this.
- You will be asked to validate the 'portrait' I write of you and confirm you are happy with its contents and that you are comfortable with the level of anonymity provided.
- I will make every effort to ensure that you are anonymous in the thesis and that your identity cannot be 'worked out'. However it is important to understand the nature of this piece of research; it is always possible that if someone who knows you were to read the thesis, they may still 'recognise' you given the research is looking at particular professional and life experiences which may be unique to you.

Publication

- The thesis will be publicly available and the research findings will be disseminated to colleagues involved in teacher professional development as well as other organisations who focus on equal opportunities for women.
- I will ask for your permission if the research is to be used for anything other than the thesis and its related dissemination/the usual sharing of academic findings, all of which are anonymised.
- You will be provided with a copy of the finished thesis after the successful completion of my doctorate.

Participant statement

I agree that

- I have read the transcript of Interview 1 and I confirm the contents and agree for it to be quoted from and used in the thesis.
- I have read the notes written above and understand what continuation with the study involves.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the research process immediately at anytime.
- I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this study.
- I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- I agree that the research project has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to continue with the research.

Please let me know of any amendments you would like to make to the above. Please strike through any points you would like amended.

If you are happy to agree to the above please sign and date below. Please retain a copy for your own records and return a copy to me.

Signature.....Printed Name.....

Date.....

A letter will be sent to you to confirm the contents of the second interview transcript.
You will also be asked to confirm the portrait I write of you.

Thank you again for agreeing to work with me.

Very best wishes

Emma

.....

Emma O'Brien

Consent letter 3

May/June 2016

Dear

Thank you for continuing to agree to work with me on my doctoral research thesis: (working title) 'Perspectives on the Pursuit of Professional Learning: Insights from Teachers who are Mothers'.

The aim of my work remains to conduct a piece of research that explores the experiences of six women teachers as they pursue their careers (in particular professional learning) whilst raising a family. The study continues to be for a doctoral thesis on the EdD programme at UCL Institute of Education.

This letter builds on the previous letters you have signed and outlines the remaining work on the thesis.

I enclose the transcript of our second interview. Please read this transcript and make sure you are happy with the contents. If there is anything you want deleted from the text please let me know. If there is anything you would like to add or clarify I am happy to add this to the transcript.

In the next few weeks I will email a draft portrait of you, which will introduce you to the readers of the thesis. When you receive this portrait please read it and confirm that you are happy for it to be included in my thesis. If there is anything you would like removed from the portrait or anything you would like changed or added please let me know.

In a few months, you will be invited to read/comment on draft chapters of the thesis specifically related to you if you choose (likely to be in the autumn/winter of 2016).

Please consider the following points related to the next stage of the research:
This third letter builds on the previous two you have signed.

- Continued participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
- You are asked to collaborate in the research, but you can control the level of your commitment.
- A draft of chapters relating to you will be sent for you to comment on if you choose. This means the other five participants may be reading these chapters too.
- You can have text removed from the transcript of interview 2 or added to it.
- The interview sound files will be your property and I will destroy these files once they are no longer required.
- The transcripts of the interviews are a joint enterprise. I will destroy the transcripts once they are no longer required.
- I may use anonymised extracts from any email correspondence in the thesis (for example if we discuss the transcripts and our thoughts/interpretations).
- I will use anonymised extracts/quotes from the transcripts of both interviews in the thesis and the thesis appendices.
- I will write a 'portrait' of each of the six women participants to introduce them to the reader. The portrait I write of you will be based on our two interviews.
- With your permission I will also use information from the profile you sent me (prior to interview 1) to inform the portrait I write of you.
- You will be asked to validate the 'portrait' I write of you and confirm you are happy with its contents and that you are comfortable with the level of anonymity provided.
- I will make every effort to ensure that you are anonymous in the thesis and that your identity cannot be 'worked out'. However it is important to understand the nature of this piece of research; it is always possible that if someone who knows you were to read the thesis, they may still 'recognise' you given the research is looking at particular professional and life experiences which may be unique to you.

