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Abstract

Balancing higher education, study, family life and a professional role is a complex task for many women students. Family support, work commitments and feelings of guilt can impact on how mothers carve out time and space for family life and their studies.

This paper draws on qualitative research with women doctoral students to examine their use of time and space. Following a narrative line of inquiry with methods of mind mapping and focused interviews, family capital was used as a theoretical lens to analyse the role the family plays in supporting access to time and space.

Findings reveal factors that may act as a barrier to a woman's success and highlight certain strategies that mothers use to find time and space to study. This paper highlights the important role of economic, social, cultural and emotional capital in the family and how access to capital influences study patterns, especially in terms of 'headspace'.

Key words: capital, students, gender, women, headspace

Introduction

Higher education and family life can both be viewed as greedy institutions of time (Edwards 1993; Hughes 2002), creating difficulties for women trying to carve out time and space. Yet despite a lack of time being one of the main reasons for disengaging and leaving study, experiences of time in higher education has received little attention (Bennett and Burke 2017). As Lingard and Thompson (2017) argue, time is shaped by social location, space and position and therefore should not be considered as a separate entity from space. Furthermore, as argued by Williams (1992), making time and space visible in research can draw attention to how labour (work, home and study) is organised and regulated (Moss 2004).

The challenges for mothers accessing higher education are well documented showing the complexities of organising higher education studies around caring for the needs of the family. Several studies in the 1990's described women constrained by gender and care commitments and illustrating the strain of their studies on family relationships (Edwards 1993; Merrill 1999; Parr 2000). Feelings of guilt were a recurring theme throughout these studies. More recent research (Lyonette et al. 2015; Moreau and Kerner 2012; Plageman and Sabina 2010) shows an unchanging picture of caring demands and unequal division of childcare and household tasks placing pressure on women students in comparison to their male counterparts. Role conflict in terms of higher education studies and caring responsibilities (Green Lister 2003) cause further barriers to learning for mothers. These pressures from the family cause issues with time management (Jamieson et al. 2009). However, as Swain and Hammond (2011) argue, despite feelings of guilt and time pressures, time away from the family can be a motivator to study and increase a mother's drive and commitment to her studies.

Concepts of time and space are influenced by context and relationships (Bennett and Burke 2017) which can make balancing work, domestic life and family life problematic (Marandet and Wainwright 2010; Wellington and Sikes 2006). As claimed by Massey (1994, 2) 'particular ways of thinking about space and place are tied up with, both directly and indirectly' to 'social constructions of gender relations'. Often a woman's amount and quality of time to study (Bennett and Burke 2017) is governed by balancing home and academic life, causing a great deal of stress (Brown and Watson 2010). Having a lack of time can also lead to feelings of guilt about falling short of their ideals of motherhood (Brooks 2015). Further strain and friction can be caused if time to study is regarded as a luxury rather than a necessity (Edwards 1993).

To an extent the experiences of mothers reflect research into mature students (over 21 years old) more generally, often described as 'non-traditional students' and part of a 'narrative of disadvantage' (Woodfield 2011). With lower completion rates and confidence levels compared to their younger counterparts (Howard and Davies 2013; Davies, Osbourne and Williams 2002), mature students have been a focus for both the widening participation and lifelong learning agendas. Yet the label 'mature students' is not nuanced enough to differentiate between the different experiences of an individual's background, gender, ethnicity and (dis)ability (Mallman and Lee 2016). For example, as Stevenson and Clegg (2013) found, mature students' concerns into the future were articulated in relation to complex and fractured pasts. We directly address this by exploring the experiences of women mature students for which the issues of time and space are particularly pertinent.

This paper focuses on doctoral student experiences. Associated with high attrition rates (Carter, Blumenstein and Cook 2013), professional doctorates are designed to enable students

to combine higher level study and professional life, showing links between theoretical knowledge and professional experience (Chitteng and Hendel 2012). As such doctoral students may benefit from relatively high socio economic and cultural status (Wellington and Sykes, 2006). However, the structure of the professional doctorate (including taught sessions, assessed assignments and part time study) enables women to study at home which are key factors in study success for mothers (Brown and Watson 2010). Mothers studying at doctoral level were therefore considered particularly relevant for exploring time and space.

