Gender and part-time work: middle-aged men's experiences in highly skilled occupations

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Copyright statement

Acknowledgments

Abstract

This thesis focuses on middle-aged men working part-time in highly skilled occupations in the UK. Qualitative data collected between 2018 and 2021 from seven triads, each comprising a male part-time worker, home sphere and workplace participant analyses workers' motives for working part-time, their experiences of work and home, how they perform gender in these spaces and the implications for the gender hierarchy. The study advances knowledge of part-time work among men and develops theorisations of gendering (Butler 1990; West and Zimmerman 1987), hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987, 1995), age-gender intersectionality and chrononormativity (Riach, Rumens and Tyler 2014). Findings show the men choose part-time work for caring, health or work-life balance reasons. Their lives are more manageable, but they incur penalties for working part-time. At home they report doing more housework and caring than their full-time peers, however their wives share the workload, undertake invisible labour and did more housework and home-schooling during the pandemic. The study makes four contributions; (1) whilst workers choose part-time work and claim disinterest in career, home sphere participants maintain the workers found full-time work stressful and unsustainable; (2) the men enjoy job satisfaction and mixed job quality but their careers stagnate in part-time work; (3) part-time working among these men produces only marginal gains in equalising the domestic division of labour; (4) they are regarded as progressive by others, they construct masculine intelligibilities based on new ideals of gender equality, selfless partnering and involved fatherhood, underscored by a discourse of choice. In addition, however, they perform gender in accordance with traditional masculinity scrips by emphasising their productiveness, job expertise and successful work histories, they also use their age and status to conceal part-time working. The duality of these sets of gendered performances reflects a hybrid from of hegemonic masculinity which simultaneously hides and secures their hegemonic power.

List of outputs connected to the thesis

Conference papers:

1. Thompson, A. (2021). *Brave pioneers: adulation for male part-time workers*. Paper presented at Gender Work and Organization Conference (GWO), University of Kent, June (online).

2. Thompson, A. (2021). *Precarity through an occupational and gender lens: middle-aged men's experiences of part-time work*. Paper presented at the International Labour Process Conference (ILPC), University of Greenwich, April (online).

3. Thompson, A., and Wheatley, D. (2016). *The quality of part-time work among men*. CIPD Applied Research Conference, University of Westminster, December.

Book chapter:

4. Thompson, A., and Wheatley, D. (2019). The Take-up and Quality of Part-time Work among Men. In: Caven, V., and Nachmias, S., eds. *Inequality and organizational practice. Volume II: Employment relations*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, pp. 129-153.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on part-time work and gender. It investigates why middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations work part-time, how they experience the work and home spheres of their lives, how they perform gender in these spaces and the implications for the gender hierarchy. In analysing this group of part-time workers using a work and a home lens, the thesis provides a holistic perspective of lived experiences of part-time work at the interstices of gender and age, within a prescribed occupational group.

It is widely understood that within the UK, and in most other economies, part-time work is much more strongly associated with women than with men (Fagan et al. 2014; Thompson and Wheatley 2019; Wheatley, Hardill and Lawton 2018). Whilst a lower percentage of women work part-time in the UK now than in the 1990s and women's share of full-time employment is increasing (Irvine et al. 2022), part-time work remains prevalent among women with and without children. In the UK, almost two-in-four of all women in employment report working part-time (e.g., 38 percent in July to September 2022), whereas part-time work is reported by only around one-in-seven employed men (13.2 percent in July to September 2022) (ONS 2022a), meanwhile Eurostat data (2020) concurs that across the EU member states women's employment rate in part-time work (30 percent) is almost four times higher than the rate for men (8 percent).

As the main users of part-time work, women's propensity to work part-time has been heavily debated (Nicolaisen, Kavli and Jensen 2019; Hakim 1995, 1996, 2000; O'Reilly and Fagan 1998; Durbin and Tomlinson 2014; Ellingsaeter and Jensen 2019; Warren and Lyonette 2015, 2018; Haughton and Bibby 2019; Nightingale 2021). There is an assumption, supported by data, that part-time work is widely used by women with dependent children to combine paid work with childcare and domestic household responsibilities (Atkinson and Hall 2009; Lewis and Humbert 2010; Wheatley 2017a), this arrangement helps to perpetuate the gender care gap, whereby women shoulder the greater share of responsibility for care and

housework in most countries (Ferrant and Thim 2019). Becker (1985) posits that there is a relationship between hours spent in market work and the amount of domestic chores and unpaid care individuals undertake, with labour market participation affecting investment in home-based activities, while Carlson and Lynch (2017) argue that men and women in heterosexual couples reach reciprocal agreements regarding time spent on paid work, unpaid care work and household tasks. In practice research shows that care responsibilities and household duties are invariably unequal (Craig and Powell 2018), with women assuming the larger share of housework in most households, irrespective of their employment status or earnings (Thebaud, Kornrich and Ruppanner 2021). Tasks remain highly gendered in many couples too, with men and women often completing different household activities (Coltrane 2000). Samtleben and Muller (2022) however report that among some men and women there is thirst for fairer allocation of paid work and unpaid care and housework. Given the association between part-time working and improved work-life balance (Beham, Prag and Drobnic 2012), part-time work could quench this thirst, with dual part-time working arrangements cited as offering the best chance of balancing the paid work and unpaid work men and women do in heterosexual couples (Ibanez 2011), leading potentially to fair families (Risman 1998). Indeed Warren (2022) prophesises that part-time work among men offers potential for domestic tasks to be more equitably shared between men and women and for ways of working outside of the home to become less gendered.

Although greater male part-time working may foster greater equality between men and women and improved work-life integration, research links part-time jobs with poorer quality employment and career prospects than full-time jobs (Barbieri et al. 2019; Fagan et al. 2014) making it an inferior proposition. Part-time work tends to be clustered in low-paid occupations and roles which offer poorer relative pay and terms/conditions than full-time positions, exposing part-time workers to precarity (Nightingale 2019; Warren and Lyonette 2015), whilst Chung (2020) adds that part-time work is stigmatised and typically penalised. As prime users of part-time work, women reputedly suffer a 'scarring-effect' (Connolly and Gregory 2009; Blundell et al. 2016), whereby their careers and lifetime earnings are stymied. Fagan et al (2014) add that even when part-time workers receive pro-rata wages and

terms/conditions of employment, part-time work has a long-term negative impact on career progression.

We know rather less about men's engagement with part-time work, other than their use of this work mode is lower than women's, and differently patterned. Men who work part-time in the UK tend to be 18–24-year-olds, relying on part-time work to support the costs of study or as a foundation for full-time work, and over 55s who use it as a pre-retirement strategy (Wheatley, Hardill, and Lawton 2018). As a group therefore, men's participation in part-time work has been described as 'U'-shaped, with dual peaks in usage at either extreme of the working age range and low usage otherwise (Delsen 1998). Whilst men's take up of part-time work is comparatively low, Wilson et al (2016) predicted that it would increase by up to 20 percent in the period to 2024. Research also suggested the male part-time workforce would become more diverse, featuring middle-aged men, single and married men, fathers and non-fathers (Belfield et al. 2017). These changes were projected due to rising flexibilisation and job growth in sectors where part-time jobs are common, e.g., retail, and the prospect of some men choosing part-time work, prompted by the introduction of shared parental leave rights (Raess and Burgoon 2015). The evidence is mixed with respect to these predictions. Data suggests that male part-time working has not risen as rapidly as expected since 2016, indeed Irvine et al (2022) report that whilst the percentage of men of all ages working part-time rose from approximately 7 percent in 1992 to 13 percent in 2010, it has levelled since. Devine and Foley (2020) concur and suggest that the more significant change since 1992 is the reduction in the proportion of employed women in part-time work (from approximately 45 percent in the 1990s to present levels of just under 40 percent), whilst female full-time employment has increased more rapidly in this period. In short, as Nightingale (2021) maintains, the part-time workforce in the UK has become a little less female-dominated over time.

Belfield et al (2017) conjecture that for a significant proportion of men, part-time work is likely to be involuntary given it is often characterised by low pay and hours of work. Dias, Joyce and Parodi (2018) concur, suggesting men rarely select part-time work on becoming a parent or for caring reasons. On the contrary, van Breeschoten and Evertsson (2019) recognise that some men do seemingly choose

flexible work, including part-time work, for caring, health and lifestyle reasons. In such instances they are likely to waive the better pay, terms and conditions and career prospects typically associated with full-time work, however Green and Livanos (2015) accept that not all part-time work is poor quality, some highly skilled men can secure good quality part-time work with relatively few concessions. In short whilst some attention has been directed at patterns of men's participation in part-time work, informed by labour market data, in depth accounts of their wider experiences of working in this mode remain under-researched.

This thesis contributes a theoretically informed empirical investigation of men's motives for working part-time, their experiences of part-time work, how they perform gender and the implications for the gender hierarchy. It focuses on a group of men for whom part-time work is atypical on account of their age and occupation, that is, middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations. The thesis draws on data and literature surrounding part-time working and the quality of part-time work, whilst the gendered lens of the study draws on gender performativity theory (Butler 1990), the notion of doing gender (West and Zimmerman 1987), masculinity theory, specifically hegemonic masculinities (Connell 1987; 1995) and on chrononormativity and age-gender intersectionality. The thesis seeks to address three research questions:

1. What factors induce middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations to work part-time and how is this work mode accommodated within their careers?

2. How do middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations experience the work and home spheres of their lives as part-time workers?

3. How do male, middle-aged part-time workers in highly skilled occupations perform gender at work and at home, and what are the implications for the gender hierarchy?

To answer these questions an empirical study is conducted in the UK using a mixed qualitative-methods, intra-paradigm approach (O'Reilly and Kiyimba 2015). This approach offers deeper insight than a quantitative technique, furthermore, the low

proportions of male part-time workers in highly skilled occupations presents issues of representativeness and reliability with social surveys and other large-scale secondary data sources. Accordingly, two qualitative research methods, semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation are employed within an overarching interpretivist research philosophy. To investigate home and workplace perspectives, seven case studies (triads) are constructed, each featuring a male part-time worker, a connected home sphere participant and a workplace participant. Over the course of the study, three semi-structured interviews are conducted with each participant, broadly 6 months apart. The design generates self-reported insight from the male part-time workers and gathers the accounts, feelings and perceptions of others who interact closely with them in the workplace and in the home setting. The use of photo elicitation in parallel with semi-structured interviews enriches the interviews, helping the researcher to gather deeper information to address the research questions.

Data collection took place over a longitudinal timeframe, late summer 2018 to early 2021, enabling some of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on work and domestic household arrangements to be captured. Government imposed restrictions caused a move to homeworking from Spring 2020 onwards for many who remained in employment, whilst lockdowns in March/April 2020 and in early 2021 closed schools and nurseries, adding to the complexities of managing work commitments alongside family responsibilities. Given the study considers how male part-time workers experience the workplace and the home sphere of their lives, and how they perform gender in these spaces, the impact of the pandemic inevitably entered the interview dialogue from March 2020 onwards, creating opportunities to view phenomena relevant to the research questions within a distinctly dynamic context, aspects of which could not have been anticipated when the research commenced. Although the thesis is not a study of men's working lives and home lives during the pandemic, it garners a sense of how regimes of paid work and unpaid domestic work/care were (re)calibrated in this period, further informing the second research question, and giving the research a distinct, real-time advantage over future studies which might retrospectively consider the effects of the pandemic on (men's) experiences of part-time work.

1.2 Parameters of the research

Although part-time work is a well understood mode of work, its precise meaning is subject to interpretation and requires qualification for the purposes of this thesis. Determining a definition is challenging since the working-hour threshold between part-time work and full-time work and the number of hours required for full-time work vary between countries (Stovell and Besamusca 2022). Furthermore, the UK, where this PhD study is located, adopts a non-prescriptive approach to working hours; a part-time worker is simply defined as someone who works fewer hours than a full-time worker, and full-time working hours are not stipulated (GOV.UKa). To overcome these definitional difficulties the study applies the full-time/part-time threshold of 30 hours per week used by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) for analysis of trends across OECD countries (Bastelaer, Lemaitre and Marianna 1997). The thesis deliberately refers to part-time workers to encompass employees and the self-employed.

As established, the study focuses on part-time work among middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations, presenting further definitional complexity related to age and occupation. Harris (1987) argues that age is difficult to define since biologically it is the number of years an individual has lived since birth, but it also relates to socially constructed periods of life such as youth and old age with each life stage characterised by different social expectations regarding behaviour (Bradley 1996). It is difficult to ascertain when middle-age begins and ends but chronologically it is the period following young adulthood, and preceding old age. The World Health Organisation define middle-aged as aged 45 to 69 (The Whoqol Group 1998), this range is too broad for the purposes of the study as it risks enveloping men who are using part-time work as a pre-retirement strategy. Referring to age ranges associated with career stage presents similar difficulties as career stages are also socially constructed and so not particularly helpful in determining the precise age band the study should use. Rae (2005), for example, considers the period between aged 16 and 34 to be one of early career development and the period after this as mid-career for most people. Although the concepts of middle-aged and mid-career are subjective and difficult to define, they appear to relate to an interesting phase of life, and it is for this reason the study seeks to explore men within this category.

Bradley (1996:147), for example, refers to middle-aged groups as the *"age elite"*, cushioned from the relative powerlessness that affects the young, and the old. In career terms, by the mid-point individuals have invariably accumulated considerable experience and are generally considered to be at the pinnacle of their careers, yet studies have shown dissatisfaction and a thirst for change among people in this age group (Mallon and Cohen 2001), making this group potentially fascinating to research. Reflecting upon these debates, the study selects men working part-time in their 40s and 50s, based on the qualified assumption that this subset of men in part-time work are middle-aged and simultaneously mid-career, as opposed to bordering retirement.

The study concentrates on men working part-time in occupations classified within the fourth skill level (major groups 1-3) of the Standard Occupational Classification 2020 [1] this skill level includes high-level managerial positions in corporate enterprises, or national/local government, and professional roles across sectors incorporating teaching/education, health, business, media and public services, science, research, engineering, and technology. Jobs at this level normally require a degree, and so investment on the part of the worker to enter and progress. Among these occupations, the study focuses on men in professional roles, since the traditional notion is that those with professional expertise have considerable autonomy and agency in decision-making over their work (Mastekaasa 2011), which infers they have greater ability to determine their working patterns. This group can be contrasted with managers whose core role lies in controlling others and extracting effort, and for whom therefore presence at work is likely to be important, with implications for patterns of working (Wheatley 2017b). In the context of part-time work among highly skilled workers, professional workers are deemed an interesting population to research; the factors which propel such men to work part-time, when they are neither starting out in their careers, nor likely to be contemplating retirement are intriguing, under-researched and poorly understood, as are their experiences of work and home and the way in which they perform gender in these spaces. The following sections introduce the key data,

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[1]Breakdown of the Standard Occupational Classification 2020
https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/standardoccupationalclassificationsoc/soc2020/soc2020volume1structureanddescriptionsofunitgroups

literature, and theoretical concepts the thesis draws upon and sets out how these are related to one another and to the research questions.

1.3 Men and part-time work

As section 1.1 establishes, part-time work is more prevalent among women than men. Where men are concerned, there is greater discussion of the labour market circumstances which channel men into part-time work (Raess and Burgoon 2015; Warren and Lyonette 2020) than there is of the factors which might lead to men engage in part-time paid work to care for dependent children for example, or as a lifestyle preference (van Breeschoten and Evertsson 2019). A common explanation for a wider demographic of men entering part-time work is that it is an involuntary work mode, accepted due to the paucity of full-time alternatives (Kamerade and Richardson 2017; Bell and Blanchflower 2011, 2013; Green and Livanos, 2015). Typically, increases in involuntary male part-time employment follow periods of economic recession, for example, there was a rise in part-time working after the financial crisis of 2008, especially for men (Grimshaw and Rafferty 2011), this growth in part-time working was more noticeable in low-skilled and lower paid jobs (Warren and Lyonette 2020). Beatson (2019) argues that involuntary part-time work increases amidst a recession because firms sometimes cut hours instead of laying off workers. Whilst this scenario offers some solace to workers as it protects jobs via work sharing (Coulter 2016), it raises new issues for those who concede to reduced hours, including the economic insecurity and concerns related to the longevity of the arrangement.

In their broader analysis of the quality of part-time work, Warren and Lyonette (2020) draw on Labour Force Study (LFS) data to show that in 2012-2013, following the 2008-9 recession, around one third of male part-time workers were reported to be working part-time involuntarily, yet in 2017 and 2018 this figure decreased to around a fifth as the economy recovered. Recent data (ONS 2022a) shows that involuntary part-time employment among men has continued to fall since, dipping to 16 percent in the three months to September 2022. Importantly Warren and Lyonette (2020) highlight that involuntary part-time work affects men in lower occupational groups more than men in high level occupations; the most marked post-recession increases in male involuntary part-time workers were found in

skilled trades, sales/customer services occupations, elementary work and process, plant and machine operative roles, whilst the numbers of involuntary part-time workers among highly skilled professional and managerial workers showed negligible increases.

Using a deeper level of granularity to expose what is currently known about part-time work among middle-aged men and among men in highly skilled occupations, nests the thesis within a narrower field of literature and provides greater context to begin to address the specific research questions. With reference to age, Fagan and Walthery (2014) claim it is uncommon for men to work part-time in mid working life. Previous studies of male part-time workers have therefore tended to dwell on the experiences of the larger groups of men known to cluster at either end of the age spectrum (Wheatley, Hardill, and Lawton 2018; Delsen 1998; Eurofound 2016) and overlook men working part-time in the age groups in-between. From a gendered perspective it is acknowledged that men continue to experience financial and moral pressures to be providers (Warren 2022; Damaske 2020), thus shaping their relationship with paid work and disincentivising part-time work. Indeed, these expectations are likely to be accentuated as men acquire familial commitments and associated costs, even though present-day households rarely rely on a single male wage (Bloome, Burk and McCall 2019), these factors help to explain why part-time work is poorly ascribed to by men in mid-age ranges. Similarly, the propensity for men in highly skilled occupations to work part-time is low and shows little sign of altering significantly. In the UK 4.3 percent of men in professional occupations (those at the forefront of this thesis) use this mode of working, and 2.2 percent of all male directors, managers and senior officials are employed part-time (ONS 2022b). Men who occupy these roles are likely to have benefitted from access to networking, mentors and other career development opportunities, leading to enhanced career progression (Briscoe-Palmer and Mattocks 2021), it is therefore likely that they will stay in full-time work to continue to reap career advantages and protect themselves and their families from economic insecurity. In turn it is intriguing to try to understand why small proportions of men in these roles work part-time.

1.4 Gender, masculinity, chrononormativity and intersectionality

Since the thesis explores the experiences of middle-aged men working part-time in highly skilled occupations, their gendered performances and the implications for the gender hierarchy, the gender literature, and within this body of work, key concepts of gender performativity (Butler 1990), doing gender (West and Zimmerman 1987) and hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987, 1995) are fundamental. In addition, as the focus is on middle-aged men, the concepts of chronomormativity (Riach, Rumens and Tyler 2014) and age-gender intersectionality (Foweraker and Cutcher 2015) are crucial in understanding how normative life course expectations, in particular the conflation of age with gender, produce wider sets of expectations, with potential ramifications for men working part-time. The concepts form a starting point from which the study can build a deeper understanding of how theory informs practice, and how practice might develop existing/new theory. The remainder of this chapter is prefaced with a short section on gender as a field of study, it then introduces the key theoretical concepts which underpin the thesis, before setting out the focus of subsequent chapters.

Gender is a much-debated field. The terms gender and sex are often used synonymously, resulting in an oversimplification which conflates biological differences with social/behavioural differences, and attributes the former to gendered differences between men and women (Lindqvist, Gustafsson Senden and Renstrom 2021). Moreover, structures in society are presumed to arise from these differences, as opposed to playing a key part in orchestrating gendered differences and associated inequalities (West and Zimmerman 1987). Establishing men and women as oppositional, fixed identities, based on essentialised differences is a common yet basic way of conceptualising gender (Whitehead 2002). When gender is essentialised men and women are treated as if they have intrinsically different characteristics (Swigger and Meyer 2019). Dzubinski and Dhiel (2018:56) concur, suggesting that "e*ssentialist assumptions are widespread, both societally and organizationally, and are often treated as normative"*. The consequences of conceiving gender in essentialist terms permeate everyday life, for example as Mokos (2020:536) observes "*much occupational sex segregation is caused by gender essentialist notions of appropriate jobs for men and women"* and so in

practice men and women's labour market opportunities are shaped and limited by biological differences. Further, essentialist assumptions are instrumental in structuring discourse and upholding power differences between the sexes (Whitehead 2002). Whilst the consequences of conceiving gender in essentialist ways can fundamentally shape men and women's lifestyle choices and structure opportunities, the evidence that gender differences stem from biology is unsubstantiated (Rogers 2000). Connell (2009), for example, argues that simple gender divisions overlook differences between different men and between different sorts of women, whilst Deutsch (2007:108) maintains *"even when structural conditions produce gender difference and inequality, these are mediated through social interactions that always contain the potential for resistance"*, thus interactions influence gender and have the potential to disrupt gendered differences. Gender theorists therefore persistently argue against gender essentialism and instead conceive gender as a socially constructed, or socially learned category which is subject to temporal and contextual change (Andersen and Hysock 2009; Maher 2008; Misawa 2010; Stead and Elliott 2009). The essence of this sentiment is captured in Simone de Beauvoir's expression, "o*ne is not born, but rather one becomes a woman"* (Borde and Mallovaly Chevallier 2010:283), suggesting nurture plays out over nature. Gender only appears static because it is deeply rooted in society and reinforced daily; all cultural settings including for example, leisure and entertainment (Andersen and Hysock 2009), or religion (Dzubinski and Dhiel 2018) produce gender norms which become embedded. In simple terms Gherardi (1995) asserts that stereotypes and day-to-day practices construct gender.

Gender theory has challenged the notion that gender is fixed and binary for some time; to this end two main conceptualisations, gender performativity and doing gender have developed to explain how gender is produced (Kelan 2009). The dominant theorisation to rebut gender essentialism is Butler's concept of gender performativity. Butler (1990) argues that cogent and static gender does not exist, rather it is performed via repetitive acts which are discontinuous and mimic dominant cultural norms surrounding the behaviour of men and women. Imitation gives the appearance of real gender when in fact gender is socially constituted, this situation is perpetuated by an unspoken pact among members of society to

replicate binary gender subject positions which are in fact culturally manifest and unreal (Butler 1990). Doing gender (West and Zimmerman 1987), is an ethnomethodological approach which conceives gender as something which is done or practiced. West and Zimmerman (1987) minimise learned behaviour as the basis for difference between men and women and refute the notion that gender is a set role, rather they consider that gender is "*constituted through interaction*" and is the *"product of social doings of some sort"* (1987:129). They argue that doing gender is inescapable as it is ingrained in institutions and daily interactions; through these practices individuals are labelled by others as either masculine or feminine. The way gender is done in social interactions therefore results in differences between men and women, not biology as essentialists maintain. Chapter 3 of the thesis develops these positions and teases out the similarities and differences between Butler's work on gender performativity and ethnomethodological approaches to gender as a performance or doing.

Unsurprisingly, since masculinity, like femininity, is socially constituted and the social landscape within which gender is produced changes, it is difficult to settle on a fixed view of what constitutes masculinity, rather masculinity must be a fluid concept which is time and context dependent (Reeser 2010). Connell (1995:92) concurs, stating that "*subtle as well as more widespread contextual changes such as globalisation and neoliberalism cause gender itself to change and transform, resulting in new social dynamics and always readjustments and change within gendered relations"*. Accordingly, as this thesis will demonstrate, a major contribution to masculinity studies is the theory of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987) which offers an analysis of gender power, gender relations, inequalities, and men's subjectivity. In contrast, other models of masculinity tend to try to categorise men (Waling 2019), for example, new man (Beynon 2002) and heroic masculinity (Holt and Thompson 2004).

Whilst gendered relations are considered dynamic, it is widely accepted that men, as a group, are more often prioritised over women in the gendered order leading to a range of life advantages (Connell 1995). As the privileged gender, Reeser (2010:8) states masculinity tends to attract status as "*the one"* and is "*unmarked"* and femininity is othered. Although the gendered order might favour men as a

group and lead to a *"patriarchal dividend"* (Connell 1995:9), it is problematic to assume that all men are advantaged and evade scrutiny. Men who eschew deeply embedded masculine norms may be admonished for not being masculine enough, for example, in her study of men entering feminised occupations, Moskos (2020:540) suggests "*men deployed a variety of strategies to moderate the negative reactions initiated by their gender-atypical work, and to overcome the associated discomfort with the female image of the job"*. On the other hand, Moskos (2020) notes that the men benefitted from being outnumbered by women; they were given more latitude, valued more by managers and clients and were perceived as prime job candidates. Moskos' work illustrates that men's power is strong but not complete, and being a man is not always easy. Men's power can be fissured when threatened, when this happens, they often rely on expressions of essentialism to protect their position (Lewis and Simpson 2010). Equally, men who follow masculine norms and reap the benefits this is purported to entail, may feel trapped, for example, the expectation to be the breadwinner is likely to restrict family time, and their involvement in masculinised jobs and/or pastimes exposes them to greater risks; power and privilege can come at a cost, therefore.

It is clear from this introduction to masculinities that there are multiple ways of being a man, and not all masculinities are prioritised (Connell 1995). Hegemonic masculinity referred to earlier, continues to be widely discussed (Messerschmidt 2018). Its origins are rooted in Gramsci's (1971) theory of cultural hegemony which explores power relations among social classes. In her works of 1987 and 1995 Connell says hegemonic masculinity is a culturally honoured form of masculinity, which licenses unequal gender relations between masculine and feminine identities and among different masculinities. Debates surrounding gender relations and power positionality are pertinent to this thesis since a key strand of the study is to explore the way male part-time workers perform gender in different contextual settings and implications for the gender order. In the work context, paid work is linked to the performance of masculinity (Cockburn 1983; Guerrier and Adib 2004), rendering the workplace a key site of gendered expectations for men. Sang, Dainty and Ison (2014:257) agree, they attest that "*the structure of organisational life is never gender neutral as it reflects and perpetuates gendered (masculinist) expectations of work and non-working life and how they can be reconciled"*, indeed,

the normative (male) working model of full time, permanent employment remains a familiar feature in workplaces (Acker 1990). Being the main earner/breadwinner signifies masculinity, and loss or erosion of this role is emasculating (Besen 2007) and is likely to affect men's identity (Nadim 2016). Eagly and Steffen (1986:261) suggest that when men lose this role "p*eople evaluate their agentic qualities less favourably".* The thesis offers an opportunity to explore how middle-aged men in highly skilled professional occupations perform gender when they work part-time, given that full-time work is the normative way of working for men. The investigation will provide insight into how the act of part-time work (re)positions these men in relation to hegemonic masculinities and serves to disturb or replicate and reinforce the gender order.

Neither the gendered subject positions of men and women generally, nor the men this thesis focuses upon can be understood with reference to gender alone. Discussing gender through an intersectional lens, such as gender and age expands understanding of gender relations and how gendered subject identities are constructed. In everyday settings individuals are doing age, class, ethnicity, sexuality and so on as well as gender (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004), and these social characteristics intersect, affecting how social situations are enacted and reproduced. In the context of gender Connell (1995:86) explains that intersectionality means "*the structures of gender are interwoven with other social structures"*, and so gender can never be fully considered as a lone social classification. The thesis respects this position by considering the role the men's age and occupations play in the way they perform gender and add/detract from their recognisability as men. Spector-Mersel (2006) emphasises that age is defining factor of masculinity; as men age, they are affected by ageing and masculinity norms. Masculinity can therefore be understood as something that changes over time; indeed, it is contended that hegemonic masculinities are differently constituted in different life phases (Spector-Mersel 2006). The term chrononormativity is pertinent here, it refers to the way in which individuals' experiences are patterned over their lives to conform with various normative frameworks. Riach, Rumens and Tyler (2014) build on Butler's idea that gender appears natural because it is ritualised through acts of repetitive performance to argue the same process applies to elements imposed through chrononormativity

such as language, gestures and dress; in other words, different performances are expected at different stages in an individual's lifetime, these involve gender but also incorporate other life-stage appropriate actions Theorisation of chrononormativity and intersectionality thus further refutes essentialist conceptions of gender and points to its fluid and changing nature.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Following this introduction, the thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 comprise a critical literature review to establish the theoretical conversations the study draws upon and contributes to. Chapter 2 develops the discussion of part-time work to underpin the first two research questions concerning why men work part-time, and their experiences of part-time work. The chapter considers what it means to work part-time, workers' motives for engaging in part-time work and patterns of participation in part-time work, according to gender, age and occupation (the characteristics central to the thesis). The latter section of the chapter assesses the relative quality of part-time work, using factors including pay, job satisfaction, job security, autonomy, and career development, informed by prominent taxonomies of job quality (Haines III, Dorey-Demers and Martin 2018; Connell and Burgess 2016; Holman 2013; Vidal, 2013; Felstead et al. 2019).

Chapter 3 supports all three research questions. It comprises a critical review of the gender/masculinity literature and refers to literatures on intersectionality and chrononormativity. The chapter first briefly mentions essentialised explanations of gender differences, before examining gender as a socially constructed category. The focus in this segment of the chapter is on Butler's (1990) theory of gender performativity and on doing gender (West and Zimmerman 1987). The chapter then considers masculinities, specifically hegemonic masculinities (Connell 1987; 1995; 2009; 2011). The notion of chrononormative performances of gender which recognise the phenomenon of age-appropriate recitals are introduced, illustrating that gender is not a singular social category but intersects with age (and other characteristics beyond the scope of this thesis) to support or potentially destabilise gendered subject identities. The penultimate section of the chapter considers prospects for men undoing gender in a work context, and implications for the gender hierarchy, whilst the final section of Chapter 3 draws the literature chapters

of the thesis together by examining the potential gendered implications for middle-aged men who work part-time in highly skilled occupations. Following the conclusion an addendum provides an overview of the theoretical framework the thesis draws from, and the knowledge gaps identified in the extant literature.

Chapter 4 explains and justifies how the empirical study has been designed and executed to address knowledge deficits. It sets out the ontological, epistemological and methodological basis of the research, the instruments used to gather empirical data and the sampling strategy for selecting study participants. A section on reflexivity is included to recognise the ways in which the researcher's own beliefs and practices may have influenced the research process/outcomes and the steps taken to ensure data is robust. The approach to data analysis is explained towards the end of the chapter.

Chapters 5 - 7 present and discuss the findings of the study. Chapter 5 responds to the initial research question. It examines why the men work part-time and how their work mode is accommodated within their careers. Chapter 6 addresses the second research question concerning how the men experience the work and the home spheres of their lives as male part-time workers. The first part of the chapter focuses on the men's experiences of work with reference to key measures of job quality and explores how they navigate and manage their working lives. The second part of the chapter discusses their experiences in the home including their contributions to household labour and care regimes, and time spent on leisure and other activities. Changes to household arrangements arising from the Covid-19 pandemic are also captured. Chapter 7 responds to the final research question. It considers how the men perform gender at work and at home with reference to the theoretical concepts presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis. The chapter amplifies the key theoretical debates raised by the research and sets out the study's contribution to knowledge and practice. Brief reflection is provided on the strengths of the study, its limitations, and opportunities for further research.

Chapter 2: Part-time work

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is important for framing the thesis and foregrounding the first research question - what factors induce middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations to work part-time and how is this work mode accommodated within their careers? and the second questions posed by the thesis - how do middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations experience the work and home spheres of their lives as part-time workers? The chapter captures the meaning of part-time work and establishes who works part-time and why. Attention is paid to examining gendered patterns of participation in part-time work and trends over time according to age and occupation. Through synthesising data and literature, unequal gendered regimes of paid market-based activity, unpaid care responsibilities and household labour are evident, with women, particularly mothers, more prone to working part-time, and more burdened by household labour irrespective of their employment or income, these insights underpin empirical analysis of men's experiences in the home sphere as part-time workers. The latter part of the chapter critically reviews the job quality literature pertaining to part-time work and so contextualises subsequent empirical work within the thesis concerning the men's experiences of work.

2.2 Defining part-time work

Part-time work is a long-standing mode of working, however as the introductory chapter highlights the definition of part-time is not universal (Dixon, McCollum and Fullerton 2018). In Spain for example part-time work is defined as less than two thirds of the weekly hours worked by an equivalent full-time worker (Insarauto 2021) and in the USA part-time workers are defined as those working less than 35 hours per week (US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020). The UK recognises a part-time worker as someone who works fewer hours than a full-time worker (GOV.UKa), where a full-time worker would normally work 35 or more hours per week (https://www.gov.uk/part-time-worker-rights). Data (ONS 2022a) shows that in the UK the average actual weekly hours of work for full-time workers (seasonally adjusted) in August 2022 were 36.3; therefore, part-time work could range from just a few hours per week to over 30. A more systematised definition is offered by the OECD who apply an upper threshold of 30 hours per week to delineate part-

time from full-time work and so facilitate comparative analysis between countries (Bastelaer, Lemaitre and Marianna 1997).

As implied above, in practice substantial variations exist across workplaces and occupations in terms of hours worked by part-time and full-time employees (Lyonette, Baldauf and Behle 2010) and so differences between modes of work may be much more semantic than material. Since part-time work is closely linked with women, persisting with terminology which bifurcates working practices may be damaging, fuelling assumptions about the divisions between paid and unpaid work in households and entrenching disadvantage in the respective labour market positions of men and women (Ferragina 2019). It is possible to argue that hours of work are becoming an increasingly tangential work measure as new technologies impact work organisation, permitting many workers to choose where and when to work (Allvin et al. 2011). Measuring work with hours risks failing to capture the full gambit of workers' experiences and is likely to be a poor gauge of the amount, or the intensity of work people undertake (Baffoe-Bonnie and Gyapong 2018). Indeed, the growth of freelancing work in the gig economy (Kuhn 2016) or eLancing (Aguinis and Lawal 2013), where work is organised around tasks, renders working hours unhelpful for understanding what workers do. The 4-day working week movement too, which has garnered greater interest since the Covid-19 pandemic (Chung 2022), reconfigures the concept of full-time work and so further blurs the distinction between full time and part-time work. Notwithstanding these debates, for many workers in the economy, hours of work remain relevant and do shape the nature of working life, for shift workers, for example (Arlinghaus et al. 2019). Furthermore, hours worked remain a measure of activity in official statistics, showing trends and patterns in working time and revealing the characteristics of users of part-time and full-time work.

2.3 Part-time working in the UK

Data from the labour market statistics time series (LMS) released as part of the labour market overview (ONS 2022a) shows that the average actual weekly hours of work for part-time workers (seasonally adjusted) in the UK were 16.3 in August 2022. Average part-time hours of work have hovered around 15-16 per week for the past twenty years, bar a sharp decrease to below 12 hours per week in 2020

when the Covid-19 pandemic affected sectors where part-time work is prevalent, for example, hospitality and retail. Whilst the proportion of part-time workers in the UK is substantially eclipsed by the proportion of individuals working full-time, part-time working is significant, and considerably more widespread than other flexible forms of work, suggesting workers and employers alike see its benefits. The total number of people working part-time in July-September 2022 numbered just over 8 million (24.7 percent of all self-employed and employees in employment) (ONS 2022a). Part-time work may however operate across measures and be, for example, part-time and temporary, part-time and term-time only and so the categories of atypical forms of work are difficult to isolate and clearly delineate from one another. Notably, the split between full-time and part-time employment in ONS data relies on respondents' self-classifying and does not report types of part-time work or capture when workers hold multiple part-time jobs or work full-time and part-time simultaneously. These points illustrate that part-time work can be used in various ways, to serve several different life scenarios.

2.3.1 Gendered patterns of engagement in part-time work

In recent decades, within most developed societies patterns of employment have altered due to flexibilisation of the labour market (Raess and Burgoon, 2015), a trend which has caused greater diversity in the employment experiences of men and women (Wilson et al. 2016). Glover and Kirton (2006), maintain that trends such as the shift from manufacturing to services has created different jobs and new skills requirements which arguably support women in the labour market but may also give rise to new opportunities for men to fulfil different jobs and work more flexibly. Despite this context data shows that women are much more likely to use flexible working practices than men (Chung and van der Lippe 2020). Part-time work, as a key form of flexible working, remains gendered; in July to September 2022 for example, only 13.2 percent of all men in employment reported working part-time compared with 37.6 percent of women (ONS 2022a). In addition, the quality of part-time work women undertake is often poor (Fagan et al. 2014; Wheatley 2017a). As Insarauto (2021:622) observes the amount and expansion of part-time work has not changed "*its strong feminisation nor women's great exposure to some of its most disadvantaging aspects, such as involuntariness and underemployment*". These characteristics predominantly arise because part-time

employment is associated with those who want or need to fulfil domestic and/or caring duties alongside paid work (Wheatley 2017a, Andrew et al. 2021), in such situations workers will often concede pay and other features of better-quality work for a convenient working pattern. Women's greater participation rate in part-time work accentuates and perpetuates their roles in the home, amounting to a greater share of domestic work (Craig and Powell 2018), childcare (Franklin and Hochlaf 2021; Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir 2021), invisible household labour (Ciciolla and Luthar 2019), and the mental load of managing a household (Dean, Churchill and Ruppanner 2021).

Although women still outnumber men in part-time work, OECD data shows a growth in men's share of part-time work since 1995 and a decline in women's share (Figure 2.1). This pattern supports claims that part-time work is becoming a little less dominated by women (Nightingale 2021).