- The thesis will be publicly available and the research findings will be disseminated to colleagues involved in teacher professional development as well as other organisations who focus on equal opportunities for women.
- I also plan to share findings with other women teachers in the hope of supporting their professional development.
- I will ask for your permission if the research is to be used for anything other than the thesis and its related dissemination/the usual sharing of academic findings, all of which are anonymised.
- You will be provided with a copy of the finished thesis after the successful completion of my doctorate.

Participant statement

I agree that

- I understand that this third letter adds to and builds upon the previous two consent letters.
- I have read the transcript of Interview 2 and I confirm the contents and agree for it to be quoted from and used in the thesis.
- I have read the notes written above and understand what continuing with the study involves.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study immediately at anytime.
- I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this study.
- I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- I agree that the study has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to continue with the research.

Please let me know of any amendments you would like to make to the above. Please strike through any points you would like amended.

Should you want to amend transcript 2, please email me with the details of any changes you would like to make to the transcript of interview 2.

If you are happy to agree to the above please sign and date below. Please retain a copy for your own records and return a copy to me.

Signature.....Printed Name.....

Date.....

Thank you again for agreeing to work with me.

Very best wishes

Emma

.....

Emma O'Brien

APPENDIX 12: SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES IN THE PORTRAITS

The following chart (figure 8) outlines the key features to note in the participants' portraits. Participants are categorised in the chart according to the age of their youngest child (highlighted). In order to preserve anonymity, the subjects are referred to as either Foundation or Core subjects (where applicable) according to the DfE (2014) Statutory guidance.

Children Under 3	Name	Samantha	Joanne
	Approx. age as of 31 Dec 2015	33	38
	Husband	Michael	David
	Children and their approx. ages as of 31 Dec 2015	**Lily 1-2 Years** Poppy 3-4 Years	**Harry 1-2 years** Jack 3-4 years
	Type of school	Grammar/Academy (11-18)	Academy (11-16)
	Position	Classroom teacher	Senior Assistant Head
	Principal subject	A Level subject	Core
	Part-time/full-time	Part-time 3 days per week	Full-time

Children 3-under 5 15 hours of funded early education or childcare. In the September after a fourth birthday, 4 year-olds are entitled to a place in a reception class.	Name	Sarah	Karen
	Approx. age as of 31 Dec 2015	40	39
	Husband	Robert	Richard
	Children and their approx. ages as of 31 Dec 2015	**Jacob 4-5 years** **Thomas 4-5 years**	**Oscar 3-4 years**
	Type of school	Academy (11-18)	Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided school (4-18)
	Position	Classroom teacher	Head of Department
	Principal subject	Foundation	Foundation
	Part-time/full-time	Part-time 4 days per week	Full-time

Children 5-10 School age	Name	Claire	Nicola
	Approx. age as of 31 Dec 2015	43	36
	Husband	James	Matthew
	Children and their approx. ages as of 31 Dec 2015	**Joseph 8-9 years** William 9-10 years	**Megan 6-7 years**
	Type of school	Grammar/Academy (11-18)	Academy (11-18)
	Position	Head of Department Job share	Assistant Principal – SENCo
	Principal subject	Foundation	Foundation
	Part-time/full-time	Part-time 2-3 days per week	Full-time

Fig. 8: Chart showing key features in the portraits

APPENDIX 13: TYPES OF SCHOOL

The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education research report into students' knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust (Foster *et al*., 2016: 254) describes different types of school in England as follows:

- Academies are publicly funded independent schools. They get money direct from the government, not the local council. Academies don't have to follow the National Curriculum. Sponsor-led academies are usually underperforming schools that are allocated to a sponsor (e.g. businesses, universities). A converter academy is often a high-performing school that has voluntarily converted to academy status.
- Faith schools can be different kinds of schools including voluntary aided schools and academies, but are associated with a particular religion. A voluntary-aided faith school receives funding from a religious organisation.
- Grammar schools are run by the council, a foundation body or trust – they select all or most of their pupils based on academic ability and there is often an entrance exam to get in.