Being a mother can have 'profound implications for doctoral-level studies', making women feel like they are leading dual lives (Brown and Watson 2010). Wellington and Sikes (2006) use the imagery of 'spinning plates' and 'juggle' to describe the challenges of the multiple roles women with families face. Fitting their studies around domestic responsibilities and family pressures presented role conflict with regards to how they spent their time. This suggests a need to examine the role of family pressures and the 'capital' used and gained by mothers who are studying.

Theoretical Lens

Drawing on the work of Bourdieu, this paper examines how social structures determine (and intertwine with) conditions of social action. He argues that the structural features of the social world are organised by fields, defined as: 'structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can be analysed independently of the characteristics of their occupants (which are partly determined by them)' (Bourdieu, 1993, 72). Akin to a game, just as cards with different values are used by players to compete, 'capital' can be accrued and used to influence position in society (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). A capital cannot exist and function except in relation to a field, which in this paper is the family. For it is from this field that the perceptions of the hierarchy of capital

originate (economic, social, cultural and emotional) and how the distribution of specific capital is decided. As Bourdieu (1998, 69) argues, family tends to operate as a field 'and its struggles to hold on to and transform these power relations'.

Although we view the family as a social field we argue that the family is also a source of capital, instrumental in supporting success for women students studying at higher education. The family can be viewed as a valuable foundation for the development of capital which facilitates trust, support and improved educational outcomes (Bourdieu 1991; Coleman 1988). This belief is reflected by Duckman and Cochrane's (2012, 583) who argue that some students are, 'better placed to deal with situations through the various forms of capital invested in them by their families'. Moreover this research maintains that children (rather than mothers who are students) are the benefactors of capital accrued within families.

Webber's (2017a, 2017b) framework of 'family capital' encompasses the systems in place that support mothers to achieve certain goals using resources from within the family. The term family capital (introduced by Gofen 2009) has been developed using Bourdieu's definitions of capital as a starting point to outline the types of support offered within families to aid educational success. Within this framework, Bourdieu's ([1986] 2011) definitions of economic and cultural capital are viewed as essential aspects of capital that can be sourced from within the family unit for the benefit of women students. Rather than accessing social networking or connections to accrue advantages (Bourdieu [1986] 2011), social capital is seen as achieving solidarity and bonding within the family to achieve a shared goal (Coleman 1988). The strength of the relationships within families is important as social capital can lead to the development of other forms of capital (Coleman 1994). The final aspect of capital, within this family capital framework, is emotional capital. Emotional capital, (as described by Nowotny 1981 in Reay 2004) is best described as the emotional resources exchanged within

families. These emotional resources can be drawn upon over time and act as a buffer during times of pressure (Feenay and Lemay 2012).

Bourdieu viewed time as essential for 'capital production' rather than seeing access to capital as generating time and space for study. Women are often seen as time poor (Edwards 1993) when trying to balance study and family commitments (Brown and Watson 2010). Therefore access to sufficient time and space is important for mothers in order for them to juggle their studies and family life. Previously, Webber has argued (2017a, 2017b) that access to time underpins the development of each form of capital within the family. For example, adequate time with the family facilitates social capital and emotional support; economic capital can buy in services (e.g. cleaning, childcare) to facilitate time for studies. Access to capital from within the family unit provides mothers with a range of strategies and support networks that enable advantages in higher education through the creation of time and space for study.

Despite the renewed interest in researching time and space, no studies to the authors' knowledge have focused on mothers through the lens of family capital. Rather than viewing capitals in isolation (Guan and Ploner 2018) or for the benefits of children rather than mothers (Gofen 2009), we view the family as supporting capital development for mothers which has been neglected in previous research.

Methodology

The data presented here originated from a study into the effects of higher education study on identity change, transformation and family relationships (Webber 2017a). The focus is to explore the reoccurring themes of time and space.

It was important that mothers' experiences were 'at the heart of the research' (Henn, Weinstein and Foard 2005, 32) as this topic is personal to mothers, covering aspects of lives

often hidden and private. Participants were encouraged to take an active role in the research process through the completion of a mind map (see Figure 1) and a participant-led interview (usually lasting an hour) focusing on four key questions:

- What was your identity or role(s) before the Professional Doctorate experience?

- What was your identity or role(s) during or after the Professional Doctorate experience?

- Changes and transformation: what has changed, why?

- How has this impacted on your different relationships?

