

The Politics of Mothering

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THE POLITICS OF MOTHERING

For My Family

As a mother of two young children at home, enjoying and seeing real value in what I and others are doing by caring for their families, yet feeling insulted and neglected by political, economic and social policy in Election Year 2015, I decided to write and distribute this Pamphlet (and I call it a Pamphlet in the spirit of political activism of using my voice - my right to write) to draw attention to something unacceptable which is happening to mothers who wish to care for their families in the United Kingdom today.

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Introduction and Housekeeping

Do forgive the pun, but how about a bit of housekeeping?

This Pamphlet seeks to say something which seems not to be permitted in the 21st Century. Hold on to your hats, folks: Some mothers do not wish to return to paid employment at the expense of caring for and supporting their families; and mothers who are at home are doing valuable work which, although not directly reducible to a £ sign, is the stuff of human lives. In short, they deserve respect and recognition for the work they do. Furthermore, those mothers, and there are many, who yearn to be at home rather than in employment, should also be supported to do so.

It is a call to action to those who see value in maternal, or at the very least parental, loving, responsive and responsible care of children over paid-for institutionalised care or non-parental care, whether in the form of nursery, wrap-around programmes or other setups. It seeks to encourage them to engage in political debate in this Election Year and to push their constituency Parliamentary candidates on the issues of care by a parent, by, for example, writing letters; printing and sending the introduction to this Pamphlet or any other literature which speaks to you; speaking directly to MPs and candidates in person; and engaging in demonstrations and online campaigns. You DO have a voice.

It does not purport to represent a 'Mother's Manifesto' for the very reason that there is huge variety in women and mothers' circumstances, priorities and hopes. It seeks to announce loud and clear that many mothers wish to stay at home with their children just as many wish, legitimately, to engage in work outside the home. So, something this Pamphlet is not: it is neither a criticism of mothers who work outside the home nor an attempt to engage in any type of 'Mommy War'ⁱ. Far from it. It simply seeks to level a playing field in airtime and expression of

opinion which has, for too long, relegated mothers at home (or those who would rather be at home than in paid employment) with their families onto the sidelines or, let's face it, into the Sin Bin.

It demands true democratic engagement of the many politicians and policymakers who seek to justify: (i) increasing separation (often compelled through financial hardship and penalty) of parents and children, and at earlier and earlier ages, despite the family's wishes; (ii) restrictions on available support to those who seek to prioritise family care often at considerable financial hardship; and (iii) a blinkered economic lens and ideological encouragement of all mothers to engage in paid employment without any consideration of the desire of many to remain home with their family and the benefits to individuals and society at large of those mothers doing so. It reminds them that they have a democratic duty to listen to what many mothers want and invites them to stop the ceaseless discrimination against mothers at home and to start valuing family care.

In the section '**Maternal Politics**', I discuss the impossible situation faced by many mothers today and how we are being forced into a defensive position. The political climate is such that no mainstream party is currently prepared to depart from the increasing promotion of, and investment in, 'Early Years' agendas and wrap-around care for school children, the availability of services and support for children cared for by a parent is dwindling, and the issue of the needs of children of all ages (including those pesky adolescents) for adequate time and attention within the family is entirely neglected. The idea that children have needs for family time and care is indeed becoming as taboo as the notion that a mother might, just might, want to stay home with her family. *This is something which has to change, and Election Year is surely the time for mainstream parties to listen.*

I raise the issue of the double bind in which mothers find themselves, in '**A Mother's Place is in the Wrong**': simply put, mothers who work hard at home are criticised and suffer financially, and mothers in employment but who wish to be raising their children at home instead experience a double shift and intolerable pressure not to 'have it all' but to 'do it all'. Yet, mainstream politicians seem to consider parental care to be a lifestyle choice: a privilege for the wealthy or a frolic for the 'feckless', and they refuse to countenance the prospect of adequately supporting families to provide care themselves.

In '**Election Year 2015 and a Hidden Consensus Politics**', I make the case that we live in an age of consensus politics in one area: prioritising and subsidising more paid-for childcare. No mainstream political party seeks to recognise or place value on the prospect of a parent at home, doing the work of child care and supporting the family. *This is manifestly undemocratic, yet it is happening without comment in public discourse.*

So, to the money: In '**Discrimination Against Caring Families in Tax Policy and Universal Credit**', I discuss the very clear policy discrimination which is inflicted against struggling, loving and caring families and raise the issue of why public money is being poured into subsidising paid-for childcare where studies suggest that it would be economically more cost-efficient for, say, the mother to be paid directly, should she decide parental care is right for her family. I address the significant and often devastating extra tax liability for a family where children are cared for by one parent and the other earns a very modest wage, compared with a dual earner family earning the same total family income - a family who will also cost money to the state in subsidised paid-for childcare. I discuss the Universal Credit system which will force low income families to forego loving parental care by one parent, including lone parent families. There is a manifest unfairness in the State treating a family as a unit where payments are made

(minimising State exposure), yet treating it as a household of mere individuals where tax is removed (maximising tax income). This policy of differential treatment depending on the State's interest demonstrates a contempt for families with children and an eagerness to, simply, exploit those families.

In '**A Shirked State Responsibility**', I discuss the double standard: A mother is liable to prosecution and civil sanction should she fail to care for her child; yet the State, politicians, and commentators feel at liberty to suggest that a mother at home, dutifully caring for her family, performs no valuable role, is not worthy of recognition and is a burden. Every child needs mothering - the question, always, is who is going to do it. At the risk of simplifying one key issue: having children is not a private, personal matter. If women stopped having babies we would pretty soon die out and no one would be there to wipe George Osborne's bottom in the nursing home. Reproduction and the care of necessarily dependent children are, quite simply, necessary for society. However, we are witnessing social and economic policy which does not live up to the State's responsibility to mothers; rather, it treats them as invisible and worthless.

Which leads me to '**A Mothers' Endowment**' and an exploration of the origin of Family Allowances - with specific attention to the rationale behind the efforts of the women's movement to achieve State payment, out of its responsibility to women raising a family, specifically to mothers themselves. I criticise the Coalition Government in performing a retrograde step (which will open the floodgates to greater cuts of mother's entitlement to support - unless action is taken) in curtailing Child Benefit payments; and criticise the unjustified discrimination in employing a 'family unit' taxation approach for the sole purpose of removing a mother's payment, but retains an 'individual' approach for the purposes of removing tax from the family purse.

In seeking to emphasise the wide variations in family set up, women's views, and mothers' wishes, I include **'Respect and Difference'** to remind policymakers that one size does not fit all. Yet, in a heavily biased form of equality, a mother is rendered free to do anything, except, increasingly, to mother her children full time and support her family at home.

This brings us nicely to **'Mothers Who Wish to Mother and, Yes, They Do Exist'**. Interestingly, the gender-neutral language used by Government, politicians and commentators, as well as Government policy papers, renders 'mother' obsolete. She does not exist. The word 'mother' is rarely used, except in discussing a mother's right – practically bordering on duty – to work outside the home, or in holding her accountable for some purported failure. This matters. It tells mothers:

'You are nothing unless you are engaged in paid employment. Your status as a mother is nothing. Your right to mother does not exist'.