APPENDIX 14: CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS

The following chart (figure 9) outlines the participants' childcare arrangements at the time of the interviews. According to the Department for Education (2013b: 1) 'all 4-year-olds have been entitled to a funded early education place since 1998 and in 2004 this was extended to all 3-year-olds'. From September 2017 the provision of 15 hours a week – across 38 weeks or 'fewer hours over more weeks' – of funded early education (or childcare) increased to a possible 30 hours, whilst there may be provision for some 2-year-olds (Gov.UK, 2017c). Meanwhile, '4-year-olds ... are [also] entitled to a place in a maintained school reception class from the September following their fourth birthday' (DfE, 2013b). Compulsory school age begins at the term after a child's fifth birthday.

Children Under 3	Name	Samantha	Joanne
	Children approx. ages as of 31 Dec 2015	**Lily 1-2 Years** Poppy 3-4 Years	**Harry 1-2 years** Jack 3-4 years
	Teaching schedule	Part-time 3 days per week	Full-time
	Husband's schedule	Michael works full-time	David is a stay-at-home father
	Childcare provision	Samantha returned to work when Poppy was 18 weeks old, giving Michael the following 5 weeks as extended paternity. It was then summer holiday. From September to Christmas, Poppy was one day with a friend, and 2 days with each set of grandparents. From January Poppy had 2 days with Michael's parents, two days at nursery, and 1 day with Samantha's parents. This was until the summer holiday when Samantha then went part time. At the time of our interview in 2016 Samantha was looking at schools for Poppy to attend in September. With Samantha working part-time, her daughters' childcare is varied with grandparents very involved.	Both Harry and Jack are at nursery. David undertakes the childcare outside of nursery. At the time of our interview in March 2016 Joanne was looking at schools for Jack to attend in September. This will make things more complicated with one child in school and one in nursery. David is thinking about returning to work but Joanne is concerned about who will have the children from 15:15 after school. They have no family near by.

Children 3-under 5 15 hours of funded early education or childcare. In the September after a fourth birthday, 4 year-olds are entitled to a place in a reception class.	Name	Sarah	Karen
	Children approx. ages as of 31 Dec 2015	**Jacob 4-5 years** **Thomas 4-5 years**	**Oscar 3-4 years**
	Teaching schedule	Part-time 4 days per week	Full-time
	Husband's schedule	Robert works part-time - 4 days per week finishing at 15:30.	Richard works full-time
	Childcare provision	Jacob and Thomas are at school. Robert undertakes the childcare outside of school.	Oscar stays with a child minder. Karen does most of the drop offs and the pickups. Richard does one drop off a week, her parents help when they are around and her mother-in-law does one evening a week. At the time of our interview in March 2016 Karen was looking at schools for Oscar to attend in September.

Children 5-10 School age	Name	Claire	Nicola
	Children approx. ages as of 31 Dec 2015	**Joseph 8-9 years** William 9-10 years	**Megan 6-7 years**
	Teaching schedule	Part-time 2 days one week, 3 days one week.	Full-time
	Husband's schedule	James works full-time	Matthew works full-time
	Childcare provision	Joseph and William are both at school. On the days Claire works they attend 3 hours of after school clubs. At the time of our interview in March 2016 Claire was looking at secondary schools for William to attend in September and wondering whether he'll attend the after school club. They have no family near by.	Megan is at school. She goes to a child minder three times a week and Matthew's mother works in her school for a little bit on a Tuesday and a Friday and then takes Megan home.

Fig. 9: Chart showing childcare arrangement

REFLECTIVE STATEMENT

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For my first doctoral assignment (Foundations of Professionalism in Education), I reflected on my professional identity working at the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education. I concluded that moving to working at the Centre 'necessitated a transition from perceiving my professional identity as that of '"teacher" to "teacher educator"'.

I progressed to examine the impact of continuing professional development (CPD) on teacher professional life. Having interviewed a male teacher for my Methods of Enquiry 2 (MoE2) assignment, for my Institution-Focused Study (IFS), I interviewed two female teachers about their experiences of CPD employing Dewey's 1938 *criteria of experience* (1997) to interpret the data. The course of these interviews highlighted the importance of exploring the experiences of women teachers who are mothers in a subsequent study, leading to my thesis.

Throughout my work I have incorporated a life history approach. With this in mind, this reflective statement nods towards a biographical structure. The following presents key points from my annual reviews from June 2012 – June 2017 (and reflection statement of November 2012) highlighting developments I noted at that time of my studies, overlaid with further observations and reflections.