Figure 2.1: Share of part-time employment by gender (UK) - all persons in employment (using common definition)
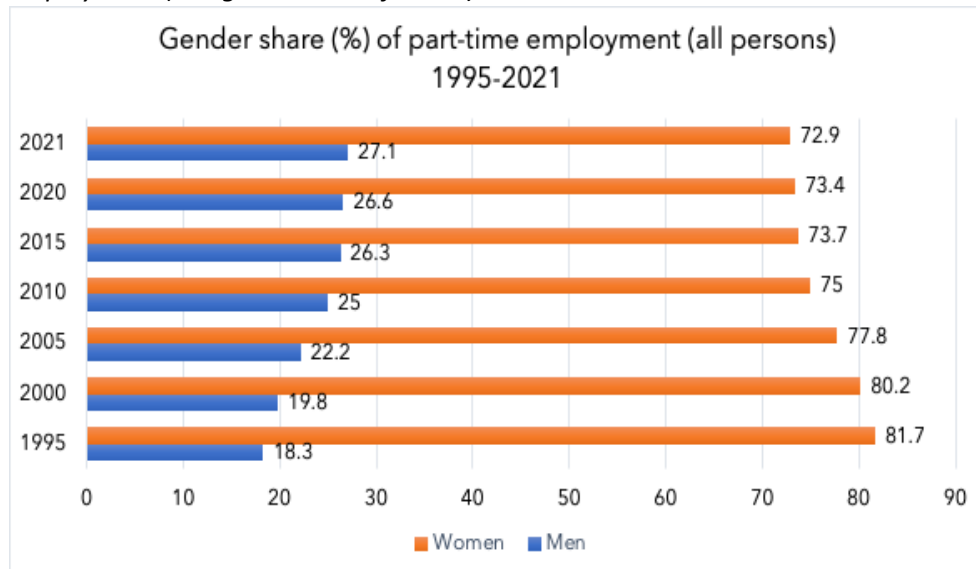
Source: OECD (2022)

Whilst men are proportionately poorly represented in part-time work, in absolute numbers there are approximately 2.27 million male part-time workers in the UK (of which 1.65 million are employees) (ONS 2022a). Past evidence has centred on part-time work usually representing a choice among men (Delsen 1998; Gregory and Connolly 2008), however long-term upward trends in the numbers of men participating in part-time work (Figure 2.2) call into question whether men are

consciously choosing reduced hours working (Belfield et al. 2017). Green and Livanos (2015) for example suggest rises in the proportion of men working part-time, particularly in lower paid roles, can be attributed to underemployment in some cases, where men would prefer more hours.

Figure 2.2: Men in part-time employment in the UK (thousands)
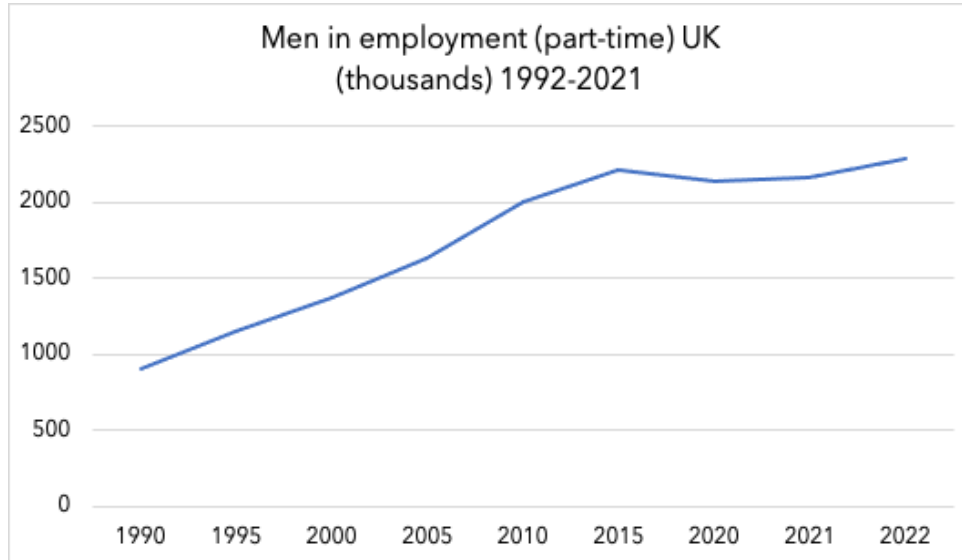
Source: ONS (2023)

2.3.2 The impact of parenting on men and women's levels of engagement with paid work

Gaps between levels of employment participation, working hours and wages exist between men and women without children, but widen with parenthood (Andrew et al. 2021). Patterns are deeply entrenched despite development of a legislative framework designed to promote family-friendly working practices, greater sharing of caring responsibilities between mothers and fathers and the right to request flexible working. In summary, The Flexible Working Regulations, introduced in 2003, for parents of young and disabled children, now apply to all workers with 26 weeks' service[2] irrespective of parental or carer responsibilities. In addition, Shared Parental Leave (SPL) regulations came into force in December 2014, presenting options for mothers and fathers to decide how to divide care responsibilities in the weeks and months following the birth of children, including new opportunities for

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[2]The Flexible Working (Procedural Requirements) Regulations, SI 2002/3207, and Flexible Working (Eligibility, Complaints and Remedies) SI 2002/3236 are amendments to the Employment Act 2002, s47, consolidated in the Employment Rights Act 1996, ss80F–80I.

men to take up to 50 weeks of parental leave (GOV.UKb). These measures appear to have made little difference to the gendering of parental responsibilities. As Niemisto et al (2021:699) argue, "*despite the apparent gender neutrality of parenthood demands, they remain highly gendered*" with caring seen as principally the mother's role, consequently more mothers cease work or reduce working time for childcare reasons. Furthermore, although the traditional male breadwinner model is now less popular than the dual full-time career model or a modified approach where one partner (usually the female) works part-time and the other full-time (Mussida and Patimo 2021), gendered differences in activity persist (Ciccia and Bleijenbergh 2014). Bear and Glick (2017:780) argue that "*social realities reinforce gendered assumptions about family roles*", in other words, tenacious gendered norms prevail, regardless of progressive statutory rights. The ramifications for women are often cited in the leisure literature for example, the combination of paid employment and greater responsibilities in the home amounts to a higher total workload and less and lower quality leisure time for women than men (Haller, Hadler and Kaup 2013). Indeed, ONS data (2017) shows that in 2015 women spent on average 40 minutes less per day undertaking leisure pursuits than men. Male part-time working, however, offers scope for couples to achieve greater gender equality in the home and for fathers to be more involved in the care of their children, with potential benefits for all (Warren 2022; Bunning 2020). Indeed, Borgkvist et al (2018:703) argue "*enabling men to spend more time with their families could confer benefits to the health and wellbeing of men, their partners and their children*".

With reference to those in highly skilled occupations, Blair-Loy (2004) struggles to understand why work devotion norms are so strong and frequently adopted among these groups, when they are among those with the most positional power and autonomy to resist. Workplace commitment literature is illuminating, it recognises that commitment to work is loaded with rational, emotional and normative elements which equate to working long hours, loyalty and self-sacrifice to meet employer demands (Lincoln and Kalleberg 1990). In her study of female finance executives, Blair-Loy (2004:290) identifies how "*particularly for career committed women, the work devotion schema competes with the schema of family devotion*", where family devotion is normative and expected. This work resonates with Hakim's preference theory (2000), where rather than being able to have it all

(successful career and dedication to family), Hakim controversially argues that women exercise a preference to be home/family oriented, and their predilection for family devotion explains their over-representation in part-time work. In Blair-Loy's study the female executives prioritised work and either remained childfree or paid for childcare, ultimately, she concludes, *"the work devotion mandate favours men over women, women without children over women with children and those who can afford to hire full-time caregivers over those who lack the financial resources or who wish to be involved parents"* (2004:309). In other work however, Wheatley (2022) finds that those in higher level occupations can strike a better work-life balance than those in lower-level occupations as their jobs invariably permit greater flexibility in terms of when to work and where to work, offering greater opportunities to work from home and to organise working hours around other commitments.

In tackling work-family conflict, rational economic choice (Becker 1991) suggests that couples make rational financial decisions when determining how to organise caring and working. Due to a range of factors, including the persistence of the gender-pay gap, it is statistically more likely that men's hourly earnings pre-parenthood will be higher than their female partner's, indeed, a YouGov report (Waldersee 2018) shows that 60 percent of men in relationships earn more than their partners, compared to just over one in four (26 percent) of women. In many cases the rational economic choice is for couples to sacrifice the lower (female) income rather than the higher male derived income, resulting in more mothers than fathers adopting the primary care role. Andrew et al (2021) however, show that whether they earn the most or the least, women are always more likely to stop working or work less post-motherhood. Indeed, they find that the employment rate of women drops to below 75 percent (from over 90 percent) when they become mothers, and weekly hours of work fall from around 40 to under 30 among those mothers remaining in paid work, but among men average hours of work change very little post fatherhood. Further, hourly wages stagnate for working mothers, but continue to grow for fathers. Andrew et al (2021:10) conclude *"the implication is that families' decisions about paid work and childcare when they start a family are not merely, or even primarily, the result of where the mother's and father's careers are at that point. Other factors, such as gendered preferences over how to share domestic and work responsibilities, may also be important"*. They add that

social expectations on men to be the breadwinner and women to be primary carers propagate normative arrangements whereby the man's career is prioritised. Niemisto et al (2021:697) concur, arguing *"the institution and experience of motherhood, specifically 'good motherhood' persists as a powerful social force"* propelling women to de-emphasise their careers to mother, even in Nordic countries where female full-time working and career-dedication is advanced, backed by government and businesses. Warren and Lyonette (2018) meanwhile, argue that occupational class is a strong signifier of differences among female part-timers in terms of why they work part-time.

2.3.3 The gendering of parenting roles during the Covid-19 pandemic

The first Covid-19 lockdown period in 2020, substantially increased the demands of childcare and domestic work in households. During this period Andrew et al (2021) show mothers were at the forefront of this extra workload, irrespective of their paid work role or income level, and their working time was more disturbed by additional responsibilities, causing tensions between work and family. These findings are consistent with Warren and Lyonette's 2021 analysis of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women's lives. Whilst focused particularly on the burden carried by working class women in the UK, Warren and Lyonette (2021) concur with Andrew et al (2021) that women in employment did much more housework, childcare and home-schooling than men during the pandemic, and indeed their share of childcare and housework expanded after the pandemic. They lament that the pandemic could have given couples an opportunity to reflect upon, and potentially change daily regimes of domestic work and other activities, yet gendered positions seemed to become more ingrained. Greater movement is reported among professional and managerial workers who were more likely to switch to homeworking during the pandemic. Among this group Warren and Lyonette (2021) show that over a third of male professionals/managers altered their work patterns and one in ten decreased their working hours, whilst nearly 50 percent of women in such roles reconfigured their work schedule and around a fifth reduced their hours. These figures imply that some fathers therefore did alter work regimes to support childcare and housework in the pandemic, but more mothers did so, adding to their already greater time spent undertaking duties in the home

realm. These patterns were replicated in other countries, Craig and Churchill (2021) for example, show similar trends in Australia, and in Italy, Del Boca et al (2020) demonstrate that most of the extra housework and childcare responsibilities induced by the pandemic were borne by women, with childcare being more equally shared than domestic chores.

2.3.4 Part-time work, age, health and marital status

Whilst participation in part-time work is highly gendered, it is also differently patterned by age. Figure 2.3 shows that although more women of all ages work part-time, men and women's use of part-time work is most closely aligned in younger age groups (16-19 and 20-24), as individuals tend to use part-time work to supplement the costs of study or gain a foothold in the labour market (Evans and Yusof 2021). Beyond the age of 25, the gap between the number of men and women in part-time work diverges markedly.

Figure 2.3: Pattern of men and women's participation in part-time employment by age
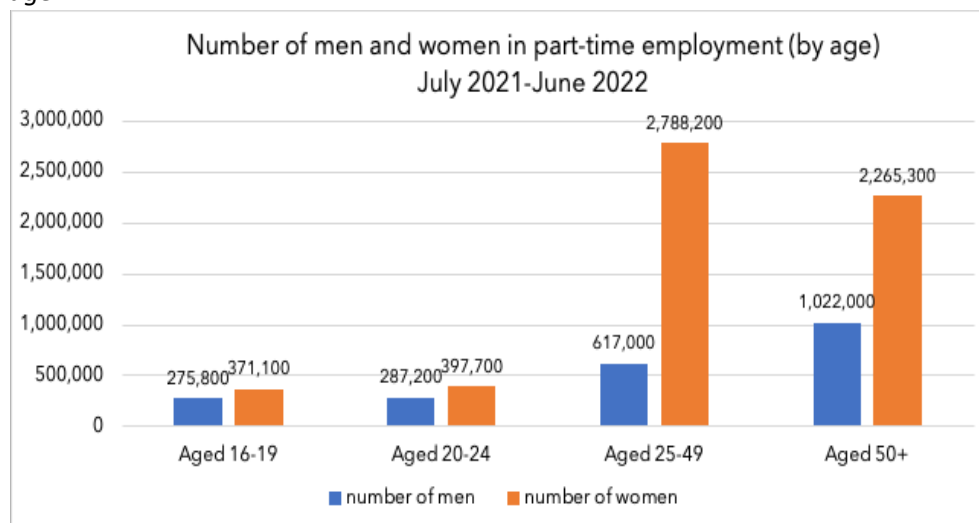
Source: ONS (2022b)

Exploring the data further to focus attention on middle-aged men's use of part-time work, figure 2.4 shows that the percentage of men in part-time employment between the ages of 55-59 is higher than for men aged 40-54, this is likely to reflect a proportion of men aged 55+ using part-time work as an early retirement strategy (Delsen 1998; Warren and Lyonette 2020). Growth in the incidence of male part-time employment over the period 2000-2021 is evident across all disaggregated age bands of men aged 40-59 but notably there is an almost two-fold rise for men in

their 40s between 2005 and 2010, this sudden uplift was likely triggered by the economic crisis 2007-2010, yet figures have remained relatively static for this age group since, with some small decreases in more recent years.

Figure 2.4: Incidence (%) of part-time employment among men in the UK (by age)
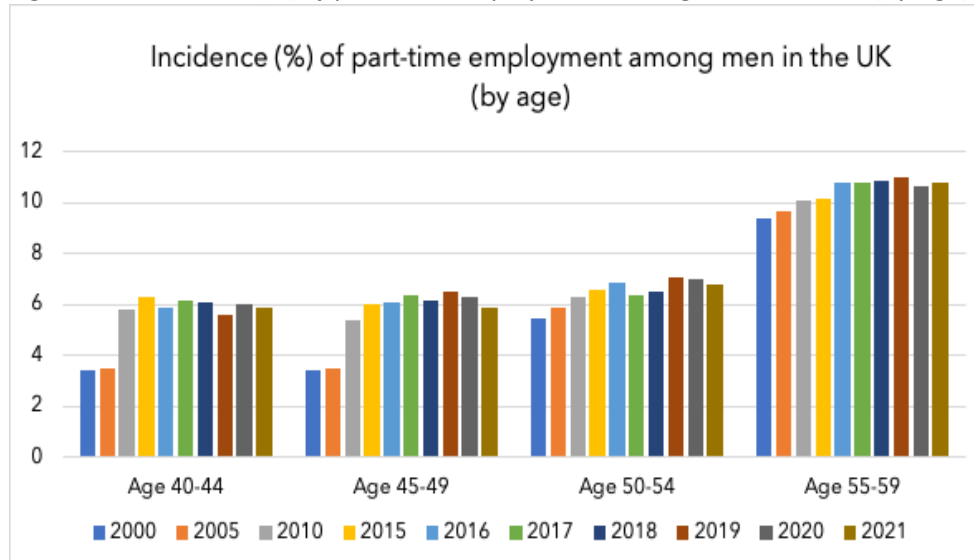
Source: OECD (2022)

In terms of gender share, figure 2.5 shows incremental increases in men's gender share of part-time work relative to women's this is attributable to a slight drop, followed by a levelling out of women's use of part-time work (see Figure 2.1) and the corresponding rise in women's use of full-time work (Devine and Foley 2020).

Figure 2.5: Men's gender share (%) of part-time employment in the UK (by age)
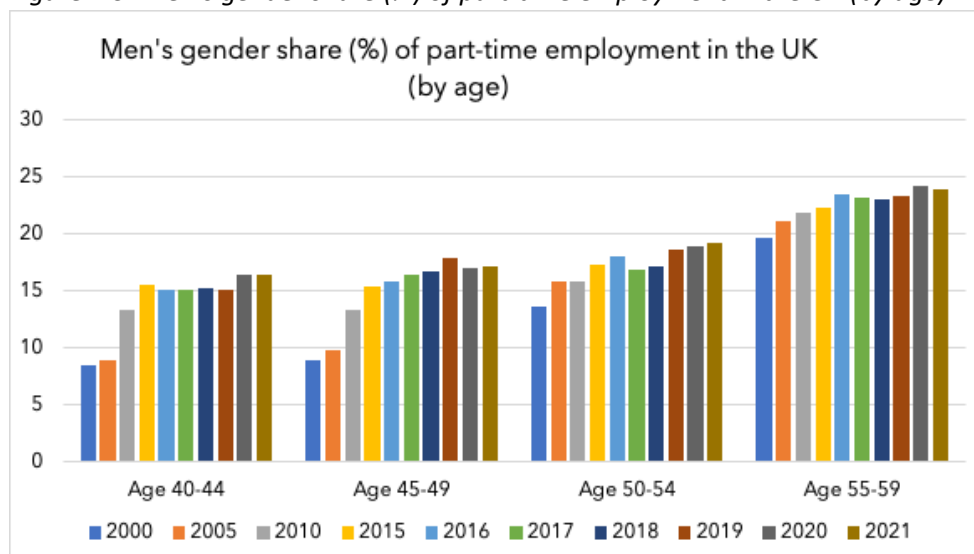
Source: OECD (2022)

Whilst the incidence of part-time work of men aged 40-44 and 45-49 reached 5.9 percent in 2021 from 3.4 percent in 2000 (Figure 2.4), the U-shaped pattern of men's engagement with part-time work described by Delsen (1998) persists. As Figure 2.6 shows part-time work among men remains most prevalent among younger and older men in employment, yet the greater proportions of men in other age groups moving into part-time work is evident.

Figure 2.6 Incidence (%) of male part-time employment (by age) 2000-2021
Source: OECD (2022)
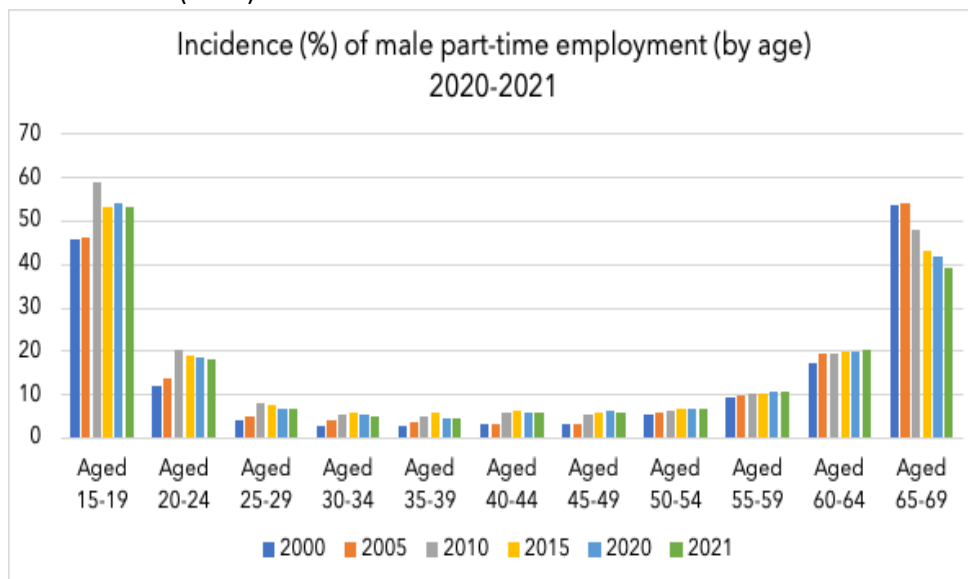
Similarly, figure 2.7 shows that men's gender share of part-time work in the outer age groups remains strong; men make up 41.8 percent of part-time workers among 15-19-year-olds and constitute 43 percent of part-time workers aged 65–69-year-olds and 33 percent of those aged 60-64. Considering the full range of ages for the past two decades (2000-2021) the general trend is that men's gender share of part-time work has increased in all middle-aged groups (accepting year on year fluctuations), resulting in a higher floor to the 'U' (Warren 2022).

Figure 2.7 Men's gender share of part-time employment (by age) 2000-2021
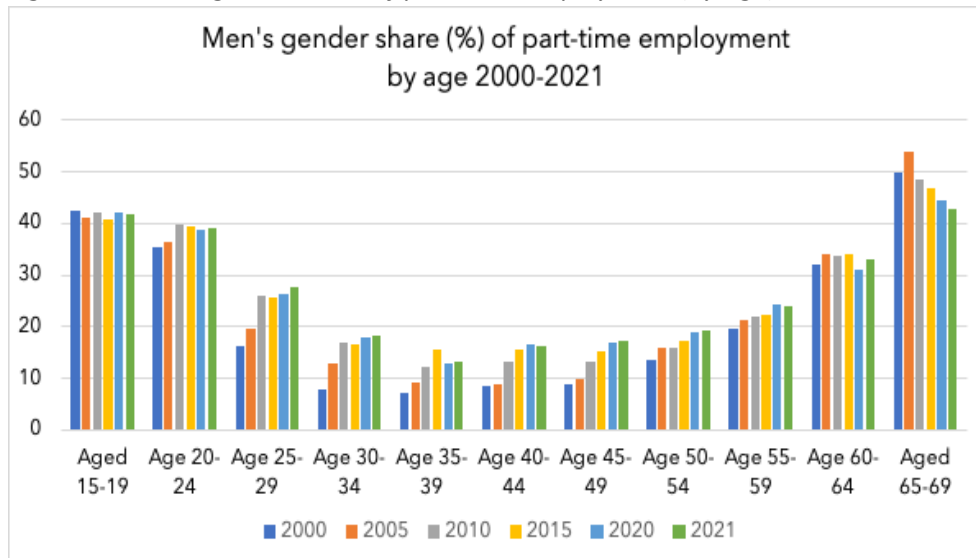
Source: OECD (2022)

Belfield et al. (2017) use the polarised terms 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' to distinguish between those who actively want part-time work and those who are using part-time work in place of alternate full-time work. In terms of voluntary motives for working part-time, ONS data (2022b) for January to December 2021 shows that in the UK, 5.6 million men and women in part-time work did not want full-time work, Figure 2.8 illustrates that of these, 26.1 percent wanted to spend more time with family, a fifth consider themselves to be financially secure and a further 15.5 percent say they earn enough. Although childcare is assumed to be a reason why many women (mothers) work part-time, Figure 2.8 shows that childcare is cited by just 4.7 percent of those in part time work who signal they do not want a full-time job.

Figure 2.8 People in part-time work who do not want a full-time job by reason

People in part-time work who did not want a full-time job by reason, UK, January to Dec 2021 (expressed as a % of all part-time workers who did not want a full time job (not seasonally adjusted)
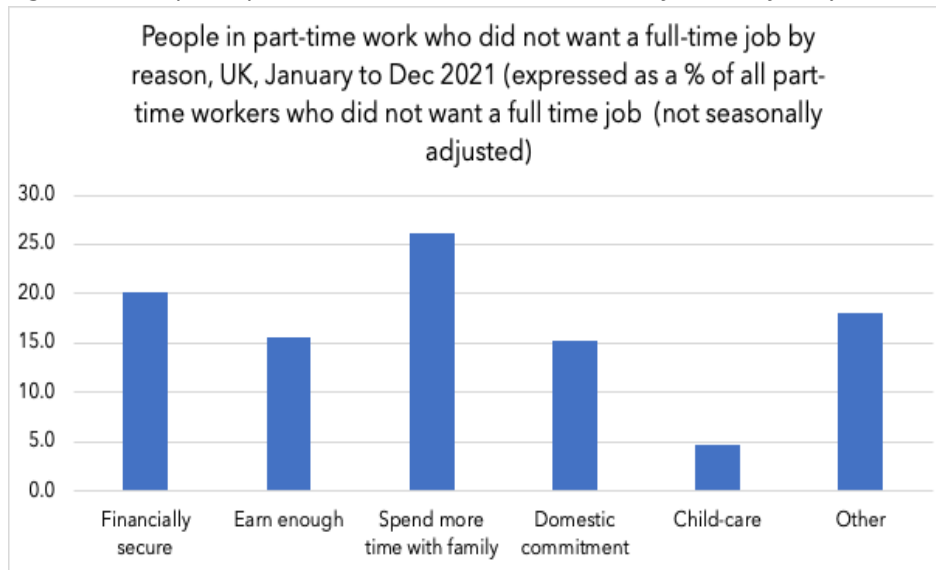
Source: ONS (2022b)

ONS data (2022a) meanwhile reveals that in July to September 2022, 358,000 male part-time workers could not find a full-time job (16 percent of the total), the remainder either did not want a full-time job, were ill/disabled or were students/still at school. Focusing on involuntary part-time work among those in the core working age bracket 24-54, Figure 2.9 shows that women's share of involuntary part-time employment is higher than men's, suggesting the comparatively smaller proportions of men working part-time in this age range may not be as susceptible to involuntary part-time employment, or at least to prolonged periods of involuntary part-time working as women. On the other hand, voluntary reasons alone appear to offer an inadequate explanation for the sudden and significant increases in part-time working among men in their 40s between 2005 and 2010 (Figure 2.5) which have persisted since. For both sexes, major fillips in involuntary part-time employment 2010 to 2015 from 2005 levels, reflect the aftermath of the late 2000s recession when employers increased their use of flexible labour in response to economic conditions (Bell and Blanchflower 2011), in these circumstances men and women are more susceptible to involuntary part-time working (Grimshaw and Rafferty 2011).

Figure 2.9: Share (%) of employed men and women aged 25-54 in involuntary part-time employment in the UK
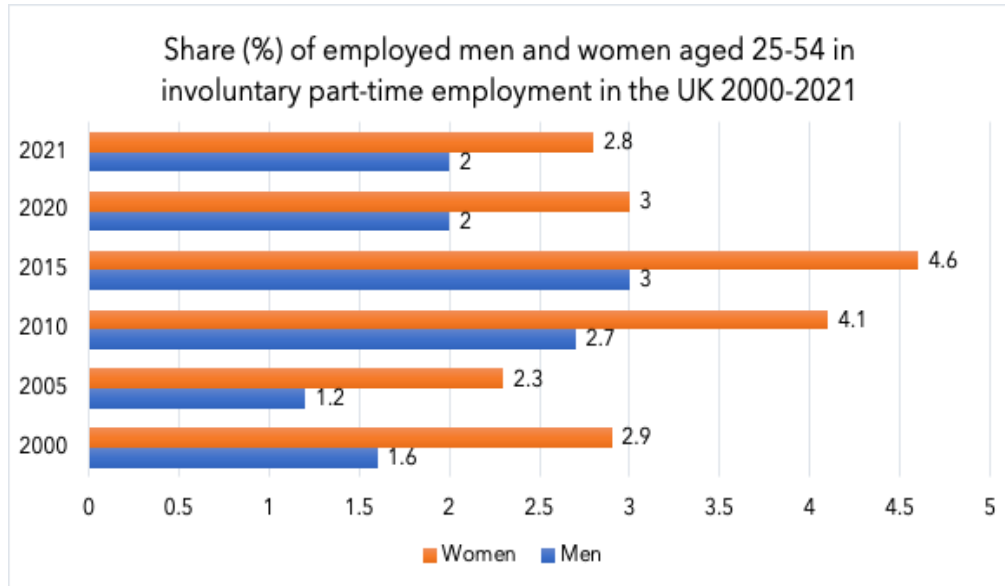
Source: OECD (2022)

Whilst the rationale for women's participation in part-time work is largely understood to be oriented around primary responsibilities for childcare (Nightingale 2021), less is known about why men work part-time. Thompson and Wheatley (2019) find several motives, ranging from a concerted choice for some (including older men close to retirement), but the challenged lives and circumstances of others who resort to part-time work at certain times over their life course. Their study is consistent with Delsen (1998) and Wheatley, Hardill, and Lawton (2018) in showing that men are most likely to use part-time work in early or late working life, but they emphasise that while part-time work may not be that common proportionally among middle-aged men, notable numbers are nevertheless engaged in this form of employment. They identify men in middle-aged groups in part-time employment, across a range of occupations, whose working patterns are influenced by a mix of personal, familial, and external labour market factors.

In extending these broad patterns to explore other demographic factors, Thompson and Wheatley (2019) find that part-time work is less common among married men (11.6 percent), and men who report being divorced/separated (10 percent), likely reflecting commitments to their spouse/ex-spouse and greater potential for familial and other expenditure during these life stages. However, number of

children is positively associated with working part-time among men, suggesting childcare is a factor in some cases. The study finds that male part-time workers report doing 6.2 hours per week of housework (42 minutes more than men in full-time work), but women still do almost twice as much. Men working part-time are also more likely to report caring commitments for ill/elderly relatives and more male part-time workers have a disability or long-term illness themselves (approximately 30 percent), compared with less than a quarter of men in full-time employment. These latter findings appear to reflect the dramatic increase in the number of male part-time workers with an illness or disability (Figure 2.10). Faced with debilitating health conditions, part-time work is an option for those who might otherwise cease working (Green 2017).

Figure 2.10: Part-time workers; Ill or disabled: UK: male (seasonally adjusted)
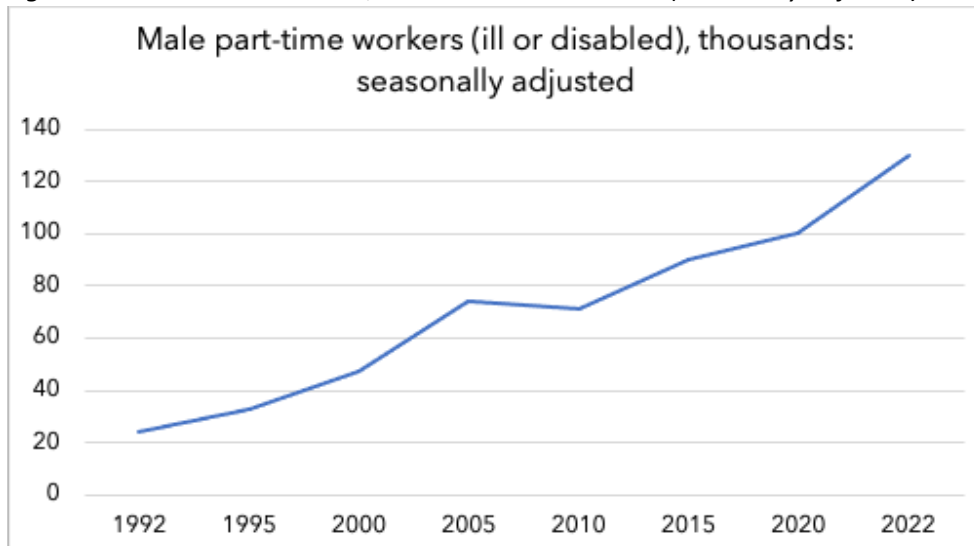
Source: ONS (2023)

Thompson and Wheatley (2019) show that while patterns of part-time employment among men broadly reflect those noted in previous research, hidden complexities lie beneath the data when a range of demographic and occupational factors are explored. Their analysis concludes that there are three broad groups of male part-time workers; those reporting better quality jobs and high job satisfaction who tend to be older men; young men who work minimal hours in low-skilled, low paid work, yet appear content; and, a middle group of men (average age of 40) crowded in low quality part-time work who face labour market constraints and limits on working time due to personal and family factors. These findings illustrate that men work part-time for a variety of reasons.

2.3.5 Part-time work at senior levels

Durbin and Tomlinson (2014) report that female part-time workers are unevenly distributed across occupations with clusters in customer services, administrative, secretarial, and elementary occupations, while Warren (2022) notes that male part-time workers are even more likely to occupy low level positions. Fagan et al (2014) recognise these patterns, suggesting opportunities to work part-time are scarcer in highly skilled occupations, and where they do exist, they are unlikely to be at the most senior grades. Deeply entrenched ideal worker norms of long working hours and staunch commitment to work (Acker, 1990) stigmatise part-time professionals and others involved in family care for deprioritising work (Epstein et al. 1999), reinvigorating the notion that devotion to work is a necessary behaviour for ideal worker status (Blair-Loy 2004). Neimisto et al (2021:699) agree that career success rests on work devotion schema and argue that men are more likely than women to comply, *"while it is rare for either men or women to achieve a successful career and devote themselves to family, men more often choose to prioritise career success over familial obligations and women the opposite"*. The work devotion narrative tied to the normative (male) ideal worker model helps to explain why men, particularly those in highly skilled occupations, are disinclined to work part-time. Data presented in Table 2.1 shows the absolute number and percentage of employed/self-employed men (000s) working part-time in SOC 2020, skill level 4 occupations as of June 2022.

Table 2.1: Occupation (SOC 2020, skill level 4) by sex (male) by employment type (part-time) - UK - June 2022

Occupation (SOC 2020, skill level 4)	Employed/self-employed men (count) working part-time	Employed/self-employed men (%) working part-time
Managers, Directors and Senior Official (total)	179,400	2.2
Corporate Managers and Directors	107,800	1.3
Other Managers and Proprietors	71,700	0.9
Professional Occupations (total)	343,900	4.3
Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals	85,200	1.1
Health Professionals	56,800	0.7
Teaching and other Educational Professionals	98,200	1.2
Business, Media, and Public Service Professionals	103,700	1.3

Source: ONS (2022b)

Part-time work remains an unaccustomed form of employment for men working in this spread of occupations (mean 3.25 percent). Male part-time working is more common in professional occupations than among managers, directors and senior officials reflecting the position set out in chapter 1 that managerial responsibilities necessitate presence and facetime (Munck 2001). Teaching, media, and public service professionals make up over half of all men working part-time in professional occupations, likely reflecting more receptive attitudes towards flexible working arrangements in the public sector (van Wanrooy et al. 2013) and conducive work environments.

Figures 2.11 and 2.12 show trends over time in part-time working in highly skilled occupations (by gender) 2010-2021 based on latest complete years of data recorded by the Annual Population Survey (ONS 2022b). The data illustrates gradual increases for both men and women but from a very low base, whilst use of part-time work, particularly in professional occupations is consistently much more established among women than among men.

Figure 2.11 Percentage employed part-time as managers, directors, and senior officials (by gender) 2010-2021
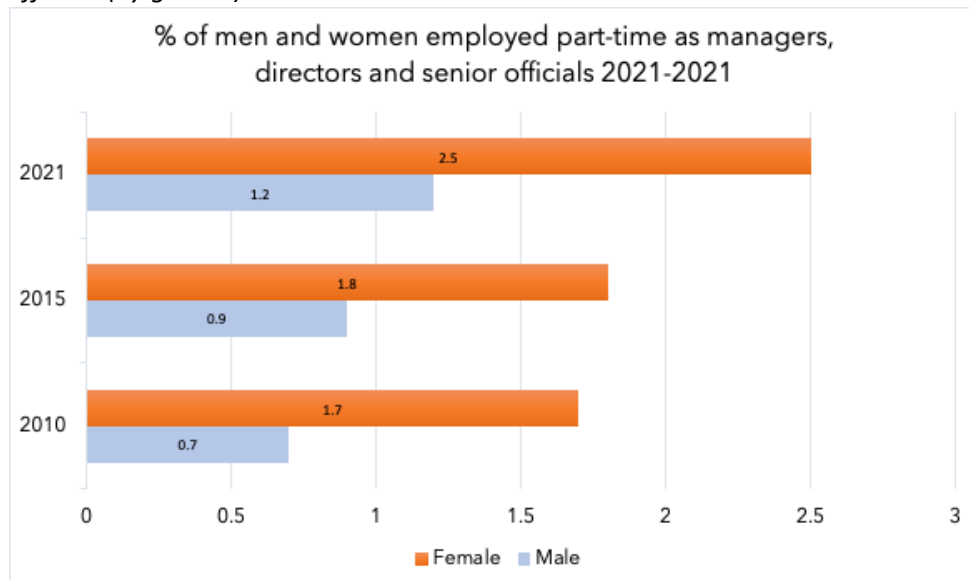
Source: ONS (2022b)

Figure 2.12: Percentage employed part-time in professional occupations (by gender) 2010-2021
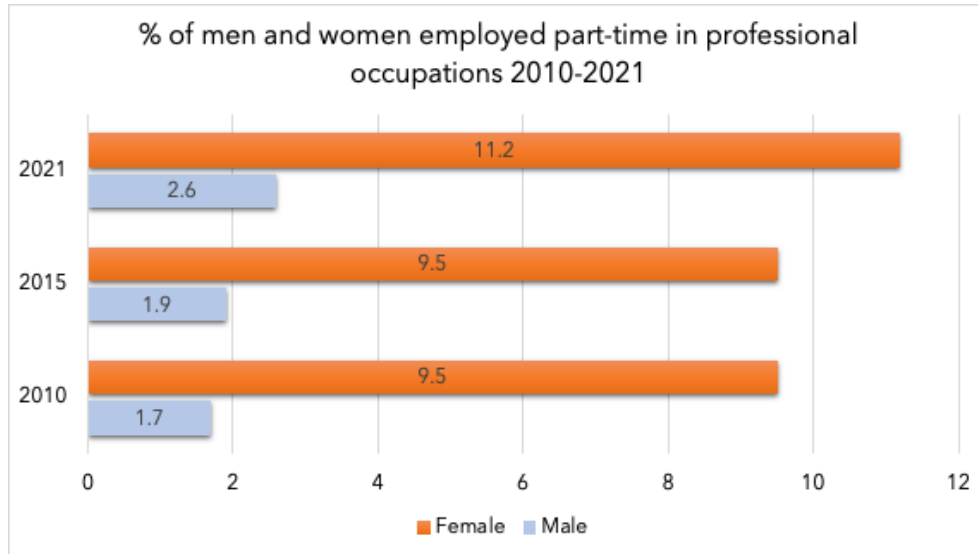
Source: ONS (2022b)

Given the low propensity for people in highly skilled roles to work part-time, the TimeWise Power List (2022), aims to dispel the notion that successful careers at this level must be full-time and entail long working hours. The list identifies successful senior ranked individuals (including, scientists, management consultants, and business professionals) who were hired or promoted on a part-time basis. While entries to the listing are based on nominations and are not statistically representative, a comparison of the first list, (2012), and the latest list (2022), intimates changes in part-time working at senior level:

- In the 2022 list more part-time jobs are combined with other forms of flexible working, designed to accommodate individual circumstances and work requirements, for example, the 2022 list contains four job shares, whereas the 2012 list contained none.
- While women still dominate the listing, the proportion of men working part-time has increased from less than 10% in 2012 to almost a quarter of those appearing on the latest 2022 list.
- Half of the part-time roles featured in the 2022 list are for less than four days a week (2 days per week to 3.5), suggesting that some people working in part-time roles are not simply marginally compressing their hours but have made fundamental changes to their working practices.