These are tactics that have always been used to oppress groups of vulnerable people: first deny they exist; if that fails, demonise them.

And what greater example of denial/demonising can there be than media and political discourse which ignores the very existence of mother on the one hand, and seeks to inflate an alleged benefit of institutionalised childcare on the other, subtly cashing in on the all-pervading sense of, always, blaming the mother. In political debate today, there seems no room to claim that there are **'Benefits of Maternal Care'**. **'The Desire to Perform It [is] Taboo'**.

So where does this leave mothers? Somewhere between **'Disenfranchisement and Disempowerment'**. The valuable work we do is ignored and devalued and our voices are not heard or heeded, given the fact that we are effectively consigned to the cupboard, at home,

with no respected public presence or influence. When no political party speaks to us or for us, we are rendered effectively disenfranchised. When we feel unable to make our voices heard, we are disempowered. *The consensus political blockade risks, in 2015, rendering us without a true vote.*

And the reason our voices are not heard? **'The Mainstream Agenda'** has no place for anyone who dares claim that they wish to forego participation in the workforce, during an important time in the family life cycle, and who demands the right to support, recognition, value and equality of treatment in doing so. Full employment is where it is at in the truest liberal and capitalist tradition, with no place for any recognition of the value or need for parental care of children or rights of mothers to care for their families if they wish to do so.

This leads me to conclude with **'A Call to Action'**. Mothers who wish to mother: make your voices heard. Give your support to groups such a Mothers at Home Matter or Global Women's Strike, or create your own and work together. Engage in this year's political process.

Everyone else? Listen up. Mummy's got something to say.

Maternal Politics

They say that the personal is political. Well, so is the maternal.

Before the lies, how about we start with some statistics? A third of mothers in employment would prefer to stay at home and look after their children if they could afford itⁱⁱ. There are over 2 million mothers at home in the UK, women branded 'economically inactive' by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)ⁱⁱⁱ. The value of informal childcare is calculated by the ONS as £343 billion per year – 23% of Gross Domestic Product - although infuriatingly, the ONS fails to mention the word 'mother' once. ONCE^{iv}.

What about the 'Family Test'? The Government Guidance to its own Departments about how a 'wide range of government activity has a direct or indirect impact on families'. It warns that 'as a whole we do not always think systematically about how policy can support strong and stable family relationships or how we might inadvertently impact on families'^v. Too true. However, what is quite staggering is how this objective (to introduce an explicit family perspective to the policy development) *literally denies the existence of 'mother'*. It, like the ONS, denies the very word. She is nowhere to be found. The Policy nobly asserts that 'Families have a major impact on the life chances of individuals and strong family relationships are recognised as an important component of individual, community and national wellbeing'^{vi}. Yet, despite mentioning the role that 'fathers' play in raising their children and considerations of, say, 'grandparents' and 'siblings', among others, not once does The Family Test mention 'mothers' or 'maternal care', not even in the context of pregnancy and birth.

Now, these omissions were either by design, which should surely ring some major alarm bells for parents, those who support women's rights, and mothers themselves, or it was a

subconscious expression of mothers being simply taken for granted, missing from policy, missing from consideration and hung out to dry.

Bring to this climate those commentators who are vocal about the 'drudgery' and 'monotony' of motherhood. There are writers who bemoan their personal mothering experience or criticise a perceived universal dissatisfaction of mothers who do mothering work^{vii} - and they are given disproportionate weight in, say, popular media, whereas the experience of mothers, and they are legion, who are happy caring for their children and supporting their families is ignored. Those mothers who happily, busily and with dedication raise their children and support their families arguably have little time or energy to sit and write a book extolling the joys, value and satisfaction of doing so!^{viii} Studying classic 'Second Wave' feminist texts is an exercise in grappling with the 'mother problem': Women can take advantage of equality of opportunity; women are free to engage in paid labour; women are increasingly economically autonomous. But when that woman becomes a mother, all bets are off^{ix}. For policymakers, politicians and liberal feminists believing in the perceived universal dissatisfaction of mothers, reading '*The Feminine Mystique*' by Betty Friedan^x and '*The Second Sex*' by Simone de Beauvoir^{xi} would be enough to lead one to think that all mothers feel chained, oppressed and miserable raising their families. Without a higher level examination into mother work, the institution of motherhood versus the experience of mothering (such as Adrienne Rich's '*Of Woman Born*'^{xii} for a wonderful exploration of mothering where unconstrained by Patriarchy) and actually listening to mothers on the ground, policy makers are ignoring a large population of the voting public.

And the voice of children? What voice? Brave is the commentator who seeks to argue that loving, responsive care in the early years is important to a child's development, future emotional security, or future prospects as a whole^{xiii}. There appears to be a selective process undertaken at

the heart of Government and policymaking to ignore studies which point towards maternal, or parental, care, in favour of championing those which promote institutionalised care. Equally, those studies which suggest that as many as a third of working^{xiv} mothers would rather be at home with their family (running to millions of mothers) are downplayed or misinterpreted.

So, if we take a look at some of those statistics, think about women we know personally and about our own choices, it would surely be uncontroversial to say that there are millions of women in the UK who wish to be at home with their families rather than in employment. The average age of first time motherhood in the UK is now 30. A woman has had significant economic participation in the workforce before becoming a mother; she is likely to bear significantly fewer children than her predecessors (having benefited from greater contraceptive and economic freedom); she is likely to retire from the workforce at a significantly older age than women face today; and her life expectancy is long indeed. Given that her childbearing and childrearing experience will form but a very short chapter in her life, the political obsession with continuous workforce participation - work, work, work, - risks denying her potentially the one period in her life when she might actually enjoy a rich, important worthwhile occupation of being a mother at home.

Yes, it seems clear that economic factors – money, money, money – are compelling many mothers into employment despite the desire of many to raise and support their family. Let's face it, the cost of living in the 21st Century has gone up and up. Housing costs are crippling. However, there are also claims that fees charged by nurseries are increasing and there are claims that this is causing many mothers to 'drop out' of the workforce, finding themselves financially between a rock and a hard place. The increasing cost of formal childcare is a convenient scapegoat for the choices made by mothers to stay at home – it does avoid the need

to actually stop and consider: might there be something about the pull home which does actually appeal to many mothers? Finding that employment simply does not pay, why should they not stay at home with their family instead? The question is why the mainstream political parties deem her to be unworthy of assistance when she makes the decision to sacrifice an income to care for her children.

So, mothers in the United Kingdom today are in an impossible situation. Our very title has been erased from Government policy on families^{xv} and general political discussion in a pernicious Orwellian language trend. Women who are mothers are expected to engage in the workforce in a liberalist and capitalist tradition of individual interest where market forces reign supreme - there is no room for love and care, let alone awareness of interdependency common to all our lives^{xvi}. There seems to be no place for maternal care. No place for improved, supported services investing in family life. No room for home educating families. No public investment in community projects and services to provide enrichment and support for families. Close those Libraries and Children's Centres. Withdraw funding from voluntary groups. Childcare for the kids^{xvii} is where it's at folks, and employment is all that awaits you regardless of your desire to care for your children during the family chapter of your life or the interests of your children.