June 2012

My review of June 2012 noted the development of my research skills and the growing knowledge I would need to underpin my studies. I numbered NVivo and Endnote training and a *Narrative Ethics* workshop amongst my activities.

By June 2012 I'd transcribed the first of two 90-minute recorded interviews. During the process I experienced the complexity of transcription; producing faithful verbatim transcripts, edited – and thus interpreted – for readability and comprehension.

I also experienced the emotional demands of life history work; asking someone to share their life with you. At this point I was learning the skills of interviewing, interpreting and analysing these conversations; skills that were to become important for future work, although of course I was not to know this at the time.

November 2012

In November 2012, I wrote in a reflective statement to support the submission of my portfolio of assignments,

> ... having considered the nature of being a professional within the Holocaust Education team, I concluded that it was important to understand teachers' perceptions of themselves as professionals and how they might relate to the CPD provided by the Centre ...
>
> ... As a history teacher the study of peoples' lives had always been of immense interest to me, their stories to be approached with the greatest respect ... Working in Holocaust education for the last five years has meant that I come across story after story of lives unlived. For me, people's stories have now become even more precious, to be respected and received gratefully, their worth acknowledged and yet as Goodson and Sikes argue 'some other methods and approaches to social research fail to acknowledge the essential humanity and personal significance of the people they purport to understand' (2008:4).

Passion for people's stories has continued throughout the doctoral process. I was yet to write my IFS or my thesis, but the importance of the individual in my work was already set and came to be a thread though my work.

My interest in exploring teachers' perceptions of their experiences of professional development combined with the belief that a life history approach could offer insight into why teachers experience CPD in the way they do, had led to the Methods of Enquiry 1 (MoE1) assignment. This assignment was to work towards developing a research proposal for my IFS, whilst the MoE2 assignment was to act as a pilot study for the IFS. The IFS was to eventually focus on how two teachers perceived their experiences of professional development, how their life experiences shaped these perceptions, and what this might mean for the work of the Centre for Holocaust Education.

Through the process of in-depth interviews for my MoE2, I learnt much about the nature of interviewing. I became aware of the importance of being cautious of seeming shared understandings, and sensitive to the distance between the interviewer and interviewee, even when the individuals might purport to have so much in common. I noted at the time,

> I see the challenge ahead to acknowledge this 'distance' and in some way attempt to bridge it, even if it is only to recognise the limitations, as well as the possibilities, of interviewing.

I wrote in the November 2012 statement that it was during the MoE1 course that I began to realise what it meant to work at doctoral level. In reality I was only beginning to glimpse the work required, as I discovered when embarking on the IFS. Whilst in the November statement I identified the need to think more about the theoretical perspective I would utilise in the IFS, it was not until I employed the work of Dewey that I began to explore what it meant to employ a theoretical lens.

June 2013

With the module *Rethinking Education: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Learning and Teaching* in July and autumn of 2012 and a course *Narrative Research in Educational Settings* in May 2013, the annual review of June 2013 charted further acquisition of knowledge.

By the time of this review I had completed the first interviews of a series of three with my research participants for my IFS, transcribed them, shared the transcripts and beginning coding with the participants, and received comments.

The 2013 review marked a period of skills development in addition to becoming familiar with the intensity of labour required to work collaboratively.

June 2014

I submitted my IFS in May 2014. At the time of writing my review statement I was awaiting the result. I wrote that I had 'developed a more secure understanding of how to read research and research literature' through working on my IFS, and a 'better understanding of the process of research from developing the research question to designing the research methodology'. This time was also a period of changing research direction. In the review I wrote,

> Born out of my IFS, an unexpected avenue has opened up for my work, related to the significance of gender. I have long had an interest in women's history, but nonetheless the research revealed to me an unexpected and interesting possibility for future study. For my thesis I hope to explore the specific CPD experiences of women teachers further.