2.4 Motives for working part-time

As noted, the increased flexibility that part-time work affords can be perceived positively from both an employer and employee perspective (Fagan et al. 2012; Plantenga and Remery 2010), since it enables firms to use labour to navigate peaks and troughs in demand and reduce costs, whilst offering opportunities for those who want (or need) to engage with work in different ways. Rubery, Keizer and Grimshaw (2016:236), however, argue that flexibility is not the panacea it is often portrayed as, instead it "*has a way of biting back"*. They identify two types of part-time workers; those compromising pay and conditions for flexibility largely on their terms, and those subject to hours/patterns of work which revolve around the needs of the employer foremost. Allied to the latter group there is recognition of involuntary part-time work, where workers cannot secure full-time employment and so settle for part-time work instead (Green and Livanos 2015), and underemployment, where workers want to work more hours than they are offered. Williams et al (2020) claim that whilst underemployment is less common now than it was in the financial crisis of 2008-9 it is higher than unemployment, notwithstanding the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on job availability. They calculate that one in seven workers are underemployed, but this figure masks variation across occupations; underemployment is rare in highly skilled professional and managerial occupations but around one in four of those in manual and elementary jobs report underemployment.

Underemployment and involuntary part-time employment, conflated with jobs in lower occupational classifications marginalises many workers and exposes them to precarity (Nicolaisen, Kavli and Jensen 2019). Kauhanen and Natti (2015) agree that the position of involuntary part-time workers is precarious, their earnings are sub-optimal and sometimes they need more than one part-time job to get-by. On the other hand, workers with greater occupational and/or economic capital are more likely to be able to choose part-time working, yet favourable working conditions and protection against exploitative practices (characteristic of good quality part-time work) is not guaranteed. As Nicolaisen, Kavli and Jensen (2019) indicate (Table 2.2) good, mixed or bad working conditions and levels of social protection can characterise voluntary and involuntary part-time work. The typology shows that voluntary part-time workers with good terms and conditions of work and social

protection occupy an equalised position with full-time workers, whilst for those working part-time involuntarily, good conditions and social protection do not compensate, since these workers desire more hours of work. As reflected in the discussion above, in other cases involuntary part-time workers are exposed to a state of persistent insecurity in terms of employment and income; where bad conditions and poor social protection prevail, their situation is compounded such that their lives are often lived on the periphery of society. In contrast the typology suggests that voluntary part-time workers who experience bad conditions and poor levels of social protection are not trapped, this presupposes that they have the credentials to secure better quality work and that the labour market conditions are conducive, the fact these workers choose part-time work does not necessarily mean they are able to choose whether or not to work at all.

Table 2.2: Typology of part-time work and part-time workers (Nicolaisen, Kavli and Jensen (2019:12)

	Working conditions and social protection		
	Good	Mixed	Bad
Voluntary	Equalised	Semi-secured	Transitionals
Involuntary	Underemployed	Precarious	Marginalised

2.4.1 Voluntary reasons for working part-time

Voluntary motives for working part-time tend to be diverse encapsulating both practical and lifestyle-related reasons. Loretto and Vickerstaff (2015) cite survey evidence showing a propensity for workers of both sexes over the age of 50 to work part-time. Part-time work in later life stages is typical for women who have used it across their life span to fit work around other (often familial) commitments. Lorretto and Vickerstaff (2015) maintain that patterns of considering others stay with women; they are more likely to retire when their partner's do or drop their working hours to free jobs for younger workers because they perceive this is expected of them. For older men part-time work is often a pre-retirement strategy or a way of extending their working lives once retired from full-time work. Hofacker and Konig (2013) concur that older men tend to use part-time work on route to retirement yet the chance to do so is restricted to those advantaged by good pensions and conducive life circumstances. Despite issues of feasibility, Loretto and Vickerstaff (2015) argue part-time work holds attraction in later life because it

allows workers to manage health conditions, provide elder care, or care for grandchildren. In this sense part-time work might be seen as a way of overcoming tensions between working and caring, for those facing competing sets of responsibilities (Zelezna 2018). On a practical level Barnes, Smeaton and Taylor (2009) maintain that flexible working (including part-time work) provides opportunities to work and earn for the third of workers aged 50+ with a long-term health condition.

Fagan et al (2014) maintain that for many, external factors affect use of part-time work, for example, care for dependent children or elderly/disabled relatives, part-time work is thus voluntary to the extent that it is feasible given these commitments. Surveys have however demonstrated that affordable care options would prompt significant proportions of voluntary part-time workers to work longer hours (Fagan 2004). In other cases, flexible working, including part-time work, is a lifestyle choice. Emslie and Hunt's study (2009) considered the work-life-balance deliberations of individuals in mid-life, when childcare was no longer an issue. Their study showed some evidence of men altering their mindset to deprioritise work, but women remained closely associated with home and family, reflecting traditional gender identities, regardless of whether they worked part-time or full-time. More generally Higgins, Duxbury and Johnson (2000) suggest people work part-time because they do not need the income or are not willing to work full-time. Research highlights phenomena such as *"voluntary simplicity"* where individuals choose a less materialistic lifestyle and seek a better quality of life which is time rich (Aidar and Daniels 2020:1), and downshifting, a deliberate move to create a lifestyle where paid work is less central and leisure time is accentuated (Sorrell, Gatersleben and Druckman 2020), whilst Persson, Larsson and Nassen (2022) applaud the socioecological outcomes derived from working time reduction, including reducing stress, making way for others to work (thus reducing unemployment), and reconfiguring consumption habits to support environmental policy. They argue however that workers who take this path may be affected by work intensification (particularly among higher occupational groups), and by money worries.

2.4.2 Involuntary reasons for working part-time

Whilst section 2.4.1 illustrates that some people choose part-time work to improve work-life integration and manage other commitments, it can, as mentioned, also be an involuntary work mode, driven by labour market conditions and employers' demands for labour (Fagan et al. 2012: Fagan and Walthery 2011) or indicative of underemployment. Indeed, for many households, part-time income is insufficient and undesirable (Fagan et al. 2014). Insarauto (2021) finds that being in a low-level occupation and on a temporary contract, are strong predictors of being underemployed and engaged in part-time work involuntarily.

Unsurprisingly given multiple dimensions of difference among men, Thompson and Wheatley (2019) cite a range of both voluntary and involuntary motives for men engaging in part-time work and a propensity for middle-aged men's working patterns to be shaped by personal, familial and external labour market factors. Eagly and Steffen (1986), on the other hand, observe that part-time work among men is generally associated with inability to find full-time employment and be the main breadwinner; a role which many men still aspire to (Benschop et al. 2013). Warren and Lyonette (2020:399) however warn against approaches which categorise men into two groups, those choosing to work part-time and those who would rather secure full-time hours, they claim "*it is vital to move beyond this over-simplistic dichotomy to understand male part-time employment more holistically, and we should certainly take inspiration from the larger and more established study of female part-time employment in order to do so*".

Sections 2.3 and 2.4 of this chapter raise an interesting debate concerning the interplay between choice, preference, and voluntariness where part-time working is concerned. As has been illustrated during the breadth of the discussion, all three terms are used within the literature to frame explanations for individuals engaging in part-time work. It is noted however that whilst the distinction between voluntary and involuntary forms of part-time working is applied to men and women's use of part-time work and features in ONS data, the act of choosing (choice) is generally used in discussions concerning men and privileged individuals entering part-time work, whilst the language of preference (encouraged by Hakim 2000), is seemingly reserved as an explanation for women (particularly mothers' use of part-time

work), as if women have an innate predisposition to engage in less paid market work than men. Setting aside the apparent gender biases enmeshed in the terminology, the terms voluntary, choice or preference suggest men and women's uptake of part-time work is unproblematic and removed from structural considerations, such as the cost and availability of quality childcare, income levels, job availability, housing costs, health and wellbeing, geographical factors and so forth, and furthermore ingrained social norms concerning the roles males and females should respectively perform are insignificant. In essence the terminology is guilty of overlooking the wide-ranging social and economic realities facing individuals and families which shape and constrain men and women's participation patterns in paid work. Whilst conceivably some (privileged) individuals will be free to make unincumbered life choices, including how much of their lives to dedicate to paid work, for most people decisions around the amount of paid work and unpaid work they do and how this is apportioned, and managed on a day to day basis at the level of the household is socially and materially constructed, and so multi-faceted and complex, rather than entirely free and unfettered. The terms choice, preference, and voluntariness in the context of part-time work should therefore be used reservedly and with full appreciation that they are contestable concepts. It should also be acknowledged that employers have exacerbated these debates by embedding deep and long-standing demarcations in working time, in turn creating the perfect conditions for cultural and social meanings to become etched upon part-time work on the one hand, and full-time work on the other. Without such entrenched historic norms and influences on ways of organising working time, the amount of paid work individuals undertake, and their rationale for how much of their lives they dedicate to paid work might arguably have become far less relevant.

2.5 The quality of part-time work

The job quality literature is concerned with the characteristics of paid work which have positive and negative impacts on workers' physical and mental state (Green 2006). Several taxonomies of job quality have been developed (for example, Haines III, Dorey-Demers and Martin 2018; Connell and Burgess 2016; Holman 2013; Vidal, 2013; Felstead et al. 2019); consistently these indicate that high-quality jobs involve more task discretion and autonomy, higher pay and job security, and opportunities

for training and development (Bartling, Fehr and Schmidt 2012). In contrast, low-quality jobs display low autonomy, skill, pay, training, job security, and are often linked with highly flexible forms of employment, including zero-hour contracts and agency work (Avram 2022). The quality of part-time work is much debated and variable. Fagan et al (2014) report that organisations sometimes use part-time working to accommodate workers' needs, helping to retain them, in other cases part-time work is used to optimise operational flexibility and/or create a pipeline of cheap labour. Owing to the latter approach, part-time work is commonly perceived as a poor quality and temporary form of employment (Fagan et al. 2012). Reliable measures of work quality however are difficult to gather as the job holder's rationale for working will affect whether a job is evaluated as good quality or poor quality (Warren and Lyonette 2020). Indeed, convenience factors may cause part-time workers to view their jobs positively and overlook arguably negative job quality indicators.

Part-time work undoubtedly offers some benefits to employees, for example a better work-life balance (Lewis and Humbert 2010), yet Choi, Leiter and Tomaskovic-Devey (2008) suggest that autonomy to choose when, where and how to work tends to be limited to highly skilled workers, whose employers are more likely to trust them to self-manage. Given that much part-time work is in low-skilled, heavily supervised work (Warren and Lyonette 2020) and disproportionately clustered in a slim range of poorly paid service-sector jobs and administrative work in which women predominate (Fagan et al. 2014), the prospect of good quality part-time work, judged at least on these measures, is far from guaranteed. It should, however, be noted that jobs are rarely wholly high quality or low quality, rather there are shades and nuances along a continuum (Warren and Lyonette 2018); high quality jobs can, for example, present negative characteristics including intensive working practices and poor work-life balance (Kalleberg 2012).

As a flexible form of working, some elements of higher quality part-time jobs but more typically low-quality part-time jobs reflect precarious work (Rubery and Grimshaw 2016). Campbell and Price (2016:14) conceptualise precarity on five analytical levels; "*precariousness in employment, precarious work, precarious workers individually and as an emerging class, and precarity as a general*

condition". Whilst precarity has always been a feature of life for some, Standing (2012:591) identifies the modern precariat as *"a contrived structural feature of global capitalism".* He argues that globalisation and neo-liberalism have created high levels of competition, and so trends for organisations to use part-time, temporary, and casual variable hours contracts, for example, to curtail costs and optimise profits, this approach leads to the commodification of labour and insecure employment for many workers.

Precarious work practices are widespread; they are likely to be present in all types or forms of organisation and adversely affect many workers' experiences of work. According to Vosko (2010:2) precarious work is shaped by a complex interplay of factors, namely *"the relationship between employment status, form of employment, and dimensions of labour market insecurity, as well as social context and social location, such as gender, or legal and political categories, such as citizenship"*. It is often difficult for precarious workers to commit to an occupation as the type of labour they supply is flexible, they often need to be over-qualified for the work, and wages and benefits are poor (Standing 2014). When in-between jobs, they must wait for work to become available, referred to as *"doing timepass"* (Jeffrey and Young 2012:645) and/or engage in *"reproductive work"* (Standing 2014:964) in the form of preparation or (re)training to improve their chances of securing work. Those in the precariat thus experience volatile income streams and constant uncertainty in their lives (Waite 2009). The following subsections consider key aspects of job quality with reference to part-time work.

2.5.1 Pay

In the UK, it is recognised that full-time work offers better relative pay and benefits than part-time work (Rubery 1998). Beatson (2019:20) concurs, arguing that there has been a *"long-standing part-time pay penalty that applies even when correcting for hours worked"*, this pattern prevails despite the introduction of the Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000. Figure 2.13 shows that mean hourly pay is higher for full-time workers than for part-time workers. Men working full-time for example earn on average almost £6 more per hour than men working part-time, among women the differential is smaller, yet women working full-time still on average earn just over £3.50 more per hour than

women working part-time. The mean hourly earnings of male and female part-time workers are similar (£14.59 for men and £14.55 for women).

Figure 2.13: Mean hourly pay (£) excluding overtime of male and female, full-time and part-time workers (UK)
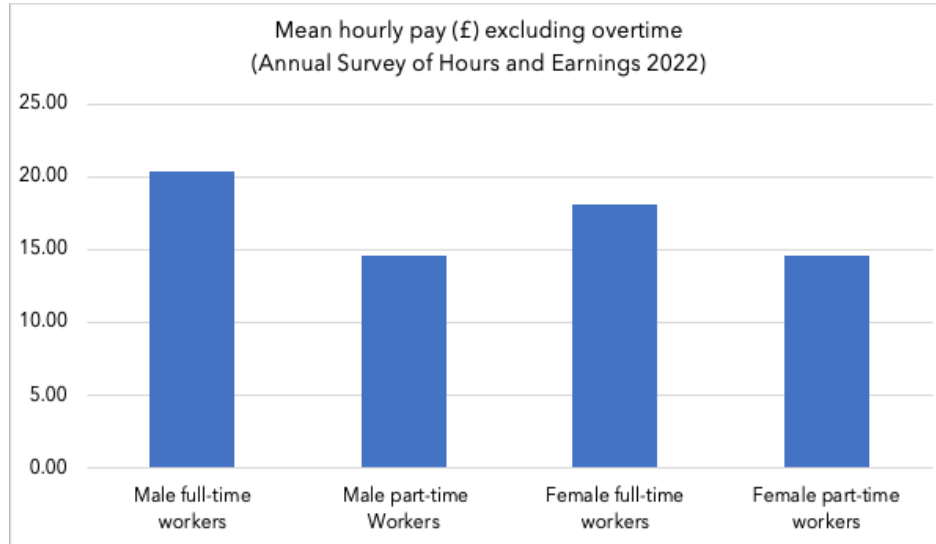
Source: ONS (2022c)

The differences in pay rates between full and part-time work is often attributed to the fact that part-time work is less common in highly paid jobs (Manning and Petrongola 2006). Indeed, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2022 (ONS, 2022c) shows considerable differences owing to occupation and age as well as work mode. Those earning the least tend to be young part-time workers (aged 16-21) in the hospitality sector or other elementary roles, whilst the highest earning employees are full-time, aged 35-39, clustered in professional and managerial occupations in ICT and finance and insurance. Moreover, part-time jobs are overrepresented in low paying occupations and sectors in the UK and part-time workers often find themselves trapped in low pay with little chance of wage progression, unless they switch into full-time work (Nightingale, 2019). In other work, Insurato (2021) argues that due to poor rates of pay, part-time work is frequently seen as providing a top-up wage, which in turn exacerbates the notion that part-time jobs belong to the secondary labour market. Whilst this view prevails part-time work is likely to remain associated with inferior pay.

2.5.2 Job satisfaction, job intensity and autonomy

Working part-time has been linked with higher levels of job satisfaction (Gregory and Connolly 2008), although evidence for such an association is conflicting (Wheatley 2017a). In their analysis of the juxtaposition between job satisfaction and job quality in part-time work, Warren and Lyonette (2020:394) find that "*after an extended period of economic turmoil and persistent austerity (with rising costs and stagnating wages, etc.), satisfaction with the quality of part-time jobs dropped substantially for all but the small group of high-level workers demonstrating an increasing polarisation of job satisfaction between high-level and other part-time workers".* The level of job satisfaction derived from work thus would appear to represent a further differentiator between good quality and poor-quality part-time jobs. Other studies illustrate a gendered dimension (Kalleberg 2012; Vidal 2013), whereby part-time workers do report some autonomy and relatively high satisfaction with their jobs, but men working part-time more often report higher levels of job satisfaction, thought to be because men are more likely to make a conscious choice to work part-time. Other studies connect underemployment and low job satisfaction and present over-qualification as a further form of underemployment which prevents workers using their skills and expertise, thus reducing job satisfaction (Wasserman, Fujishiro and Hoppe 2017).

In terms of job intensity, part-time work can have positive effects by reducing the pressure of combining work and non-work (Russell, O'Connell and McGinnity 2009). More broadly however Lewis and Humbert (2010) argue that part-time workers pay a price for working flexibly in the form of lower pay and work intensification. Intensified work routines translate to pressure to shoehorn full-time workloads into part-time hours, few breaks and poor workplace support (McDonald, Bradley and Brown 2009). Chung and van der Lippe (2020:370) further claim that "*enabled intensification"*, in other words the tendency for part-time workers to carry out work in non-work time, is also an issue. According to Kelliher and Anderson (2010) a possible reason for this is that workers feel obligated to employers for the flexibility they have been granted. As noted in the introduction to section 2.5, higher quality jobs however tend to provide workers with higher levels of task discretion and autonomy (Felstead et al. 2019) and so in theory greater opportunity to balance work and family time to ease work pressures. Put simply Glavin and

Schieman (2012) explain that job holders with greater job gravitas can exert control over their jobs and make choices in their own interests regarding where and when they work, in contrast to retail, cleaning and catering staff for example, who have little to no latitude (TUC 2021). Similar arguments are made by Wheatley (2022), but with a caveat that working from home can blur boundaries and be difficult to manage, indeed this reportedly a common experience among hybrid workers (Green and Riley 2021).

2.5.3 Training and development and career progression

McDonald, Bradley and Brown (2009) argue that part-time workers receive fewer training and development opportunities and are less likely to experience career progression than their full-time counterparts. Studies mainly focused on women in part-time work arrive at similar conclusions, Durbin and Tomlinson (2010), for example, comment that part-time status places a hold careers. Similarly, Crompton and Lyonette (2011) suggest that part-time work in professional and managerial occupations limits careers. To some extent part-time workers' experiences in this regard may be because they spend less time at work and so have fewer opportunities to participate in training and development geared towards promotion (Cohen and Single 2001). However, part-time workers are also perceived as less committed than their full-time peers (Kropf 1998) and so overlooked for development and seen as less viable candidates for promotion. In a study involving male and female part-time workers, van Osch and Schaveling (2020) find part-time status damaging for career progression among both sexes; their data shows that part-time working is perceived to afford fewer job options and slower development and promotion. Most significantly, they find that male part-time workers are held back the most, they experience slower progress and promotion than men working full-time but also than women across both work modes. Van Osch and Schaveling (2020) attribute these findings to the fact that men working part-time practice gender-role incongruence (Eagly and Karau 2002). In other work, Fagan et al (2014) suggest that there are often barriers in place which make transition from part-time to full-time work difficult for individuals, and so part-time work can become a trap, on the contrary Nätti and Nergaard (2019) find it can provide routes back into full-time employment and so mobility over time.

2.5.4. The quality of men's part-time work

Job quality for men in part-time employment is variable. Green and Livanos (2015) suggest that some men in part-time work appear to reap the rewards of better-quality employee-oriented flexibility, arguably at some cost in terms of pay and working conditions, while others are exposed to part-time work which is employer-led, often volatile, of low quality and associated with under-employment. Their findings however also evidence well paid part-time work among highly skilled older men. In short, they conjecture that access to good quality part-time work and flexibility on workers' terms is much more likely for those with the highest social capital and occupational status in the labour market Haines III, Dorey-Demers and Martin (2018) concur, suggesting the majority of those in good part-time jobs which are permanent and offer high pay and latitude, are more likely to be better qualified and come from households with higher total income than those in poor quality part-time work.

2.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was threefold, firstly to capture what is meant by part-time work in the contemporary labour market, secondly to establish patterns in terms of who works part-time and for what reasons and thirdly to explore workers' experiences of part-time work with reference to quality of work indicators. The chapter supports the first and second research questions. Discussion within the chapter establishes that part-time work is relational to full-time work and defined in these terms, despite much variation in the hours worked by both full-time and part-time workers (Lyonette, Baldauf and Behle 2010) and even though new ways of working render hours of work a poor indicator of the amount of work individuals do, or the intensity of the work they undertake (Baffoe-Bonnie and Gyapong 2018). Labour Force Statistics which rely on worker self-reports and distinguish between full-time and part-time work, show that part-time work is a significant mode of working in the UK (ONS 2022a). The principal users of part-time work remain women, as it is considered a prime means of managing childcare and domestic responsibilities alongside paid work; much published research consolidates this view and attests to women's greater role in unpaid care and housework (Wheatley 2017a, Andrew et al. 2021). In recent years however there is evidence that men's

share of part-time work has increased and recognition that greater numbers of men from a broader demographic range are entering part-time work (Warren 2022), drawn from beyond the clusters of young men and older men at either ends of the age strata who have traditionally used part-time work respectively to support study or gain a foothold in employment and as a pre-retirement strategy (Delsen 1998). Meanwhile women continue to display increased rates of participation in full-time work. These factors combined suggest that part-time work is becoming a shade less dominated by women (Nightingale 2021).

The growth in men's participation in part-time work is often considered involuntary, suggesting men would rather work full-time, but are prevented from doing so due to the paucity of full-time alternatives (Green and Livanos 2015). Patterns of men's engagement with part-time work during, and in the aftermath of economic recession supports this analysis, yet the rate of involuntary part-time employment among women increased post-recession too indicating that both men and women are susceptible to being pushed into part-time employment when they would prefer to be working full-time (OECD 2022). Part-time work can indeed be an unattractive proposition, it is associated with poor quality work (Fagan et al. 2012), career stagnation (Durbin and Tomlinson 2010) and can represent a precarious market position (Nicolaisen, Kavli and Jensen 2019), these factors help to explain why few men reduce their hours of work on becoming a father (Andrew et al. 2021) and go some way towards explaining why low numbers of middle-aged men (Delsen 1998) and few men in the upper echelons of the occupational scale participate in part-time work (Warren and Lyonette 2015). On the other hand, part-time work affords the opportunity for individuals to downshift and enjoy a more leisurely lifestyle (Sorrell, Gatersleben and Druckman 2020), particularly if income from part-time work is sufficient (Higgins, Duxbury and Johnson 2000); Green and Livanos (2015) suggest that with respect to men, these advantages are leveraged by those with higher social capital and occupational status.

In practice men's relationship with part-time work is likely to be far more complex than a simple division between those who use it involuntarily and those who choose it (Warren and Lyonette 2020). Embedded and persistent assumptions that women choose part-time work to be home focused, whilst men prioritise full-time work,

risk overlooking the complexity of working hours and patterns and the reasons underpinning individual and household paid and unpaid work arrangements. Such patterns also skim over the growth in the incidence of involuntary part-time work among women on the one hand, and their increased movement into full-time work on the other. This thesis helps to understand why middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations work part-time, and how working in this mode influences their lived experiences of the work and home spheres of their lives.

Chapter 3: Theorising gender, masculinity, intersectionality and chrononormativity

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 located the thesis in data and literature pertaining to part-time work, and debates and discussions within the chapter were designed to underpin the first and second research questions posed by this thesis. Chapter 3 further develops the theoretical conversation this thesis sets out to contribute to by critically reviewing key aspects of the gender/masculinity literature, considering age gender intersectionality, and detailing the ways in which chrononormative ideals permeate life course expectations. The theoretical concepts discussed and critiqued bring a gendered lens to the study, helping to make sense of the empirical data analysed in Chapters 5 and 6 (pertaining to the first and second research questions respectively), however the chapter is substantially designed to foreground the third research question - how do male, middle-aged part-time workers in highly skilled occupations perform gender at work and at home, and what are the implications for the gender hierarchy? Findings pertinent to this question are presented and discussed in Chapter 7.

The chapter briefly addresses wider perspectives on gender, before sequentially reviewing the extant literature surrounding key concepts and ideas which are central to the thesis. Accordingly, section 3.2 starts with reference to the conflation of gender with sex to frame subsequent discussion; then it concentrates on theorising gender as a social construction. Within this discussion Butler's work, from a poststructuralist perspective, is reviewed alongside alternative ethnomethodological theorisations (principally West and Zimmerman 1987 on doing gender) to show how performance, the term used by ethnomethodologists, and performativity (Butler's term) are distinguishable from one another yet share some common ground in terms of the way in which gender is constructed. This section helps to interpret the phrase 'perform gender' in the third research question. Detailed treatment is then given to masculinity in section 3.3 of the chapter; first, the concept of masculinity is briefly introduced and some of the issues surrounding its analysis are set out, then hegemonic masculinity (Connell,

1987, 1995) is explored as a structural account of power infused gender relations, which draws from the theories of patriarchy and hegemony. Since the thesis examines the lived experiences and gender performances of men drawn from a defined age group and corresponding life stage, the next section (3.4) considers the concepts of intersectionality and chrononormativity, specifically how ideals surrounding both gender and age infiltrate the life course, serve to socially construct expected occurrences within each life stage and so structure individuals' choices. The penultimate section of the chapter (3.5) briefly considers prospects for undoing gender and troubling men's position in the gender hierarchy, whilst the final segment of the chapter (3.6) adopts an applied approach to critically explore the potential gendered implications for men of engaging in part-time work. Following the chapter's conclusion, a short addendum is included to summarise the theoretical framework this thesis draws from and seeks to build upon.

3.2 Theorising gender

Essentialist views of gender and sex reflect a binary and static position; the dual nature of this categorisation is based on biological sex differences, and *"deeply embedded, such that it is reflected in embodied social practices"* (Moskos 2020:540). Conceptualising gender in essentialist terms and viewing it as a binary division creates boundaries surrounding gender appropriate behaviours and is a fundamental way in which gender inequalities develop and flourish (Saguy, Reifen-Tagar and Joel 2021; Morton et al. 2009). In other words, opportunities for men and women become divergent and life trajectories underscored based on the notion that there are incontrovertible differences between the sexes. In a work context, Moskos (2020:541) argues *"gender processes and gender essentialism are deeply entrenched in the social organization of work and labour markets"*, so stubbornly so, that the gender binary has a habit of reinventing itself even when there are opportunities for amalgamating or breaking down differences.

Gender theorists including Butler (1990), West and Zimmerman (1987) dissent from the view that that gender is something an individual biologically is or has and instead focus on it as something that is socially constructed. These theorists approach gender in somewhat different ways as this chapter will elucidate,

however the underlying premise is that the behaviour of men and women more often complies with the culturally prevalent gendered norms, giving the appearance that differences between the sexes occur naturally (Fleming, Harris and Halpern 2017).

Brickell (2003) explains that the words performative and performance have both become popular tropes for examining gender, however the two terms are often used confused and substituted for one another, even though they have different theoretical bases. The idea of gender as a performative derives from Butler (1990), whilst ethnomethodological theorisations of gender as a performance or doing stem predominantly from the work of West and Zimmerman (1987) with valuable insight from earlier writings by Goffman (1956). The distinction between these approaches is important for the thesis in both an academic and a practical sense. Both theories illuminate the idea of gender as socially constituted and are important for foregrounding the third research question, yet in terms of informing the empirical investigation into how middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations perform gender in part-time work, Butler's theory of gender performativity is acknowledged as more abstract and challenging for social scientists to apply in empirical work (Brickell 2003) for reasons that will become apparent as the chapter progresses. Butler's work however is highly useful in understanding how the gender binary comes into being, why it is so enduring and how it contributes to life course expectations, for example those that relate to when and how men are expected to engage with paid work.

3.2.1 Gender as performative

Butler (1990) rejects the idea that gender follows sex and is based on sex and thus adopts an anti-essentialist position. She argues that gender might appear consistent, stable, and polarised, with for example (as demonstrated in chapter 2), clear differences between men and women in terms of patterns of participation in part-time work, but the steadfastness of gender is illusionary. The appearance of a true gender or fixed binary categories arise because gender comes into being discursively, through reason and argument rather than intuition, and is reliant on the repetition of prevailing gender norms (such that it is normative for women to

engage in part-time work to make time for caring and home-centred responsibilities and normative for men to focus on paid work); it is a by-product of discursive processes therefore, not reality. Butler (1990) refers to this process as performativity. Her theorisation of gender as performative and not embodied, means that gender does not exist before it is performed, rather it is only created as it is performed, by its own performance. So, for example, exclaiming "*it's a girl"* when a female baby is born, triggers a process which Butler (1993:232) refers to as the "*girling"* of the female subject. Seregina (2019:458) concurs, she argues that "*gender emerges as it is performed, existing and gaining power in our repetition of norms that are associated with it. Hence, no 'true' gender exists as basis for performance, and gender is real only to the extent that it is learned, repeated, and behaved".* Performativity can thus be seen as way of conjuring the subject, there is no prior subject or gendered entity to perform gender, the gendered subject only arises with continual repetitions of gendered norms (Butler 1990). Furthermore, since there is no self in advance of gender materialising, the same holds for gender identity, as Butler (1990:25) adds "*(gendered) identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results".*

The requirement for constant repetition of gendered norms is an important element of Butler's theorisation; it further strengthens the central argument that natural categories of femininity and masculinity are fictional (Butler 1990). From a performative perspective Butler (1990) argues that the structure or discourse of gender is only reflected and apparent because iterations of gender norms are sufficiently plausible to convince the performer themselves and others that gender is true and static. Affirmation of authenticity by others is key, as those who observe (the audience) use what they see and hear as the basis for categorising people as masculine or feminine (Butler 1993). Individuals learn how to perform gender believably by looking at the reactions they receive from the audience (others), and by watching and emulating others' performances, it is easy therefore to conceive how gendered patterns of working persist, governed by heteronormative ideals, whereby men, by and large, strive to conform to the male breadwinner model of continuous full-time employment, whilst women, especially mothers, show a greater propensity to work part-time. Ways of being which are seen to comply with the dominant rules of gender and meet normative life course expectations will

confer legitimate, or intelligible (read) status on individuals as masculine or feminine, whereas Butler (2009) argues that failure to comply with gender norms exposes individuals to gender precarity, presenting a risk to subject intelligibility. Men who work part-time therefore, expose themselves not only to a precarious form of work, as shown in chapter 2, but also, according to Butler (2009), to a precarious lived experience as men for rebuking deeply ingrained norms, or behavioural scripts, surrounding how men's lives and engagement with paid work should unfold, these two perspectives on precarity stand to pose a double jeopardy for male part-time workers. Drawing on Arendt's work, Butler (2009) explains that gender becomes linked with precarity the very moment we pause to deliberate who warrants subject recognition, accordingly performativity of gender is integrally bound with "*who can be read or understood as a living being, and who lives, or tries to live on the far side of established modes of intelligibility*" (Butler 2009:iv). Butler (1990) argues that negative reactions to the way individuals perform gender, where subject intelligibility is queried or rejected, reflect patriarchal power and conditions of compulsory heterosexuality. For Butler (1990) therefore the heterosexual matrix is key to the division between men and women and conferring subject intelligibility, because gender categories only make sense and have a clear footing when heterosexuality is prioritised. In later work on undoing gender Butler (2004) seeks to tackle this complex and important area by engaging with political gender debates, and movements concerned with intersex, transgender and transsexuality.

Borgerson (2005) argues that Butler's work is important, it has convinced many to understand gender as a performative rather than as performance. A key criticism of Butler's work concerns her treatment of gender identity and the construction of self (Morgenroth and Ryan 2018). With reference to self, Brickell (2005) says Butler's conceptualisation of performativity is confusing and contradictory in considering the subject and the degree of agency the person who is (re)produced by the performative process has. While Butler insists that cogent gender, created through repetition and re-enactment only produces the illusion that there is a subject with agency to decide how to do gender, Brickell (2005) contends that repetition of gendered phrases in language create a rich basis for individuals to develop as subjects, to which meaning is then attached. He challenges Butler's notion that self is only illusionary by suggesting "*the acts, activity, and action*

*occurring in the definitions of what gender is beg the question of whether we might
understand subjects as doers of some of it. Where otherwise might gestures,
movements, and repeated acts originate?"* (Brickell 2005:28). In other words, he
detects that on the one hand Butler rejects the existence of self, yet on the other
she seems to see the subject as not simply illusionary. It is this lack of clarity over
subject agency that Brickell considers problematic. Indeed, Brickell (2003:175)
maintains that "*it is Butler's disinclination to concede that subjects act in the world
that ensures that sociologists need to go elsewhere – including ethnomethodology
– for an adequate set of theories".* These debates, critiquing Butler's work appear
to represent a fundamental challenge between ethnomethodologists attempts to
arrive at a structural, eminently more relatable, understanding of gender as
enacted by individuals in everyday life and ingrained institutionally, and Butler's
post structuralist perspective which emphasises discourse and maintains that the
self as a singular and coherent entity is a fictional construct. In essence the tussle
between Butler and ethnomethodological interpretations of what gender is and
how it comes about can be distilled to a difference of option with respect to
whether truth, meaning and understanding are possible or not possible, with Butler
attached to the notion that gender is illusionary and unreal, despite the fact it is a
prominent and very real construct in most peoples' daily lives.

To overcome these problems, Brickell (2005:28) prefers to consider performativity
as "*primarily a constitutive process"* which relies on power to enact it or establish
it, so taking a lead from Butler but accepting there must be a subject to make it
happen. Self is also discussed by Czarniawska (2013:61) who observes "*the Self is
produced, reproduced, and maintained in past and present conversations. It is
community constituted, in the sense of being created by those who take part in a
conversation; it is historical, because past conversations are evoked in the course of
present ones".* Czarniawska (2013) adds that discursive conversational elements
meet with other factors such as dress, body language, gestures, and social factors
such as age, class, gender, and ethnicity to fashion self. Similarly, Borgerson
(2005:71) argues "*repeated representations, imposed codes of behaviour, or
organizational cultures endlessly re-create normative values and identities which
are made available to, constitute, and exist in tandem with the subject in
contemporary culture. In this way, the iterative normativity of an environment*

contributes to the subject's constitution". In other words, wider cultural norms and organisational practices constantly shape and influence self, and gender is part of this process.

Butler's theorisation of gender as performative, and associated on-going debates concerning self and agency, make it challenging to empirically test whether subverting gender or causing gender trouble, as Butler (1990) calls it, could lead to the disintegration of the idea of two oppositional genders and the cultural norms which uphold this artificial division. However, as Ryan and David (2003) argue, because many people are integrally bound with their gendered identity, efforts to reduce the significance of gender could have the opposite effect as people act to defend their gender identity and in so doing amplify gender differences. It is difficult to see therefore how the binary can be weakened or banished. Research of the type conducted in this thesis to examine how men perform gender in part-time work and how they are perceived by others does tackle a challenge to the dominant rules of gender and the normative life course expectations arising from the gender binary, yet as Morgenroth and Ryan (2018) argue troubling might need to start with individuals coming together to mobilise around groups such as trans men and women to dismantle binary notions of gender.

3.2.2 Gender as a performance

The conceptualisation of gender as a performance rather than a performative reflects an ethnomethodological stance. Goffman (1956) and West and Zimmerman (1987) are considered key proponents of this position. Ethnomethodological theorisations of gender share some common ground with Butler's performativity theory, notably both resist the idea of naturalness, reject the notion of static gender types and recognise that to gain intelligibility individuals must comply with culturally accepted norms. However, in contrast to Butler (1990), ethnomethodologists believe the gendered self to exist before it acts, and correspondingly they attest that gender is a practice we do in social interactions rather than something that comes into being discursively.