A Mother's Place is in the Wrong

On assessing the commentary in the media and the numerous political 'conversations' it could be argued that the climate is reaching the point where politicians and commentators effectively suggest that mothers are simply not up to the job of raising their children themselves - and that it is universal, institutionalised childcare which is crucial for the preparation of an individual's future^{xviii}. Blaming the mother is nothing new (Freud has much to answer for)^{xix} but there is something quite insidious about promoting institutionalised Early Years childcare and 'wraparound care' as more beneficial than loving care and a family environment.

The concerns of countless mothers who work outside the home about the double bind and double shift they experience is misinterpreted as more money to childcare providers rather than in her own pocket; or shared parental leave rather than adequate support, value and respect^{xx}, conveniently ignoring the wishes of many mothers. What is consistently neglected in political discussion is the lived experience of many mothers who do work outside of the home because of financial compulsion, despite her yearning to be at home full time with her family. She is under immense strain. She is doing it all. Something's got to give^{xxi}. The 'second shift' she often finds herself performing is not likely to be understood by the professional and political elite who are able to 'buy in', say, cleaning services and ironing services. The reality facing these mothers is consistently downplayed.

Consider, for fun, some commonly uttered truths in the Internet's 'Comments Bars of Shame'. 'Don't have children unless you can afford them': Well, the cost of living means, quite frankly, that many a family cannot afford to have children without help or, in many cases, being forced to be separated from their children despite the family's wishes. It is utterly disingenuous to suggest that having children is simply a personal venture of no wider societal benefit. If women

stopped having them we would soon die out. No one will be wiping anyone's bottom in the nursing home. No one will be paying taxes towards public services. It is selfish, simplistic and inhumane to suggest that having a child puts you out on a limb and on your own^{xxii}. Cue cries of 'why have children if you are going to work'. We cannot win.

Women who make the choice (to the surprise of many who promote the idea of full employment of women and a restricted view of equality) to stay at home with their children suffer for it financially in the short and long term^{xxiii}, but many continue to dedicate their time (mindful that a child's life is but a chapter in our long life-expectancy) because they see value in what they are doing and they believe it is right for their children. They do this in the face of sometimes intense criticism and hostility or frequently subtle disapproval and derision^{xxiv} and even accusations that they are somehow 'letting the side down'^{xxv}. To see the financial risks a woman takes, and to extrapolate from that a need for her to be forced into continuous workforce participation^{xxvi}, is to contribute to the devaluation of her chosen role. The refusal of the UK political class to consider the role worthy of financial recompense, the continuing view of 'he who earns, owns' places mothers at an immediate disadvantage, the absence of such schemes to enable mothers who have been out of the workforce during childrearing to engage in retraining, and the unavailability of significant career break entitlement all contribute to a woman's precarious financial situation. However, these issues and their impact on the vulnerability of mothers are not given priority. Instead, the focus is almost entirely on maternal employment as panacea.

Having children and seeking to care for that child yourself is deemed by the mainstream political parties to be a lifestyle choice^{xxvii} – either a privilege for the wealthy or a frolic for the 'feckless'. Such parents are deemed lazy, unambitious and unproductive, rather than performing a public

service, undertaken at considerable financial cost in the loss of income by women across the social, educational and economic spectrum. It is not seen as something essential to a child's wellbeing (every child needs mothering: the question is who is going to do it) or as raising productive, well-adjusted and caring people of the next generation. *Mothering is ignored by policy, deemed worthless and inconvenient^{xxviii}.*

Looking at the treatment of mothers, politically, it seems that sadly, family life - the good stuff and a calm, nurturing (and nurtured) loving home - has no place in 21st Century UK plc. And they wonder why anxiety, stress and depression are at perilously high levels in adults and children alike, and why surveys into wellbeing consistently place the UK as the dunce of the world class.

Election Year 2015 and a Hidden Consensus Politics

We are heading into a General Election where the Labour Party is clueless as to why women have been removing themselves from the democratic process (9 million missing women cries Harriet Harman) and fails abjectly to listen to any claim of mothers to raise their children at home^{xxix}. Given the history of the Labour Party within the Trade Union movement, it is unsurprising that it holds no regard for mothers who do not engage in the workforce, or, for that matter, pay their Union dues. What is disappointing, however, is that one might expect a party with significantly more women and with a greater sensitivity to women's issues, including updating of sexual offences laws, equality laws and discrimination laws to engage with all women – including those they currently denigrate as wasting their talents at home.

The Conservative Party believes that a married person's tax allowance (applicable whether or not children are involved) for those in the basic tax bracket will appease growing discontent that no value is placed on families (someone tell them, please, that children can be raised in loving unmarried families, single parent families, single-sex partnerships and others - this is not, and has never been, about the institution of marriage or the perceived supremacy of one type of family over another) and pursues a reorganisation of the welfare state which is systematically restricting the rights of a mother, whether or not in a partnership, to raise her family. Consider the fact that George Osborne has recently pledged to get even more women into employment. With this unwavering commitment to female employment, it should come as no surprise that the party has shown little sympathy for mothers who wish to remain home with their families, despite a presumed support for 'traditional family' set ups.

The Liberal Democrats give every impression that they believe that parents who do not place their children into institutionalised childcare are failing and disadvantaging their children (I kid

you not) and brand women who stay at home 'Edwardian' yet consider men who do the same progressive^{xxx}. Unsurprisingly for a party steeped in liberal values, where individualism and a restricted interpretation of equality dominates, the Liberal Democrats have been particularly vocal in promoting 'benefits' of childcare by institution and its disregard for mothers at home.

The Green Party's only proposal which could have come close to providing an equal economic playing field for mothers at home, by way of a form of universal basic income, has been dropped for this election, without a replacement scheme to apply to those engaged in unpaid caring work. The European Union has an agenda of increasing female employment which will undoubtedly lead to an expectation of full employment for women, whether or not a mother has children at home^{xxxi}. *The influence this EU policy has on domestic approach to family life, caring responsibilities and choice for national policy has gone totally underneath the radar.*

So, where does that leave a mother who wishes to stay at home and raise her family? Between a party who loathes them (Liberal Democrats), a party who patronises them (the Conservative Party) and a party who ignores them (Labour Party). Each of them is committed to increasing spending on formal childcare yet neglect mothers' rights to care for their children. Short of advocating the establishment of a mothers' party or a women's party to address directly family issues, what are we to do in the face of a consensus politics that mothers have no place providing care to their families?

Perhaps direct activism and engagement of political players is the first step.

We could challenge mainstream political parties as to whether it has occurred to them that women might (just might) be deserting the democratic process because their interests are not represented, are dismissed, are belittled, and are denigrated? That a woman is told, by men and women in a distinct occupational and political elite, that they may not wish to confine

themselves to such a regressive, boring, mind-numbing, wasteful and belittling task of raising a family full time. It is impressed on a mother that the only care that matters (and even then not much, compared with, say, highly valued and regarded professions) is that which is paid: childcare in nurseries or by childminders; care by the nursing profession; care by social services; care by nursing home staff - but care by a loving mother and all the unpaid work which goes to raising a family full time? Not on yer nelly.