Figure 1 – Example of a mind map

The use of a mind map gave participants freedom to express their feelings and experiences in an informal way and encouraged the development of reflective thought to make links between ideas within their own time framework. Participants were asked to take the lead by completing the mind map and using it as a basis for discussion. Although the researcher was reliant on what the participant chose to share (Boivin and CohenMiller 2018), it was important to be sensitive to the subject matter and give the women time and space to construct their own experiences (see Webber, 2017a, 2017b). The use of face to face and skype interviews meant that the research was not restricted to geographical boundaries, giving participants greater opportunities to participate in the research (Deakin and Wakefield 2013). Although Lo Iacano, Symonds and Brown (2016) suggest that skype interviews make it harder to establish a rapport with participants, in this study the nature of the topic and its level of importance to the women helped to develop effective skype interview relationships. The participants were self-selecting, invited to participate through an email invitation through the Professional Doctorate Network UK. Those participants were studying Doctorates in Education, , arguably more likely to benefit from a high economic and cultural status (see

Wellington and Sykes, 2006) compared to those studying other degrees. 10 participants were selected based on their gender, age (over 25), having a long-term partner over 2 years (either currently or during their studies) and having children under 18 years of age.

Table 1 – Table of participants

Although a small sample size, it was important to capture rich relatable rather than generalisable data (Waller 2006). Our intention was to explore their experiences in detail and give them sufficient space and time to explore, in depth, the themes they raised.

Ethical approval was sought and granted from the University of Plymouth. This was shared with and agreed by all participants and names were changed to protect confidentiality. The main consideration was to ensure that the mothers could take ownership and some control of the interview; the use of the mind map facilitated autonomy and eased the power relationship between the researcher and the participant (Stevenson and Clegg 2013).

Thematic analysis was carried out by two researchers independently to find patterns across the data of the women's lived in experiences, views and behaviour (Clarke and Braun 2017). After analysis, time and space were identified as recurring themes, reflecting other theorists who maintain that, 'time is irrevocably bound up with the spatial constitution of society (and vice versa)' (May and Thrift 2003, 2). The lens of family capital was utilised as a framework to make theoretical sense of the data.

Findings

Reflecting the work of McLeod (2017), time and space (or 'timespace' as discussed by May and Thrift 2003) were found to be central to this area of educational research and practice. Having opportunities to access and develop sources of family capital were instrumental for developing strategies to study and indeed find places to study (see Table 2). Conversely,

receiving limited family capital from family members often led to additional stress for mothers as they had to work harder to negotiate time and space to study around the needs of the family.

Table 2 – Strategies to support study

Economic

Economic capital, defined as capital immediately and directly convertible to money, is at the root of all other types of capital (Bourdieu ([1986], 2011). In this research economic capital was used to maximise space and time to study; specifically the space and size of the house, income from work and facilitating the 'freeing up' of time to study, such as cleaning. This is in keeping with other studies reporting that poor housing can shape the amount of space and time available for studies. For example, as Moss (2004, 298) described, 'poor heating, low income and the need to do paid work left women with less time to study'.

For most mothers in this research, economic capital supported good housing, further evidence of relatively high socio-economic and socio-cultural capital. Although Quinn (2003) has argued that women in the UK tend to separate spaces of study from those of home, these women did not appear to keep university and home life separate. Instead they often chose to use their economic capital to obtain a (separate) space within the house. For example, as Marnie reported, *'I actually built a room onto my house to study in'*. Utilising existing space within the home was sometimes possible too and linked to power relations within the family:

> *I've got an office ... I've claimed it as my own space now and it's great ... and I have much more freedom with my time now. (Emma)*

In other words one strategy utilised economic capital to provide a dedicated physical space to study. Notwithstanding the need to have economic capital to occupy a house, finding space to study at home (rather than at the institution) could enable women to spend more time with

their children, get on with domestic tasks and minimise travel (Brooks 2012). The women wanted to be close to their children expressing comments such as, '... because Mummy's always there', (Lou), seeing being present as '...an absolute priority … in order to be a mum to be here', (Emma), hence studying at home enabled them to do this. Creating a study place within the home reflects the work of Massey (1994) showing the gendered nature of the women's use of space through the construction of a designated study area close to the family, thus combining caring responsibilities and study commitments. In this way time and space are irrecoverably bound.

As Moss (2004, 299) argued, 'it is at the level of daily events where pathways to higher education are created and challenges to learning are confronted'. Housework such as cooking, cleaning and washing were often regarded as tasks to be negotiated with other family members in order to study. To help with this, economic capital could be utilised to pay for domestic services.