Firstly, the work of Goffman (1956) provides some helpful insights to ease the confusion around agency and expand on the role of self. According to Brickell (2005:30), in contrast to Butler (1990), Goffman "*sees selves as both socially constructed and as loci of social action*", thus conceding more of the self than Butler (1990) does. In his analysis, social interaction is key as it is argued that individuals manage themselves in others' company, engaging in impression management. He uses the analogy of the theatre to explain how individuals perform self on a centre stage in front of others and are subject to scrutiny, rather like Butler's notion of an audience who will categorise individuals as men or women, masculine or feminine, based on observed behaviours. However, Goffman (1956) also refers to a private backstage where people practice their behaviour, appearance, mannerisms and so forth to appear appropriately gendered as a man or a woman on stage. In later work, Goffman (1974:21) introduces the idea of multiple different frames or "*frameworks*", within which all sorts of human interactions occur, guided usually by unspoken rules. Applied to gender, Goffman's notion of framing can be understood to mean that individuals' performances of gender (should) occur within parameters. In addition, so-called "*felicity conditions*" exist (Goffman 1983:26), these constitute certain interactional understandings surrounding speech, and verbal dialogue. In this context agency appears problematic, as the frames and felicity conditions suggest limits to free action. Goffman (1974) attests that these frameworks constrain but are not entirely rigid in terms of identities and actions. In other work Goffman (1976) refers to display work, meaning that individuals choose the way they self-present and express themselves to others in different settings. West and Zimmerman (1987) highlight flaws in Goffman's conceptualisation of display work; they contend it is not possible to separate displays from interaction as others who view individuals' *gendered* displays are likely to see male or female, they stress that it is critical to view gender as something that it permeated through everyday interactions and not simply a series of one-off performances.

West and Zimmerman's theorisation of doing gender (1987) makes an important contribution to understanding how gender is constituted. They propose a "*distinctively sociological understanding of gender as a routine, methodological and recurring accomplishment*" (1987:126), arguing that gender is done and not is. The doing of gender entails social dialogue and a socially constituted set of thoughts

and behaviours which are assigned as masculine or feminine and legitimated in the sociocultural context, for example in the work context or home sphere of individuals' lives. Correspondingly Simpson (2011:381) suggests that "*individuals in a reflexive manner mobilise, negotiate, and renegotiate gender in their day-to-day activities*" to construct themselves with what they perceive is culturally acceptable masculine or feminine behaviour in a particular setting. The divisions formed in society between masculinity and femininity might therefore appear natural, but in fact they are socially manifest.

In practice West and Zimmerman (1987:134) maintain that being a woman or being a man requires cultural work "*to produce configurations of behaviour that would be seen by others as normative gender behaviour*". Doing gender convincingly, to attract approval, requires reading and responding to situations in a gender congruent manner, or at least in ways that are accountable (Zimmerman and Wieder 1970) and can be an uneasy process. Where performances depart from routine ways of interacting, challenge will often ensue, and individuals may experience social pressures to conform to gender accountable actions to align with their sex categorisation (West 1984). Gender accountable actions and ways of doing are those which are customary and fit with culturally normative behaviour, in other words they appear natural, as if innate, and so generate no reaction from others. Of course, normative behaviours are changeable over time; for example, the gender ideals of previous generations are not so apposite today. Normative gendered behaviours also vary across ethnic groups, cultures, subcultures, and social situations, however the expectations that men will be masculine, and women feminine, are ubiquitous (Deutsch 2007).

Whilst West and Zimmerman's conception of gender as a performance or doing is more tangible than Butler's notion of gender as a performative, it is criticised for perpetuating gender differences. Brickell (2003) for example notes that doing gender upholds the gender hierarchy in which men's power is supreme. In other words, to do gender in ways which are consistent with dominant constructions of gender and ways that match sex category, maintains the status quo. West and Zimmerman (1987) fleetingly suggest that doing gender does not always mean male domination as micro-interactions can moderate and resist power as well as

reinforcing it, leading Deutsch (2007) to concede that their work recognises gendered differences can alter, but she argues the wider underpinning narrative of their work is that gender is an enduring socially constructed set of differences which upholds inequality between men and women. In other work, West and Fenstermaker (2002) see opportunity for resistance, for example in situations when individuals act in ways which are perceived to be atypical for their sex, however they interpret such behaviours as simply a dilution of the bond between gender norms and sex category, not a breach; in short, doing gender cannot be avoided and so resisting is fruitless. In short West and Zimmerman's work is known as a "*theory of conformity and gender conventionality, albeit of multiple forms of conventionality*" (Deutsch 2007:108).

The focus of West and Zimmerman's work (1987) is therefore on doing gender, not how it is undone or might be undone (Teller and Porcini 2016). Accordingly, their work is helpful in explaining why inequalities persist in the workplace and why individuals feel so compelled to behave in ways that they deem to be true to their sex. For instance, Simpson (2004) and Cross and Bagihole (2006) explain that men in feminine occupations such as primary school teaching, focus on masculine tasks and use masculinised language at work so that they are seen to do gender in ways which match their sex category. Other studies focusing on women in male dominated occupations demonstrate how they often face a difficult task to maintain femininity whilst operating in a masculinised environment so to do gender in a convincing manner (Kelan 2010), gender norms are therefore always a point of reference.

Despite the central message in West and Zimmerman's work, Deutsch (2007:108) contends, "*the doing gender approach implies that if gender is constructed, then it can be deconstructed. Gendered institutions can change and the interactions that support them can be undone*". She cites examples of ways in which gendered inequality has incrementally improved. Deutsch (2007) maintains that it should be possible to consider the processes by which gendered interactions loosen to validate different subject positions. In short, Deutch's work suggest that if gender is done, it must be possible for it to be undone, or to use Lorber's language (2005), it is feasible to conceive a notion of de-gendering. Similarly, Risman (1998) refers

to the concept of gender vertigo, both labels recognise the idea that gender can be dismantled. Other work seems to accept this position too, for example, Cotton, Beauregard and Yilmas-Keles (2021:619) suggest that there is evidence that over time "*stereotypes about women's leadership roles and men's family role can be undone".* Indeed, in a work context the blurring of gendered occupational and vertical segregation for example or the increased proportion of women in full-time employment (Irvine et al. 2022) indicates growing convergence between the lives of some men and some women. These contextual changes raise questions concerning how, and in what ways, gendered social interactions might alter. Deutch (2007) agrees that men and women are culturally steered to do gender in ways which maintain the gender binary, but is curious whether, and if so, how, social interactions can, over time, undo gendered differences in the same way as they are conceived in West and Zimmerman's work to be done. These debates are developed in section 3.5.

3.3 Theorising masculinity

According to Waling (2019), masculinity tends to be theorised in two different ways by social scientists, either by considering men's articulated and lived behaviours, their subjectivities, and the gender relations between different sorts of men and between men and women, or by positioning types of masculinities against which to measure how men's practices align. Given this thesis is interested in MPTs' lived experiences it prioritises the former. Accordingly key attention is paid to hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987) as an analysis of power, inequalities and gender relations, with roots in the concepts of patriarchy and hegemony. This theorisation of masculinity is highly relevant to the thesis; it provides a framework for thinking about how the MPTs enact and manage their masculinity in part-time work since this is a work mode more commonly used by women, and how their participation in part-time work impacts their position in the gender hierarchy.

Prior to considering hegemonic masculinity this short section introduces the concept of masculinity and refers to some of the issues surrounding its analysis. Reeser (2010:11) refers to the "*slipperiness"* of masculinity to reinforce the notion that it is a fluid phenomenon which is "c*onstantly created and challenged in*

numerous ways" (2010:18). Bosson and Vandello (2011:82) take a similar stance, adding that masculinity is *"relatively difficult to earn and easy to lose"* and so can, at times, be a precarious state for some men. They contend that women do not face the same obstacles to gain and maintain womanliness, in the way that men are required to work at upholding their status as men. Bosson and Vandello (2011) says men's precarity stems foremost from evolutionary factors, whereby men used their physical prowess to attract a mate and fend off other men (Trivers 1972); this competitiveness with other men is echoed in the way men still act to prove and preserve their masculinity. Secondly, they argue that one of the consequences of gendered social roles which typically, for men, involve status, such as head of the household, is that masculinity is necessarily linked to displaying (and guarding) status.

Masculinity has been extensively studied; however, Waling (2019) argues that theories of masculinity tend to be overly structural, viewing masculinity as an omnipresent structural force that governs men's behaviours, giving them little choice in their actions, rather than focusing on men's lived experiences. In other words, studies tend not to examine situation in which men grapple with doing or performing masculinity. Likewise, McCarry (2007:410), condemns much theorising of masculinity for attributing men's actions to social constructions of masculinity and so portraying them as *"powerless victims"* whilst they attract benefits from their privileged place in the gender order.

3.3.1 Hegemonic masculinity

Connell (1995) argues that there is not one masculinity, but many different masculinities, each associated with different positions of power. Within this structure, the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987) focuses on explaining how power is so central to gender relations and why the gender order sanctions firstly men's patriarchal power over women, but also leads to a hierarchy of masculinities in which other forms of masculinity are positioned beneath it. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005:832) explain that hegemonic masculinity *"embodies the currently most honoured way of being a man...and it ideologically legitimates the global subordination of women to men".* Bowen (2021:12)

emphasises the link between hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy by reflecting that *"masculinity becomes hegemonic when it changes and adapts not to revise structures of power but to instead legitimate patriarchy as a necessary, even ideal, force".* As a form of masculinity therefore hegemonic masculinity is culturally constituted and arises from a socially shared acceptance of the most legitimate version of masculinity in a specified context, for example, the workplace, the sports pitch, the classroom, or the home.

In practice hegemonic masculinity is a dynamic construct rather than a static one, which is upheld through the performances of men and women (Bach 2019), this implies that hegemonic masculinities are changeable across time and place and so different versions can coexist. Furthermore Hearn (1994) argues that it is a social process which triumphs not just through the power of the hegemonic group but because of the assent of subordinated groups, so all groups are affected by its existence. For men, the presence of hegemonic masculinity acts as a regulatory force as they try to align with its *"ideals, fantasies, and desires"* (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:838), those who do secure a powerful position in the gender order (Connell 1987). Sheerin and Linehan (2018) demonstrate the application of hegemonic masculinity in a work context; they explain that in strongly male-dominated sectors, for example, where hierarchical power structures often persist, men accumulate advantages by keeping to a hegemonic masculinity script, where they do so the gender hierarchy is strengthened, and male dominance over women and othered men is maintained. Sheerin and Linehan (2018) contend that women in the workplace are often complicit in this process, either knowingly or unwittingly, and so they help the hegemonic norm to blossom. Closure behaviours or exclusionary behaviours are also practiced in organisations to protect the privileged, these often reproduce male power and uphold cultures in which hegemonic masculinity is central (Sheerin and Linehan 2018).

Foweraker and Cutcher (2015:461) stress the importance of hegemonic masculinity, arguing, *"while hegemonic masculinity may not be the lived form of masculinity, it is a powerful benchmark against which men are evaluated".* Similarly, Sheerin and Linehan (2018) are grateful for the contribution hegemonic masculinity has made to gender literature and to the understanding of the social construction

of gender. Despite these compliments, Connell's theorisation has attracted criticism and promoted much debate. Hood-Williams (1997) argues that the approach leans towards gender essentialism, conflating masculinity types with the male sexed body and so it reinforces the gender binary. Linked to this, Francis (2002) argues that the concept of multiple masculinities with hegemonic masculinity trumping other sorts, suggests there are typologies of masculinity. Waling (2019) disputes this is what Connell (1987) meant. Connell (2008:244) recognises hegemonic masculinity has often been misinterpreted as a *"static character type"* but is clear this was not the intention. A further criticism of hegemonic masculinity is that it stems from a heteronormative perspective of gender (Waling 2019). Jewkes et al (2015) agree that heterosexuality is a key tenet of hegemonic masculinity, for example, it is often performed in ways which slur those with non-heterosexual sexualities, for example referring to homosexual men as "*faggots*" (Panayiotou 2010:670).

The central notion of hegemonic masculinity, that it relies on the subordination of women, has also been called into question. Christensen and Jensen (2014) argue that hegemonic masculinity does not always reflect and/or endorse patriarchy, indeed some forms of hegemonic masculinities support masculinities which are pro-equality between men and women. Similarly, Bloksgaard et al (2015:155) argue that "*gendered power relations are dynamic, unstable, and ambiguous, and the most valued masculinity ideals may not always legitimise patriarchy.'* Jewkes et al (2015) are however far more sceptical, they question whether hegemonic masculinity can ever change to the extent that it is no longer oppressive to women.

Turning to application of the theory, Jewkes et al (2015) suggest that hegemonic masculinity has potential to be transformed into practices which bring about greater gender equality if men are prepared to change how they act. They argue that men do have a choice and so could reflect on ways of being that are less dominant and more egalitarian. This stance is also adopted by Waling (2019) who argues that the root of the problem with hegemonic masculinity, as first conceived, is a failure to consider how men acquire and use agency. This criticism links with the concept of blocked reflexivity (Whitehead 2001) which suggests that men are often unaware of the gendered nature of their workplace and have scant

recognition of their patriarchal power. In other words, they ignore prevailing patriarchal norms, or do not see them, in turn, neither do they see how they might be supporting these norms through their behaviours. Sheerin and Linehan (2018:568) concur, adding *"the privileged position of men is normalised and predicated on men's blocked reflexivity, reflected through their inability to recognise their own gender identity practices, as contributing to the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity".* Lewis and Simpson (2010) develop this idea suggesting that men do not regard themselves as gendered, instead they consider gender to be something only others possess and consequently they are often considered *"genderless"* (Reeser 2010:9).

Some of the issues noted with respect to hegemonic masculinity were addressed via a reworking of the original theory. The updated version (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) entailed (1) emphasising the relational nature of the concept, (2) confirming the relationship is not just a pattern of dominance but hegemony which legitimises unequal gender relations (3) ensuring hegemonic masculinity is not seen as traits to be reduced a type(s) (4) new recognition of the potential agency of those with and without hegemonic power, rather than focusing on the untrammelled power of the hegemonic groups (5) conceptualisations that hegemonic masculinity can be challenged and changed (6) encouragement for hegemonic masculinities to be studied empirically at a global regional and local level rather than seen at the society-wide level only (Messerschmidt 2019). Furthermore, in recent work to amplify the theory Messerschmidt (2018) explains that there is a need to consider the differences between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities and recognise the variation among hegemonic masculinities. To denote a separation between hegemonic masculinity and other authoritative, yet non-patriarchal masculinities, Messerschmidt (2010) refers to dominating and dominant masculinities. In practice however Christensen and Jensen (2014) argue that masculinity positions are so subtle and complex that it is possible for some masculinities to supress women and support their liberation simultaneously, furthermore, where dominant masculinities are thought to be non-patriarchal, hierarchies of masculinities could still preside, subordinating othered men. These complications have likely contributed to Hearn et al (2012) offering the

view that hegemonic masculinity is a confusing and, at times, contradictory
concept.

The other major amplification is the notion of hybrid masculinity (Bridges and
Pascoe 2014; 2018) whereby subordinated masculine or feminine gender
performances are woven into the identities of some men resulting in an outcome
which secures their hegemonic power (rather than diminishes it), but hides it at the
same time, leading Messerschmidt (2018:82) to refer to hegemonic masculinities
as *"omnipresent but hidden in plain sight"*. To impress the point and explain how
this happens, Messerschmidt (2018) cites a study by Aboim (2010) involving a
sample of heterosexual men in different household configurations, all of whom
were engaged in gender atypical practices, reflective of greater gender equality, for
example regular caring commitments and housework. The men in the study were
not emasculated by their adoption of feminised activities, rather they embraced
and distanced themselves from femininity at the same time, holding onto their
hegemonic power by casting themselves as better at these tasks than women. In
this sense Messerschmidt (2018), Aboim (2010) and Bridges and Pascoe (2014;
2018) show that hybridity simply reinvents men's hegemonic power and so affirms
it instead of diluting it.

3.4 Intersectionality and chrononormative ideals

So far, this chapter has focused solely on gender, yet the thesis concerns a subset
of middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations and so calls for other
characteristics to be considered if the study is to fully address the research
questions. To ignore the men's age and their occupation/socio-economic status
would be to eliminate key factors of difference which are likely to underscore their
lives and experiences as part-time workers. As Connell (2009:87) notes, *"gender
relations always work in context, always interact with other dynamics in social life"*.
Holman and Walker (2021) add that separate treatment of characteristics such as
age, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status only captures part of reality and
so intersectionality research which attempts to look across characteristics to
explain patterns of inequalities is critical. Nash (2008) argues that although
intersectional effects might be patterned, individual or collective agency can be

used to resist social categorisation or change ways of engagement with it, resulting
in different experiences for some.

Drawing on Butler's work on performativity, particularly her account of how the
desire for recognition is shaped by heteronormativity, Riach, Rumens and Tyler
(2014) explain how men's lived experiences of age, gender and sexuality are
(re)negotiated and reframed within organisations as they become aged. In a
practical sense they argue "*complying with the life-course expectations associated
with the heterosexual matrix constitutes the condition of viable subjectivity upon
which the conferral of recognition within organizational settings depends*"
(2014:1679), in other words intelligibility in a work context relies on conformance
with expected (chronological) life stages such as youth, single status, marriage,
career, family, retirement and so forth and is necessarily heterosexual. As outlined
earlier in the chapter, norms related to gender and sexuality serve to produce and
reproduce power relations which prioritise heterosexuality and give it an elevated
position by reinforcing the heterosexuality-homosexuality binary. The
institutionalisation of heteronormativity marginalises individuals whose sexuality
fails to comply with the norms of the heterosexual matrix, and the associated life-
course, imposes further chrononormative expectations. Where individuals'
performances of gender align with the norms embedded in the heterosexual matrix
and life chronology, then they are afforded subject intelligibility in the eyes of
others (Riach, Rumens and Tyler 2014). Duncan and Loretto (2004:99) argue
patriarchal beliefs are responsible for generating "*an exclusive, male-based, and
male-biased chronology of career development that values continuous
employment",* for men therefore, living up to these ideals is an important way in
which they gain subject intelligibility.

Not surprisingly, age features strongly in chrononormative ideals, as Foweraker and
Cutcher (2015:459) emphasise, "*ageing is culturally constructed and accomplished
in social interaction with other sources of social differentiation, in particular
gender",* thus generating changing culturally constructed expectations on men and
women as they age. Arber, Davidson and Ginn (2003) and Connell (2000) suggest
for example, loss of bodily strength and poor health reduces men's own
perceptions and others' views of their masculinity, requiring them to look for new

ways to shore up their masculine status. Meanwhile, research on older men as carers (Calasanti 2003, 2019; Milne and Hatzidimitriadou 2003) and on older men's experiences of widowhood (Bennett, Hughes and Smith 2003; Van den Hoonard 2007) provides insights into the influence of men's work identities on how they spend their time, and the importance of preserving their masculine status as they age. Foweraker and Cutcher (2015) for example, suggest that remaining in the workforce helps men to maintain a masculinity script. These studies reveal the emphasis older men place on usefulness and the way in which work, and productiveness is associated with masculinity and inactivity linked with emasculation. Interestingly in Nilsson, Hagberg and Jeppsson Grassman's 2013 study of ageing and masculinity in Sweden, the men framed their gendered identities as 'what I have done is who I am', thus relying on historical actualities, namely their strong, younger selves, as a means of re-designating their now old bodies as still masculine. Despite the imposition of chrononormative ideals on lived experiences, Elder and Giele (2009) recognise that it might be possible for individuals to use their agency to wield control over their path and craft their own life course, free from scrutiny to a greater or lesser extent.

In summary, Riach, Rumens and Tyler (2014:1678) suggest "*chrononormativity presents a fruitful means of exploring the temporal orders inscribed in organisational life which produce assumed and expected heteronormative trajectories that may include (but are not exclusive to) ideas about the 'right' time for defined life stages surrounding partnering, parenting, and caring vis-a-vis career progression, promotion, and flexible working".* Riach, Loretto and Krekula (2015), attest that there is still a lot to learn about how ageing impacts gendering processes and gendered workplace structures, indeed, "*an understanding of the intersection of age and other elements of identity such as gender and sexuality in an organisational context is still relatively new*" (Riach, Rumens and Tyler 2014:1680). This PhD study seeks to shed light on the experiences of men who appear to defy chrononormative ideals by participating in part-time work in middle-age.

3.5 Can the gender order be disturbed? – prospects for undoing gender in the workplace

Much of the theory reviewed within this chapter raises questions as to whether gender can be undone and men's power in gender relations moderated to bring about greater equality between men and women. This short penultimate section of the chapter considers this question in a work context, with a view to supporting empirical enquiry to address the third research question of the thesis.

Hancock, and Tyler (2001) refer to the way in which work cultures, over time, develop and embed preferred work identities through language, dress, behaviour and so on, creating a situation whereby fit with the prevailing organisational culture is important for gaining subject intelligibility. Borgerson (2005) agrees that corporate cultures can indeed be influential, she argues that they control subjectivities and how they relate to one another, channelling certain gendered performance (and other sorts of performances e.g., those based on age or ethnicity). This analysis raises questions concerning how much scope there is for gender to be subverted. Brickell (2005:34) refers to Butler's work on gender performativity, where prospects for subversion appear limited; "*If subjects are best understood as performative effects who do not do gender as such, it is difficult to see how they might precipitate subversive action; permitting subjects to initiate subversion would have been to suggest doers behind the deeds".* For Butler (1990) therefore gender cannot be undone as it is never done or practiced, instead it is a performative, or act of constituting the subject. However, it is also understood from Butler's work that iterability and repeated performances of traits and gestures continually (re)produce and thus sustain appearances of what is considered normative for certain groups or identities (Borgerson and Schroeder 2002), leading Borgerson (2005:70) to maintain that these very performances must give rise to the possibility of "*subversive emergences"*, in other words an unravelling of ideals surrounding masculinity and/or femininity. These thoughts suggest that gender can be subverted more readily than Butler seems to imply. Following similar logic but drawing on ethnomethodological accounts of doing gender, Brickell (2005:37) argues that individuals are both participants and agents in social interactions and so they can "*perpetuate and/or resist hegemonic social arrangements"*. Reeser

(2010) agrees, he suggests there are examples of masculinity operating in non-hegemonic ways which would seem to show that masculine hegemonic operations can be supplanted, and male power dislodged. It is possible that attempts at subversion through social interaction, might give rise to new definitions of masculinity and new ways of understanding and enacting masculinity. Connell (2009:72) adds that in a work context, as in other institutional settings, it is common for defined "*gender regimes*", or patterns of gendered social relations, to develop over time, but just as they are generated through interactions, they can be modified, reconstructed and replaced in interactions; ultimately, "*If a structure can come into existence, it can also go out of existence*" (Connell 2009:89). At the macro level subversions might be more difficult, as Brickell (2005:38) argues "*hegemonic masculinities, male dominance, and the possibilities for their displacement are not conditioned by the availability of cultural resources alone*", rather the power of overarching social structures and institutions need to be arrested for this to occur. It is feasible however that even small acts of resistance in social interactions can slowly over time stretch the boundaries of the frames of masculinity and reshape them, to challenge and alter prevailing hegemonic masculinities. In this sense broader conceptualisations of gender are disrupted as new discourses emerge over time to replace them.

Kelan (2018:545) argues that doing gender means "*enacting masculinity and femininity in light of the perceived sex category*", and so to undo gender is to enact gender in ways which are contrary to sex, or non-normative. In this sense she argues that the practices and performances involved in undoing gender could begin to disturb the gender binary and support notions of gender equality. Deutsch (2007) concurs that undoing gender represents a step towards greater gender equality. Plenty of research however shows men doing gender at work in ways which perpetuate inequality. Martin (2001:588) for example, uses the term "*mobilising masculinities*" to describe the deliberate actions of men in the workplace to maintain the gender hierarchy, she accepts however that some of this practice is perhaps conducted unconsciously (Martin 2003). In other work Glick, Berdahl and Alonso (2018:453) highlight the existence of masculinity contest cultures, where workplace cultures are characterised by "*hyper-competitiveness, valorising physical strength, intense work devotion, prohibition against 'soft'*

*emotions, social dominance, the need to display confidence (even when
unwarranted), and male bonding*". Glick, Berdahl and Alonso (2018) argue that
these environments marginalise some men as well as women, deepening
inequalities.

Correspondingly, many of the practices Glick, Berdahl and Alonso (2018) find are
represented in Kelan's meta-analyses of studies of men doing and undoing gender
at work (2018). Overall, Kelan (2018) identifies more acts of doing gender than
undoing gender suggesting work is a site in which the gender order is more likely
to be endorsed than challenged and in which therefore inequalities prosper. She
detects four themes and corresponding doing and undoing gender actions as shown
in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Compendium of practices – men doing and undoing gender at work Kelan
(2018:550)

Themes	Doing gender	Undoing gender
Men creating connections with other men	Bonding through sexual objectification of women Bonding through mocking and foul language with other men Sucking up – connecting with another man to gain his support Building informal workplace relationships Identifying with the similar – men identifying with other men due to shared similarity Supporting – men ensuring that other men gain benefits Protecting – preventing other men from suffering negative consequences Liking and disliking – men making decisions based on personal relations Expressing fondness – men expressing fondness due to shared interests Establishing connection to other men by excluding non-normative men Reproducing proven success model – selecting people who look like the incumbent	Searching affirmatively – searching specifically for women
Men distancing themselves from women	Publicly criticizing – men publicly criticize women Ganging up on women – men act in concert to depreciate women Excluding women – men socializing together Displaying hostility to women –	Visibility and presence at women's events Displaying humility Using power to advance women

	crowing over women's humiliation Looking sulky – when a woman exerts authority over a man Seeing the wife – men associate female employees with their wives Using others – men abusing women's emotional work and support Being absent or undermining women's events	
Men impressing others	Dominating – men exercising domination over others Peacocking – men vying for attention and time Occupying space – men occupy space such as a spacious office or have expansive gestures Self-promoting – men asserting talent as exceptional	Sharing space – men sharing space with others Showing dedication to private life
Men displaying heroism	Taking credit – men using other's effort and taking credit for them Being fully dedicated to work – men being free from caring Responsibilities Being highly competitive Deploying and facing power Enacting a warrior ethic Displaying financial success Control over own body Celebrating total commitment – applauding men's extreme Presenteeism	Showing dedication to private life Showing openness to failure – admitting mistakes Displaying emotional intelligence and sharing emotions Being people orientated

| | Responding enthusiastically – showing enthusiasm about a job offer

Going for the glory – exceeding expectations to acquire glory

Being rational – drawing on facts and figures

Being task orientated | |

Whilst the compendium appears to offer a bleak outlook in terms of addressing inequality in a work context, Kelan (2018:554) argues that *"approaches to doing and undoing gender need to consider a temporal perspective: doing gender in the short term might mean that gender is undone in the long term"* because the gender difference is accentuated, and when this happens it can be tackled. Similar arguments are made in relation to gender stereotypes; a study by Roberson and Kulik (2007), for example, shows that if stereotypes are made visible and discussed individuals can start challenging them, but if they are ignored, they are more likely to be upheld.

A final consideration here is the extent to which men are cognisant they are undoing gender. Stainback, Kleiner and Skaggs (2016) make the case for including men who are undoing gender in research samples if studies are to advance understanding of how gender change is facilitated, this makes sense, yet the ability to gather useful data relies on pinpointing men who undo gender and recognise that their practices constitute an undoing. As Kelan (2018:556) demonstrates in her analyses of doing gender and undoing gender practices at work *"w*e *have less research evidence on what undoing gender by men might look like. In other words, we have a better idea of how men contribute to gender inequality than how men contribute to gender equality".* To try to highlight cases of men undoing gender Kelan (2018) recommends ethnographic observations of men at work, and secondly approaches which gather others' thoughts on how men undo gender in the workplace and how they are perceived. This thesis seeks to do this by exploring the experiences of middle-aged men working part-time in highly skilled professional

occupations. The use of part-time work would appear to be the antithesis of the normative (male) working model (Acker 1990) for these men and so potentially represents an act of undoing gender. The research design gathers the men's own interpretation of their acts of doing/undoing of gender and as Kelan (2018) suggests, incorporates the perceptions of others in the form of work (WS) and home sphere (HS) participants.

3.6 Men, part-time work, and masculinity

This final section of Chapter 3 draws on the ideas presented in the chapter to offer an applied perspective by considering the potential impact of part-time work on men's masculine identities and others' interpretations of their masculinity. Given the normative male working model consists of full-time permanent employment (Acker 1990), part-time work among men conceivably represents an antecedent or accelerant of gender precarity (Butler 2009) with concomitant risk for men's gendered identities. Whilst the notion of a sole male breadwinner and a full-time female homemaker has loosened as more couples follow a dual-career model or modified breadwinner (breadwinner plus) model of male full-time worker and female part-time worker (Mussida and Patimo 2021), recent research continues to note the existence of a strong association between breadwinning and masculinity, Padavic, Ely and Reid (2020:65) for example, state that *the breadwinner ideal confers manly status on men who leave caregiving behind and put in long hours at work"*. Pedulla and Donnelly (2022) also note that gendered norms expect men to work full-time to financially take care of themselves and other members of their household. Social forces are indeed powerful and enduring; with reference to the recent Covid-19 pandemic, Cotton, Beauregard and Yilmas Keles (2021:616) observe that the growth in part-time work has *"merely served to re-establish women as family dependent and vulnerable workers as it represents a 'transmission mechanism' through which gender norms are reinforced",* these norms being that women are most suited to part-time work as it is a working pattern which is more accommodating of their (greater) responsibilities for caring and domestic work.

In contrast, the workplace is consistently recognised as a key arena within which men negotiate and exhibit masculinity (Gaylin 1992; Erikson 1982; Hodgson 2003;

Hogg and Terry 2001; Morgan 1992). Correspondingly for men, not working is associated with reduced social power, loss of income and peer relations, and loss of an arena in which to showcase competitiveness and independence or to take risks and revel in accomplishment (Thompson 2006), whereas to remain in employment supports men to retain a strong masculinity script (Foweraker and Cutcher 2015). Previous research on depictions of older men's masculinity upon retirement from work reinforces the importance of work as a central tenet of masculinity, successive studies maintain that as men get older, their masculinity dissipates and they are prone to being rendered invisible, particularly once they leave the workforce and are no longer perceived as productive (Calasanti and King 2005; Fleming 1999; Sennett 2005; Thompson 2006). The imperative to remain productive, constrains choices for men, with repercussions for women too, often making it more difficult for women to prioritise work, and arguably more difficult for men to focus upon home and family (McGinley 2016). Biggart and O'Brien (2010) concur, arguing that becoming a father is a predictor of longer work hours for men, reflective of the fact that men are more often locked into the provider role; the onset of fatherhood simply intensifies this obligation. The notion of constrained lifestyle choices, at least for men, is similarly reflected in Hofmeister and Bauer's (2015) study of parenting and work in Germany, which found that the expectations on men to be the main provider restricted their choices as they experienced tensions between fatherhood and financial commitments to the household, meanwhile German mothers could exercise greater latitude to choose full-time work, part-time work, or to stop work altogether to focus on childcare and domestic responsibilities.

Masculinity is not just tightly bound with work, as detailed above, but it is more acutely linked with work that requires long hours and commitment to the employer (Lewis and Humbert 2010); in other words, full-time work. As Cotton, Beauregard and Yilmas-Keles (2021:617) remind us "*career success requires masculine career patterns, and 'good motherhood' requires high involvement in caregiving",* not surprisingly therefore, as demonstrated in Chapter 2 of this thesis, most men in employment work full-time*.* In other work, competitive forms of masculinity have been associated with professional occupations (Merilainen et al. 2004), implying that staunch adherence to hegemonic masculine ideals is especially paramount in

the professions. Sang, Dainty and Ison (2014:259) however point out that it should not be assumed that "*all white, male, middle class, heterosexual professionals are able (or willing) to embody the ideals of hegemonic masculinity*". The strong association between masculinity and full-time, permanent work would indicate that men who work in gender atypical ways will be placed in a precarious position as they breach normative ideals surrounding work engagement. Such men unsettle the gendered sub-structure of the organisation and in so doing risk becoming highly visible, potentially to their detriment. For example, male architects in Sang, Dainty and Ison's study (2014), who undertook caring work for members of their family, experienced marginalisation at work. Where men fail to align with hegemonic masculinity ideals, are marginalised and subsequently leave the workplace however, it is likely that hegemonic masculinities gather ground, rather than breakdown, thus shutting down options for others to err from the dominant masculinity norms (Sang, Dainty and Ison 2014).

Men's reluctance to take up flexible working is rooted in ideas that doing so will indicate lack of commitment to work and will be accompanied with penalties for digressing from the ideal worker model of full-time, permanent employment (Acker 1990; Williams 1999). As Bosson and Vandello (2011) argue, manliness needs to be constantly practiced so as not to be diminished, therefore, not only might engagement in flexible working damage men's careers and perceptions of them in the workplace it may also threaten their identities as men beyond the workplace (Michniewicz et al. 2014). Ahmed (2007) uses the term 'othering' to capture what happens to those who stand out as different in organisational cultures when they are unable or unwilling to comply with organisational and broader cultural norms. Within organisational cultures it is invariably women who deviate from embedded workplace norms, for example, long hours and presenteeism, but sometimes men veer away too and risk becoming othered in relation to those who do tread the expected path (Ahmed 2007; Padavic, Ely and Reid 2020).

There is further compelling evidence that men are reluctant to risk emasculation in a work context. Vandello et al (2013) found that although men prized workplace flexibility equally with women, they were less likely to seek flexibility. Indeed, men who perceived they would be judged harshly for detouring from normative

masculinity if they decided to work flexibly were the least likely indicate they would take advantage of flexible working options, including the use of part-time work. Subsequent research within the same study (Vandello et al. 2013) demonstrates that men have legitimate grounds to suspect they would be penalised for working flexibly. Whilst both mothers and fathers who worked part-time post parenthood received poorer performance evaluations and lower pay rises than their full-time colleagues, in assessments carried out as part of the study, men who worked flexibility were seen as less masculine and received higher scores on traits associated with femininity. These findings appear to illustrate the perils of working flexibly and of caregiving irrespective of gender, but moreover they go some way to explaining why men are deterred from taking up part-time and flexible modes of work even if they might value them. It appears that in conjunction with the material disadvantages befalling those who work flexibly (referenced in Chapter 2), the act of using flexible working practices marks men out as more feminine and thus potentially distances them from masculinised ideals of what it means to be a man, in short flexible working carries risks for men in terms of their masculinity.

Recent work (Kelland, Lewis and Fisher 2022) has noted forfeits for caregiving fathers in the workplace; they are reportedly ridiculed for fulfilling childcare roles, considered lazy and viewed warily by others. Cook et al (2021) similarly report that men who use flexible working practices for caregiving face greater stigma than women who do so, and Berdahl and Moon (2013) recognise a fatherhood penalty for caregiving fathers which manifests as being teased, demeaned and ostracised by work colleagues. On the contrary, other work finds that caregiving penalties are attributed to women but not to men, in other words there appears to be a dual standard at play which acts in men's favour. Research by Brescoll, Glass and Sedlovskaya (2013) and by Munsch (2016) argues that women, especially mothers, are more likely than men to be stigmatised in the workplace and assumed to take work less seriously if they engage in part-time work. Fathers, on the other hand, who seek flexibility for care purposes appear to be looked upon positively and awarded a "*progressive badge of merit*" for their enlightened approach (Kolb 2014, *cited by* Gerstel and Clawson 2018:81). In other work, Bear and Glick (2017) analyse the much plauded motherhood penalty, experienced by women who take time out of the labour market for caregiving, and consider whether it should be reframed as

the caregiver penalty irrespective of the gender of the person who fulfils this role. Findings from their study supports the notion of a breadwinner bonus applicable to mothers and fathers, whereas caregiving penalties seem to be evident for mothers but not for fathers. Explanations for men's reported ability to avoid a caregiver penalty are unclear, Moss-Racusin, Phelan and Rudman (2010) suggest that men's higher status affords greater latitude to occupy counter stereotypical roles, whilst Bear and Glick (2017) conjecture that caring might be seen as an admirable quality in modern men, or practically perhaps employers presume a man will be more adaptable and flexible, fitting caring around work rather than work around caring and so easier to accommodate in the workplace. The latter point is in part supported by earlier research (Lyonette 2015; Williams 2010) which similarly argues that flexible working harms women's careers the most. Here the central tenet is that when women use part-time work their hours and patterns of work are invariably constrained by outside commitments and so they usually require an inflexible form of flexibility where set times and days are preserved for care responsibilities, which cannot be rearranged or obviated to respond to employer requests. In other words, women tend to require flexibility which involves unavailability. In contrast Borkgvist et al (2021) find that men use flexible working arrangements differently, the men in their study were encouraged through organisational norms to exercise a flexible approach to working times (perhaps due to seniority and greater autonomy at work), altering arrangements where necessary to meet operational demands, thus maintaining their status as ideal workers. Borgkvist et al (2021) conclude that whilst flexible working is promoted as gender neutral, the evidence demonstrates that it is operationalised in gendered ways.