Discrimination Against Mothers in Tax and Universal Credit

Newsflash - Very young children, from birth to school age, are extremely dependent and vulnerable people. It does not take child development 'experts' or talk of attachment theory^{xxxii} to understand this. Mummy really can be a young child's world (an idea society increasingly spits on). Children of school age are just as entitled and in need of loving care as younger children, and require extensive care during school holidays. Adolescent children too have very great needs. Wrap around care potentially necessitates non-loving family care for longer than an average adult's working day.

How about something uncontroversial: There is a significant cost inherent in raising children^{xxxiii}. The fact that this cost applies just as much to a family who requires paid childcare as those who have sacrificed an income to provide the care themselves is suppressed in debate about families and the care of children, yet it is significant. It renders many single income families significantly worse off than dual income families, yet successive Governments have chosen to prioritise the dual income family, raising it on a pedestal and deeming it greatly more deserving of State support. In short, many families are struggling financially – but single income families with children disproportionately so. Lone parents face an even greater burden.

The Government applies a household 'family unit' approach for the grant of benefits yet applies an individual system for the removal of tax from income. Just think about this double standard for a moment. When it suits the Government, to reduce its costs, it employs a 'family unit' approach: a global assessment of the resources of the family, the income of the family and the outgoings of the family. However, to apply a similar principle to income tax is avoided. Instead, an individual approach is employed, thereby rendering a parent who chooses to care for the children economically invisible and worthless (and a PAYE Code which serves nobody), and

maximises tax revenue at the expense of a significant number of families on very modest incomes indeed.

Consider a family of four, Jones, where a sole earner earns £20,000 while, say, the mother performs the childcare is liable to pay £3,445 in tax. So far so what. Right? Well, compare their significant financial burden with a dual income family of four, Smith, bringing in the same £20,000 but split between them in varying proportions, paying, say, total tax of only £490 and graced with the entitlement to financial help towards commercial childcare providers. Look at those figures. The Jones's are penalised by £2,955 in *extra* tax so that *the Family Jones is discriminated against all for the privilege of a mother wishing to remain at home to care for her children herself.*

It is a huge amount of money. It is the difference for countless families between living comfortably and living on the edge. Who is keeping up with these Jones's, exactly? The figure of an extra £2,955 tax liability applies right up to incomes of £30,000 (the majority of working families, potentially). It is a disgrace. I use that example because it tells you everything you need to know: the values behind an individual tax system which cares nothing for family life and which perpetuates the invisibility and worthless status ascribed to mothers and children^{xxxiv}.

When the State giveth: you are a unit.

When the State taketh away: you are on your own.

If any political party values fairness, perhaps this direct contradiction in how the State calculates entitlement versus penalty should be addressed. Surely it should work both ways. If you calculate your own duty to your citizens by assessing them as household units, you should perform the same calculation method to assess them for liability for tax.

The political jargon of 'hardworking families' and 'families who do the right thing' is, in this context, a singular insult. Tell Mrs Jones she does not work hard to support her family. Tell her on the doorstep while you canvas for votes. I dare you.

The much maligned yet full-steam-ahead Universal Credit is seeking to penalise families where one person works outside the home, albeit on low pay, and another cares for the family, again, disproportionately affecting mothers. The new welfare system would seek to penalise families for even daring to work part-time with teenagers at home: Work outside the home full time, Lead Carer, or you are in for a tough ride, never matter that it may well be hugely beneficial for individual families to have the option to have a parent at home, seeing to the children's needs^{xxxv}. Lone parents face an even greater burden under the new system – their right to care for their families is to be systematically curtailed.

This is a massive issue. There has been criticism of economic policies formulated ostensibly in the name of austerity, which disproportionately affect women and children. What is disheartening to see is the fact that nothing seems to be done about it, despite the engagement of multinational companies, banks and wealthy individuals in significant tax, ahem, exposure limitation and an increasing gap between rich and poor. It is a challenging time, and one which is becoming increasingly hostile to mothers and children.

So, Dear Government, when it comes to mothers and children, there really are no 'broad shoulders': you have no valid justification for penalising mothers at home. Your incentives to 'get more women into work' are blinkered. Increased subsidy of (ever increasing) paid childcare fees, even where that would objectively cost more public money than funding many more mothers to do the work of caring for their young children themselves^{xxxvi}, is ideologically driven social engineering.

What is stifling the democratic process, and renders democratic engagement of many mothers an exercise in Turkey's voting for Christmas, is the fact that all the mainstream parties are riding the same train.

A Shirked State Responsibility

Every child needs to be mothered, loved and cared for. An uncontroversial statement, yet, it is quite a challenge to write it - it is expressed with so little frequency by policy makers or politicians, even within discussions of children, families and childcare. There seems to be a squeamishness or fear about appearing anti-egalitarian, gender-specific or old-fashioned. The literature on mothering is alight with discussion about the work of mothering - and the fact that it might well be performed by a father^{xxxvii} - it is not a sexist issue. Yet, the importance of mothering is something which does not receive the attention which it deserves in public policy.

By way of hypothetical example, if a mother were to leave a child at home, alone, for significant periods of time every day, she would be prosecuted for child abandonment or child neglect. The State imposes a duty of care onto the parent. If a mother fails in that duty by leaving a child unsupervised or by not arranging suitable substitute care, she would be criminalised. Yet, despite these criminal and civil duties on parents, there is no accompanying responsibility of the State *to* a mother, no recognition of a mother's work and performance of her duty, no reward for the work she does, and no respect for work or status of mother.

Just stop for a moment and think about what that means: It means that the State recognises that a child *must* be cared for. It is prepared to sanction any mother or father who fails in that duty. Yet, we are living in a society in which a mother who performs that duty, performs it well, willingly and lovingly, is treated by the State as a burden, acting out of *personal* choice, and regarded by politicians of every colour as a waste of space - doing something no different from choosing to sit down on one's backside and doing nothing of note.

Picture too, if you will, the social situation many mothers now find themselves in. Libraries are closing. Cutting, say, the availability of something as simple as 'Bounce and Rhyme', 'Story Time'

and 'Messy Play' can be a real blow to families with young children at home, fuelling isolation. Children's Centres are closing. All of these are lifelines for carers and children, yet no doubt regarded as utterly petty by many professional people and politicians. Playgroups can be few and far between - often relying on volunteers (many of whom were, in their day, stay at home mothers, still, like their contemporary counterpart, treated as society's minions^{xxxviii}). For a Government to cut funding to services, groups and activities to support parents in raising their children at home only for policymakers and commentators then to say to parents, 'you are failing your children by not providing access to enrichment' is cruel and rich indeed.

The answer is not increased investment in institutionalised childcare and more hostile attempts to force mothers into workforce participation. Rather, it is proper consideration of the needs of a society which actually values young children and their parents; and investment in public services and the community. Not increasing separation of children from parental or maternal care against the wishes of the individual family.

A Mothers' Endowment

The women's movement of the late 19th Century and early 20th Century sought participation in the democratic movement - the campaign for universal suffrage - not simply as an end in itself (recognition of women's status of full human being with full human rights) but as a means^{xxxix}. A means to get rights and issues which related to many women's hearts heard, including: reproductive rights, freedom from sexual assault and rape, even within marriage, safe conditions at work, equal pay for equal work (the concept of equal pay was not invented in the 1970s), and support for mothers at home with campaigns for a mothers' endowment, pushed by key figures such as Eleanor Rathbone^{xi}, leading to the victory of the establishment of Family Allowances in 1946.