> *… there's practical things that we've done; we've hired a cleaner.* (Susan)

Economic capital was also accrued via employment income, itself a competitor for study time. In this research, Linda described the tension between working for an income and the time she spent on her studies:

> *… so sometimes you want to get on with the EdD [Doctorate in Education] but you can't … there's some things going on there between the income and the time I spend within my job role, and the amount of time I spend on the EdD... I work part-time so I'm protecting myself by these two days that I have for research.*

This reflects other research regarding higher education as 'time for self or selfish time' (Moss 2004, 294). Like Emma's need to 'claim' physical space in the home, Linda felt the need to

protect time, illustrating different strategies adopted by women. The negotiating strategies with members of the family required for utilising economic capital for higher education also signals the importance of social capital.

Social

Social capital is described by Bourdieu ([1986], 2011, 16) as 'made up of social obligations (connections)' or membership of a group. Coleman (1994) focuses on the strength of the relationships within families resulting in solidarity and a shared goal. We view social capital as either or both of these; access to social networking or working towards a shared goal within families. What is important is that others (within the family) can provide support to give the students a social advantage (Chua and Ng 2015). For most mothers in this research, the person most relied upon to free up time to study was their partner or husband. As Susan explained, '*I have a very supportive husband, they [family] got used to the fact that when mum is working you just leave her'.* In this example, time for studying was protected by leaving Susan alone. In others, it seemed a more active prioritising that entailed the partner doing 'all the childcare' for blocks of time including weekends:

> *There's definitely something about being older and having to prioritise your time...I have to go away for three days and he does all the childcare over that period of time, but he also at the weekends makes the time available so I can actually use the time to study. (Marnie)*

Parents also offered support, especially if they lived nearby. This often took the form of releasing space and time for them to study:

> *I am lucky because my parents live just up the road and they do a huge amount of childcare; but to go in every Thursday and talk with a group of adults and discuss*

interests and things, and to come home with your head buzzing was a treat ... and

really was a huge part of my sanity at that time. (Emily)

In contrast to other research when women disguised their enjoyment if it undermined the labour of work (Moss 2004), Emily was open about the pleasure she gained from studying. Appreciation of the time and space her parents provided may also have reinforced the social capital and its rewards. Moreau and Kerner (2012) made the important observation that these types of positive outcome of studying remain absent from institutional policies where returns are mainly described in terms of financial terms.

For Linda, despite her parents not necessarily understanding the qualification, at least they understood its importance. This is interesting given that not all social networks are supportive of women engaging in study whilst being a mother (Archer, Hutchings and Ross 2003). Indeed, in this extract Linda also put value on the time grandparents spent with their grandchildren, thereby legitimising and justifying this practice:

My mum and dad don't necessarily understand what a doctorate is in some ways, but

they know that it's important ... so in some ways it allows them increased access to

the children, if we weren't doing the doctorate they wouldn't do maybe as many

sleepovers ... (Linda)

The age of children had a direct impact on how social capital was required and utilised. Emma described how different strategies depended on the developmental stage of the children. This introduces the notion of 'biological time' impacting on the spaces they used and how they could spend their 'clock time' (Leaton Gray 2017):

... when I was doing my studies that I'd always do it when the kids were not here, at

nursery or when they'd gone to bed... or I would go to bed early and then get up and

work in the wee hours of the morning before the kids woke up ... [now son is older] we seem to click very well together, he likes his space, I like my space, we come together when we can, he does his thing and I do mine and it works quite well ... (Emma)

As reported in other research (Brooks 2012; Moss 2004) mothers were often involved in intense negotiations in order to release time and space for their studies. This demonstrates that time and space was tied in (whether directly or indirectly) to constructions of gender and gender roles (Massey 1994). For those with older children, this could involve the whole family:

and it's partly to do with the support mechanisms that are in place ... ... we will sit down round the table and we'll talk through issues and problems and decide as a family what we're going to do about them... (Carolyn)

For this process to work, time and space (around a table) were used to work through issues and make decisions. Indeed, being able to solve problems and reach a consensus is an important product (or outcome) of family capital (Belcher, Peckuonis and Deforge 2011). Furthermore, like Emily, Carolyn portrayed studying as positive and as something to be enjoyed.

That's [support] really strong with my husband, and he's a great believer ... that everyone has to have some space for something they enjoy, ... it's partly to do with the way our family works (Carolyn)

So unlike Brooks' study (2012) there were many examples of negotiating domestic and childcare responsibilities to help 'create' time. It also shows how, through repetition, these practices could generate cultural capital.