As illustrated, whilst men's use of part-time work is sometimes positioned as posing a risk to their masculinity, for men, going against the grain and performing gender in ways which are inconsistent with embedded gendered stereotypes is not always detrimental. Research by Meijs, Lammers and Ratliff (2015) suggests that men can get away with gender stereotype-inconsistent behaviour, such as engaging in part-time work, if their behaviour is perceived as a creative and clever, or an enlightened way of playing with gendered roles. The basis for this argument is that it is often considered more acceptable for those with higher social status and power, for

example, men (Schneider 2004) to sidestep social norms and conduct themselves in a wider array of ways and more individualistically, whereas women and othered groups (including othered men) who practice non-stereotypical behaviour are likely to be perceived negatively for behaving contrary to social norms (Eagly and Steffen 1984). Indeed, Lewis and Simpson (2010) argue that men who do gender differently sometimes revel in their token status and use it to construct a special identity for themselves, apart from other men. Pini and McDonald (2008:606) recognise this phenomenon in their study of male flexible workers in Australia; the men who altered their working hours for childcare portrayed themselves and their choices as "*slightly on the progressive side and early adopters who believe in equality*". Further, Pini and McDonald's study (2008) failed to show that dominant gender discourses were dismantled by men engaging in reduced hours working. So, for example, some men in their study described choosing work arrangements to complement part-time study and/or other career enhancing activity and emphasised the short-term nature of their commitment to reduced hours. Critically, they articulated their orientation to part-time work as different to that of female co-workers. The latter were assumed to choose part-time work over full-time work for family reasons, a subordinate and less important reason, in their opinion. Older men, reducing their working hours as part of a pre-retirement strategy, felt exonerated as they had satisfied traditional notions of masculinity in the past by working full-time. These men were anxious to distance themselves from young male part-time workers and voiced the opinion that "*all real young men work full-time*" (Pini and McDonald 2008:606). In different ways, both groups of men can be seen to articulate (and maintain) their masculinity, despite their involvement with part-time work.

In a more recent study of men doing gender differently by reining back their careers and taking a primary role in the home Bach (2019:351) demonstrates the efforts the men put in to broker new forms of masculinity, her research emphasises how "*constructing intelligible home making positions requires a lot of cultural work*". Swidler's work on cultural repertoires (2001), is helpful in explaining why this might be so, she attests that in times of transition and change, cultural work is more evident because new patterns of action sit alongside yet stand out from established arrangements (e.g., fathers as full-time workers versus involved fathers working

part-time/flexibly). In these circumstances Swidler (2001) argues that individuals often develop new scripts which underlie their ways of being and acting. In relation to men who are involved fathers, and ascribe to gender equality regimes, these new scripts might be conceived as way to create a new form of intelligible masculinity which accord with hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, Kelan and Wratil (2018) attest that men acting to support the equality agenda can be interpreted as a heroic act of helping women out, representative of men doing gender not undoing it. In other work Bach (2019) provides clear examples of men developing new intelligible masculinity scripts; her study, focused on the male partners of high achieving, career orientated women, found the men invested in cultural work to construct a non-dominant form of masculinity underpinned by a narrative of choice, involved fatherhood and gender equality. Their non-traditional family arrangement is articulated as temporal, optional and voluntary which maintains a semblance of being in control and deflects any potential inferences of emasculation. Similarly involved fatherhood is considered a choice and an ideal; the men construct fatherhood as degendered, in the sense that mothers' work can be done by fathers too. In discussing gender equality as a central tenet in their version of masculinity, the men in Bach's study (2019) reject the idea of dominance and being the breadwinner, replacing this traditional masculine position with one which emphasises cooperation and reciprocity. The studies by Pini and MacDonald and Bach both show men (re)constructing masculinity to form new gendered subjectivities, through which they seek to achieve recognisability.

The actions of men who construct their masculinity by choosing part-time rather than full-time work can be interpreted in alternative ways. Their rejection of full-time work could be seen as a way of casting aside the constraints of hegemonic masculinity to legitimise doing gender differently (Gatrell and Swan 2008), else an attempt to re-formulate notions of hegemonic masculinity by dissociating it from the breadwinner role, and perhaps aligning it with other acts such as fatherhood and pro gender-equality behaviours, thereby preserving manliness in a different guise (Brandth and Kvande 1998). To extend these arguments, studies largely emanating in Denmark and other Nordic countries, suggest that traditional norms of masculinity, predicated on patriarchy, are no longer the most legitimated forms of masculinity performed by present day men and indeed hegemonic power can

preside in other forms as discussed in section 3.3.1. Aarseth, (2009) and Miller (2011), for example, indicate that in certain countries, hegemonic ideals of masculinity are beginning to change to reflect men's greater uptake of home-centred, family-oriented roles. Notably Bach and Aarseth (2016) illustrate how legislative changes in North-Western European countries, have helped to foster a shift away from traditional models of fathering to new notions of involved fatherhood. Involved models of fatherhood are allegedly more prevalent among middle class men (Bjork, 2013) and among educated men (Brandth and Kvande 2014). However, Bloksgaard et al (2015) argue that age is key too; their research reveals that younger, less educated men, support the notion of involved fatherhood more so than older men with a similar educational background, suggesting that generational change in normative ideals of masculinity could be occurring irrespective of occupational class. Hearn et al (2012) concur, arguing that the notion of the involved father updates hegemonic masculinity as men take on greater roles for caring, especially in dual career households.

In contrast, Bloksgaard et al (2015), emphasise that advent of new ideals of masculinity, such as involved fatherhood, do not instantly eradicate (or simply update) traditional ideals, in practice old and new can coexist as masculinity takes different forms. Their work explores how intelligible masculine identities are formed in heterosexual couple households where the woman's career takes precedence. By focusing on family arrangements which deviate from the normative male breadwinner model, more can potentially be learned about the ways in which new (non-dominant) masculinities are constructed and how gender hierarchies are (re)constructed beyond traditional patterns of gendering within families (Bloksgaard et al. 2015). In this regard, key questions arise concerning how men who eschew the breadwinner role negotiate a cultural landscape which is immersed in gendered traditions. Bach (2019:340) is pessimistic, she argues that involved fathers who ascribe to gender equality "s*imultaneously destabilise and preserve hegemonic ideas of what it means to be a man",* offering little prospect of gender hierarchies being disturbed by new gender atypical household arrangements.

These questions are important for this thesis, with specific reference to the third
research question - how does the lived experience of part-time work impact the
way in which middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations perform gender at work
and at home, and what are the implications for the gender hierarchy? The growing
cohorts of men working part-time raise interesting questions in relation to the
study of men and masculinities; they potentially disrupt the ideals of hegemonic
masculinity by adopting a feminised workplace position which is the antithesis to
the normative (male) work model (Acker 1990), yet Messerschmidt (2000)
comments, it is precisely at times when hegemonic masculinity is disrupted or
challenged that it becomes more apparent. This study of the daily interactions and
performances at work and at home of middle-aged men who are working part-time
in highly skilled, professional roles, provides an opportunity to theorise if, and if so,
how, this subset of men develop new gendered scripts to guide their performances
of masculinity, what these scripts are, and how their masculinity is positioned in
relation to hegemonic masculinity.

3.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to illuminate the gender lens of the thesis by
setting out existing theoretical conversations on the social construction of gender
(Butler 1990; West and Zimmerman 1987) and on masculinities, specifically the
construction and enactment of hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1987, 1995).
Given the thesis focuses on middle-aged men in highly skilled, professional
occupations the literature reviewed also encapsulates work on intersectionality
(age and gender) and the notion of chrononormativity. The chapter supports a
theoretical understanding of how gender is done and potentially undone by men
working part-time, whilst application to the workplace in the latter section of the
chapter addresses the importance of work for men's masculinity. The chapter
foregrounds the empirical research for this thesis and links principally to Chapter 7,
the final findings chapter which focuses on the third research question - How do
male, middle-aged part-time workers in highly skilled occupations perform gender
at work and at home, and what are the implications for the gender hierarchy?

The chapter discredits essentialised, embodied notions of gender difference, which position masculinity and femininity as binary and fixed and instead embraces the stance adopted by gender performativity theory (Butler 1990) and doing gender (West and Zimmerman 1987) that gender is a socially constructed category. The role of context and social interaction, set against the dominant regulations of gender, are considered crucial in (re)producing gender, giving the illusion that stable and coherent gender exists and so perpetuating stereotypes and associated inequalities. With respect to masculinity the central arguments of the chapter are that masculinity is a subjectivity which is associated with power; the workplace is an example of a key site in which masculinity is constructed, embedded, and reproduced. In a work context, whilst men are considered to benefit from a patriarchal dividend (Connell 1995) often they do not see their privilege; it is not uncommon for men to consider organisations as gender neutral or ungendered, whilst othered groups such as women and marginalised men more readily recognise gender. In the social organisation of masculinity, the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987) refers to the current, culturally most honoured way of being a man. It legitimises patriarchy and subjugates women but also facilitates a hierarchy of masculinities. Men may seek to navigate and secure masculine hegemonic power by, for example, forming connections with other men, by deploying closure tactics and pitting against *othered* men (for example non-heterosexual men or older men); women too can be complicit in upholding hegemonic masculinity.

Despite the cultural prioritisation of hegemonic masculinity, it is shown to be fluid and context dependent, attempts at subversion, or undoing, through social interaction are thus conceivable (Connell 2009; Deutch 2007), giving rise perhaps to new variants which either do, or do not, legitimise patriarchy. The chapter illustrates that presently more is known about ways in which men do gender than about how men undo gender and the potential for acts of undoing to reduce gender inequalities. To arrive at a more nuanced understanding of how masculinities are constructed, maintained, and subverted, it is argued that studies should focus on men's experiences (Waling 2019; McCarry 2007). Furthermore, deeper exploration of the intersectionalities of gender, with other social characteristics stands to be fruitful way of advancing knowledge and so understanding how combinations of

social characteristics facilitate or constrain gendered subjectivities (Connell 2000),
whilst chrononormative frameworks impose additional normative ideals on
individuals (Riach, Rumens and Tyler 2014), adding to the complexities of managing
gendered performances and gaining intelligibility in the eyes of others. At a macro
level, without detailed disaggregation to different types of men, the extant
literature shows that for men, departure from the time honoured, normative male
working model of full-time and permanent employment can carry risks from a
gendered perspective. Studies report that men experience forfeits and workplace
stigma when working part-time (Vandello et al. 2013; Kelland, Lewis and Fisher
2022; Berdhal and Moon 2013; Cook et al. 2021), however other research
contradicts, finding men to be less disadvantaged by part-time working (for
caregiving in particular) than women (Bear and Glick 2017; Brescoll, Glass and
Sedlovskaya 2013; Munsch 2016; Gerstel and Clawson 2018) and so the picture is
somewhat confused. The thesis seeks to contribute to these conversations, drawing
on the experiences and gendered performances of middle-aged men working part
time in highly skilled, professional occupations.

3.8 Theoretical framework - summary

Following extensive review of the literature (Chapters 2 and 3), Figure 3.1 provides
a summary of the theoretical framework for this thesis, and the knowledge gaps
identified, which have in turn helped to form the specific research questions.

Figure 3.1: Theoretical framework

PART-TIME WORK			
Defining part-time work	Motives for working part-time	Job quality in part-time work	Incidence and patterns of part-time work

Knowledge deficit (maps to RQ1 and RQ2)

- An understanding of why middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations work part-time.
- An understanding of how this subset of men experience part-time work and how they are perceived by others.
- An understanding of how this subset of men navigate the home sphere of their lives as part-time workers.

Knowledge deficit (maps to RQ3)

- An understanding of how middle-aged men who work part-time in highly skilled occupations perform gender.

Gender performativity (Butler 1990)	Doing gender (West and Zimmerman 1987)	Hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987)	Chrononormative expectations (Riach, Rumens and Tyler 2014)
GENDER			

The framework is designed to draw together data, concepts, and theorisations from two key domains, that is part-time work and gender. Elements of the framework surrounding part-time work, presented in Chapter 2, provide a deep understanding of who typically works part-time and why, and how the act of part-time working shapes workers' experiences of paid work, unpaid household and caring responsibilities and other facets of their home lives. The review of extant literature demonstrates that much is known about part-time work and its implications for majority user groups, such as women and those in low paid, low status roles, whilst significantly less is known about men's participation in part-time work and how it shapes their lived experiences, especially in occupations, sectors and among age groups where part-time work is least used. The part-time work element of the theoretical framework provides the impetus therefore for the first two research questions posed by the thesis (RQ1 and RQ2) and foregrounds the empirical investigation which seeks to address these questions. In turn, the gender components of the framework, set out in this chapter, form a theoretical, sociological understanding of the socially constituted nature of gender, notably

masculinity, and of other chrononormative expectations, which impose normative ways of being and living. The fusion of these two bodies of literature, part-time work, and gender, exposes an acute knowledge gap pertaining to how gender is performed by men who participate in part-time work, specifically those men who are least likely to do so. This gap in the literature forms the justification for the third research question (RQ3).

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology

4.1 Introduction

As established in Chapter 1, the purpose of this thesis is to explore the factors which induce middle-aged men in highly skilled (professional) occupations (aligned to SOC 2020, skill level 4) to work part-time, to investigate how they experience the work and home spheres of their lives as part-time workers, how they perform gender in these spaces and what the implications might be for the gender hierarchy. The specific research questions are:

1. What factors induce middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations to work part-time and how is this work mode accommodated within their careers?

2. How do middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations experience the workplace and home sphere of their lives as part-time workers?

3. How do male, middle-aged part-time workers in highly skilled occupations perform gender at work and at home, and what are the implications for the gender hierarchy?

Chapters 2 and 3 set out the theoretical framework for this thesis and identified the knowledge gaps the empirical investigation seeks to develop. This chapter proceeds to explain and justify the research design and methodology chosen to explore these gaps and address the specific research questions. The chapter is organised into seven sections plus a conclusion. The first section sets out the philosophical assumptions underpinning the study. Secondly the research design is outlined and justified, this section is followed by an explanation and appraisal of the research tools used to collect rich data from the different sets of participants. The fourth section is dedicated to detailing and justifying the sampling technique employed and presenting the composition of the participant sample. The subject of reflexivity in the context of the study is addressed next, whilst the penultimate section considers the method of data analysis used to make sense of the data. The final section details the ethical issues to arise from the approach to research and how these are managed. Throughout the chapter a reflective stance is adopted,

whereby the challenges inherent in designing and conducting the research are elucidated, information is provided to explain how problems and issues encountered at each stage of the study were managed and overcome.

4.2 Philosophical assumptions

A research philosophy or paradigm comprises of ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Ontology focuses on the assumptions researchers hold about the nature of existence or reality, or as Crotty (1998:10) succinctly explains, it involves assumptions about *"what is".* Epistemology on the other hand is how we discover the truth or reality (Kivunja and Kuyini 2017), and so entails assumptions about knowledge, its nature, how it is developed and how it is conveyed to others. Axiology meanwhile refers to the role the researcher's ethics and values play in the research process (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2016). Taking these points into consideration, the two main philosophical traditions are referred to as positivism and interpretivism. The former sees the world as existing externally and that its properties should be measured by objective means, while the latter argues that the world and reality are not objective and external, rather they are socially constructed and given meaning by people (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2016). Broadly interpretivist approaches give prominence to a qualitative research design which gathers rich data directly from participants (Jankowicz 2005). Positivist researchers on the other hand prioritise calculable and measurable knowledge over other forms of knowledge and thus are assured by quantitative research and quantitative data. A mixed methodological approach pursues a third way, or hybrid social science research paradigm *"that aims to bridge the quantitative-qualitative (positivist-interpretivist) divide"* (Baskarada and Koronios 2017:3).

Johnson and Clark (2006) advise that researchers should carefully reflect on their philosophical position as it guides important decisions concerning the design of the study. In this case, the researcher is of the view that the nature of reality is rich and complex, it can never be fully known or captured since it is not fixed, singular or objectively measurable, rather there are several plausible truths, and an understanding or interpretation of these comes about through shared experiences, interactions, narrative, and dialogue. Accordingly, the orthodox approach, which

assumes that reality is objective, orderly and can be understood through scientific and analytical forms of investigation is soundly rejected in the design of the empirical research used to address the research questions. Instead, the study adopts a relativist ontology in which reality is believed to be socially constructed rather than known. In approaching the research, it is recognised that there is not one perception of reality but many, and that realities can be investigated, and meanings developed via interaction between the researcher and participants to capture the complexities and richness of phenomena relevant to the study (Kivunja and Kuyini 2017). The research is thus guided by an overarching interpretivist philosophy where the key objective is "*to try to see how the people involved understand what's going on, and what they see as the evidence involved*" (Jankowicz 2005:116). The approach is useful as it places meanings in a cultural context rather than accepting the positivist stance which equates explanations and predictions and treats them as eminently logical (Rabinow and Sullivan 1987). Baskarada and Koronios (2017:12) add that "*interpretivism aims to break out of the extant subjective conceptual frameworks by redescribing and clarifying phenomena via novel constructs*". Accordingly, the research seeks to develop new insight which allows us to view the world and social phenomena through different lenses, whilst exploring and questioning the structures which underpin conventional thinking and practices. In operating in this manner, the researcher recognises the role her own values, beliefs and interpretations play in the research process, however the research participants are considered key subjects with whom the researcher co-constructs meaning. Importantly as Hiller (2016:103) argues, in this approach "*no interpretation is privileged over another; no interpretation is a definitive one*". The approach accepts disorderliness of thoughts and actions and seeks to extract issues, fully cognisant of the socially constructed nature of realities.

4.3 Research design

A central element of the research process is determining the research design. Bhattacherjee (2012:21) describes this process as "*creating a blueprint*" of the way in which the research will be organised, planned, and executed. Here methodological choice and the selection of methods (research instruments) come to the fore. In alignment with interpretivist research this study relies on a qualitative methodology (Denzin and Lincoln 2011) where the focus is on seeking

to understand participants attitudes, thoughts, feelings, perceptions, values, beliefs, and their experiences. Specifically, the study applies a mixed qualitative research design (O'Reilly, Kiyimba and Drewett, 2021), which combines two qualitative methodologies drawn from the same research philosophy or paradigm, in this case interpretivism. The approach is entirely distinct from mixed methods studies which combine qualitative and quantitative approaches and in so doing mix ontological, epistemological, and methodological approaches (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010). Accordingly, the research methods comprise semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation technique (see section 4.4). The methodology and research methods are carefully chosen to elicit rich information from participants. In accordance with qualitative research processes, the frequency of what is said and/or thematic counts is of little significance and the outcomes of the research do not claim to be generalisable to a population. The researcher accepts the position of Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000) that generalisability of the findings of interpretivist research is unlikely given that the very nature of research steeped in interpretivist philosophical assumptions is context related and variable. Accordingly, data is generalised to theory (Yin 2003), and some emphasis is placed on naturalistic generalisability (Stake 2000); the ability to generate a sense of external validity by recognising similarities and common threads in the information gathered.

Using the two research instruments, qualitative data is collected from three distinct, yet related sets of participants (explained in detail in section 4.5). The central participants comprise seven middle-aged men who, at the onset of the study were working part-time in a highly skilled (professional) occupation. Each of the men were asked to identify a person known to them in their home sphere (e.g., partner, spouse, relative, friend) and a colleague, line manager or other contact in their work sphere to be part of the study. This approach results in the formation of seven triangulated case studies capable of yielding rich data. The case studies are referred to throughout the thesis as triads, on account of the three participants within each case study.

Bhattacherjee (2012) considers case study research to involve a deep dive into an issue or collection of issues in a real-life setting designed to either test hypotheses

or to build theory. Consistent with the interpretivist philosophy underpinning the study, the intention is to use the triads to develop theory inductively (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007), that is to develop existing theoretical models and frameworks using insight from new contexts and perspectives so building on these theories and their application. The triad (case study) approach is selected for several reasons, firstly because it is an effective means of eliciting and interpreting information "*in a given context*" (Cronbach 1975:123). Secondly, the how and why questions, used as part of a case-study approach, are considered capable of producing valuable insight where the phenomena to be investigated and the context are intertwined and difficult to separate (Yin 2009). Thirdly, the composition of the triads provides an opportunity to establish how the male part-time workers (MPTs) are perceived by participants in the work sphere (WS) and in the home sphere (HS) on account of their engagement with part-time work. This feature of the study injects multi-dimensional, multi-layered voice to corroborate accounts where applicable, and/or expose alternative perspectives. The presence of differing accounts is not necessarily an indication of tension between participants, nor does the researcher attach a particular value to the detection of aligned or differing accounts, simply the alternative research lenses serve as a means of juxtaposing MPT, WS and HS participants' positions on the same topic or theme, thereby garnering maximum insight to inform the research questions. Indeed, in relation to masculinity, a construct which is central to the thesis, Nordberg (2007), argues that since different contexts can produce different prevailing discourses around what it means to be a man, it is highly relevant to explore how masculinity is constituted via social interaction in different social settings.

Consistent with multiple case-study research the design allows for both intra-case insights and inter-case findings to be identified and explored (Ridder 2017). Further, the triangulated design facilitates the identification of themes common within each of the three distinct participant groups. Whilst loose a priori constructs and variables (such as family circumstances, age, and health) serve to progress the research and influence the nature of the interview guide, the researcher is receptive to encountering several different, even competing, realities in the research process. Ridder (2017:298) terms this approach, the "*social construction*

of reality" case study research design, and argues it fits well with an intention to build upon theory or generate tentative new ones.

Seven triads were chosen to give breadth to the research whilst representing a manageable number of participants for the researcher to maintain contact with throughout the duration of the study. The research design set out to collect data from each participant in three phases over the course of a 12-month period, commencing in late summer 2018, with key data collection points at the start and the end of the 12-month period and a shorter interim check-in with each participant after the initial six months. At the planning stage a great deal of consideration was given to the overall time period for the study, the number of data collection points and the length of the intervals between these. As Hollstein (2021:13) argues however *"here, universal rules are impossible, since all these aspects depend on the research questions and the specific topic of the study"*. Ultimately, the decision to build the study around three data collection points at six monthly intervals mirrors other qualitative longitudinal studies which take a similarly prospective approach in seeking to trace changes over time in the research subjects' lives and or narratives (e.g., Sanip 2020). Staging the interviews six months apart appeared to offer three key advantages. Firstly, conversations would occur at regular intervals such that researcher-participant rapport could be maintained, and threads followed without the need for undue repetition at the subsequent encounter. Secondly, participant interest was likely to be maintained and the risk of subject attrition thus minimised, and thirdly it was thought that an interval of six months between interviews offered sufficient time for potential changes to occur in the MPTs' home and/or work lives, thus optimising the level of insight the study provided into the men's lived experiences as part-time workers.

The original plan was to maintain the same timeline for each triad and complete the entire empirical study over a 12-month period, however in practice It was challenging to arrange all the interviews in parallel due to the researcher's and the participants' diary commitments and work patterns. Consequently, each triad followed an individual timeline, but the same intervals between each phase of the study were adhered to across all the triads to maintain the integrity and comparability of the research outcomes. Some of the triads joined the study much

later than others, leading to an elongated total data collection period of 28 months, commencing late summer 2018 and concluding in early 2021. A proportion of the primary data collection occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020 onwards), rather than hindering the research the changing external environment provided a unique opportunity to explore responses to the research questions in a truly dynamic and unparalleled time. The start times of each phase and a summary of the data collection instruments used in each phase are shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Data collection phases (start times) and instruments

Phase A	Commenced August 2018 Semi-structured interviews and photo-elicitation
Phase B	Commenced February 2019 Interim 'check-in' semi-structured interviews
Phase C	Commenced August 2019 Semi-structured interviews and photo-elicitation

Note – end dates for each phase are not included as data collection in each triad followed an individual timeline.

The longitudinal aspect of the design strengthens the research by tracking developments in real time and capturing the potentially changeable views, perceptions, and positions of the participants across the course of the study. This feature added complexity, however as Ployhart and Ward (2011:412) attest "*the precision of our theories is enhanced by considering temporal issues, if for no other reason than most of our theories do not currently do so".* Moreover, there is a compelling rationale for the longitudinal aspect of the design as neither experience of work or home life, nor gender, can be considered as static phenomena. In common with Tomanović's observations (2019:368), the researcher believes longitudinal qualitative research offered an effective way to elicit "*insight into the processes, such as making choices, coping, adapting, navigating"* and so provided scope to illuminate the way in which participants' thoughts and ideas develop over time.

Whilst successful as a way of building rapport with participants, tracing narratives over time and capturing changes in participants' actions, views, and perceptions, the longitudinal nature of the research design presented some problems in terms of data completeness. Missing data are however considered par for the course with a longer timeframe, as Ployhart and Ward (2011:416) assert "*missing data are*

synonymous with longitudinal research. Like death and taxes, missing data is going to happen despite herculean efforts to avoid it". In total 44 interviews were conducted. Table 4.2 illustrates the number of completed interviews by participant type per phase of the study.

Table 4.2: Number of completed semi-structured interviews by participant type, per phase of the study

	Phase A	Phase B	Phase C	TOTAL
Male part-time workers (MPT)	7	5	5	17
Home sphere participants (HS)	6	5	5	16
Work sphere participants (WS)	5	3	3	11
TOTAL	18	13	13	44

4.4 Research methods

The chosen research methods are designed to collect rich qualitative data from all three sets of participants. As referred to in section 4.3, the research design relies on three phases of data collection.

4.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews occurred with each participant to facilitate the incremental collection of data over a longitudinal timeframe. The interviews were designed to build upon one another, gaining greater depth of insight over the course of the study. The researcher was cognisant that the MPTs might find talking about their gendered identity to a stranger a little personal, and moreover that HS and WS participants could be guarded, and so fail to share their true feelings and perceptions surrounding the phenomena of male part–time working, and specifically their relationship with, or to, the MPT at the centre of each triad. To mitigate against this outcome, the interview guides (Appendix A), were developed to start with fact gathering (phase A) and progress to exploring participants'

feelings, perceptions, attitudes and deeper emotions at Phase C, as greater rapport developed between the researcher and the participant.

Accordingly, as table 4.3 illustrates, the semi-structured interview guide developed for the initial phase A interviews with the seven MPTs adopted a (factual) life-work history perspective, with a view to identifying the factors that were influential in shaping the men's engagement with part-time work, this insight is crucial to the first research question. Particular attention was paid to events considered by the participants to be critical incidents, triggering their move into part-time work and/or characterising their experience within, and outside of, paid work. Questions focused on education, family background, early career choices, their career trajectory to date, friends and other influences, income/wealth, personal values and priorities, life aspirations, health and well-being, leisure interests and family circumstances. The interviews also began to explore how the MPTs experience work and home and manage their gendered lives as male part-time workers to support the second research question. In recognition of the notion that gender could be a potentially sensitive topic, the researcher deliberately set out to build rapport in phases A and B prior to exploring more personal themes pertinent to the third research question around gender performance, gendered identity, feelings of belonging, gender congruity/incongruity and so forth within phase C. By adopting this staged approach, the researcher felt she would be able to build trust, and participants would thus feel more comfortable revealing innermost thoughts and feelings as time progressed.

Table 4.3: Development of the semi-structured interview guides

	Facts >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> Feelings		
	Phase A	Phase B	Phase C
	Fact-finding, broad attitude gathering	Rapport building, revisiting earlier ideas and themes	Deeper data, thoughts, attitudes, feelings
Male part-time workers (MPT)	Factual life/work history perspective Critical incident(s) Motives for participation in part-time work Job-role data Leisure/non-work time Uptake of household chores, childcare etc.	Updates/ capture new information and reflections	Collection of deep 'talk data' (Bloksgaard *et al*, 2015), surrounding gendered identification and gender performativity at work and at home / lived experiences
Work sphere participants (WS)	Broad attitudes to part-time working per se Profile (e.g., age, gender, status) of part-time workers in the organisation Reasons men work part-time Experiences of working with part-time colleagues	Updates/ capture new information and reflections	Deeper thoughts and candid perceptions concerning the gendering of part-time work, longer-term career and labour market ramifications for men who work part-time, pervasiveness of the normative male working model of paid, full-time, permanent employment
Home sphere participants (HS)	Initial exploration of part-time work from a familial and relational perspective Division of household labour Care responsibilities Leisure time	Updates/ capture new information and reflections	The gendering of the men's lives and how they perform gender in the home sphere. Men's role and activities in the home The benefits and/or tensions the men's part-time work status generates in the domestic setting

Phase A interviews with WS participants were designed to identify the prevalence of part-time working in the organisation, the profile of those engaged in part-time work, broad attitudes to part-time work and part-time workers, perceptions of the contribution of part-time employees, comfort with (and 'normality' of) men in part-time work and perceptions of the key reasons why men might work part-time. By taking a wider contextual stance in the initial phase A interviews with WS

participants, rather than focusing directly on their work colleague within the triad, the researcher sought to de-personalise the interview and slowly build rapport so that the conversations at later phases might be more revealing in terms of close working relations, including the practicalities and tensions of part-time work from a co-worker or managerial perspective.

Phase A interviews with HS participants enabled the researcher to explore the perceived merits and drawbacks of male part-time work from a household and relational perspective. The guide sought to explore initial attitudes to their co-participants' part-time work status, the economic and social impact of his part-time work mode on the household, the division of household labour, care responsibilities (as applicable), how his non-work time is spent and the ways in which their personal relationship with the MPT at the heart of the study is shaped or influenced by his part-time work status. The HS participants were also asked to comment on how the MPT approached the work/home divide and how they managed the day-to-day practical aspects of their lives in this respect. Each of the phase A interviews lasted between 50-70 minutes.

Phase B interviews with all three sets of participants were designed to be shorter, check-in interviews, conducted via telephone, Skype or MS Teams. The interviews averaged 20-30 minutes in length. The timing of the interviews provided an opportunity to revisit and capture new information, reflections and views stemming from the phase A interviews and to build rapport with participants, thus paving the way for deeper exploration in the phase C interviews. No new themes were pursued in these interviews, but earlier themes and findings were checked, consolidated, and recorded.

Phase C interviews with the MPTs explored further topics concerning the men's gendered identity and ways of articulating and performing gender to elicit deep data in relation to the third and final research question. The interviews probed concerning the MPTs' feelings of acceptance and belongingness at work and in non-work settings, their experiences of emasculation or emancipation due to working part-time and their sense of the regulations of gender in the workplace, in the family and in other social spaces. The interviews sought to extract evidence, in the

form of signs or articulation of the way in which the MPTs perform gender in work and outside of work and operate as men in these spaces. The interviews also discussed the MPTs' future work and career plans, their attitudes to retirement and their lifestyle priorities. The researcher agrees with Bloksgaard et al (2015:157) who consider *"men's talk about masculinity to be an important type of data in itself— rather than merely an epiphenomenon—both because such talk is, in itself, an important form of social practice that constructs masculinity, and because the analysis of such talk provides important insights into conflicts, negotiations, and ruptures between different ideas about what masculinity is and could be".* The interviews with MPTs culminated in gathering deep talk data in accordance with this perspective. The use of photo elicitation (see section 4.4.2) often served as an accelerant for such deep conversations, enabling richer data to surface.

Similarly, phase C interviews with WS and HS participants explored deeper themes and issues. The researcher probed the WS participants to gather their thoughts and perceptions concerning the longer-term career/labour market ramifications for men who work part-time. The researcher was particularly interested in the perceived ease with which men could transition between part-time and full-time patterns of working, and whether WS participants thought that men working part-time could compete, without impediment, with male (and female) full-time workers for promotion and career development opportunities. The interviews teased out perceptions of the men's masculine identity and masculinity position in the workplace and sought comparisons with men following the normative male working model of full-time, permanent employment. Phase C interviews with HS participants focused on the gendering of the MPTs' lives and how they perform gender at home. Key themes in this set of interviews include the perceived quality of the MPTs' relationships with family members and friends, the division of labour (including hidden labour) in the household and how this is negotiated and renegotiated over time, how leisure time is spent and the benefits and/or tensions the MPTs' part-time work status generates in the home sphere. In common with the phase A interviews, the final phase interviews lasted between 50 and 70 minutes.

Phase A and C interviews were designed to be face-to-face, held at a suitably safe and private location for example a workplace or a public meeting space or exceptionally meetings were arranged at participants' homes with appropriate protocols in place. Whilst some of the initial interviews did take place face-to-face later interviews were conducted via MS Teams due to social distancing restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic. Video calls were chosen in preference to telephone calls to maintain the intimacy of the interviews and allow for body language and facial expressions to be observed. The researcher sought participants' written permission to record the interviews in all three phases to enable replay and facilitate the production of accurate transcripts. Participants were also asked to consent to the researcher taking supplementary notes (Appendix B).

4.4.2 Photo elicitation

Photo-elicitation technique (Harper 2002) was used in parallel with semi-structured interviews in phases A and C. Photo-elicitation is widely recognised as a visual research method, "*based on the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview*" (Harper 2002:13). Whilst the technique typically draws on photographs, it is possible to use drawings, cartoons, graffiti, or other forms of imagery (Harper 2002), leading Pauwels (2015:97) to consider the alternative terminology of "*image-elicitation*" or "*visual elicitation*". Images can either be supplied by the researcher or by the participant. Where the latter is the case, as it was in this study, the approach is sometimes referred to as the "*native image making technique*' (Bignante 2010:2). The objectives of using this technique alongside the interviews were three-fold; to promote more direct involvement of the participants in the research process, to stimulate the collection of qualitatively different information to that which the researcher might ordinarily have been able to collect in a conventional semi-structured interview, and thirdly to triangulate between different sources of information and bring fresh insights into the research. Care was taken to consider when and how to incorporate the images within the interview process to best meet these objectives and prevent a purely descriptive outcome which would add minimal value. As Pauwels (2015:97) confirms "*carefully chosen visual material of a photographic or non-photographic nature (prints, drawings) combined with a good interview technique can broaden the interview*

from an information round about what has been recorded to a data collection session about the significance of the recorded material to the respondent".

The researcher was interested in exploring the participants' choice of image, the social and personal meanings, and values they attached to it and how they related to the image verbally and emotionally. On the basis that Heisley and Levy (1991:260) argue *"imagery dredges the consciousness (and subconsciousness) of the informant".* the key intention was to use the image(s) as a device to stir thoughts and trigger salient narratives. Additionally, given much of the subject matter of the interviews centred around participants' feelings and perceptions and the focus was on potentially sensitive topics such as gendered identity, emotions, and family, it was felt that introducing images might alleviate some of the social anxieties likely to accompany discussing such subjects and so act as a catalyst for a deeper discussion with each of the participants. Indeed, where the participant is invited to talk about an image he or she has selected, they become the expert, and this helps them to speak more freely (Pauwels 2015).

Accordingly, all participants were asked to bring a photograph (or an image in an alternative format e.g., drawing, postcard, cartoon, magazine cutting) to the interviews, which conveyed meaning to them personally and captured their thoughts in a visual format. To help the participants with this feature of the research the MPTs were encouraged to select an image which symbolised or characterised their gendered identity, either at work or outside of work, or else conjured a specific aspect or wider narrative of their experiences as male part-time workers. HS and WS participants were asked to select an image which conveyed their perceptions of the MPT known to them within the triad, an aspect of their work or home lives, or indeed an image to represent their broader thoughts concerning the practice of men working part-time. The researcher was open to the possibility that the images could be abstract.

Despite the potential of using photo-elicitation there were some setbacks employing this data collection tool. First, not all participants supplied images to support the interview process. The researcher persisted by speaking to participants individually to help them select an image as it was felt the original guidance was

possibly too vague and open. Despite greater encouragement the total number of images supplied throughout the study numbered just eight (six in total from three of the MPTs and two from HS participants). In terms of the validity debates surrounding the approach, the images that were supplied played a variety of roles including eliciting new streams of thought, evoking meanings, illustrating key points, demonstrating the values and deeply held beliefs of the participants and providing moments of reflection, both during the interviews, and in the intervals between interviews. This was a positive manifestation of the technique and one of the main reasons why photo elicitation was attempted. However, as images can take on assumed meanings, by the image taker and reader (Shortt and Warren 2019), the researcher was alert to the possibility that her disposition, knowledge, cultural background and her own experiences could affect what she saw in the images, how she used them in the interviews, the questions she posed and the inferences she took from the participants' responses. To ensure data derived from the images was robust and represented the participants' meaning and not her own, the researcher allowed each participant to talk freely about their choice of image and the social meanings they attached to it. She used the interview setting as an opportunity to relay the participants' thoughts and feelings back to them to check her understanding and interpretation was accurate.

4.5 Sample selection

Consistent with research which uses case studies, non-random, purposive sampling was used to select the cases and participants in the study (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2016). This form of sampling is not intended to be statistically representative of the target population, instead, it is used to form information-rich cases, based on the nature of the research questions. The sample size is small (n=7 triads) comprising a total of 21 individual participants, but as Mason (2010) suggests, qualitative research samples are routinely much smaller than those used in quantitative research. The absence of a large quantity of data and/or data subjects does not equate to less information, rather Ritchie et al (2013) contend that sampling for a qualitative study relies upon a different kind of logic to sampling for quantitative inquiry, one that is based on richness and depth and does not require the researcher to consider key scales or statistical representation.