The oft-forgotten fact is that women had pressed for family allowance to be paid to mothers to enable them to have some State recognition of their work and a payment to ease her vulnerability, irrespective of the family income^{xli}. This knowledge has been lost in gender-neutral language of recent times and in the fashion for the word 'parenting'. People have forgotten that women fought for the payment to be made to women, not to the man of the house.

And so it was, Dear Reader, that in removing the universality of Child Benefit, George Osborne was able to take a first step in annihilating mothers' rights, unnoticed. He did not stand up in Parliament and say 'We are going to remove the only payment in a mother's own right' or 'We are going to render a mother at home with the children at the mercy of the charity of her partner'. Had he done so, I would imagine at least one or two ears would have pricked up, smarting at the blatantly sexist and discriminatory nature of the announcement.

The result: in the 21st Century, there are, yet again, women who have not a penny coming into her home in her name as a safety net. Her crime: her decision to raise her children and support

her family at home. Her punishment: being rendered dependent and invisible. It is unacceptable, and the fact that no mainstream party sees fit to right this wrong is another blow to a mother at home's feeling of low worth, status and security. The fact that many people, women included, have supported the cut demonstrates just how deep the hostility towards mothers runs, and how shallow the respect for her work is. There must be a reevaluation of priorities here. The policies of mainstream political parties practically render a mother at home a non-citizen – branded economically inactive and treated as worthless.

She is rendered at the mercy of the goodwill of her partner. A financially abusive partner does not cease to be so on becoming a higher rate taxpayer. A man who reduces his partner to beg for money for personal necessities is not rendered generous by virtue of a higher rate PAYE code. A woman is rendered vulnerable, whatever the financial status of her partner – and all for her decision to sacrifice an income to care for her children herself.

Women are back where we started over one hundred years ago - still seeking recognition for the work mothers perform and seeking state acceptance or responsibility to the mother for it. Marilyn Waring and others have had something very clear to say about the devaluing across the world of mothers despite the fundamentally important and consuming work they perform for the good of their families and society – of having no financial recompense for that valuable work^{xlii}. It is shocking and interesting reading. Any self-respecting feminist politician would do worse than to read Waring's *'Counting for Nothing: What Men Value and What Women are Worth'* and to review their attitudes towards mothers at home. In this nation, there are women, by virtue of their choice to mother, who are cut loose, and on their own, at the mercy of their partner. For not one politician to have raised this as unconscionable demonstrates the poor regard in which mothers at home are held. By removing a hard-won payment from the hands of

a mother, the Government performed the most sexist and retrograde economic step of recent times.

If any politician cares about women's issues, they should stop to think about what this means. As discussed earlier, the State employs double standards in granting payments versus deducting tax. A woman is subsumed into the tax identity of her partner for the sole purpose of removing her only allowance, yet the State continues to treat the family as comprised of individuals for the purpose of removing money from its pocket by way of tax.

Respect and Difference

It is something to be celebrated that the UK boasts a decent society which enables women, by and large, to be educated and to compete on (broadly) the same terms as men. Women, whether or not they are also mothers, are and should be entitled to pursue their occupation of choice and seek fulfilment, as a human being, where that lies for them. However, to treat women as a homogeneous group is unacceptable.

Not all women are the same; not all mothers are the same. It is a respect for individual difference and understanding of the variety of human existence which should lie at the heart of democracy and be fully taken on board by political parties, not least the Government of the day^{xliii}.

Arguably, women are free to do anything, protected under equality legislation, sex discrimination legislation and benefiting from universal access to education. Women in positions of political influence, and certain high profile women married to men with political influence are fully on board with that - they have benefited from it and buy into wholesale. Yet, despite these freedoms, it is becoming clear that there is something a woman is not freely entitled to do. Something she might actually want to do: to mother her children and support her family at home.

Mothers Who Wish to Mother and, Yes, They Do Exist

As discussed already, the original women's movement was not just about economic freedom to work and own property, to vote and to participate in the political process. It sought the right of economic independence. It also sought the right for recognition, politically and financially, for the work mothers do when they care for their children and families. That this right is still not won in the 21st Century is beyond saddening^{xliv}.

Maternal feminism and other variations are not new ideas, yet somehow, somewhere, party lines and a restricted, liberal, feminist theory dictated that gender equality (often read: you are to be treated as a man, not as a mother) is more worthy than consideration and acceptance of potential differences amongst and between individuals.

In doing so, mothers got lost. Understanding of women's rights is increasingly restricted, even amongst politically minded women, as starting with De Beauvoir and ending with Friedan. Nothing but the message of disaffected mothers and the drive for fulfilment outside the home is tolerated, out of fear of destabilising gains women have made in the workplace. Academic discussion of biological essentialism, gender neutrality, liberalism and equality had silenced the rights of mothers to claim and defend, simply, their right to care for their children. I, and I am not alone, truly understand the fear that many women may well hold: dare to explore our rights as mothers, and it is back to kitchen sink for everyone with a vagina.

We get it.

But it has gone too far: consider again the fact that it is possible in the 21st Century to read political statements and Government Policy specifically about 'families' where the words family,

father, parent, grandparents and sibling can be bandied about without once mentioning the words 'mother' or 'maternal care'. The language used really does speak volumes.

It tells mothers: you are nothing unless you are engaged in paid employment. Your status as mother is nothing. Your rights as mother do not exist.

These are tactics that always been used to oppress groups of vulnerable people^{xiv}. Deny they exist and hey presto. If that fails, demonise them.

Benefits of Maternal Care and Desire to Perform Maternal Care as Taboo

This is where it all gets doublespeak. I am expected to say: 'parents'. I am expected to downplay the value of mothers. I am expected even to deny that a mother's care may well be superior to care from a stranger (yes, that is where it is heading - and the idea is not new, ask Plato^{xlvij}). You may well have been reading this Pamphlet thinking that it has been many years since you have read the word 'mother' so many times in one publication.

The reality we are facing is that we may only speak of childcare being productive and valuable if it is performed by strangers, for a fee, and under the guise of 'Early Years Education'. There is no room for recognition of the productive and valuable work performed by loving mothers up and down the country and throughout time.

An example, and it is long overdue - and I do not fall into the trap of defining 'good' mother versus 'bad mother' here^{xlvii} - is necessary to describe a snippet of a hands-on mother's daily role^{xlviii}. This is not a sentimental exercise. Take a mother who sacrifices an income to care for her young family, despite financial penalty and severe hardship to do so.

She performs a quite amazing feat of sustaining life inside her body. She births her baby. She nurtures her baby. She may or may not breastfeed her baby and continue to do so in responsive maternal care. She is caring and loving. She is instilling values. She is teaching life skills. She is teaching her child how to speak, how to recognise numbers, shapes, colours, car makes and models in the street, to name a few. She provides nutritious meals, three times a day. She dresses her children. She does the school run. She does voluntary work supporting new mums to breastfeed. She changes nappies. She wipes bottoms and noses. She attends to her children's needs. She kisses and cuddles her children. She teaches manners. She takes her children to all manner of playgroups, parks and activities. She resolves conflict. Performs simple first aid where

necessary - let's kiss that better. She takes them with her while she does necessary tasks for the running of the house and home - shopping, bank, post office.