Cultural

Cultural capital is characterised by the 'cultural practices, artefacts, and knowledge held by the family' (Williams and Dawson, 2011, 92). Although Bourdieu ([1986] 2011) maintained that cultural capital is usually generated by a mother and her access to free time, we argue that the whole family can generate and transmit cultural capital. This is in conflict with Bourdieu (1991) and Duckworth and Cockrane (2012) who argue that children are the recipients of capital within families.

Within the family home having a culture of higher education was an important factor underpinning the development of time and space for study. Indeed, higher education related skills, abilities and mannerisms were a form of cultural capital that had become habitual and ingrained (Winkle-Wagner 2010):

> *My children see me as someone who's sat at the large table and one end is always filled with books, that's my desk ...the house is quite crowded with stacks of books everywhere ... (Linda)*

As this shows, objectified objects in the form of cultural goods such as study books served to represent practices and additions to the family space that became customary (Winkle-Wagner 2010). Context was inextricably linked with time as social location; space and position were responsible for shaping the women's deployment of her time (Bennett and Burke 2017). Marnie too explained how her studies supported and developed habitual educational routines and practices within the home for the whole family:

> *... I do my studying in a built-on conservatory ... the boys identified that this is the place you come and read, you come and do homework.*

Furthermore, when children's educational aspirations were affected positively by children observing their mother's studies in the home (Davies, Qiu and Davies 2014), this appeared to alleviate guilt and motivate mothers to find space to study within the family home (Webber 2017a). For example, Emily's daughter viewed completing a doctorate as a normal part of family life and asked, 'Can you do a PhD in ballet dancing?' Aisha was also pleased when her children tried to mirror her practices:

> *... when they [children] saw me studying for hours I felt they were in a way affected, they were keen to have their own desks and to follow some, so I felt in a way they were proud of me...*

Linda discussed how having a partner who understood and supported the practicalities and challenges of higher education made a difference to his acceptance of time and space being taken up by studying:

> *So in some ways because we're both studying at the same time [Linda and partner] ... I think it's good in the main because we both understand what you're going through, and I think some partners might not understand, or might not see the benefits of it.*

However, the mothers in this research also spoke of challenges when access to time and space in the home environment were not valued:

> *I have commissioned one of the rooms so what used to be a little living room is my office ... I've got dedicated space, although other people I feel don't particularly respect my dedicated space in the family, so as it's the first door from the front door people come in and everything gets shoved and dumped in the office ...* (Lou)

When mothers are juggling study life, family life and work life, carving out additional chunks of time can support study success (Leonard 2001). To overcome a shortfall in time or

available space, the use of a diary was one strategy employed. Frances offered an example of how she 'reordered and reconceptualised activities' (Moss 2004, 297) in order to make time to study:

> *I lock time into my diary ... I use time on tube journeys to read ...I have it out almost a hundred percent in my head all the time ... I have flow when I do it, it's the most head filling.*

However, this strategy could be compromised by context, social positioning (Bennett and Burke 2017) and gender role expectations (Massey 1994) which affected the accessibility of time and space. For Lou, negotiating free time and childcare for her studies could be compromised by conflicting priorities of her husband. Therefore, although the use of a diary was partially dependent on the extent of embodied capital it also relied on the availability and commitment of other members of the family. The negotiation process itself was often influenced by emotions and more specifically, emotional capital.

Emotional

Emotional capital is best described as the emotional resources exchanged within families (Reay 2004) that can act as a buffer during times of strain or pressure (Feenay and Lemay 2012). Despite being under researched (Aitchison and Mowbray 2013), the mothers in this study experienced a whole range of emotions when writing and engaging in doctoral level study. Reflecting other research (Brooks 2015; Webber, 2017a, 2017b), some experienced intense feelings of guilt over a lack of time for study or for the family. Susan illustrated how feeling torn between trying to find time to study within the family home and wanting to be with the children was a source of conflict for her and other participants in this study:

> *But I also find it's not just them [family] asking for time, it's me wanting to be on the other side of the door more often than on this side of the door, I mean the being on the family side… I think I'm struggling to find the right way to actually find that balance.*

Susan described how she shut her bedroom door to signal not to disturb her. Although in practice this often worked, it did not dissipate her conflicting emotions and feelings of anxiety and frustration concerning neglecting the family or wanting to spend time with them (Aitchison and Mowbray 2013).