4.5.1 Male part-time workers (MPTs)

The three-fold criteria applied to selecting the primary MPT sample (n=7) for inclusion in the study was as follows:

a) Must be working in paid part-time work (< 30 hours per week) at the outset of the study.

b) Must hold a role which falls within the parameters of SOC (Standard Occupational Classification) 2020 skill level 4. As identified in the introduction (Chapter 1) the study seeks professionals within skill level 4 as opposed to those men with managerial roles.

c) Must be middle-aged (40s and 50s)

The precise age, ethnicity, marital status, sexual orientation, number and ages of dependents, income, or health of the MPTs did not form part of the criteria for selection. In narrowing the total sample population to middle-aged men in SOC 2020 skill level 4 professional occupations, identifying suitable participants became challenging. As data shows (ONS 2022b; OECD 2022), the proportion, and absolute numbers, of middle-aged men working part-time is low. The researcher was cognisant therefore that the occupational criterion would make locating middle-aged male part-time workers even more difficult and the likelihood of constructing a diverse sample of primary respondents with respect to ethnicity, sexuality, and other demographic characteristics such as relationship status, or indeed achieving sectoral diversity, was remote.

For the above reasons accessing male part-time workers who fulfilled all the study's requirements ultimately required an element of *"convenience"* or *"availability sampling"* (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2016:304) within the purposive sampling frame. Potential primary participants were identified using the researcher's professional network. Once identified, all potential participants were vetted in accordance with pre-established criteria before being formally invited to join the study.

A summary of the sample of MPTs who agreed to take part in the study is presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Summary of participants - male part-time workers (MPT)

MPT ID (Triad)	Job / employer	Hours of work	Qualifications	Family status
MPT1 (T1)	Progress Coach (16+ College)	0.6FTE (3 x days per week)	Degree and PGCE	Married, wife works part-time as a Psychotherapist, 2 x adult children.
MPT2 (T2)	Internal Communications Officer (Higher Education)	0.6FTE (3 x days per week)	PhD	Married, wife works part-time as a Food Bank Manager, 3 x school aged children
MPT3 (T3)	Software Designer (SME)	Averages 0.6FTE (1-3 days per week)	PhD	Married, wife works full-time as a University Professor, 2 x school aged children
MPT4 (T4)	Systems and Data Analyst (Office Supplies Company)	0.6FTE (25-30 hours per week)	Degree	Married, wife works full-time as an interim HR/OD professional, 2 x adult children
MPT5 (T5)	History Teacher (16+ College)	0.6FTE (3 x days per week)	Degree and PGCE	Married, wife works part-time as a GP, 2 x school aged children.
MPT6 (T6)	Senior Lecturer (Higher Education)	0.6FTE (3 x days per week)	Master's Degree and PGCE	Married, wife studying, currently not employed, 1 x pre-school child
MPT7 (T7)	Senior Lecturer (Higher Education)	0.8FTE (4 x days per week)	PhD	Married, wife works part-time as a trainer in the care sector, 2 x school aged children

The purposive sampling frame and resort to convenience sampling led to considerably homogeneity in terms of the biographical characteristics of the MPTs and their respective lifestyles. Drawing on Moya and Fiske's (2017) description of socio-economic status (SES) as a system of social stratification based upon access to resources including occupation, education, income, and wealth, the MPTs all enjoy high SES despite their part-time work mode. Furthermore, the men are all heterosexual, married and were living with their wives throughout the duration of

the study, as such the study fails to capture the experiences of single or divorced men, men living alone, and men with non-heterosexual sexualities or non-cisgender identities. The MPTs are of white British background and married to white British women (except for MPT7 who is married to a white Canadian woman), thus the sample suffers from a distinct lack of ethno-cultural diversity. On the one hand the homogeneity of the sample could be seen as a drawback especially since gender is socially and culturally constituted (Connell 2009). It might be argued that the study would benefit from a wider sampling frame to explore the experiences of men from different ethnicities, men in same sex couples and single, widowed, or divorced men. The deliberate incorporation of such cases, sometimes referred to as "*extreme cases*" may enable the researcher to learn more and answer the research questions more expansively (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2016:301). Specifically greater diversity within the sample would provide a deeper understanding of how the intersectionalities of age, ethnicity, relationship status and sexuality impact on the phenomena pertinent to the research questions (Kelliher, Richardson and Boiarintseva 2019). On the other hand, Sang, Dainty and Ison (2014) observe that past studies exploring transgressions from traditional masculine gendered expectations tend to focus on those men othered by sexuality, ethnicity and/or class. On this basis, the (hetero)sexuality, (white British) ethnicity and high socio-economic status of the sample group is legitimised as a means of exploring how a prioritised subset of men experience their lives when they veer from a normative male working model of full-time employment (Acker 1990), thus adding a privileged voice that is seldom heard.

As table 4.4 shows, the MPTs in the sample work across a narrow range of sectors and occupations in the UK; five of the MPTs work in the education sector, of these MPTs three are academic teaching staff, one is a qualified teacher working in a specialist student support role and one a media and communications professional. The other two MPTs work as technology professionals in the private sector. MPT3 is a software designer for a small to medium enterprise (SME) with ties to the construction sector, whilst MPT4 works for an office furniture and stationery supplier as a data and systems analyst. The sectoral and occupational variation within the study, whilst not extensive, has enabled the researcher to gain a deep understanding of middle-aged men's experiences of securing and navigating part-

time work in alternative organisational contexts and thus formulate some appreciation of the significance of sector in affording such opportunities. The researcher appreciates the sample skew towards professionals in the education sector but embraces it as an opportunity to investigate how part-time work is operationalised and experienced by men in a significant professionalised sector within the UK economy where part-time working policy and practice is well established (Beatson and Wood 2013). The sector also represents a reasonably well gender balanced working environment where part-time working is a work mode often adopted by men as well as women; in 2021-22 for example, male staff accounted for 51 percent of full-time staff reported to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and 34 percent of part-time staff. These factors make it a credible work context in which to explore part-time work among men.

As noted in the introduction (Chapter 1), the criteria for selecting the MPTs to join the study complies with the OECD upper threshold for classifying part-time work, that is up to 30 hours per week (Bastelaer, Lemaitre and Marianna 1997). Working hours varied among the men in the sample. As table 4.4 illustrates, MPT7 worked the most hours at 29.6 hours per week over 4 days, he has a permanent 0.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) contract, where the standard full-time working week for employees at his place of work is 37 hours. MPTs 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 were working 3 days per week (0.6FTE) at the outset of the study, with prescribed working days which were consistently applied. The working arrangements of MPT3 are the most fluid of all the MPTs in the sample group. MPT3 is a contractor rather than an employee and so submits a monthly invoice for days/hours worked. His working time varied during the study, ranging from 1 to 3 days per week. In terms of work history, all the MPTs had participated in full-time work prior to working part-time, and all had been working part-time for at least two years at the point at which the study commenced. MPT3 and MPT4 had the longest part-time work histories, having worked part-time for more than a decade and almost two decades respectively.

4.5.2 Home sphere (HS) and work sphere (WS) participants

The participant information sheet distributed to all the MPTs at the outset of the study (Appendix C) asked them to each refer a potential participant known to them

in their home sphere (HS) and a potential participant in their work sphere (WS) to take part in the study. Besides a connection to the primary MPT, no conditions were placed on the gender, age or other social characteristics of the HS and WS participants. The referral approach reflects participant-led snowballing and was adopted to provide a mechanism for formulating seven fully triangulated case studies. As Shaghaghi, Bhopal and Sheikh (2011:88) observe "*in the snowball sampling method reliance is based on referrals from initial known subjects to recruit new additional subjects. This method is often used when the population under investigation is hard-to-reach due to their special characteristics or sensitivity of the study subject*".

As shown in table 4.5, six of the seven MPTs taking part in the study elected to refer their wives to be the HS participant whilst MPT2 referred his brother as the HS participant.

Table 4.5: Summary of participants - home sphere participants (HS)

Participant ID	Triad	Relationship to MPT	Occupation
HS1	T1	Wife	Part-time self-employed psychotherapist
HS2	T2	Brother	Full-time management consultant
HS3	T3	Wife	Full-time university professor
HS4	T4	Wife	Full-time HR/OD consultant / interim manager
n/a*	T5	Wife	Part-time GP
HS6	T6	Wife	Studying part time for a qualification in counselling
HS7	T7	Wife	Part-time learning materials' designer/developer for a large care organisation

* soon after the phase A interview MPT5 developed a serious illness and could no longer participate in the study, his wife had agreed to participate in the study but declined to take part following her husband's diagnosis, therefore no HS interviews took place in T5

Adhering to the same process, WS participants in each triad were identified by the MPT and then referred to the researcher to outline the nature of the study and secure the participants' informed consent to be involved in the research, prior to issuing a formal invitation to take part. Five of the seven MPTs identified a WS

participant as shown in table 4.6. The sample of WS participants is exclusively male, comprising of either a colleague or line manager.

Table 4.6: Summary of participants - work sphere participants (WS)

Participant ID	Triad	Relationship to MPT	Occupation
WS1	T1	Line manager	Guidance Manager and Psychology teacher
WS2	T2	Colleague	External Communications Manager
WS3	T3	Manager/SME business owner	Director/owner – design, planning, project management consultancy
n/a*	T4	n/a	n/a
n/a**	T5	n/a	n/a
WS6	T6	Colleague	Senior Lecturer
WS7	T7	Line Manager	University Professor

*MPT4 did not identify a WS participant
**due to illness and absence from work MPT5 did not identify a WS participant

A summary of the composition of each of the triads is provided in table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Summary composition of each triad

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7
MPT1	MPT2	MPT3	MPT4	MPT5	MPT6	MPT7
HS1 Wife	HS2 Brother	HS3 Wife	HS4 Wife		HS6 Wife	HS7 Wife
WS1 Line Manager	WS2 Work colleague	WS3 SME Owner			WS6 Work colleague	WS7 Line Manager

4.6 Reflexivity in the context of the study

Note: this section is written in the first person as a personal account of the ways in which the researcher's own beliefs, judgments and practices may have influenced the research process and outcomes.

In collecting data and throughout the subsequent processes of coding, analysis, formulating findings and inductively building upon theory, I was cognisant that my own thoughts, feelings, attitudes, values, and practice surrounding paid part–time work could not easily be separated from that of my research subjects; my ability to remain reflexively aware would therefore be paramount. At the outset of the research process, I studied Schwandt's definition of reflexivity (2001:224), which foremost emphasises the importance of *"critical self-reflection on one's biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences"*; secondly acknowledges that *"the enquirer is part of the setting, context, and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand"* and thirdly recognises that reflexivity is *"a means for critically inspecting the entire research process"*. I therefore set out on a quest to be transparent and consciously aware of my positionality throughout the research process. I was bolstered in this endeavour by the work of Engward and Davis (2015:2), who suggest that reflexivity is *"an essential means to developing and demonstrating rigour in all qualitative research"*.

In practical terms, I am a mother of three, I took 9-12 months' maternity leave with each child but except for these short breaks I worked full-time as an academic in FE/HE throughout my children's childhood, first as part of a dual-career household, and later as a single parent. Throughout my PhD studies I remained cognisant that my past experiences as a mother, juggling full-time paid work, raising children, and running a home, were likely to influence my angle of investigation, the questions I asked and the inferences I drew from participants' responses. For example, I vividly recall being anxious at an earlier stage of my career that moving to part-time work would impede my career prospects and so I continued in full-time work, despite the stresses and strains the arrangement placed on the quality of family life and my marriage. I therefore recognise, for example, that I am probably inclined to conflate career progression with full-time work and assume part-time work is career damaging, I also tend to believe, because of my own experiences, that striking a positive work-life balance is difficult to achieve in full-time work. These deep-rooted thoughts are likely to infuse my study.

In recent years, I have moved to part-time work to balance study with paid work. The choice to do this was both influenced by, and subsequently became an

influence upon, my PhD research. In essence, my own wrestles with work-life balance and my desire to create a lifestyle, where paid work was less of a defining feature, resonated with the stories my research subjects relayed and I could empathise with them. At times it was difficult for me to disassociate and refrain from overlaying my own thoughts and feelings on those of my respondents, as such critical self-reflection became an essential part of the research process.

Furthermore, as Foweracker and Cutcher (2015:463) attest *"the characteristics of the interviewer such as gender and age shape the social dynamics of the interview and hence the accounts interviewees give of their lives and the constructions of themselves they present to the interviewer".* As a female researcher, in the same age bracket as the MPTs, I recognised that this group of participants might wish to align themselves with their perceptions of my likely position on the themes discussed. The same could be true of the HS and WS participants. I was open to this possibility and alert to mirroring behaviours.

A further risk was that the MPTs would not be receptive to openly discussing masculinity with a woman (Lupton 2000), indeed, they were lucid in approaching this theme in abstract but were initially less forthcoming in reflecting on their own masculinity. It is possible that the MPTs were cognisant of traditional gendered presumptions when formulating their responses to questions surrounding gender and masculinity (Connell 2000; Simpson 2004) and so could have been prone to presenting performances of gender which matched stereotypical forms of masculinity to guard against appearing emasculated in my presence, else they did not see their gender (Lewis and Simpson 2010). Certain inflections and biases inherent in the narratives presented by the MPTs cannot be ruled out entirely although the longitudinal nature of the research meant I built good rapport with them over the course of the study such that they relaxed into the research process and became more candid over time. The triangulated case study design was also instrumental in alleviating concerns surrounding bias by providing others' perceptions and thus potentially confirmatory, contradictory, or simply more illuminating narratives to draw upon.

I realise that bias in a project is problematic, however as Malterud (2001:484) argues *"preconceptions are not the same as bias, unless the researcher fails to mention them".* I aim to be transparent throughout. The approach to analysis, set out in the following section, for example, explains how I prioritised reflexive practice and so openly recognise the way in which I am an analytic resource, part of the setting and context I seek to understand, as such I cannot help but bring myself to the qualitative data collection and analysis process. This reality is manifest in the interview guides I devised and deployed, the codes I chose to use to organise data, the themes I developed, the names I attributed to each theme, the way in which the data is interpreted, and ultimately the findings and conclusions derived from the study. I would argue that my ways of seeing, exploring and interpreting the issues presented by the research make for a rich, developed understanding of some of the more complex and subtle material encountered during my study.

4.7 Approach to analysis

The approach to data analysis looks to thematic analysis (TA), a process Braun and Clarke (2006:78) describe as a *"foundational method for qualitative analysis".* Conceptually, as Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) argue, TA is far richer than, for example, content analysis, which relies purely on extracting and counting the words and phrases commonly occurring within the data. TA helps the qualitative researcher to draw out collective meanings and shared experiences, coalesce fragments of ideas, link data and derive conclusions as patterns within the dataset become clear (Miles and Huberman 1994). It looks for explicit and obscured meaning within participants' narratives, enabling systematic identification, synthesis, and organisation of data and so illuminates patterned meanings across the data set (Braun and Clarke 2006). In terms of application, TA is flexible; as Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016:579) highlight, *"thematic analysis may be used irrespective of whether you adopt an inductive or deductive approach"*; and add, *"you may also use a combination of deductive and inductive approaches, commencing analysis with theoretically derived themes which you then add to as you explore your data set".* TA therefore offers the opportunity to draw out and examine themes within the data which linked to existing theory, whilst simultaneously pursuing an inductive strategy, in which new and interesting themes can be identified within the data as the analysis becomes more granular. In

their later work, however, Braun and Clarke (2021) observe that those who produce published TA research often make errors when using TA, and when referring to it in their work; most notably authors fail to recognise that there are different approaches to TA, underpinned by different epistemological positions, situated in different research paradigms. Moreover, they fail to acknowledge the specific orientation to TA that they have used. Here, to avoid this pitfall, the specific approach taken is reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2019); a model developed to demarcate Braun and Clarke's approach to TA from other forms of TA on the thematic analysis continuum (Figure 4.1), notably coding reliability TA and codebook TA.

Figure 4.1: Thematic analysis continuum (adapted from Braun and Clark 2019)

Positivist, structured coding reliability approaches	Codebook approaches e.g., template analysis, framework analysis	Reflexive TA

THEMATIC ANALYSIS CONTINUUM

Partially qualitative   Purely qualitative
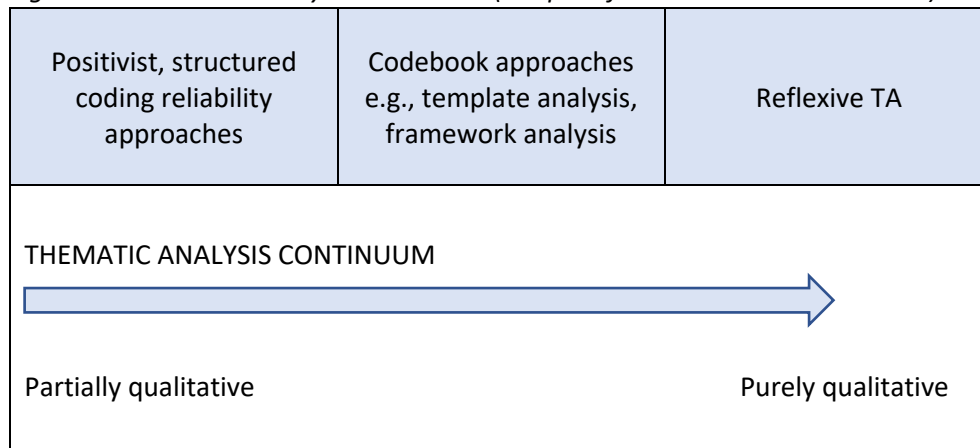
4.7.1 Reflexive thematic analysis

Braun and Clarke (2019:593) state that "*reflexive TA procedures reflect the values of a qualitative paradigm, centring researcher subjectivity, organic and recursive coding processes, and the importance of deep reflection on, and engagement with, data".* Reflexive TA therefore recognises the crucial role the researcher's subjectivity plays in the process of analysis and the way in which the researcher reflexively interacts with theory, data, and its interpretation to co-develop meaning with the participants and draw inferences from the participants voices (Braun and Clarke 2021). In short, reflexive TA fully complements the interpretivist philosophical assumptions underpinning this PhD study, wherein several different realities are understood to coexist.

Figure 4.2 illustrates the 6 phases of reflexive TA (Braun and Clarke 2019). Whilst the phases appear to build sequentially, in practice, and indeed conceptually, the process is not as straightforward and linear as figure 4.2 might suggest. Braun and Clarke (2021:332) stress "*the analytic process involves immersion in the data, reading, reflecting, questioning, imagining, wondering, writing, retreating, returning; it is far from mechanical".* Accordingly, in applying reflexive thematic analysis, phases are treated as tools to guide the process.

Figure 4.2: Phases of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clark 2019)

Phase 1
- Data familiarisartion
- Writing familiarisation notes

Phase 2
- Systematic data coding

Phase 3
- Generating initial themes from coded and collated data

Phase 4
- Developing and reviewing themes

Phase 5
- Refining, defining and naming themes

Phase 6
- Writing the report
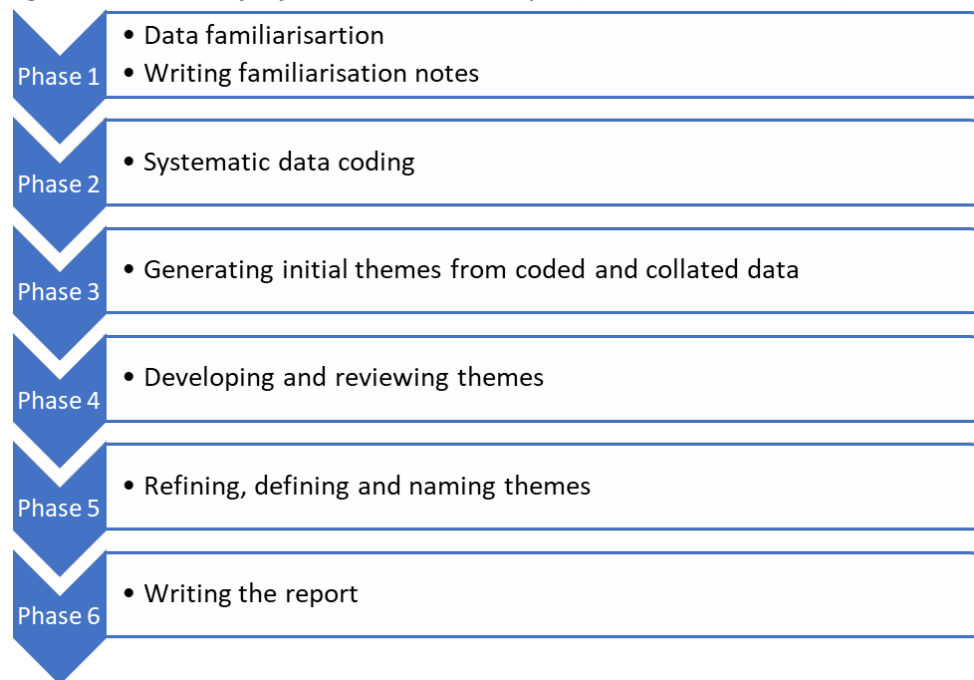
With explicit reference to the photo-elicitation strand of the research design, determining a suitable method for analysis presented challenges as techniques for the analysis of photos and images remain under-developed (Drew and Guillemin 2014). As just eight photographs/images were supplied by study participants the decision was made to analyse them using reflexive TA rather than adopt a specific arts-based method to examine them separately to the interview data. At the outset of the study the intention had been to use Grounded Visual Pattern Analysis (GVPA), whilst GVPA is regarded as a credible and robust means of analysis to explore discursive and visual meanings across multiple still images (Shortt and Warren 2019), the researcher felt that attempting to use GVPA with such a small sample of photographs/images could result in inferring patterns that did not exist or forcing associations. It was also felt that treating the photographs/images

outside of the reflexive TA method could risk isolating them rather than considering them simultaneously alongside the analysis of the more substantial volume of interview data.

4.7.2 Use of NVivo 12.0

NVivo version 12.0 for Mac was used to organise, manage, and save data at each phase of the reflexive TA process. Whilst the software proved efficient and functional for the various phases of the process, NVivo remains ostensibly an architectural aid to organising and categorising qualitative data whilst the processes of coding and interpretation require human intervention (Weitzman 2000). Ultimately, use of NVivo helped to ensure all stages of the analysis were methodologically robust and that overall, a fully systematised approach to data analysis was followed and could be evidenced in the thesis. Some of the tools within NVivo (such as annotations and memos) were enabled to provide an audit trail of impressions of the data as the stages of the process unfolded. An audit trail is invaluable as it illuminates all the stages leading to the findings (Lincoln and Guba 1985), it also enables frequent backtracking to revisit codes, themes, interpretations, and inferences, to engage in deeper reflection and so fully get under the skin of the data.

Use of the coding stripes and functionality within the explore tab facilitated cross analysis of the codes applied to certain interviews, for example the set of interviews with home sphere participants, or interviews at phase B. As themes were developed and refined, enquiries within NVivo revealed which participants were more strongly associated with a particular theme or themes, the software also enabled the efficient retrieval of data excerpts. The facility in NVivo to consider coding and themes applied to photographs/images versus interview transcripts, enabled the interrelationships between photographs/images, interview transcripts and theoretical interpretations to be elucidated.

4.7.3 Phases of analysis

The initial phase of the reflexive TA process involved the researcher listening and relistening to the interview recordings from each set of participants in turn, annotating the transcripts (Figure 4.3), and creating logged memos in NVivo to

capture her initial impressions of the interview and image data (Appendix D). This phase supported familiarisation with the data set. In common with Sheerin and Linehan's experiences (2018:567), the early readings of the data, or "*first pass through*" generated multiple, disparate units of meaning stemming from the interviews and photographs.

Figure 4.3: Sample script annotation

#	Annotation
2	financially secure - inheritance, shares - now investments in property
3	man stuff
4	male bonding at work
5	work ethic/work habits and routines
6	laughter - finds it funny he loves what he does or is it nervous laughter showing that he's conscious of old habits where work is central/part of his identity, needs the affirmation work gives/ needs to feel important

Several readings of the transcripts took place with a focus on the participant type, careful thought was given to why participants shared certain stories and the effect(s) the stories they told might have on those constituted through the storytelling (Riessman 2008). This form of analysis came more prominently into play when reflecting upon how, and why, HS and WS participants selected stories, anecdotes or instances featuring the MPT known to them.

The **second phase** of the process, systematic data coding, progressed in an exploratory fashion. Each transcript was carefully read, and each image viewed, whilst engaging in open coding to mark or code features of the data considered important (Appendix E). At this stage more than 80 individual codes were generated, the labels for the codes were brief and no attempt was made to organise codes into hierarchies. In-keeping with the ethos of reflexive TA practice, a hybrid inductive and deductive approach to coding unfolded, whereby a mix of codes were created over the course of the data analysis process:

- 'in vivo' codes, created based on the terms used by the participants, which were in turn inevitably influenced by the different themes introduced by the researcher during the interviews (Mustchin 2012)

- other codes created by the researcher as the coding process progressed (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2016).

And, on occasion,

- those prompted by existing theory and relevant literature ('a priori' codes)

In later stages of the analysis (phases 3-5), some of the initial codes were merged, dropped, reordered and so forth as part of an iterative process. The researcher took her lead from dominant codes, that is, those which contained the greatest number of references.

The **third phase** entailed examining the codes and collated data to identify significant broader patterns of meaning to constitute potential themes (Appendix F). Braun and Clarke (2019:591), argue that qualitative research is "*about meaning and meaning-making, and viewing these as always context-bound, positioned and situated".* They stress that qualitative data analysis is not about digging to find the truth in data, rather it rests on the researcher's affinity or involvement with the data, and it captures their thoughts, reflections, and observations as the process advances. In other words, the researcher must be active in the process and not expect codes to stand out or emerge of their own accord.

Accordingly **phases 3 and 4** of the reflective TA process involved first generating initial themes, or patterns of shared meaning in the data, supported by a central idea or concept, then iteratively revisiting, and developing these, through repeated reflexive immersion in the data, such that collectively created meaning was generated over time and organised in a way that made sense. The researcher was constantly reflecting on her theoretical assumptions and wrestling with these as she drew on her analytic resources and skills to interpret and organise the data. A considerable amount of time was spent comparing codes with one another, looking for coherence between codes and themes and considering relationships between themes (Birks and Mills 2015). Given the research design, phases 3 and 4 of the analysis focused on the presence or absence of connections both within and across the seven triads, within and across timeframes and among participant groups. Patterns of shared meaning between photographs/images and interview narratives were also explored. Themes grew increasingly developed and tightly framed

towards the end of phase 4 (Appendix G) as the researcher became more immersed in the data and astute to the fit between coded data and themes. The 'to' and 'fro' active process, whilst complex, confusing, and deep at times, helped to shape the themes to auger well with the research questions, and the reflexive stance taken by the researcher enabled both exploration, experimentation, and criticality.

The **penultimate phase** of the process, refining, defining, and naming the themes (phase 5) (Appendix H), involved developing a detailed comprehension of each theme, determining the scope, coherence and 'story' of each theme. Themes considered peripheral to the research questions were removed and in other instances, themes were separated or merged. Phase 5 culminated in generating succinct informative titles for each theme (Figure 4.4) which would aid the writing up process and map coherently to the research questions.

Figure 4.4: Final themes and codes

THEMES				
Context	MPTs' motives for working p/t	MPTs' experiences of work	MPTs' experiences of home	Masculinity in the context of male p/t working
CODES (NODES)				
Couple relationship, values and beliefs Family composition and support networks Partner's career and work pattern Socio economic status Workplace receptiveness to p/t work Gender and society	Health and well-being Childcare and family Work-life balance	Working hours and patterns of work Work location and the logistics of work Job quality Managing the work-home boundary Job search and transitions Future work plans	Childcare and parenting Division of domestic labour Leisure time Unpaid work	Expectations and tensions MPTs as pioneers Gendered performances at work and at home Others' perceptions/ gaze Work history/ proven credentials

The writing up, **phase 6**, became a continuation of the analytic process. The stitching together of the thesis, supported by key quotes from participants, and the art of writing-up findings with reference to the theoretical framework prompted further reflections on the meanings within the data.

By presenting the stages of analyses clearly in the segment above and building the evidence trail in NVivo, the researcher's thought processes, and potential research biases are made transparent (Patterson 2013). Such transparency is critical; it enables the reader to assess the veracity of the results themselves within the findings chapters.

4.8 Ethics consent and confidentiality of the data

Robust ethical practices were followed in the design of the study, data collection and data storage processes. Ethical consent was secured from the NTU Research Ethics Committee. In accordance with the NTU ethical code, participant information (Appendix C) was sent to all potential participants prior to the commencement of the study. The information sheet explained how the data collected would be used and how it would be stored. The researcher held a conversation with each prospective participant to address any queries and concerns and to ensure all aspects of the participant information factsheet were understood.

Once agreement in principle to take part in the research had been secured, participants were asked to sign an informed consent form (Appendix B) prior to each data collection stage. Participants reserved the right to opt out of the study at any stage, without any obligation to reveal their reasons for declining to take part. At each phase participants were reminded that they could decline to answer individual questions within the interview template by signalling to the researcher during the interview. Participants were also advised that they were under no obligation to supply photographs/images for the photo-elicitation feature of the research and so could freely choose whether they wished to engage with this aspect of the research design. Participants were assured that it would not be necessary to provide reasons for less than full participation in the study.

Interviews were recorded with the participants' consent and transcriptions retained safely, as password protected documents. Participants were assured that any photographs/images supplied as part of the study would only be reproduced in the thesis or subsequent publications with the express permission of the participant. All photographs/images gathered over the course of the study are subject to the same data retention practice as the interview transcripts and will be confidentially destroyed once all work has concluded.

Steps were taken to safeguard participant confidentiality and anonymity. The interview transcripts were handled only by the researcher and a designated transcription service. The transcription service was supplied with recording files in safe mode (password encrypted) to ensure the interviews could not be opened and listened to by other parties. Hard copies of research notes, photos/images and any other relevant documentation are stored in locked filing cabinets, and electronic files maintained only on a password protected computer. The notation system used throughout the thesis to refer to participants is completely anonymised. The abbreviation MPT is used to denote the male part-time workers who took part in the study, HS refers to home sphere participants and WS is used to identify work sphere participants. The number attached to each participant represents the triad the individual belongs to (1-7) such that related participants are evident in the presentation and discussion, for example the participants in triad 1 are referred to as MPT1, HS1 and WS1 respectively. The phase of the study (a, b or c) is referred to where this is pertinent (e.g., MPT1a, HS2b). Where triads are referred to the abbreviation 'T' is used followed by the number of the triad (e.g., T1, T6). To avoid reader recognition, the names of individuals and organisations in participants' direct quotations are omitted. In addition, faces in photographs and names/identifiers in images that compromise participant or organisational anonymity are pixelated. All photographs and images supplied by study participants are described in the thesis without reference to specific identifiable features, premises, or individuals.

4.9 Conclusion

The research design follows a mixed qualitative methods intra-paradigm approach, where more than one research methods is used, drawn from the same research

paradigm or philosophy, in this instance interpretivism. Accordingly, data is gathered using two qualitative research instruments, semi-structured interviews, and photo elicitation, to generate a nuanced and detailed expose of the phenomena to be researched. The primary data collection exercise occurs across seven triads. Using a purposive sampling frame each triad comprises a central MPT, plus a WS and a HS participant. Three phases of data collection are conducted at intervals, capturing changes in the participants' experiences over time. The longitudinal design enabled strong rapport to develop between the researcher and the participants and for deep insights to be captured. It also meant that a proportion of the primary data was collected during the Covid-19 pandemic; rather than hindering the research, the effects of the pandemic on experiences of work and employment and on household dynamics provided for even richer data to emerge to address the research questions.

Use of reflexive TA enabled the researcher to fully familiarise herself with the interview transcripts and images, and through cycles of reflexive immersion in the data, to organise it into appropriate themes. NVivo version 12 for Mac proved an efficient means of storing and manipulating the data throughout the six stages of the reflexive TA process whilst also providing a robust audit trail. Full ethical approval was gained for the study at the outset and a range of measures were taken to protect the data and safeguard the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

Chapter 5: Motives for working part-time

5.1 Introduction

This chapter constitutes the first of the three chapters to analyse the findings of the thesis. It addresses the first research question - what factors induce middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations to work part-time and how is this work mode accommodated within their careers? The chapter is organised into three themes which represent the major factors MPTs cited for first entering part-time work, namely caring responsibilities (section 5.2), the ability to achieve a better work-life balance (section 5.3), and health and well-being reasons related to self-and/or others (section 5.4). However, as the discussion illustrates, in practice MPTs' motives for participating in part-time work are rarely singular or static. Accordingly, further themes from the data are threaded through each section of the chapter to emphasise the complex interplay of contextual factors which shape MPTs' initial and on-going decisions surrounding participation in part-time work including their individual career orientation, household composition, income, values, organisational receptiveness to part-time working and societal views surrounding gender and work. Importantly, the chapter also provides a sense of MPTs' relationships with their wives, these insights help to explain the way their lives are conducted, and how twists and turns in circumstances result in reconfigured patterns of working and living.

The chapter illustrates the delicate dichotomy between voluntary and involuntary part-time work as the MPTs seek to make sense of their working lives and consider how part-time work is accommodated within their careers. MPTs report actively choosing part-time work and so can be described as engaging in voluntary part-time working (Belfield et al. 2017). This finding is consistent with Delsen (1998) and Gregory and Connolly (2008) who attest that part-time work more often represents a choice among men, it also echoes more recent work by Warren and Lyonette (2020) which indicates that men in managerial and professional occupations appear to have been largely protected from post-recessionary increases in male involuntary part-time employment. The frailties of this account however are exposed as the study advances; signs of involuntary part-time working (Green and Livanos 2015) enter the dialogue as MPTs' circumstances alter. Further discussion

surrounding choice and the voluntariness of part-time work vacillates around the extent to which the MPTs are truly free to select part-time work. Whilst theoretically choice is closely related to notions of freewill (Monroe and Malle 2010), when applied to the practice of working part-time, choice at least for some of the MPTs in this study, appears to be a somewhat blurred phenomena as it often is for women. As Chapter 2 illustrates women's propensity to work part-time has been interpreted as a preference (Hakim, 2000), yet it is more often positioned in the literature as a socially constructed choice, to facilitate the fulfilment of gendered responsibilities for childcare and domestic work (Lewis and Humbert 2010; Wheatley 2017a; Andrew et al. 2021), given most of the burden for this activity falls to women (Niemisto et al. 2021). Whilst there is not a gendered presumption that men will organise their work to accommodate caring responsibilities and domestic work, the extent to which MPTs' choices to work part-time are underpinned by freewill, or shaped and constituted by their work histories and/or the roles they play beyond paid work, their idiosyncratic social-domestic arrangements, and their relationships with their partners, forms an integral part of the discussion.

5.2 Caring responsibilities

The study reveals that caring for children is a key reason why several of the MPTs entered part-time work. This section first outlines the broad circumstances of each case prior to analysing the intricacies of the men's decisions to work part-time at this point in their careers and their thoughts and feelings (and those of relevant HS participants) concerning this decision. MPT3 and MPT4 relinquished full-time work to become caregiving fathers (Kelland, Lewis and Fisher 2022; Hunter, Riggs and Augoustinos 2017) for their then infant children. Their respective family work-care arrangements fit the description of a modified breadwinner model (Mussida and Patimo 2021) for comprising both a full-time and a part-time income earner, yet counter conventional (Petts, Carlson and Knoester 2020), given the secondary earner is male and the breadwinner female; an arrangement which is unusual among heterosexual couples (Waldersee, 2018). MPT5 similarly entered part-time work after the birth of his first child, however his wife also works part-time representing an arrangement which is thought to offer the best chance of achieving symmetry in terms of the amount of paid market work and unpaid household work

men and women do (Ibanez, 2011). A dual part-time worker household configuration is also present in T7, although in common with MPT4, MPT7's move to part-time work followed the birth of the couple's second child. MPT7 and MPT4's initial commitment to full-time work on becoming a first-time parent is typical, as men rarely choose part-time work on becoming fathers (Dias, Joyce and Parodi 2018).