She teaches a child how to interact in the world. She reads to her children. She provides loving guidance. She sees to their emotional needs. She bathes her children. She puts her children to bed. And is woken numerous times a night. Did I say she loves her children? And that's just one day. And that is not the end of it. And that's just babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers. I could go on, to discuss the needs of older children - emotional security, guidance, help with learning. In short, everything that matters.

The work this mother (and, I will spell out again that a primary caregiver might well be a father, but come on, I am primarily talking about mothers' desire, taboo, to mother their children) is valuable and rewarding, and continues to be throughout her children's lives.

Like any occupation, there are times when we loathe the boss, or the monotony. Maternal ambivalence can strike any mother^{xlix}. There are women who confront a massive culture shock on becoming a mother: used to the illusion of equality and economic independence, they realise, actually, there is no male equivalent of pregnancy, birth and nursing. The ties to our children are stronger than we thought they could be. There is a massive shock to their sense of self, self-worth, place in society, value, ambition and hopes. Suddenly, here it is. Baby. Family. Either the baby gets chucked out with the feminist bathwater or mother fears waking up in the dark ages of inequality.

I do not, for one moment, claim that the nuclear family, isolated motherhood within Patriarchy is necessarily a wonderful thing. This Pamphlet is not the place to enter in a wider discussion about the academic nuances of feminist mothering, although it is fascinating. Just take a read through any number of the books in the bibliography. Nor is it my purpose here to explore

mothering free from the constraints of capitalist individualism, a world where non-commercial interests and varying strengths of individuals are celebrated - including a recognition of the power of a woman to grow a baby, birth a baby, and nurture a child - and a social set up where mothers are duly supported by what we yearn for: a village.

I recognise and understand many very decent feminist arguments about the need to rethink motherhood, the institution, where a mother is isolated on her own doing the 'private stuff of home' (although I have already set out some of many reasons why mothering and supporting family is anything but a private matter) and a breadwinner does the 'public' stuff' - this is something which needs to be explored, and it is telling that the wealth of academic work on the issue of mothering and feminism is not more widely known. In family relationships, many mothers, I am sure would be particularly open to the idea of fathers taking a more hands-on approach to parenting, for a feeling of shared responsibility for the raising of families - even outside of the nuclear family - evoking the fact that we are a social species.

It is also relevant for policymakers to consider why women and children suffer significantly, financially, on the breakdown of relationships. If their needs were truly respected, there would be a host of policies which would see to solving that issue. Income splitting - rights during marriage not just on divorce to shared income; stipends for mothers at home, to reflect the work she performs in providing care - creating a safety net she is otherwise entirely without.

However, for the purpose of this Pamphlet, in this election year, the debates which commonly take place, the academic discussion and ideas about how a society might be more equitably arranged and current proposals from politicians about how to 'achieve equality' are predicated on a simple fact: denial of any specific needs of a specific group.

If, as is happening, mothers as an entity with various wants, needs and desires, are denied; mothers as participants in paid labour is the only mother recognised and valued; and individualist, liberal, capitalist priorities continue to oppress a mother who wishes to care for her family, there will be no freedom to mother. No freedom to perform the care of our families.

Want to find a happy mother? She will be the one who feels mistress of her destiny, has autonomy in how she spends her time, is supported, is socially accepted, financially secure, is loved, respected and valued. This could be any mother: in paid employment or at home with her children. And happy children? Just too controversial to contend with. We are forever told that the plural of anecdote is not data. However, we are wilfully ignoring the stories and pride of mothers who chose a path of family life, for a relatively short time in her productive life (women are no longer in bondage to large families with no reproductive rights). If we dismiss the accounts of women who are living their lives, quietly but nevertheless happily, and continue only to heed those women who are already on a platform to speak, and who have got there by explicitly and necessarily choosing not to raise their children at home, out of dissatisfaction with mothering, career ambition, or whatever (as is her right) we distort the picture and fail millions of mothers.

Many mothers do not deny that Dad or, at a push, Grandma, can provide the loving care which a young child needs, but many feel that their bond with their children is so great that they wish to provide the care themselves. Put in the language maybe one or two politicians just might understand: mothers often love their children, you know, and those little tykes have a terrible habit of wanting mummy.

Where there *is* poor care being provided to children at home, and it is clear that there are, and always have been, examples of care that is lacking, the answer should not necessarily be taken

as 'more early years education' and greater removal of children from family care - just as the incidence of poor nursery care (and there are numerous) would not be accepted as rationale for closing the gates.

Equally, the right of a child to loving maternal care should not be something denied to him by virtue of an argument about poverty. Driving an isolated, struggling mother into low paid, full time work *if against her wishes* - bringing immense pressure to that mother - could only ever be interpreted as a bonus by the either the out of touch or naive. A mother in dire circumstances is worthy of proper support. Care. The freedom to mother her children, without risking impoverishment. She should be provided with adequate economic support. There is no excuse for poverty in our country. A woman performing a duty of raising her family should not be penalised financially, risking poverty, for doing so. If the wish for a particular woman is employment, aren't we fortunate that we live in a society where she will be able to work without stigma. But it has to work both ways.

To avoid the risk of sounding exclusionary, mothers are forced to concede that fathers can do just as good a job, and that Grandma (who, incidentally has great practice in raising families given that she had enjoyed the freedom to raise her own) is a perfectly adequate provider of care to one's child. To avoid appearing in anyway unsisterly, a mother must accept that their child could be perfectly well cared for in a nursery environment. *Woe betide* the mother who dares to demand the right to care for her child herself.

We must keep quiet in the face of the increasingly vocal advocates for non-maternal care. In keeping quiet and carrying on, the debate is being skewed. The voices with the biggest bank balance are being heard; those with vested interests in perpetuating institutionalised care at earlier and earlier ages have cosy access to the political ear; those who wish to be at home and

in the community caring for their children instead of in employment are ignored at best and derided at worst; the many, many women at home who do an amazing and worthwhile job are confined to a footnote as an anachronism - if that.

This is hardly democratic, is it?

Disenfranchisement and Disempowerment

Mothers who seek to provide care themselves have no options in the current democratic process save activism on their own steam. No mainstream political party pursues policies which even come close to supporting parents at home.

The consensus is childcare, childcare, childcare.

So many women feel that they are obliged to accept the state of affairs which is developing - there really is a cost of living issue; a cost of working issue; a debate to be had about a living wage; and a fair discussion to be had about the welfare state (and I use that term advisedly - rather than the in vogue 'benefits system').

Before anyone raises the issue of taxpaying work - let us not forget that many mothers are compelled to engage in low paid work which barely comes within the tax bracket. It is disingenuous to suggest that a mother at home necessarily means a loss of tax income to the State. On the contrary, a huge sum of money is presented to her family to pay for substitute childcare where it may well be more cost effective to the State to fund a parent directly¹. The money is there. It is the will to help mothers directly which is absent.