In addition to physical space, Marnie and others talked about the 'headspace' needed to study. We view the term headspace as an internal reflective space to think over issues, whether academic or family related. Significantly for some mothers their children prioritised their headspace, making it difficult for them to focus on their studies. For others their studies occupied their thoughts to the extent that they did not always feel focused at home. Although to the authors' knowledge there is no literature on the concept of headspace, we can link this to Reay (2003) and Moreau and Kerner (2012) who described the conflict felt by students worrying about their children rather than their studies.

Our findings also showed that, like physical spaces, headspace was often in competition with demands of family and children:

> *It's the headspace, and even if I wasn't studying, I knew I should have been studying, or thinking about studying, or kicking myself I hadn't been studying. (Marnie)*

> *I have it (studies) out almost hundred percent in my head all the time. (Francis)*

Conversely, other mothers found that family and children took priority in their headspace which could result in guilt and anxiety. Children occupying the mother's headspace could be due to 'intensive mothering' practices that include 'prioritising children's needs and demands'

(Carter, Blumenstein and Cook 2013, 341). This internal tension for mothers is a consequence of the battle between the competing priorities of academia and domestic life. Helen and Linda explained the stress they felt as a result of this tension:

Because of the pressures ... it's not where I particularly want my head to be.... but of course he [son] takes up my time, he takes up my mental time ... I manage, but actually I think it's probably having an impact on my stress levels. (Helen)

I do have moments where I think should I be spending more time with the children ... it's the type of thing you're always carrying around inside you, that worry that you should be doing it and you're not ... I think the main impact is time really (Linda)

Linda's quote especially shows how she justified the time and space allocated to her family and studies and sought to draw on the emotional support from the family to do this. Doing so appeared to help make sense of her conflicting emotions (Feenay and Lemay 2012). However, for Emma and Emily, a lack of emotional support from their partner resulted in limited opportunities to carve out additional time and space resulting in relationship breakdown:

He wasn't supportive emotionally or physically ... at the Masters, at the weekends he would never suggest that he would take the boys out. (Emma)

The EdD and getting the interview and getting it, and starting it, was the final straw really, ... so we [Emily and husband] had this disagreement and then when I actually got onto the course ... he didn't say well done ... he said well it's good for you but no-one else, so his whole attitude changed. (Emily)

A lack of emotional support and negative attitudes towards higher education study effected how the mothers used their time in the home. As found in other research (Brooks 2012;

Edwards 1993), Lou tried to study when her children were not around to minimise disruption to family life:

> *I thought I would be able to contain my EdD in within the school day, and largely I can... but it does escape around the edges and there are times when there can be conflicts.*

Conversely, any positive emotional capital such as pride displayed by their partner or children could be used by women to strengthen their resolve to study:

> *I think he [son] feels very proud of me and to be honest I suppose that's part of the reason I'm doing it... (Frances)*

> *He's very proud of me [partner] … he thinks I'm clever, and he thinks I've got a real message to give to the world … (Marnie)*

Emotional capital, derived in this way, could boost academic confidence and act as a buffer when women experience guilt or doubt over making time and space for their doctorate studies (Aitchison and Mowbray 2013).

Discussion

This paper argues that time and space are interlinked and underpin the development of all forms of capital offered within families, enabling more choice and opportunity which in turn aids higher education success. The way that time and space are lived, experienced and (re)constructed links to gender (Massey 1994), power relations and socio-cultural differences. This has important implications for supporting mothers in higher education.

It is suggested that students struggle with higher education studies because of poor time management (Bennett and Burke 2017). However, this research supports Moss (2004) who argues that creating capital, and the time and space supporting this, are often in the control of a number of people. For example, many mothers spoke of the importance of negotiating time and space to study despite causing conflict and feelings of guilt (Brooks 2015). Accessing high levels of capital from within the family can also support mothers in their studies and make a difference to their success (Webber, 2017a, 2017b). Therefore developing strategies as a family is important.

A disciplined and organised approach is used to utilise time for studying, such as train journeys, using economic capital to buy in cleaning services or using time when children were asleep. Communication was key to utilising social capital and organising time either through family meetings or diarising time together with a partner or other family support networks. This contrasts with the findings of Brooks (2012) who noted an absence of familial negotiations in her research. However, it is important to note that even with these strategies in place some mothers still experienced feelings of guilt and role confusion, wanting to spend time with both their families and on their studies (Carter, Blumenstein and Cook 2013).