For MPT3 and MPT4 part-time work is a long-standing arrangement; when the study commenced, these men had been working part-time continuously for twelve years and approaching twenty years respectively. MPT3 and HS3 were together for sixteen years before conceiving their son, during this time they had frequently discussed how they would approach the division of childcare and paid work if they were to have children, with a clear understanding that MPT3 would step back from his career to become the primary carer:

> *I mean because we have been together since '91, we had kind of an agreement, whenever we discussed what we might do in the future years, I said I think I would be quite happy to stay at home* (MPT3)

He adds:

> *She…we, are into equal opportunities and it was never presumed that I'd be the breadwinner and she'd stay at home with the kids* (MPT3)

Hesitation between 'she' and 'we' suggests that the couple's equal opportunities stance is driven principally by HS3 and MPT3 is compliant. Notably HS3 relays their story somewhat differently; in common with her husband's account above, HS3 mentions the couple's discussions prior to the birth of their son, however her response is far more emphatic:

> *We had trouble having children, but we always talked about this because I never wanted to be a full-time mum* (HS3)

She conveys her feminist ideals strongly, revealing that she would not have contemplated staying in a relationship with MPT3 had he held stereotypical gendered views in relation to the division of domestic labour and parenting responsibilities:

> *I think that's been part of our relationship right from when we met, kind of my feminist principles about roles of men and women, and I suppose if* [MPT3] *hadn't been accommodating of that then we wouldn't be together. So, it wasn't really anything we would argue about in fact it wasn't a point of contention* (HS3)

Whilst essentialised differences between men and women is a common, unproblematised way of conceptualising gender (Whitehead 2002), the notion that masculinity, and femininity are entirely natural categories (Swigger and Meyer 2019) which share natural, underlying commonalities is shown to be flawed in this case. HS3 admits that she did not have a strong maternal disposition and did not enjoy maternity leave. She jokes with the researcher to show that she is fully aware that as a mother, voicing such sentiments is taboo and the antithesis of good motherhood (Neimisto et al. 2021):

> *Because you are a bad mum aren't you* (laughs) *and ... I just found it's tedious to go along and sit in coffee shops, the only reason you have any relationship with them is because their babies are the same age as yours, it was just ugg* (HS3)

Whilst these were the views of HS3, she did not appear to recognise how difficult or tedious it might be for MPT3 to take on this role. Instead, in addition to relaying her feminist principles, HS3 stressed that MPT3's lack of career identity in comparison to her own was a factor in the couple's decision for her to resume full-time work following maternity leave, whilst he moved to part-time work to become the main carer:

> [MPT3] *always said I have a job I don't really have a career, that's what he said at the time, or your professional identity is much stronger than mine* (HS3)

Interestingly these words, and thoughts, flowed from HS3 but were not reinforced by MPT3 which may suggest that HS3 felt the need to justify what could appear a selfish decision to pursue her career full-time, whilst deprioritising his. Perhaps she also wanted to deflect from her actions, recognising that by prioritising paid work over family devotion she was deviating from the traditional gendered expectations of her as a woman (Andrew et al. 2021), and causing MPT3 to break away from dominant gender norms which shroud masculinity. HS3 continues to defend the couple's decision, based on the notion that taking a break from employment would be more damaging to her career than it would be to his:

> *I think there was also a recognition when we talked about it, that my career as a woman was just going to be more affected if I took a massive break out rather than his* (HS3)

The scarring effect on women's careers caused by time away from the labour market for maternity leave and childrearing (sometimes referred to as the motherhood penalty) is widely documented (Bear and Glick 2017) and so HS3's viewpoint is likely well founded, however as full-time working and breadwinning is still the norm for men, particularly men with dependent children (Warren 2021), and part-time work among men in high level occupations remains unusual (Warren and Lyonette 2020), it is difficult to predict whether HS3's career or MPT3's would be most adversely affected by part-time work. HS3's perspective appears contrary to emergent studies in the UK which show that men encounter forfeits when taking long breaks for paternity/parental leave and childcare (Kelland, Lewis and Fisher 2022; Cook et al. 2021) and accord more so with Moss-Racusin, Phelan and Rudman (2010) who argue that men's gendered status affords them greater latitude to fulfil counter stereotypical roles. HS3 acknowledges that her thoughts are not research informed, rather borne from a gut feeling that part–time work among men is more acceptable because it is rare:

> *I just think somehow with men it's kind of a novelty you know, it's just viewed differently* (HS3)

INTERVIEWER: More positively?

> *More positively, yeah... the man has made a choice to do that you know... I mean that's only anecdotal I don't think there is enough research out there at all. Except that you know, I mean my colleagues and I had a conversation about men being able to say in meetings I have got to go home and look after the kids, and no one bats an eye* (HS3)

Her remarks imply that she continues to witness male privilege in the workplace (Berdahl and Moon 2013) yet MPT3's career has stagnated since he started working part-time as a freelance software designer for a friend's consultancy business, an experience familiar to female primary carers, who typically sacrifice career progression for convenience and manageable work which fits around their home-centred responsibilities (Bear and Glick 2017). Meanwhile HS3 has enjoyed incremental career advancement during this time. Her progress demonstrates that without the burden of primary responsibility for childcare and domestic work, women have more time to dedicate to career and thus greater opportunity to comply with the normative (male) working model (Acker 1990), compete with others and fulfil their potential in the labour market.

Within T4, MPT4 and HS4 relay a similar story to the couple represented in T3 although they first attempted to be a dual-career couple with senior, full-time jobs when their children were young. As Wheatley and Bickerton (2016) suggest, dual-earner couples where both occupy professional or managerial roles experience distinct challenges juggling their responsibilities, not least because such work is more likely to involve work-related travel. Consistent with this finding, MPT4 and HS4 discovered that their demanding work schedules and regular business-related travel had a detrimental impact on their lives and ability to source childcare for their children. HS4 describes the couple's lifestyle.

> *You literally almost felt like you were passing one baby over for the next one to go out the door to catch the plane. We were both trying to travel, trying to do diaries months in advance...got to the point where it was almost impossible* (HS4)

Whilst the couple recognise that their ability to pay for childcare and rely on family support whilst they were travelling for work afforded them a nexus of privilege not all couples enjoy, the arrangement became increasingly untenable. MPT4 recalls a critical incident which exemplifies the couple's experiences and his level of dissatisfaction with their lifestyle. MPT4 explains that he was at the airport, about to go away on a business trip, HS4 was away working too, and it was their youngest child's first birthday, he remembers calling HS4 saying:

> *I can't do this anymore* (MPT4)

To which she replied:

> *He's only one, don't worry, he won't remember* (HS4)

MPT4's comment captures the exasperation he felt at the time, and he appears quite emotional retelling this story in the interview. His recollection of HS4's reply implies that she was much more comfortable with the couple's situation than he was. HS4's own reflections on that period of their lives are illuminating. Whilst she recalls the difficulties of logistical arrangements and the stress this caused, she does not convey an emotional response to the impact of their working lives on care regimes for their children:

> *He hated travelling. I can remember when we were both working full-time, we were both travelling quite often, and the logistics of having a two-year-old, and then a four-year-old and a baby, trying to work out when both companies want you somewhere else in a different country, or at least at the other side of the country on the same week, and trying to figure that out was just so unbelievably stressful* (HS4b)

Both HS4 and MPT4 reflect on how they arrived at a solution whereby she would continue to work full-time, and he would scale down to part-time work, the focus

of their respective comments however is noticeably different. HS4's comment continues to reflect logistical concerns and is colder, whereas MPT4 chooses to centre his words around care for their children:

> *It was just a problem in the sense that both of us couldn't travel and then he said fine I'll go part-time then and it, kind of we drifted into it, it wasn't like so right, which one of us wants to do it?* (HS4)

> *We both came to realise what we wanted in terms of looking after the children. Having assumed that we would be able to do the wrap around care and all that kind of stuff to make it work…the other option was easier, and I think we both agreed better* (MPT4)

MPT4's remark that he could not carry on and a comment from HS4 in the Phase B interview that MPT4 *'always backed off being promoted, he didn't like the extra responsibility or pressure'* (HS4b), suggest MPT4's greater sensitivity to stress was a factor in his readiness to work part-time. HS4's remark that they *'drifted into it'* indicates that she did not resist, neither did she offer to relinquish full-time working. MPT4 explains that shortly after the critical incident at the airport, he used a restructuring opportunity at work to broker a part-time role:

> *Within the company the offer was for me to do a split role so a job involving operational management and a forecasting scheduling piece, and it came out of a conversation with the director, I said to him, I only want half of the job I don't want the operational side. I am more than happy to take this other role as a part-time role* (MPT4)

In common with MPT3, MPT4's part-time job was not advertised, instead he can be seen to use an existing workplace connection to negotiate a part-time position. With reference to Kelan's compendium of men doing and undoing gender (2018), the way in which MPT3 leveraged a friendship with a close friend to enter part-time work and MPT4 brokered part-time work with his male boss provide clear examples of men supporting men, and so men doing gender at work. HS4 corroborates this position:

> *I think if* [MPT4] *hadn't known the people at* [name of organisation]*, then I don't think they would have entertained it being a part-time job, it wouldn't have occurred to them in that type of role even though they had hundreds of part-time staff in the warehouse and customer service, wouldn't have thought of it* (HS4)

These remarks reflect evidence that part-time jobs are rarely found at more senior levels (Warren and Lyonette 2020), yet simultaneously show the ability of MPTs to use their status and gender to short-cut this barrier. Whilst MPTs' entry to part-time work in T3 and T4 was easy to enable via their networks and occurred in the context of relationships where the female partner wanted to work full-time or at least did not resist doing so, the decisions made by the couples are intriguing from a financial perspective. Statistically men are less likely than women to work part-time for childcare reasons (Moran and Koslowski 2019), but in the small proportion of different sex couples where women out earn their partners (Waldersee 2018), rational economic choice theory (Becker 1991) assumes logical financial decisions will prevail to preserve the higher (female) wage, whilst impacting the secondary (male) wage to free time to dedicate to caring responsibilities. Notably, in T3, the couple's decision for HS3 to continue to work full-time following maternity leave and for MPT3 to work part-time defies the conventions of rational economic choice (Becker 1991). At the time MPT3 moved to part-time to become the primary caregiver for the couple's first child, he was by some distance, the principal earner in the household. Their shared equal opportunities values, manifest in her strong sense of professional identity and staunch opposition to being a full-time mother, plus his corresponding preparedness to stay at home, took precedence over financial logic and reason:

> *It made no sense, no* (laughs) *absolutely. So, we were making these decisions completely not based on financial or you know what you would do pragmatically in terms of family income, it was totally about me not wanting to lose my professional identity and my career* (HS3)

The jocular tone of HS3's response and the way in which she highlights the lunacy of their actions accentuates the fact that the couple's socio-economic status as

professional workers with financial reserves afforded them the privilege to make a values-driven choice concerning who became the primary carer, with scant regard for the resultant financial impact. For couples in a more precarious financial position, it is contended that the respective salaries and earnings potential of each partner, is likely to be critical to decisions related to childcare and paid work (Waldersee 2018). Similarly, in T4, the couple had relatively matched earnings at the time and so the rational economic choice argument (Becker 1991) is of limited use in explaining MPT4's decision to move to part-time work. The data would suggest that in common with MPT3, MPT4 purports not to be heavily invested in career, which helps to explain why he willingly conceded full-time work, whilst his wife remained in full-time employment:

> *I was absolutely raging ahead in terms of career, so I was a project management consultant, but totally unimportant you know, the reality is being happy. So yes, I came to realise that career wasn't my key thing* (MPT4)

In both cases it is difficult to ascertain with certainty how attached to career the MPTs were prior to relinquishing full-time work. It is conjectured that MPT3's reported remark that his work is a job not a career, and MPT4's comment that career is not his key thing could be narratives the men use to conceal disappointment at the premature curtailment of lucrative and successful full-time careers and defend different (part-time) work trajectories, more commonly associated with women (Wheatley 2017a). The use of the phrase '*absolutely raging ahead*' by MPT4 may for example, suggest wistful reflection on a halted career he had worked hard to build, yet ultimately conceded for the greater good of his family. Later in the study MPT4's insistence that career is not important is juxtaposed against his struggle to reignite his career in full-time employment following redundancy from part-time employment. His intention to return to full-time work is intriguing given the lack of emphasis he placed on career in the early phase A interview and given he is not under financial pressure to do so. These narratives are explored more fully in Chapter 6 as part of the discussion related to the second research question concerning MPTs' experiences of the work sphere of their lives.

In contrast to the household working arrangements in T3 and T4, MPT5 and MPT7 make up part of dual part-time worker households. MPT5 and MPT7 both report that their primary driver for choosing part-time work was to enable them to become more involved fathers (van Breeschoten and Evertsson 2019) and share in care, whilst simultaneously maintaining professional careers, although it is apparent, in common with the households in T3 and T4, that the MPTs' decisions to work part-time are also bound up with supporting their wives' career orientation. MPT5 explains that at the time his wife gave birth to their first son, she was studying medicine; his move to part-time work enabled her to qualify and for him to be fully involved in the care of their child. At the start of the PhD study MPT5 had been working part-time for just under seven years as a history teacher at a local Sixth Form College and his wife was working part-time as a General Practitioner, an arrangement the couple intend to maintain throughout their careers. He claims the dual part-time worker model they adopt makes him a better employee, he can be more productive and attentive during working hours without feeling conflicted that he is neglecting family responsibilities, whereas men who are the primary provider often feel a tension between being a hand-on father and dedicating time to their workplace (Hofmeister and Bauer 2015). The couple manage their work commitments such that they both work three days per week and have one non-working day in common to spend together. Their working patterns allow them to evenly split school drop-offs and pick-ups plus childcare responsibilities which fall outside of school hours and so reduce their reliance on marketised childcare for their two children, a cost burden and logistical challenge dual career families often struggle with (Hardill and Watson 2004). The couple choose part-time work as a lifestyle preference (Hakim 2000) in place of working longer hours and compromising couple and family time. Their motives resonate with Higgins, Duxbury and Johnson (2000) who suggest some people simply work part-time because they are not prepared to work full-time, or do not need the income. The couple's socio-economic status makes this choice possible:

> *We are in a very lucky financial position... but I don't think that would necessarily be the case just from our two salaries...we had some help buying the house...we don't have a mortgage so we can enjoy life in a different*

way. [wife's name]'s *part-time salary is a very good salary. It's better than mine would be if I worked full-time. So, that's definitely alright, it means that we can have a very nice comfortable lifestyle* (MPT5)

For many couples, particularly those working in lower paid positions, a dual part-time worker arrangement is likely to be less financially accessible, yet it may well offer attractions which offset concerns regarding income, for example a life of voluntary simplicity (Aidar and Daniels 2020). To an extent the situation in T7 reflects that financial prosperity is not the only way to enable the decision-making process, although part-time work remains financially viable, and the couple's life is not inflicted by hardship as a result. MPT7 chose a permanent move from a full-time contract to a 0.8FTE contract (4 days per week) a year after the birth of his second daughter, principally to enable him to play a greater role in childcare and support his wife (HS7) to organise her part-time working hours optimally on her return from maternity leave:

> *HS7 was coming to the end of maternity leave for the second child. Her job requires time away from home so it's not part-time where she can fit in her job around childcare. We decided that she would be able to work within the older child's school day and have a full day of working on Thursday where I do the school drop offs and then if the second one had time in childcare, she would be able to continue working her normal working hours* (MPT7)

HS7 recognises the support:

> *Initially that's why he dropped down his hours and started working part-time - to accommodate my work pattern so that I could put in a few extra hours through the week. I don't remember having major conversations about it (laughs) I mean, I think because I wanted that long day, we had to try and find a way to make that work* (HS7)

Discussions within T7 suggest, consistent with studies surrounding women's use of flexible working (Lyonette 2015; Williams 2010), that HS7 was struggling to manage her working time around fixed childcare commitments and MPT7's move to part-

time work offered a solution. The economic position of the couple in T7 is less secure than the couples in T3, T4 and T5 due to lower combined income. He describes carefully weighing up the financial costs against the personal benefits of moving to part-time work, notwithstanding his desire to be a more present father to his children and support his wife:

> *We worked it out and thought that it would, combined with the benefit I would get from spending time with the smaller one ... and the cost of an extra day in childcare we decided that we could make it work* (MPT7)

MPT7's reduction in income is thus partially off-set by savings in childcare costs, he concludes:

> *I'd say we're probably pretty comfortable, there aren't those awkward conversations about making ends meet at the end of the month* (MPT7)

HS7 concurs, adding *'I think we're in a very lucky position where we have what we need... and it works, we don't intend on needing a bigger house or having to, you know, have anything more really than we have'.* These remarks suggest contentment with the lifestyle they can fund on the income derived from two part-time salaries. In terms of career accommodation, MPT7 was able to access the university's flexible working policy to request a contract variation and so avoid unsettling his career to find part-time work. The provision reflects the fact that some organisations view part-time work as an effective way of organising from both an employer and employee perspective (Fagan et al. 2012; Plantenga and Remery 2010) and moreover proactively develop formal policies to broker such arrangements (CIPD 2018). Despite the robust policy framework, MPT7 reveals that he was initially strongly encouraged to request a compressed working week by his (male) manager on the grounds it would afford him the flexibility he needed whilst enabling him to remain a full-time worker. Similar fate has befallen MPT5 whereby he has had to resist managerial pressure to extend his teaching contract closer to full-time. These findings appear to reinforce the notion that full-time work still holds a place as the time honoured and preferred pattern of working for men (Acker 1990) and is culturally embedded, irrespective of policies aimed at reducing gender

inequalities. They also help to explain why so few middle-aged men voluntarily enter part-time work. The expectation that men will financially provide for their families remains socially normative (Warren 2022), whilst family devotion schema tends to orient women to childrearing and domestic responsibilities (Padavic, Ely and Reid 2020). The familial and financial circumstances of the MPTs captured in this section who have entered part-time work to play a primary role or greater role in childcare are not homogeneous, however the MPTs appear to represent a privileged tier of men for whom part-time work can be a choice (Green and Livanos 2015).

5.3 Work-life balance

Whilst the MPTs have exercised a choice to work part-time, in common with many women who work part-time the demands of home life, combined with work, feature prominently in their decision, exacerbated by the onset of parenthood (Niemisto et al. 2021). In contrast to the couples in section 5.2 MPT6 entered part-time work pre-parenthood in a deliberate bid to ease work-life tensions the couple were experiencing, this motive endorses research to suggest workers often turn to part-time work to help manage competing sets of responsibilities (Zelezna 2018) and indeed there is a strong relationship between part-time work and work-life balance (Beham, Prag and Drobnic 2012). HS6 recalls the day-to-day reality of being a dual-career couple:

> *I was working full-time and commuting as well...so, we felt that something could give in terms of someone else being in the house and helping with meals or you know the balance even just as a couple. It felt like we weren't even seeing each other or spending any time at home* (HS6)

Such feelings are frequently reported by dual career couples (Wheatley and Bickerton 2016) as they attempt to balance demanding careers with leisure time and other interests and responsibilities beyond paid work. The couple struggled to manage their careers alongside personal setbacks; notably they suffered five successive miscarriages, whilst both maintaining demanding work schedules. To add to the pressure the couple faced, MPT6 was simultaneously trying to develop a social enterprise which, although complementary to his role as a university

lecturer, increasingly consumed more of his time. In discussions concerning their ideal family life, the couple present similar family values to the couple in T5, a belief in equal opportunities and a commitment to shared parenting:

> *My wife and I we're socialists, and big fans of how things are done in Northern Europe, so we had always wanted, when we finally did have a child, to have some form of shared parenting...so, there was always a discussion about how we might manage that* (MPT6)

As MPT6 was, by a small margin, the secondary wage earner at the time, the couple looked to a solution which made rational economic sense (Becker 1991):

> *So, it basically got to 2016, he was feeling pressured I think in terms of his time. ... feeling, not sort of trapped as such, but that he didn't have much time for* [name of social enterprise]*. I was working full-time, it was pre-children, although we were going through lots of challenges to start a family which was also another reason for him wanting to take that break, I was also earning a little bit more than him at that time, so, we did discuss the possibility and I was very much for it because I was feeling that something needed to give, we were both just working, working, working* (HS6)

Whilst financial considerations entered the couple's decision-making process, MPT6 reflects that living modestly helped to make part-time work possible:

> *We were both used to relatively humble environments...our luxuries are pretty limited; we don't go on holidays we are not out socialising and all that stuff* (MPT6)

MPT6 presents an array of motives for choosing to work part-time, yet ultimately settles for a need to arrest control. The problem of control is prominent in the work-life balance literature and part-time work, whilst not a panacea, is often theorised as a means of ameliorating work-life tensions (Chung and van der Lippe 2020):

It was a mixture of personal, professional and entrepreneurial reasons...the flexible working request was originally an attempt to try and control my time (MPT6)

He adds:

Because we had lost several pregnancies, we expected that would continue and our feeling was if we lost another baby, we couldn't possibly cope with me effectively being absent if that had happened (MPT6)

The ability to be around and support HS6 in the eventuality of a further miscarriage hastened MPT6's decision to request a reduction to a 0.6FTE contract (three days per week). At the time of the initial phase A interview MPT6's overjoy at finally becoming a father was tinged with some financial anxiety as HS6 had been made redundant whilst on maternity leave, leaving the family reliant on his part-time salary alone. Whilst he was fully productive juggling paid part–time work with social enterprise, from which he drew a small income, as a new father, it is likely that MPT6 felt intense social pressure to provide economically (Warren 2022) and be the breadwinner (Benchop et al. 2013). Paradoxically, the interviews revealed the couple's intention for MPT6 to remain in part-time work and, since her earnings potential was greater, for HS6 to find alternative full-time work once maternity pay ceased. In practice as the study progressed, the interviews at phase C show the couple displaying a traditionally gendered male breadwinner, female homemaker model as MPT6 resigns from part-time work to take up a new full-time job, and HS6 remains at home as a full-time mother, and part-time student. The work related and home life implications of this transition are analysed more fully in Chapter 6 in response to the second research question.

The couple's stance on the allocation of work-centred and home-centred responsibilities are further explored through imagery supplied by HS6 to support the photo elicitation strand of the research (Image 5.1).

Image 5.1: interchangeable gender roles (supplied by HS6)

The photo stock image prompted a rich discussion. HS6 explains she chose it because for her the Venn diagram effect of two overlapping heads represents interchangeable roles and the close connection that she shares with MPT6:

> *So, I think what I liked about it was the sort of interconnectedness of the couple. Their heads are, you know, kind of linked and it kind of looks like one of those pictures that could easily switch it around. So, it could easily be the woman on the other side, and the man on the other side and I think for me, that kind of exemplified why* MPT6 *moved to part-time working, you know, when we were trying for a family* (HS6)

The quote suggests HS6 sees their roles exchanging over the course of their lives and careers, and the interconnected heads show joint decision-making, or perhaps indicate blurred roles with both partners focused on work devotion (Bair-Loy 2004; Niemisto et al. 2021) and family devotion, this indeed has been the case for the couple and continues to be so as HS6 dedicates time to study (with a view to a career change), combined with care. The outward facing positions of the people in the image and the contented smile of each partner implies that these realms are not conflicted; the female partner can dedicate herself to work knowing her baby is well cared for and happy and should the image revolve, roles could be reversed. As noted, when the study concluded, MPT6 had secured full-time work, his spell in part-time employment having been relatively temporary (Pini and MacDonald 2009) whilst HS6 assumed the primary care role for their daughter. HS6

acknowledges the traditional nature of their current arrangement but emphasises, as per the scenario conjured by image 5.1, their new arrangements will not necessarily be permanent.

> *We might be in I suppose what's quite a traditional way of working, I am obviously studying, and he's now working full-time, but that that could change in the future, you know, it might be better if I work full-time, and he does three or four days a week. There's always a change around that comes from that. So, I think it was the interchangeability of the picture that was appealing to me* (HS6c)

5.4 Health and well-being

The final two MPTs in the study present markedly different career histories to one another, yet their reasons for working part-time at this stage of their lives and careers are both underpinned by health and well-being concerns for self (MPT1) and self and others (MPT2). MPT1 was a full-time sales manager for a brewery when his children were young, followed by over two decades as a secondary school teacher. He describes being physically absent when he worked in sales and then mentally preoccupied as a teacher. When the study commenced MPT1 was working part-time as a Student Progress Coach. MPT1 presents the rationale for his move to part-time work as principally a desire to gain a better work-life balance and make work a less prominent feature of his life (Sorrell, Gatersleben and Druckman 2020), yet it is apparent from data supplied by HS1 that health concerns and an inability to sustain full-time work as a teacher were the underlying reasons for MPT1's transition to part-time work:

> *When he was teaching the sheer workload that he had was really not manageable...he would just never be on top of it, so, I think it kind of felt that he was just kind of drowning* (HS1)

HS1 recognised how depleted of energy MPT1 was, even after the school summer break:

> *A constant treadmill, it got to a point where he would still be exhausted you know going back after the holidays, and even after the summer holidays, the last few years he would go back and he just hadn't recovered you know, there just wasn't enough petrol in the tank to get through the autumn term* (HS1)

The intensity of the workload, plus ill-health in the summer of 2015, prompted MPT1 to finally concede that some form of flexible working option would be more conducive to his health and well-being in the longer term (Barnes, Smeaton and Taylor 2009):

> *Talking to the specialist...she said that the job that I was doing and the way that I was doing it had quite a big part to play in me getting pneumonia and so, she recommended that I do something about that* (MPT1)

It is evident from the phase A interview with HS1 that MPT1 had been struggling with the burden of full-time work for some time yet was unprepared to act. It is inferred that he felt acute expectation as a man to continue to fulfil the breadwinner role (Padavic, Ely and Reid 2020) and was potentially conscious that an admission of health deterioration might diminish his masculine credentials both in his eyes and in the perceptions of others (Arber, Davidson and Ginn 2003; Connell 2000):

> *For probably five years at least before he finished, I wanted him to either finish teaching or move to another kind of job because of the stress levels, and I don't think he recognised for a long time just how unwell he was becoming...he was depressed although I don't think he knew that at the time, but as with a lot of men particularly I think it took a physical illness to really make him realise the severity* (HS1)

Two sets of factors collided in the academic year of 2015-16 triggering MPT1 to finally leave full-time teaching and pursue part-time work; first the health warning and secondly the departure of three of his oldest and closest (male) colleagues at his school, one to work elsewhere and two to retire:

So having had this shove from the hospital and then my support network were all leaving, I thought it would be a really good opportunity for me to leave. So, I left at the end of the 2015-16 academic year and started here in the September (MPT1)

The dialogue suggests that MPT1 felt vindicated in leaving at this point as his co-workers were leaving too. Their simultaneous departure enabled MPT1, with the continued support of HS1, to finally seek alternative, less pressured employment:

We sat down and had one of our chats and we were talking about what is the best-case scenario or what would I preferably want...and I decided that although I absolutely loved standing up in front of the group and delivering, I wouldn't want anything like as much as I was doing...and then the universe provided an advert (MPT1)

MPT1 describes how he responded to the advertisement but omitted to disclose an interest in part-time work in his application, perhaps for fear of rejection given stigma associated with part-time work (Cook at al. 2021). MPT1 concealed his real reasons for moving to part-time work from colleagues and managers at the school too by presenting his new role as a pre-retirement strategy even though he had no intention to retire in the foreseeable future. HS1 explains:

I don't know whether his perception was that he would be perceived differently if he did work less than full-time. I did suggest that he should make more of the fact that the job was stressful, and he wasn't coping or enjoying it anymore, but he wasn't never keen to do that, so nobody really knows those are the reasons why he left (HS1)

The dissonance between MPT1's real reason for leaving and stated reason enabled him to evade scrutiny from colleagues. Whilst an admission of inability to cope or waning health may imply weakness, the use of part-time work is an accepted way for men to extend their working lives in the years preceding full retirement (Hofacker and Konig 2013) and so avoid the erosion of masculinity associated with

non-productive male lifestyles (Thompson 2006). It is contended that MPT1 was keen to legitimise his job move to colleagues in a way which would enable him to preserve a masculinity script (Foweraker and Cutcher 2015). Despite this strategy, and pressing health needs to work less, MPT1 remained concerned about the move from a financial perspective, this is consistent with research by Persson, Larsson and Nassen (2022) who argue that working-time reduction may tackle burn out and stress and reap other socioecological benefits, but it is often accompanied by money worries:

> *When I got the job, I wasn't sure it was the right thing because it was going to be a huge reduction in salary and not only because the pay is much less but also because I was going to go down to 3 days, so a bit of a double hit...we have got by each month, just* (MPT1)

As the oldest participant in the study (early 50s when the research commenced, with two independent adult daughters) MPT1's move to part-time work shows a reluctant, yet reconsidered attitude to work-life balance, where breadwinning work becomes less central, this is consistent with Emslie and Hunt's study (2009) which found that men are more prone to adapt a work to live stance once their children have left home. In such situations the weight of the breadwinner burden can thus lift, providing greater latitude for different work-life approaches. Indeed, the case illustrates MPT1, a member of the age elite (Bradley 1996), with considerable life and work experience, showing propensity for change, an act which has been observed among people within his age group (Mallon and Cohen 2001). Moreover, in common with circa 30 percent of men in part-time work, health concerns underlie MPT1's decision to work part-time (Thompson and Wheatley 2019), illustrating the broader appeal of part-time work as a means of managing health conditions over time (Loretto and Vickerstaff 2015). The evidence to show that MPT1 underplayed ill health and delayed acting until he could leave under cover of pre-retirement, however, suggests that work-life balance desires alone may not have been enough to persuade him to relinquish the breadwinner role.

In contrast to the other men in the study MPT2's route to part-time work has been circuitous. On becoming a father sixteen years ago MPT2 ceased work as a

biochemist to be the primary carer for his daughter, whilst his wife (also a biochemist at the time) worked full-time. Conscious not to damage his work record by showing commitment to caring (Kropf 1998; van Osch and Shaveling 2020), and to remain economically productive MPT2 founded an online business. This move marked the first of what would become several shifts in the couple's respective roles in paid work and unpaid care. Once their second and third children (premature twins with acute long term health complications) arrived, care needs disrupted the couple's work plans, this scenario is familiar; Mussida and Patimo (2021) report that the presence in the household of individuals with disabilities negatively affects employment outcomes for all family members as the direct and indirect implications are profound. MPT2 explained how his wife was unable to return to work after extended maternity leave, due to the emotional and physical demands of caring for the twins, and whilst it meant abandoning his longer-term career ambitions and reducing family expenditure to live more simply (Aidar and Daniels 2020), MPT2 wanted to share caring responsibilities. MPT2 describes his thoughts and actions post the twin's birth:

> *So, you figure you'll be better off just doing something at home. So, I'd already had that kind of a process and I said to my wife if you want to quit, quit, and I will just run the business* (MPT2)

At the Phase A interview, MPT2 had dissolved his business and was working part-time in university communications:

> *I couldn't carry on running my own business...I had arthritis so I couldn't do heavy lifting anymore, so I was looking for easier work... I think running your own business is quite stressful...I was 40 at the time so I thought trying to get a job when I was 40 might be easier than trying to get a job when I was 50* (MPT2)

Securing work commensurate with his qualifications and experience proved difficult:

It was difficult finding work, particularly I think because I had run my own business for 12 years therefore you have no kind of continuing professional development, you have no other stuff that HR people love. So, it was very difficult to find a job, yes... you know I had applied for something in the region of 250-300 jobs, you have to take what you can get (MPT2)

The refrain *'you have no kind of continuing professional development...that HR people love'*, illustrates the perceived importance of a chrononormative pattern of career development (Duncan and Loretto 2004) for career continuity and success. MPT2's search culminated in compromise; a temporary role when he would have preferred permanent work, and so underemployment (Williams et al. 2020):

I think I probably would have ideally liked more than 0.6FTE but as I said when you are past 40 and applying for work you can't be too choosy, and I think it was really a question of taking my skills and leveraging something out of that (MPT2)

As the study progresses and care needs for the twins (aged 16 when the study concluded) are less onerous MPT2 seeks full-time work. His struggle to exit part-time work is captured in Chapter 6 as part of the presentation and discussion of findings related to the second research question. Meanwhile, MPT2 reflects on the effects of family life on career:

My motivation is my family, if we had a normal family would I have gone down this path? probably not you know. I would have probably done a normal job you know, a much more normal arrangement and so I think working for myself and then working part-time, my family was the motivation (MPT2)

MPT2's use of *'normal'* three times in a short excerpt infers that he is conscious that his career trajectory to date is the antithesis of the normative (male) working model (Acker 1990) and runs counter to age-appropriate recitals of gender performance (Riach, Rumens and Tyler 2014). He comments, *'people think that having disabled children is a bit like having ordinary children, but you just do a bit*

of extra work, but it is profoundly not like that. I think our choices still will be governed around what's best for our children'. Although MPT2's main motive for entering part-time is categorised within this chapter as related to health and well-being, in practice it is clear the drivers for his choice to work part-time at this stage of his life are best conceived as an amalgam of personal health and well-being, lifestyle, on-going childcare demands and complex child health needs, which are difficult to separate or prioritise.

More generally, whilst the men's reasons for working part-time are reported within this chapter under the headings of caring responsibilities, work-life balance and health and well-being, and these reasons are substantiated by the data, other inferences are drawn which underlie MPTs' motives for choosing part-time work. Whilst some of the MPTs support their primary reason(s) for moving to part-time by claiming disinterest in career, subtle slivers of data (often offered by HS participants) appear to show that for some of the MPTs, notably, MPT1, MPT3, MPT4 and to a lesser degree MPT6, full-time work in a demanding role was an unwelcomed pressure, for example MPT4's claim at the airport, *'I can't do it anymore',* HS4's comment that MPT4 *'dislikes pressure',* HS6's comment that MPT6 was *'feeling pressured'* and HS1's comment that MPT1 *'did not have enough petrol in the tank'.* This evidence is interesting and seems to show that the push factors propelling men to leave full-time work were perhaps more significant than the men were willing to disclose. For men, the admission that work is too demanding, or dispiriting is likely to be difficult, given work, specifically breadwinning work, is an important signifier of masculinity (Besen 2007). The loss of this role could be troubling for MPTs' gendered identity (Nadim 2016), causing them to search for verbal schema which they perceive to be less emasculating. By emphasising socially progressive reasons for choosing part-time work, including playing a greater role in childcare, honouring equal opportunities values, or enabling their wives' careers whilst deemphasising their own, the MPTs appear to be engaging in cultural work (Reeser 2011) to present their masculinity in ways which support women's liberation, a position Christensen and Jensen (2014) argue can coexist with acts of supressing women to confer masculine intelligibility. The MPTs' performances may also be a way of them coming to terms with subverting chrononormative and heteronormative expectations (Riach, Rumens and Tyler 2014) by choosing to work

part-time in middle-age and mid-career. By pressing the MPTs to try to get fully underneath their reasons for working part-time, the researcher felt at times that she was picking a scab and asking the men to face career disappointment, familial difficulties, stress and inability to cope in full-time work, or failure to match gender norms associated with hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987), that they were sensitive to, and finding difficult to reconcile. These themes resonate closely with the third research question and are developed in Chapter 7.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed evidence from the study to address the first research question of the thesis (What factors induce middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations to work part-time and how is this work mode accommodated within their careers?). Findings reveal that MPTs describe themselves as voluntary part-time workers as their decisions to participate in part-time work are underscored by choice. The motives MPTs present for first entering part-time work and remaining in part-time work are complicated and varied, although childcare, a desire to strike a better work-life balance, and health and well-being emerge as prominent reasons in the MPTs' accounts and were therefore used as the central organising framework for the chapter.

In practice a complex range of interconnected factors shape individual MPTs' decision-making as depicted in Figure 5.1, these include individual factors related to the men's socio-economic status, their careers, interests and preferences and their health, intersected with household, organisational and societal factors. In all triads individual factors are seen to reside within a household context, the configuration of which plays a key role in shaping the MPTs' decisions to commence part-time work and affects decisions related to their future trajectories in paid work. Organisational factors feature in the MPTs' decision-making processes to the extent that access to part-time work, at an appropriate level, organisational receptiveness to part-time working and the operationalisation of work routines, for example the ability to work for home, influence MPTs' entry into part-time work. Lastly, societal factors are evident as MPTs are shown to be conscious of disturbing chrononormative ideals by rebuffing the normative male working model (Acker 1990) when choosing to work part-time work. The remainder of this concluding

section elaborates on these sets of related factors, reflecting the salient findings of the chapter.

Figure 5.1: Summary of factors affecting MPTs' decisions to work part-time

Individual	Household	Organisational	Societal
Socio-economic status	Family values and priorities	Sector	Normative male working model
Career orientation	Presence of dependent children / care demands	Corporate culture	Who works part-time and why
Other roles and interests	Partner's working pattern and career orientation	Job role / status	Chrononormative ideals – age and gender
Health and well-being		Trust and autonomy	
Preference			

The central interplay between individual and household factors determines the amount of paid work the MPTs and their wives consider optimal for the household and how it is shared and arranged between them. Whilst for some of the MPTs, exercising choice to work part-time is facilitated by a less materialistic, simpler lifestyle (Aidar and Daniels 2020), income appears a secondary consideration for most of the MPTs; this is likely a factor of their privileged socio-economic status. Moreover, findings illustrate that MPTs' decisions concerning the amount of paid work they undertake are made and remade in the context of secure marital relationships in which the interests and priorities of their respective partners and other family members are primary. Accordingly, the data shows that couple (and individual) values related to parenting, couple/family time, and career orientation are reflected in household living and working arrangements. Several of the couples use male part-time working as part of their collective household labour market contribution, to ease the logistical pressures of managing working alongside caring for dependent children and to reduce reliance on marketised childcare. In some

cases, this leads to dual part-time worker arrangements where the intention is that the parenting role is shared more equitably between partners, whereas in other households MPTs entry into part-time work results in the men adopting the primary care role for dependent children whilst their wives work full-time. In both cases there is evidence of the MPTs presenting their entry into part-time work as an act of support for their wives' careers and work pattern, especially where their wives have a strong professional identity and/or a defined career orientation.

While the bulk of the data is transparent and clear regarding MPTs' motives for working part-time, small fragments of interview data infer hidden agendas. Across the triads some of the MPTs claim disinterest in career and use this narrative to support their move to part-time work, yet HS participants are prone to suggest stress in full-time work played a key part in MPTs choosing part-time work, notwithstanding other practical reasons for them withdrawing from full-time work. The MPTs might therefore be seen to use career lethargy as way of masquerading an inability to cope in full-time work, where the latter is perceived as a weakness which detracts from their masculinity.

With reference to organisational factors, findings show, consistent with the literature (Fagan et al. 2014), that there is a paucity of opportunities to work part-time in highly skilled occupations. Jobs at this level are rarely advertised as part-time, instead there is evidence of MPTs applying for full-time work with the intention of negotiating part-time terms, and signs of nepotism as MPTs leverage personal and professional connections with other men to create new part-time job opportunities which match their qualifications and experience and offer the flexibility and convenience the MPTs seek. Moving to part-time work entails compromise in the form of a temporary contract and fewer hours than preferred in one case, and significantly reduced pay in another, yet these concessions are accepted as the MPTs' desire to work part-time takes precedence. For other MPTs, notably those in academic roles in the education sector, the work culture readily accommodates part-time working arrangements, suggesting sector and type of role are important variables in terms of access to part-time work in highly skilled professional occupations.