Many people argue that mothers 'have always worked'. And Amen to that. Of course we have. We still do. You know that children did, too, don't you? What they neglect to do is think beyond Industrialisation - not too far back in our evolutionary history. At no time in human history, before the creeping commercialisation and urbanisation of our world, has a mother had to leave her family for significant periods of time, in the care of non-familial relations, in order to work. Production was the work performed within the family, the village, whether it be collecting

water, growing crops, making clothes, nursing the sick, educating the young ... you get the picture.

But the combination of compelled work outside the home and care of a mother's children by strangers in the numbers we see today? It is a new thing. Many mothers feel justifiably unhappy leaving their children in the care of others and experience real pain in separation from the children (a sentiment echoed often by the children). The work we do at home in caring for young children and older children in the school holidays, in the community and in voluntary organisations, is utterly disregarded. We are not valued. We do not count.

I do not for a moment, lest there be any misunderstanding, advocate all women become mothers or advocate that all mothers should stay at home - heaven forefend. I and other women are beyond grateful for the opportunities carved out for us by previous generations. Many of us have taken, and are taking, advantage of real strides in rights in education and professional opportunities. Many women are choosing to raise and support their family full time, sacrificing a wage or career. Many wish they could make that choice. Many choose not to have children at all, and nothing should stand in their way. Many women also feel that part-time employment is the right option for them. There is a common thread here – not all women want the same thing. One size does not fit all.

Again, there are of course wider, finer, academic discussions to be had about how a person can exercise 'true choice' within cultural constraints and ingrained Patriarchal values. However, for the purposes of this Pamphlet, there is a valid point to be made that the gender equality agenda is on male terms: behave like men in the male public sphere which we have for generations created and controlled or be confined to the private, individual sphere where you are cut loose and hung out to dry.

The freedom to mother in the 21st Century is a freedom yet to be won. The idea that mothering work is a valuable work is yet to catch on - and it is one which has been ignored for too long. Global Women's Strike is gaining attention in the age of social media; however, in the UK, save for voluntary groups, such as Mothers At Home Matter, there is a shortage of organised voices of mothers who wish to prioritise the family life cycle. Our very preoccupation with doing the hard and time-consuming job of mothering makes us very easily dismissed. Women - mothers - parents: we are divided and risk being conquered.

The Mainstream Agenda

So, what is going on? To put it mildly, the entire terms of reference, the agenda and terms of modern politics and economics, are being set by elite educated white men and professional liberal feminist women so that families who make, or who yearn to make, the decision that a parent (and it is usually the mother - let us not kid ourselves) stay at home to raise and support the family are entirely neglected by accident or design, depending on the policymaker's whim. In the current climate women do not feel able to say something so unfashionable and so 'retrograde' as: I wish to devote time to raising my family; or something so radical and fundamentally important as I demand the right to support, recognition, value and equality of treatment in doing so.

There. I have said it. And now, breathe.

Is it really so controversial to say this? Is it really so outrageous, in 2015, for a woman to dare to: 1) speak in gender specific terms; to 2) point to the fact that a specific branch of feminism has dominated debate so successfully since the 1960s that women are forgetting their own heritage of the inclusive and collaborative nature of the original women's movement, and that feminism has many shades; 3) to recognise that there are many women who wish to relinquish paid employment - or at the very least reduce their hours - during the time of their lives in which they have family responsibilities; 4) to proclaim that there is human, intrinsic value in mothering work and in the raising and nurturing of a family and home life; and hold on to your hats, 5) that, consequently, mothering and family work should be supported and rewarded rather than penalised and discouraged.

There needs to be a thorough and democratic examination of the rationale behind increased discrimination against one type of family (single income, parental care of family) over another (dual income, paid childcare) and a humane and truly family friendly social and economic policy.

A debate is urgently required. Reform is absolutely necessary.

When you take a look at the history of the women's movement, and some quarters of academic discussion today it is clear that there is nothing new in these demands. There is nothing outrageous about such claims. There is nothing unrealistic about seeking adequate recognition and support for all citizens involved in productive and valuable work - whether currently deemed worthy of pay or not.

As things currently stand, our country is freeloading on the unpaid, undervalued and ignored work of mothers - work we increasingly risk being denied the right and freedom to do.

A Call to Action

To attempt to figure out how we are in the situation we are in and how we are heading towards worse, a society where our daughters will have the right to bear children but not care for them, I believe we need to focus on a few 'W's.

Who are the main players? What is at stake? Where is the power being held and the decisions being made? Why is it that mothers as primary carers are not valued and risk being eradicated and undermined? What shall we do about it? When is the political class going to listen?

This is the debate which needs to take place. Mothers who wish to mother: make your voices heard. And the rest of you: listen up.

If it is true that there have been waves of feminism, then mothers' rights are the flotsam on the ocean surface left behind by the Second Wave. It is time that a lifeboat was sent out to bring them back to shore: Mothers, fathers, wider relatives, politicians, and commentators who might see value in a mother, or a parent at the very least, caring for and supporting their family full-time if that is their desire, *get on board*.

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ⁱⁱ Department for Education Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 20014.

ⁱⁱⁱ Office for National Statistics report on Overview of UK Labour Market, March 2015.

^{iv} Office for National Statistics, Household Satellite Accounts, Valuing Informal Childcare in the UK, 2010.

^v 'The Family Test', Guidance for Government Departments, October 2014, Department for Work and Pensions, p3.

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} To name a few: Cusk, Rachel. *A Life's Work. On Becoming a Mother*. London: Faber and Faber, 2001; Valenti, Jessica. *Why Have kids, A New Mom Explores the Truth about Parenting and Happiness*. Las Vegas: Amazon Publishing, 2012; Asher, Rebecca. *Shattered, Modern Motherhood and the Illusion of Equality*. London: Random House, 2011; and Maushart, Susan. *The Mask of Motherhood, How Becoming a Mother Changes Our Lives and Why We Never Talk About It*. New York: Penguin, 1999.

^{viii} However, there are some wonderful books on the joys of mothering, the nature of mothering and the ups and downs of mothering. Stadlen, Naomi. *What Mothers Do, Especially When It Looks Like Nothing*.

London: Piatkus, 2004; Pearce, Lucy H. *Moods of Motherhood, The Inner Journey of Mothering*. Cork: Womancraft Publishing Ltd, 2014; De Marneffe, Daphne. *Maternal Desire, On Children, Love and the Inner Life*. London: Virago, 2006; and Steinberg, Eden. *Your Children with Raise You, The Joys, Challenges and Life Lessons of Motherhood*. Trumpton, Boston & London, 2005.

^{ix} Freely, Maureen. *What About Us? An Open Letter to the Mothers Feminism Forgot*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1995 is an interesting read about how a limited brand of feminism and equality neglected those mothers who wished to support their families.

^x Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. Middlesex: Penguin. 1963.

^{xi} De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. London: Vintage, 1997.

^{xii} Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born, Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. London: Virago, 1977.

^{xiii} Manne, Anne. *Motherhood, How Should We Care For Our Children?* Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2005 and Biddulph, Steve. *Raising Babies, Should Under 3s Go to Nursery?* London: Harper Thorsons, 2005 make interesting reading.

^{xiv} I have tended to restrict my description of mothers in employment rather than 'working' mothers because I believe that this betrays a tendency to view mothers at home as not somehow making productive use of their time.

^{xv} 'The Family Test', Guidance for Government Departments, October 2014, Department for Work and Pensions.