June 2015

I spent much time searching for a suitable theoretical lens for my thesis and appropriate conceptual tool. Having submitted a thesis proposal, I made a substantial change to the theoretical framework, deciding against employing a phenomenological (combined with a feminist) approach as I had initially outlined. This meant rescheduling the thesis panel and reworking my proposal. My biographical context was a significant factor in this decision and my connection to Holocaust education came into sharp focus.

I had been interested in scholarship that brought phenomenology and feminism together, but it didn't sit naturally for me and I wondered whether trying to employ phenomenology could end up being a distraction from utilising a feminist lens. But it was the connection to Heidegger that was the critical issue. I had planned to use the work of Husserl, but it became increasingly apparent that it would mean engaging with Heidegger. This was something I did not want to do given his connection to Nazism.

By the time of the June 2015 review I had decided to move ahead with feminism as a theoretical lens and incorporate intersectionality; attending the course *Intersectionality: Theory and Methodology in Educational Research*.

Making this substantial change meant I was further into the academic year than initially envisaged, but I was confident I had made the right decision. The experience also made me realise how emotionally invested I was in the thesis. I wrote in that summer's review,

> The process has been an important learning experience as I have engaged in critically assessing my own work, analysing my feelings about research, wrestling with the complexity of various feminist theories and developing my thinking and writing to meet doctoral standards.

June 2016

By June 2016, data collection for my thesis was complete. When writing the review I was at the stage of checking transcripts (from the transcriber) against audio recordings and refining them, before sending them to participants for confirmation of content.

Meanwhile, I had been developing ideas for my theoretical framework. In addition to data collection I spent the spring term developing my knowledge of Bourdieu's work. By this point in time I had abandoned the use of intersectionality, believing this could be

explored within the life history method I planned to use, alongside my use of materialist feminist and Bourdieusian lenses.

As my confidence with the use of theoretical lenses grew, I noted in my summer review a development in my attitude towards problem solving, writing,

> Over the last few months I have developed my problem solving skills and responded to challenges by looking at situations in different ways ... Having moved away from phenomenology, when my reading on feminism could only take me so far in my theoretical approach, I sought out other possible routes and have now incorporated Bourdieu's theories into my work. The lesson I have most learnt this year is one of resilience.

June 2017

The 2017 review looked back on a timeline of achievements. The summer and autumn terms in 2016 were spent developing ideas for an in-depth coding system. Between June 2016 and March 2017, I spent time refining my coding, considering how to handle and present the data, and pondering the data in light of Bourdieu's work. Spring and summer of 2017 saw further development of my analysis and the writing process.

At the time of the review I had explored many ideas and ways of working. In the review I wrote,

> Over the last year I have rigorously explored many avenues, especially around my data analysis, approaches for my coding, the structuring of my thesis and the presentation of my research. Along the way I have reached a number of dead ends but this has ultimately strengthened my rationale for employing the approaches I have finally decided upon and I am able to offer robust explanations for the decisions I have made.

Having shared work from my IFS with the Centre's team in 2014, and led a workshop sharing my research with teachers at the #Women*Ed* annual conference in October 2016, by June 2017 my abstract to present at the annual BERA conference had been accepted. I wrote with anticipation that I would be presenting a paper on my research in September.

June 2018

Over the years, the doctoral process has shown there have been times when something has only become visible to me upon progression in my thinking. Initially this left me anxious about what it was I could not see. When I mentioned this concern to a colleague she remarked on how exciting this was; that I could look forward to always learning more. In the end, it is this learning to learn that I have gained.

With the thesis now written, I have learnt much about the research process: designing a research question; identifying appropriate research methods; grappling with ethical issues; collecting, handling, interrogating and analysing data; presenting data; employing a theoretical lens; and putting forward an argument founded on research. I have also learnt about endurance and resilience. I have learnt to devise solutions, reframe problems and persevere.

As the process comes to an end I find myself turning full-circle. The first assignment entailed reflection on my professional identity. Through the modules I explored teacher professionalism and experience of CPD. My work was very much practitioner research focused, but over time my biographical context has broken through. My passion for history and the stories of people has led me towards using life history approaches throughout my research. This has culminated in using Bourdieu's work with his emphasis on individuals being a 'product of history'. Ultimately, I have moved from practitioner research to a more theoretical positioning, and this has resulted in a further transition in my professional identity.