Having a dedicated space empowered mothers to study, rather than regarding space as gendered in a negative way (Massey 1994), and offered them choices and control. This signalled to the family the importance and value of the mother's studies. Interestingly we found that mothers preferred to find space in the home to study rather than seek it elsewhere, unlike Quinn (2003). However, this could be challenging when the family encroached on this space or women felt isolated from the family (e.g. shut off behind a door). Therefore, the use of a study space at home crucially entailed emotional capital both negative and positive.

The data presented here reaffirms the importance of emotional capital in the family field, reflecting research carried out by Aitchison and Mowbray (2013). Emotional capital was closely linked to the other forms of capital (economic, social and cultural) and served to positively and negatively influence their studying. Whilst positive emotional capital could help sustain the motivation to study and relieve guilt, negative emotional capital could lead to relationship and family breakdown as well as enhance feelings of guilt and threaten completion of the doctorate. Yet unlike Moss (2004), mothers in this study tended to openly describe the pleasure and enjoyment they get from learning rather than disguise it. Importantly this openness could have consequences for the family more generally. As the mother role modelled study skills, the aspirations of the children could be raised and the value of education and study reinforced (Lyonette et al. 2015; Reay 2003). In other words, through celebrating the benefits of higher education study to the children, mothers could feel justified and rewarded via the further development of cultural capital in the home. This could manifest itself in terms of the time and space available to study. Whilst it is possible that education students are likely to exhibit such enjoyment in learning, we cannot accurately determine to what extent this compares to students of other subjects without further research. Moreover, because every family is different, with constantly changing complex needs, a 'one size fits all' approach (Bennett and Burke 2017, 9) does not work. However, the strategies presented here can be adapted according to the children's ages, family dynamics and work patterns.

The family as a site of capital production

We recognise the family as a field and an important source of capital which aids educational opportunities. Where this paper is unique is that we recognise that rather than the

family being a source of capital for their children (Bourdieu 1991; Duckworth and Cockrane

2012), capital can be shared amongst adults. Thus, mothers can be consumers of family capital, not just producers. In this research, mothers were able to access capital produced within the family by their partner, parents and their children.

Through the development of this paper, we revised Webber's (2017a, 2017b) original model of family capital, which maintained that support offered through family capital facilitates the creation of time and a transformative space for identity change. Although space to transform, rethink ideas and change identity is important, we argue here that family capital impacts on the availability of the time and space (both physical and headspace) on offer (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Revised model of family capital for mature female HE students

'Headspace' for these mothers was a critical issue and one which revealed serious conflict. Although these mothers were education students and arguably more inclined to exhibit enjoyment of learning, the data show they still felt torn between studying and spending time with their family, which often occupied space in their thoughts. Capital from the family helped to introduce strategies to support their studies. For example: economic capital was used to free up additional time; social capital provided support, understanding and childcare; cultural capital legitimised time to study; and emotional capital developed resilience, lessened guilt and supported focused study time. Overall, these strategies contributed to alleviating any guilt around not spending time with the family (Brooks 2015; Carter, Blumenstein and Cook 2013) and gave women space to reflect, think and focus on their studies.

Although these sources of capital might be accrued from outside of the family, we argue that for mothers the family is the obvious and most likely source of these forms of capital due to location, availability and emotional relationships. Hence, families have the potential to provide a network of support through everyday interactions and close relationships.

Conclusion

Overall, this paper highlights the important role of the family in supporting capital development for mothers. As economic, social, cultural and emotional capital are located within the family, mothers are reliant on them to support their studies. However, the evidence shows how time and space play a pivotal role in this process, not only by providing access to existing capital, but by helping to create new capital. So, as found by Chua and Ng (2015), accruing one form of capital can influence the reproduction of another. This is important because high levels of capital from within the family can make a difference to study success.

Further research is needed into the emotional capital influenced by studying, particularly in terms of headspace. Although these students may have relatively high economic and cultural capital, they still felt guilty and conflicted about studying. Supporting this aspect of study would help mothers across all subjects manage time and space, minimise feelings of guilt and maximise their learning potential. Indeed, we would like to explore to what extent our framework applies to undergraduate mothers who may not have access to high economic or cultural capital or have strategies in place to cope with work life balance. Finally, it is also important to extend this research to those studying other subjects. Doing so would enable comparisons to be made in relation to the enjoyment of learning and the promotion of a learning culture within the family.

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