^{xvi} Lasch, Christopher. *Haven in a Heartless World, The Family Besieged*. London: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd, 1995.

^{xvii} Office for National Statistics report, 18 July 2014, stated that between 1995 and 2010 there was a movement away from informal childcare in the household towards formal childcare for children aged under 5 years old.

^{xviii} The implication behind the comments in this article are staggering: 'Why we should all pay towards the cost of childcare', 22 February 2015, The Guardian.

^{xix} Paula Caplan provides a fresh look at the tendency of society and mental health professionals to blame mother in *The New Don't Blame Mother*, London: Routledge, 2000.

^{xx} There is a wealth of literature about the conditions under which mothers might feel empowered and valued, not least O'Reilly, Andrea, ed. *21st Century Motherhood, Experience, Identity, Policy, Agency*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010; O'Reilly, Andrea, ed. *Mother Outlaws, Theories and Practices of Empowered Mothering*. Toronto: Women's Press, 2004; and Rothman, Barbara Katz. *Recreating Motherhood*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000.

^{xxi} Hochschild, Arlie, with Machung, Anne. *The Second Shift, Working Families and Revolution at Home*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2012.

^{xxii} Waring, Marilyn. *Counting for Nothing, What Men Value and What Women Are Worth*, 2nd Edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc, 1999.

^{xxiii} Crittenden, Ann. *The Price of Motherhood, Why the Most Important Job in the World is Still the Least Valued*, 10th Anniversary Ed. New York: Picador, 2010.

^{xxiv} Badinter, Elizabeth. *The Conflict, How Overzealous Motherhood Undermines the Status of Women*. New York: Picador, 2011; Bennetts, Leslie. *The Feminine Mistake, Are We Giving Up Too Much*. New York: Hyperion, 2007; Faludi, Susan. *Backlash, the Undeclared War Against Women*. London: Vintage, 1992.

^{xxv} Badinter, *ibid*; Douglas, Susan J. *The Mommy Myth, the Idealization of Motherhood and How it Has Undermined All Women*. New York: Free Press, 2004.

^{xxvi} Gilbert, Neil. *A Mother's Work, How Feminism, The Market and Policy Shape Family Life*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

^{xxvii} 'George Osborne accused of 'patronising' stay-at-home mothers', The Telegraph, 5 August 2013.

^{xxviii} Tazi-Preve, Mariam Irene. *Motherhood in Patriarchy, Animosity Toward Mothers in Politics and Feminist Theory - Proposals for Change*. Toronto: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2013 makes for very interesting reading indeed about the oppression of mothers, the creeping annihilation of mothers and the treatment of mothers in Patriarchy.

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- ^{xxix} The Labour Party sent not one representative to the Mothers at Home Matter event in Parliament in 2015.
- ^{xxx} Nick Clegg in Press Release from Department of Business, Innovation and Skills stated that ‘This Edwardian notion that women should stay at home while men go out and support the family has simply no place in this day and age’, 13 January 2015.
- ^{xxxix} EU Strategy on Gender Equality, 21 September 2010, European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.
- ^{xxxix} Bowlby, John. *Attachment*. London: Pelican, 1969.
- ^{xxxix} ‘Cost of Raising a Child Surges Past £225,000’, 23 January 2014, Guardian.
- ^{xxxix} For illuminating academic discussion on the economic system and how women simply do not count, see Counting Waring, Marilyn. *Counting for Nothing, What Men Value and What Women Are Worth*, 2nd Edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc, 1999.
- ^{xxxix} Universal Credit and Your Family, February 2015, www.gov.uk/universalcredit.
- ^{xxxix} The Centre for Social Justice said in October 2012 that it would be cheaper to pay working parents to stay at home as in some cases it costs more to pay out state subsidies for childcare.
- ^{xxxix} Rothman, Barbara Katz. *Recreating Motherhood*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000.
- ^{xxxix} Caplan, Paula. *The New Don’t Blame Mother*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- ^{xxxix} See Fleming, Suzie. *Introductory Essay to The Disinherited Family*. Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1986.
- ^{xl} Rathbone, Eleanor. *The Disinherited Family*. Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1986.
- ^{xli} Indeed, the mother of Family Allowances, Eleanor Rathbone, threatened not to vote for FA when proposals were for the grant to be paid in wage packet to the man of the house – a step which would have defeated the very purpose of its campaign, namely, to protect women.
- ^{xlii} Waring, Marilyn. *Counting for Nothing, What Men Value and What Women Are Worth*, 2nd Edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc, 1999; Waring Bjornholt, Margunn, and McKay, Ailsa. *Counting on Marilyn Waring*, *New Advances in Feminist Economics*. Bradford: Demeter Press, 2013.
- ^{xliii} Boyd, Elizabeth Reid and Letherby, Galye, eds. *Stay-At-Home Mothers, Dialogues and Debates*. Bradford: Demeter Press, 2014; DiQuinzio, Patrice. *The Impossibility of Motherhood, Feminism, Individualism and the Problem of Mothering*. London: Routledge, 1999; Glenn, Evelyn Nakano, with Chang, Grace, and Forcey, Linda Rennie, eds. *Mothering, Ideology, Experience and Agency*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- ^{xliii} Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. London: Penguin, 2004; and Rathbone, Eleanor. *The Disinherited Family*. Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1986.
- ^{xliii} Tazi-Preve, Mariam Irene. *Motherhood in Patriarchy, Animosity Toward Mothers in Politics and Feminist Theory - Proposals for Change*. Toronto: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2013.
- ^{xliii} Referenced Ibid. The dream of democracy, according to Plato, requires the removal of mothers from the charge of their children. Yes, I nearly fell over too.
- ^{xliii} Hays, Sharon. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. Yale: Yale University Press, 1996; Maushart, Susan. *The Mask of Motherhood, How Becoming a Mother Changes Our Lives and Why We Never Talk About It*. New York: Penguin, 1999; Thurer, Shari L. *The Myths of Motherhood, How Culture Reinvents the Good Mother*. London: Penguin, 1994; Warner, Judith. *Perfect Madness, Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety*. London: Vermillion, 2006; O’Reilly, Andrea, ed. *21st Century Motherhood, Experience, Identity, Policy, Agency*. New York: Colombia University Press, 2010; O’Reilly, Andrea, ed. *Feminist Mothering*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008; O’Reilly, Andrea, ed. *From Motherhood to Mothering, the Legacy of Adrienne Rich’s Of Woman Born*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004; and O’Reilly, Andrea, ed. *Mother Outlaws, Theories and Practices of Empowered Mothering*. Toronto: Women’s Press, 2004 all include a thorough examination of the myths of ‘good’ mothers.
- ^{xliii} For a beautiful exploration of ‘*What Mothers Do*’ see Stadlen, Naomi. London: Piatkus, 2004.
- ^{xliii} Heffner, Elaine. *Mothering, The Emotional Experience of Motherhood after Feminism*. New York: Doubleday & Company Inc, 1978; Pearce, Lucy H. *Moods of Motherhood, The Inner Journey of Mothering*. Cork: Womancraft Publishing Ltd, 2014; Holloway, Wendy and Featherstone, Brid. *Mothering and Ambivalence*. London: Routledge, 1997.