Lastly, findings show that societal pressure to comply with chrononormative frameworks regulating career development, age and gender (Riach, Rumens and Tyler 2014) has an influence on MPTs' decisions to enter part-time work and the longevity of their relationships with part-time work. The evidence shows that pressure to conform is manifest in different ways, for example, one of the MPTs is seen to delay entering part-time work until such a time as his co-workers might interpret the move as a legitimate pre-retirement strategy, thus in-keeping with chrononomative ideals. For others, as noted, motives for working part-time are carefully framed by the MPTs to preserve their credibility, suggesting the men are conscious of non-conformance and anxious to minimise the effects in interactions with others, whilst MPT2 is resigned to a non-chrononormative (adult) life course. MPTs' relationships with part-time work are shown to be dynamic as some revert to full-time work when their household circumstances alter, this act serves to restore chrononormative work-life arrangements consistent with men of their age, these findings are captured fully in Chapter 6 in response to the second research question concerning MPTs' experiences of the work sphere of their lives as part-time workers.

Chapter 6: Experiences of work and home

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter addressed the first research question concerning the factors which induce middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations to participate in part-time work and how this mode of work is accommodated within their careers. Furnished with this understanding, Chapter 6 now presents and discusses how MPTs experience the work and home spheres of their lives as part-time workers and so explicitly addresses the second research question - how do middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations experience the workplace and home sphere of their lives as part-time workers?

The chapter starts by critically examining the quality of work MPTs encounter (section 6.2), specifically reflecting on dimensions including pay, job satisfaction, autonomy and control, intensification, precarity and training and development. MPTs' experiences of the work they undertake are shown to be variable, with evidence of good and poor work quality indicators permeating their roles, yet there is tacit recognition among the men that career progression is better enabled in full-time work. In section 6.3, some of the MPTs are shown to deploy various strategies to carefully manage the boundary between work and home to prevent spillover, yet some of the men are seen to work more flexibly to meet the needs of their employer. The second part of the chapter (sections 6.4 and 6.5) concentrates on MPTs' experiences of the home sphere. Findings are presented and discussed in relation to the division of domestic labour within households, MPTs' involvement in care routines for dependent children, and the ways in which they occupy their remaining time. Despite the MPTs' part-time work mode, domestic responsibilities are shown to remain unequal with the men's partners shouldering a disproportionate amount of the workload, irrespective of their paid work responsibilities, women in the households also assume a mental workload and undertake considerable invisible, or hidden household labour. Due to the longitudinal design of the study and the timing of the data collection exercise, the findings also provide novel insight into how regimes of care, housework and paid work were (re)negotiated within households where the male partner worked part-time during the Covid-19 pandemic. Key findings presented in section 6.5 show that

the burden of additional household chores and the pressures of home-schooling were more often borne by the MPTs' wives.

6.2 Job quality

In attempting to apply the typology of part-time work and part-time workers developed by Nicolaisen, Kavli and Jensen (2019), findings suggest MPTs present as voluntary part-time workers with either mixed (semi-secured) or good (equalised) working conditions and protection, on account of relatively privileged conditions for some of the MPTs, and examples of poor job quality characteristics, typical of much part-time working (Fagan et al. 2012), blended with good conditions for others. In practice, however, as Warren and Lyonette (2018) suggest, experiences of job quality in part-time work are eminently nuanced and difficult to classify; MPTs' roles consist of good and bad characteristics in different combinations and quantities and are therefore perhaps best conceived as occupying a place on a spectrum. Furthermore, the study supports earlier research (Warren and Lyonette 2020) in finding that MPTs' motives for participating in part-time work (set out in Chapter 5) influence their perceptions of the quality of work they experience, potentially distorting the objectivity of their accounts. The following sections present and discuss MPTs' experiences of job quality.

6.2.1 Pay

Research illustrates that part-time work is commonly associated with pay insecurity (Broughton et al. 2016) and poorer relative rates of pay (Insurato 2021; Beatson 2019). The findings from this study partially concur, with evidence of pay exploitation and variation for men working part-time in the private sector, and poor relative pay for MPTs in non-academic roles in education, principally linked to overqualification. Formerly MPT1 was a teacher, MPT3 and MPT4 high earners in the city and MPT2 an academic researcher, the MPTs lament that their earnings power is now diminished, and in some cases volatile. HS1 could not believe '*the derisory salary'* MPT1 commanded in comparison to his former teacher salary and said it had become a source of arguments. She explains how it helps them both to consider his work as a Progress Coach at a Sixth Form College as charity work:

> *It's such small amounts of money and for what they do, the income is ridiculous. It's like community service, and I think that's a good way to see it really because if you looked at what he puts in for that salary I think you could think well that's ridiculous* (HS1)

Whilst MPT1 did take a salary cut to work part-time in a different educational role, later sections of this chapter illustrate redeeming features of his current job which MPT1 highly values, such as interesting work and a manageable workload which helps to reduce the pressure of combining work and non-work (Russell, O'Connell and McGinnity 2009). In T4, HS4 refers to MPT4's sub-optimal earnings in part-time work, implying that he is undervalued in his present employment but accepts the poorer salary relative to the rate he could command elsewhere in exchange for the familiarity the role offers:

> *He knows that if he looked for other work elsewhere, he could get paid significantly more than he is now, but he is not actively very good at looking for change* (HS4)

HS4's remarks are considered highly speculative and potentially implausible, since part-time roles are least prevalent in the higher reaches of the occupational structure (Warren 2022) and transitioning to full-time work from part-time work can be challenging (Fagan et al. 2014) as MPT4's experience detailed later in the chapter indeed shows. There is clearer evidence that MPT3 is financially penalised as a contracted software designer. The SME owner (WS3) admits he exploited the fact that MPT3 was looking for local, convenient work:

> *He was making the move to be the primary carer for the kids...we didn't have to pay a stellar rate to attract him to work for us it was more, it's on my doorstep, I am working with a nice group of people including an old friend, this could be quite interesting...we paid him a reasonable rate* (WS3)

MPT3 has endured reduction in chargeable hours of work and a rate cut, due to economic factors affecting the firm; WS3 explains the impact of the 2008 financial crisis:

> *We got to the back end of 2008 and the recession hit, everyone in the company either left or took a pay cut.* [MPT3] *stuck around but we made a point, please reduce the amount of time you are invoicing us for, and we reduced his rate, he was okay with that, he understands that's the world* (WS3)

Coming out of the recession and in the years to follow WS3 recognises the firm were complacent about MPT3's rate, perhaps because he had accepted a rate reduction and volatile hours in the past and WS3 knew MPT3 valued convenient, flexible work:

> *His rate reduced and it only recently went back up, so it was a bit cheeky of us we just left it where it was and probably a year ago* [MPT3] *said you know this is a bit of a joke and I couldn't disagree with him, and he said how about an increase, and we agreed. It went up January and it's just gone up again in July. So, he's not far off the going rate for the region and you know a senior software developer, he is not at that rate, but he is not a million miles away from it, whereas he was at one point, and I suppose we would never have got away with that with anybody else...I think we probably slightly overstepped the mark* (WS3)

Later in the interview WS3 admits the organisation is reliant on the specialism MPT3 offers and so should perhaps be more attentive since the salary costs and disruption involved in hiring someone to replace him would far exceed the increased rate they have recently agreed. This admission suggests that those in part-time work are sometimes trapped in lower relative pay and experience poor pay progression (Nightingale 2019). The study finds pay in part-time work is not universally poor, in other triads pay rates are fair. The men who work in part-time in teaching and lecturing roles (MPT5, MPT6 and MPT7) for example, are protected from financial exploitation in part-time work by the pay scale bargained in their respective sectors. They earn pro-rata the salary for their grade and salaries are reviewed on an annual basis. This scenario reflects equalised terms and conditions

and social protection (Nicolaisen, Kavli and Jensen 2019). MPT6 is cognisant he has a good deal:

> *It would have been very difficult for me to get a similarly remunerated part-time role from scratch* (MPT6)

6.2.2 Job satisfaction

Whilst some of the men in the sample receive pay in part-time work which falls below their expectations, levels of job satisfaction among the sample group are generally high. This finding reflects research by Warren and Lyonette (2020) showing that men in senior part-time roles fare much better in terms of job satisfaction than those in lower status occupations. HS1 is buoyant about MPT1's level of work enjoyment:

> *He really does enjoy this job so that's fantastic cos I don't think he's ever really had a job that he could honestly say he enjoyed...he likes the one-to-one work, he likes all the liaison with parents, so I think he feels like he's really making far more of a contribution than he was when he was teaching* (HS1)

MPT1 speaks positively of the job satisfaction he derives from his part-time role:

> *The work is fairly straightforward, but also what I am finding is the work is really interesting. Every day is different, I am learning new things, just dealing in a much deeper level with students' emotional issues and behavioural issues, so yes, I am really enjoying it* (MPT1)

WS3 is confident that job satisfaction is a key incentive for MPT3 to stay, arguably greater than salary which would explain why the organisation has been complacent concerning pay:

> *The money will be some element of it, but I think the level of job satisfaction, the interest in the work he is doing, the people he is working with, is as much as an incentive for him to stay* (WS3)

Other men in the study are positive, MPT5 for example simply states, *'I do really like working here, I really like my work-life balance'.* These accounts of job satisfaction among male part-time workers accord with studies by Kalleberg (2012) and Vidal (2013) which show that part-time workers generally report higher levels of job satisfaction, but men especially express few negative feelings, thought to be because they often choose to work part-time.

In terms of job satisfaction MPT2 is somewhat of an outlier, on the one hand he speaks enthusiastically about projects he is working on:

> *So, I am working across the research portfolio of the University, so you know I am working on a sort of heritage culture type thing and also on a project with someone from agriculture (*MPT2)

Yet later he speaks of his frustrations, linked to job content:

> *There are things I miss about working for myself...just certain things I used to do that I don't get the same fulfilment sometimes in the job I am doing now. Not a lot is expected of me, no one has asked me to come up with solutions to problems...on a small scale yes, but I am not expected to change anything and that's where the frustration comes ...you want to do things, use your experience to say this could change and be better* (MPT2)

His brother (HS2) concurs:

> *The work he's doing is boring I think, you know he can do it standing on his head* (HS2)

MPT2's remarks suggest he has had to compromise on his ambitions and surrender to work for which he is overqualified due to the paucity of part-time work at senior levels and in professional roles (Fagan et al. 2014). As a former biochemist with a PhD and postdoc experience, plus 12 years as a business owner, it appears he feels sub-optimally employed in university communications. Whilst the role is research-

related, he is writing about others' research rather than conducting his own and he has little scope to influence the role. MPT2's account reflects the views of Wasserman, Fujishiro and Hoppe (2017) who find that overqualification can be frustrating, it prevents job holders from showing their skills and expertise at work and as such is termed a further form of underemployment with implications for job satisfaction. Whilst MPT2 is somewhat unfulfilled by his job, he recognises the benefits of being employed versus being self-employed and appears to concur with Russell, O'Connell and McGinnity (2009) that part-time work can alleviate stress:

> *You don't have to go out and find work, you don't have prepare bids or anything like that. A lot of people in my office are very stressed you know about work, and I am like am I missing something here, you know, I am not stressed at all you know* (MPT2)

6.2.3 Autonomy and control

Despite working in professional roles which tend to afford job holders greater agency (Choi, Leiter and Tomaskovic-Devey 2008), some of the MPTs report a lack of autonomy and control in part-time work and the inability therefore to resist change, reject work intensification, make improvements or organise their working times and routines. In a recent merger with another local college, MPT1, who is the only part-time worker in his team, recounts that he was *'given no choice but to move'* to the neighbouring college's site. HS1 explains how this directive affected him:

> *He had to move sites and I know that was something that he really struggled with because he didn't want to move...I think it was the enforced nature of it and the fact that he didn't get any opportunity to say how he felt about it...it was just like this is what is happening, this is where you are going* (HS1)

MPT1 felt singled out as a part-time worker and excluded from the decision-making process. However, in other instances he has been able to exercise his voice to influence the senior team, for example, upon appointment he successfully argued

a case for working Monday to Wednesday consecutively, rather than the broken schedule across the week desired by the college. These examples illustrate that job holder's levels of control can vary.

As highlighted in section 6.2.2 MPT2 encounters a distinct lack of task discretion in part-time work despite his background and experience. He reflects candidly on the level of control he feels he has in life more generally:

> *I drove my wife to the hospital in the middle of the night 15 years ago nearly when she was 24 weeks pregnant and to be honest, I don't feel like I've made a decision since then, you know, I haven't felt any sense of agency really since then* (MPT2)

MPT2's lack of ability to plan or influence his private life magnifies his experiences in part-time work. In the workplace MPT2 has described how the role he performs provides low task discretion, here he adds, '*I appreciate that I am low down the food chain, so you're not expected to input'.* This comment is expressed with a degree of sadness rather than bitterness as MPT2 tries to come to terms with the way in which his life has unfolded. The comment *'low down the food chain'* appears to be a form of self-degradation, as objectively he occupies a professional role in business. The lack of autonomy MPT2 experiences in terms of job content fortunately does not extend to temporal flexibility; his role provides moderate latitude in terms of working time and diary management:

> *You know if I said to him* [manager] *I need to work you know Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday this week he won't even ask why you know, he will just say yes* (MPT2)

This aspect of control can be seen as a compensatory factor; it is valuable in supporting MPT2 to manage his workload alongside complex family arrangements. In other cases, the MPTs' skills and higher-level positions afford them access to better quality jobs (Bartling, Fehr and Schmidt 2012) where their expertise is valued irrespective of part-time status, and they enjoy high levels of employee-oriented flexibility (Green and Livanos 2015). The two men in the sample group who work as

lecturers (MPT6 and MPT7) have set days of work, during which they are required to deliver timetabled lectures and seminars and/or attend meetings, however outside of these fixed commitments, in common with full-time academics, they can work remotely, vary start and end times and choose when to take breaks as expectations are largely outputs driven and not time-based. MPT7 does not work on a Thursday yet feels full-time because his working days span a normal working week:

> *It feels like I am a full-time member of staff, I don't think they tar anyone with a brush for being part-time, but I feel like I am full-time because I am in from Monday to Friday effectively* (MPT7)

He explains that university academics have plenty of latitude to work away from their desks when devoting time to planning and assessment, research, conference attendance or other self-directed projects. The environment operates with high levels of trust exhibited by management and few controls on face visibility, as such the movements of part-time and full-time academics, hourly paid lecturers and research colleagues become highly blurred. In operational terms it appears that MPT7 is drawing attention to the premise that working four days per week is barely distinguishable from full-time working. Among the sample group, MPT3 stands out having the most flexible working arrangement borne in part from the nature of his role (software design), the fact he works with clients in different time zones and his status as a contractor rather than an employee. As Borkgvist et al (2021) argue is often the case with male part-time workers, MPT3 displays a flexible approach to part-time work, rather than one built around unavailability, this can help him to organise his work life around other responsibilities but can sometimes be a hindrance as work commitments to clients and family responsibilities occasionally clash and lines get blurred. MPT3 is aware that chiefly his unique skill set affords him a privileged position in the organisation to approach the work in the way he sees fit and customarily choose when and where he works (Glavin and Schieman 2012):

> *I guess up to now, it's been really fluid because it's been a kind of development piece of work mainly, most of it is kind of strategic work so it*

> *doesn't require that I'm at a desk between certain hours and I need to be contactable, also, the work I do very rarely requires that I go into an office so I can work at home* (MPT3)

The owner of the firm agrees:

> *Tons of latitude yeah...he's trusted to decide* (WS3)

Choi, Leiter and Tomaskovic-Devey (2008) affirm that freedom on this scale is usually reserved for highly skilled and high discretion workers who can be trusted to work autonomously and remain dedicated to their work role; MPT fits this profile. Whilst fundamentally flexibility and expertise characterise MPT3's status in the organisation, he is not immune to exploitation, as the reference to pay in 6.2.1. above and HS3's comment below attests to:

> *Part of my role has been like pushing him. Sometimes he comes back from work, and he is frustrated, and I say but did you speak to them about it, do they know how you feel, you have options if are not happy with the way you are being treated as a consultant* (HS3)

The above remark suggests that MPT3 is prepared to be complicit in his own mistreatment on occasion and is reluctant to complain as he does not want to risk losing the flexibility the role offers (Kelliher and Anderson, 2010). The mix of good qualities and poor qualities in MPT3's role supports work by Kalleberg (2012) that ostensibly good quality jobs can still contain some negative characteristics.

6.2.4 Job intensification

In accordance with Lewis and Humbert (2010) some of the men report that they suffer costs in part-time work in the form of work intensification. MPT6, a university lecturer, explains that it took almost a complete academic year for his part-time working pattern to embed. During this period, he consistently worked over contract and was unable to contain the demands of his role in part-time hours; this form of work intensification is recognised by McDonald, Bradley and Brown (2009) in relation to part-time work:

> *I had a year of working extremely hard, working very long hours working a lot beyond my kind of formal job role...that's the trouble with doing big events like* [name of event] *you become visible in the wider University, so you get a lot of pressure to do other things above and beyond and lose your ability to control it...it wasn't sustainable, but we weren't able to do anything about it* (laughs) (MPT6)

In other work, the notion of working beyond contractual hours is referred to as enabled intensification (Chung and van der Lippe 2020), indeed MPT6 did arguably self-impose work intensification by voluntarily working additional hours, however, to refrain from doing so would have harmed his students and colleagues and damaged his reputation centrally in the University, which was something he was not prepared to risk. The success of his social enterprise also played into the intense schedule MPT6 experienced in part-time work:

> *It's become a portfolio career, effectively I do two things* [part-time lecturing job and social enterprise] *and when I want to look after* [daughter's name]*, I will usually work through the night or work at weekends to make up* (MPT6)

Now in full-time work he feels he has better control of his work schedule:

> *Well, I have got a lot more power, so if someone says can you meet us on Southampton on a Thursday when* [HS6] *has her course I can say no I can't* (MPT6)

On the contrary, others support the notion that part-time work is less intense (Russell, O'Connell and McGinnity 2009), MPT1, for example states *'there isn't anything to take home really',* whilst MPT2 intimates that his role is not at all pressured.

6.2.5 Job precarity

Consistent with previous research (Rubery and Grimshaw 2016), the longitudinal nature of the study provides examples of job instability and loss in part-time work as well as precarity experienced as volatile hours and temporary work (Standing 2012). MPT1 shares that he felt vulnerable when his college merged with another, and the two student support teams were combined:

> *I thought was that if there were going to be redundancies it would be the*
> *part-time people who would go* (MPT1)

MPT1's job was safe, yet his thinking process seems to suggest that he has internalised the idea that part-time workers are perceived as less committed (Kropf 1998) and therefore more dispensable. For MPT4 job loss is real, he is made redundant in a large-scale reorganisation prompted by company acquisition and his recovery from this set back is protracted and difficult as discussed in section 6.2.6. In other triads MPTs report accepting job insecurity to enter part-time work. MPT2 for example experiences job instability as a series of successive temporary contracts. He perceives his ability to secure permanent work has been hampered by his *'chequered background'*. At the phase B interview MPT2 remained mired by job insecurity:

> *I don't see any new roles being created you know in the time frame that I*
> *might need them, and so my assumption is I will have to look elsewhere, I*
> *am not going to depend on any more work coming up here* (MPT2)

The temporary nature of MPT2's work combined with overqualification (as highlighted in 6.2.2) in part matches the depiction of the precariat offered by Standing (2014) in which the type of labour workers supply is flexible and they are required to possess qualifications and skills greater than those needed for the work they undertake. In T3 meanwhile, MPT3 the only self-employed contractor in the sample group, accepts volatility in hours and earnings in exchange for flexible working conditions to fit around childcare commitments, as established in section 6.2.1.

6.2.6 Training and development and career progression

Irrespective of the level at which they are operating, and the expertise (and untapped potential) that several of the men possess, MPTs appear to acknowledge that part-time work will offer fewer development opportunities and slow or no career progression (McDonald, Bradley and Brown 2009). WS and HS participants recognise this hazard of part-time work too, mirroring research which attributes poor career progression to lack of time in the workplace to accumulate the training and development required to progress (Cohen and Single 2001):

> *Sometimes I think, you know having career progression is about being in the right place at the right time and if you are just around less then you are kind of reducing your chance to be in the right place at the right time* (WS2)

> *Most people whether consciously or I think more subconsciously would have felt that if you want to do more or get on then you can't do that part-time* (HS4)

Most of the MPTs therefore do not anticipate or actively seek promotion in part-time work. Instead, they accept a hold on their careers (Durbin and Tomlinson 2010) in exchange for the lifestyle part-time work affords them. In some instances, MPTs display clear aversion to promotion, on the grounds the costs in terms of time/focus, work strain and commitment, would outweigh the additional financial and status gains. MPT7 for example is reportedly intent on remaining in part-time work as a senior lecturer:

> *He did two masters and his PhD so I mean, there was definitely a drive to reach that level but I'm not sure that pursuing it further would be any greater benefit to him, he assumes moving forward or progressing would probably mean full-time and I don't see him being interested in doing that* (laughs) (HS7)

Those who wish to progress follow MPT7's thinking and centre their job searches on full-time work. Their stance reflects tacit recognition that career progression necessitates masculine patterns of work (Cotton, Beauregard and Yilmas-Keles

2021), necessarily full-time work. MPT2 is among this group but he is pessimistic about his chances of making rapid progress:

> *It's very hierarchical, they are not going to put you into a grade 7 from a grade 5 job they will only want to look at grade 6, that's what I meant about being realistic...the reality is I am not going to get an interesting managerial role, I need to do time in lower grades first* (MPT2)

His concerns are echoed by his brother (HS2) who recognises that in spending time in self-employment and working part-time to accommodate caring needs, his sibling has failed to keep pace with the male-based chronology of career development which values continuity of service and penalises interruptions for childcare (Duncan and Loretto 2004). Consequently MPT2's career has suffered:

> *I think you know probably at his age he would expect to have 20 years' experience under his belt and be in a very secure senior position and in fact he's in a relatively insecure, relatively junior position, so I think you know he's quite impatient to move upwards* (HS2)

Given the scale and duration of the present study it is difficult to deduce the full extent to which experiences of part-time working shape and impact the longer-term career decisions and prospects of those MPTs who seek career advancement. The longitudinal nature of the study has however enabled a modicum of insight into the legacy of part-time work as experienced by three of the men (MPT2 and MPT4 and MPT6) as they seek to transition to full-time work. As established, in some respects part-time work exposes workers to greater precarity, for this reason, Fagan et al (2014) attest that ease of progression from jobs can be considered an indicator of job quality. Firstly, findings show that overall, the experience of part–time work and the freedoms it facilitates causes MPTs to carefully self-regulate their future work choices. They become more circumspect when contemplating a return to full-time work, careful not to fully relinquish the opportunities part-time work provides in the form of flexible working hours (MPT4), autonomy, job satisfaction and interesting work (MPT4 and MPT6), or the ability to work from home, thus saving on commuting time (MPT2 and MPT4). Their searches for full-

time work tend to be infused with the memory of part-time work; when discussing his efforts to secure suitable work for example, MPT2 comments:

> *Yes, I would certainly ask about flexible working. I think you can tell, if you ask the question and you get a frosty response* (laughs) *even if they say yes, we allow flexible working, you know you can tell if they don't really want you to do it* (MPT2)

The legacy of part-time work appears, in the case of MPT2 at least, to suppress his prospects of transitioning to full-time work at a level commensurate with his qualifications and experience and in a suitable timeframe causing him to be trapped in part-time work for longer than he desires and so subject, for a time, to involuntary part-time employment (Green and Livanos 2015). He struggles to convince prospective employers of his commitment to full-time paid work and of the credentials gained in part-time work, and consequently must adjust his ambitions downwards to enter the full-time labour market. These findings illustrate that part-time work is damaging for careers (Van Osch and Schaveling 2020), and particularly so for men since part time work is gender-role incongruent (Eagly and Karau 2002). At the phase B interview MPT2 had managed to secure an internal job move to fulfil two part-time roles, which together constitute a full-time 1-year fixed-term contract. He comments:

> *I knew this move was not going to be that fulfilling but sometimes you just have to do what you have to do to get the next job...I might get a more interesting role next time but this time there was no chance* (MPT2)

He mused that he had to be realistic about what he could get as he is over 40 and has, in his own words, *'a chequered background';* this is a phrase MPT2 uses often to denote an atypical career characterised by time out of the labour market to commit to full-time caring responsibilities followed by a long period of self-employment in a field unrelated to his qualifications or early career background. HS2 looks at MPT2's situation from a recruiter's perspective to draw a similar conclusion and reiterate the importance of consistent work devotion schema for career traction (Neimisto et al. 2021):

> *I think if I looked at someone or see in their CV freelance or part-time*
> *experience I'd probably think, you know, are they up to it? Perhaps unfairly*
> *but that would probably be something that would occur to me. if you can*
> *see a string of significant full-time roles that probably adds more value to a*
> *potential employer* (HS2)

For MPT4 his search for full-time work followed redundancy. According to HS4, prior to this incident MPT4 claimed to be content with part-time work:

> *Working part-time he was constantly giving off I don't want to do more. He*
> *was actually content within the role he was doing, or that's what he kept*
> *saying to everybody* (HS4).

It is notable here however, in scrutinising MPTs' experiences of part-time work, that MPT4's mantra altered when faced with redundancy. In considering what to do next, a tension between full-time and part-time work is apparent:

> *I think at this stage I think it would be a full-time role, to go part-time would*
> *require most probably stepping down a level which isn't ideal, not having*
> *the need to be there for the children then I think I can be selfish* (MPT4)

MPT4 preference for full-time work appears to reflect recognition that employers rarely engage part-time workers in senior positions (Durbin and Tomlinson 2014) and status is important to him. Yet MPT4's narrative of choice applied to part-time work, followed closely by the same narrative to justify full-time work is intriguing from a gender perspective, and is considered in Chapter 7 in the fuller context of the findings related to the final research question. Briefly here though it seems a discourse of choice is used on the one hand to combat potentially negative audience reactions to gender performativity which defies the dominant rules of gender (Butler 1990) and so retain masculine intelligibility in part-time work, and simultaneously as a way of concealing that pressure to conform to dominant rules of gender lies behind his later 'choice' to move to full-time work. The dialogue raises interesting questions concerning the extent to which choice, or gender conformity

tensions are at the heart of MPT4's prior and anticipated levels of engagement with paid work. It is inferred that MPT4 feels pressured to work full-time to prove masculine credentials that have been destabilised, not only by time in part-time work, but also redundancy and the stigma of inactivity (Sennett 2005; Thompson 2006). HS4 senses this too:

> *I kept saying to him you don't need to go full-time, but I think there is that gender feeling that you still feel you should go full-time* (HS4)

MPT4 remained out of work for over 12 months, before securing a six-month long fixed-term contract. His search for full-time work was impeded in part by disruptions to the labour market caused by Brexit, and later the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding the effects of these events, the process of transitioning to full-time work proved difficult even though MPT4 omitted to reveal a history of approaching two decades in part-time work in applications and interviews:

> *If they don't ask, I'm not telling* (MPT4)

This admission is interesting, it provides further evidence to suggest MPT4 is conscious of gender role incongruity in part-time work (Eagly and Karau 2002) and concerned a history of working in this mode portrays home devotion schema (Padavic, Ely and Reid 2020) commonly associated with women, which he perceives will impede his job search. The notion of concealing part-time working is developed in Chapter 7 in relation to the final research question. Here, as prospective employers were unaware of MPT4's part-time work history, alternative explanations are required to account for his protracted job search. One possibility is that MPT4 took his time to find full-time work due to feeling torn between conforming to dominant gender norms and a true desire to work less, or maybe not at all. Alternatively, job search criteria borne from a desire to retain the best aspects of part-time work in full-time work narrowed opportunities, or perhaps he was overly ambitious in terms of the roles he was applying for, the following comments support these interpretations:

> *I have been looking on and off, but it has to be the right thing.* [name of organisation]*, I had a conversation with them* (MPT4)

> *Yeah, I came second I think about 3 or 4 times which was quite impressive* (laughs) (MPT4)

The difficult job search caused MPT4 to encounter *"timepass"* (Jeffrey and Young 2012:645), in other words, time on his hands during a lengthy period of worklessness. MPT4's predicament is more usually associated with those in the precariat who find themselves between jobs (Standing 2012). The outcome of his search (temporary contract) represents uncertainty and could simply reflect labour market condition, else could be attributable to MPT4's non-normative career development (Duncan and Loretto 2004) in the sense that a static career over the long term is likely to be perceived as atypical for a middle-aged man in a highly skilled occupation, and thus a risky appointment for a new employer. The experiences of MPT2 and MPT4 variously illustrate involuntary part-time working (Green and Livanos 2015), underemployment (Williams et al. 2020) stemming from time spent in part-time work and aspects of work precarity (Standing 2012, 2014; Campbell and Price 2014), yet MPTs' socio-economic status as middle-aged professional workers protects them from the worst excesses of these labour market disadvantages. For instance, unlike those in the precariat who are continually acquainted with instability, volatile earnings and veins of uncertainty in their lives (Waite 2009), MPT4 was able to withstand an extended period of worklessness due to a severance package and HS4's full time salary as an OD consultant, furthermore his ability to find full-time high skill, high status, well paid work suggests his experiences are not comparable to workers in the precariat.

Whilst MPT2 and MPT4 faced difficulties transitioning to full-time work, MPT6's move was comparatively unproblematic. A regional policy role (strongly connected with the theme of MPT6's social enterprise) was advertised locally, MPT6 first reposted it to his connections on LinkedIn, and only later began to consider himself as a viable candidate. HS6 explains how the process unfolded:

> *So, it was the kind of role that came up, as I say he wasn't looking but it was just an opportunity that arose that he thought actually no, I would be mad not to because* (laughs) *it's kind of a job role that has been written for him* (HS6)

The full-time job was offered to MPT6 on a one-year fixed-term contract and so entailed gambling on his secure, permanent, part-time position as a university lecturer. Consistent with research (Damaske 2020), it is contended that as the sole earner in the household and with a young family to provide for MPT6 felt a moral and financial duty to take the role and figure out a solution if the contract was not extended or made permanent, in other words he felt a weight of responsibility as a father, to provide (Andrew et al. 2021). HS6 outlines her thoughts on the temporary nature of MPT6's new job:

> *It will expire in February; there's a strong possibility that it would be extended but obviously there is a risk that it might not be* (laughs). *I think that's again, where it comes in with the picture of the partnership* [Image 5.1], *you know, that if it came to it...and I have to stop my course or* [MPT6's] *contract isn't extended, you know the other one then kind of steps up accordingly* (HS6)

HS6's reference back to Image 5.1 is interesting, whilst she considers roles to be interchangeable, the evidence gathered suggests family decisions more often orientate around his priorities and hers are subjugated.

6.3 Boundary management

As section 6.2 indicates the MPTs experience a mix of good and poor aspects of job quality in part-time work. With notable exceptions, MPTs appear to settle in part-time work, exchanging aspects of poor-quality work for the opportunity to work in a mode which is more conducive to their desired lifestyle and/or family situation. This finding was illustrated multiple times and in multiple ways and appears to reflect the scarring effects women in part-time employment typically experience (Bear and Glick 2017; Blundell et al. 2016). The findings also repeatedly show that even though several of the men in the study enjoy fluid working arrangements

where they can, to a large extent, determine their own work schedule and work location, most of the men in the study recognise a need to engage in boundary work to carefully delineate between paid work and non-working time so that paid work does not encroach (Chung and van der Lippe 2020). The risk of working longer than contracted and paid work spilling over into family time is accepted as an issue for flexible workers (Kelliher and Anderson 2010), and the experiences of the men in this study would concur, causing the men to deploy strategies to prevent excessive spillover. Some of the men are better at imposing boundaries between work and home than others. MPT1 accepts low pay and recognises the college is benefitting from his QTS (Qualified Teacher Status). He works hard to delineate home and work, upholding the view of Clark (2000) that the strength of the border between work and home will affect the outcome in terms of whether work impinges on home time or vice versa. HS1 for example observes:

He is pretty good at keeping those boundaries, it's very unusual that he will be doing work outside of those times. He very rarely does anything at home (HS1)

MPT1 explains how he works a little beyond 4.30pm each Wednesday to avoid excessive spillover into his non-working days:

That doesn't mean I do everything, but the things that I feel need to be done, they get done and then I go home can enjoy the four days that I have then...sometimes that's 5 o'clock and sometimes 5.30, rarely later. I put on the "I am not in until next Monday" message (MPT1)

MPT1's reference to '*enjoy the four days*' implies his non-work time is leisure time rather than spent on household duties, this line of enquiry is considered later in the chapter in relation to MPTs' experiences of home and the gendered division of domestic duties. MPT5 describes a similar approach to MPT1, to avoid taking work home and imposing on family life:

> *I probably spend more time in college than I am paid to do but I am quite happy to do that and to do kind of preparation and marking in college, so I don't have to take it home* (MPT5)

MPT2 is stringent about work-home boundaries, he explains '*I don't work on the commute now, mainly I just read or listen to music'.* He is reportedly good at leaving work on time too as WS2 reports:

> *I also know that he goes home on time every day, you know, he doesn't subscribe to the you know, oh yeah cor, I've got so much on kind of Cinderella sort of approach which some blokes do in offices...I'm pulling 15-hour days and all that kind of stuff. It's a slightly more nuanced version of saying how big your car or, I don't know, other appendages* (WS2)

It appears that MPT2 manages his time effectively but also resists getting drawn into masculine contest cultures (Glick, Berdahl and Alonso 2018), which might entail presenteeism and other competitive behaviours between men. Similarly, HS4 explains that MPT4 is good at sticking to boundaries:

> *I think* [MPT4] *would have made it really clear these are my boundaries, and he was very good with that because he had to be home, he didn't spend an extra half an hour getting something finished, he'd just be organised, but he wouldn't have the coffee in the morning when everybody else would chit chat, he would be head down getting on with work* (HS4)

HS4 implies that MPT4 is assertive, productive, a hard worker, characteristics that are more often associated with culturally prioritised versions of masculinity (Connell 1987), whereas engaging in *'chit chat'* is something others who do not share these attributes do, perhaps women. She proceeds to describe how he, on occasion, works flexibly to respond to the demands of the business, but within firm boundaries:

> *He would, you know, if the call centre in South Africa goes down, even on Saturday, he will respond, so he is not completely cut off, but he is quite*

> *disciplined that they don't contact him on holiday, they don't really contact him out of hours unless there is only him that can fix something* (HS4)

It is evident in this passage too that HS4 describes MPT4 in ways which resonate with heroic acts of doing masculinity at work (Kelan 2018, Holt and Thompson 2004), for instance emphasising his technical skills and ability to come to the rescue to fix a problem nobody else can fix.

MPT3 seems to experience greater struggles around boundary control than the other MPTs. He works on average three days a week on a contract basis, but he describes a fluid arrangement in which he must carefully manage the expectations of the firm owner (WS3) with the needs of his family. To ensure he is paid for all the work he undertakes, and time is safeguarded for family commitments, he fastidiously records his working hours in a notebook (Image 6.1). Non-working time such as school pick-up time, family holidays and weekend activities are blocked out to preserve this time. He described the notebook as:

> *A record of my life, look, it goes back weeks and months, I have loads of these, I could tell you what I was doing 3, 4, 6 years ago this week* (MPT3)

Image 6.1: Record of working hours and other commitments (supplied by MPT3)
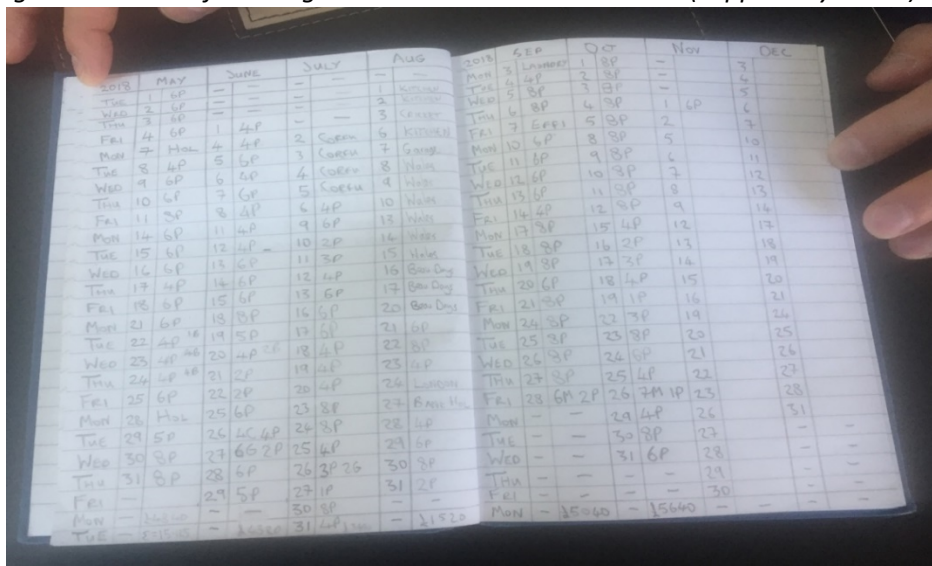
MPT3 seems proud of his work record, it shows continuity and constancy in paid work, yet predominantly on his terms, which is suggestive of the degree of

autonomy he is afforded, his seniority and the trust instilled in him by the organisation he contracts to. He seeks to limit home to work spillover by frequently working from home, blended with occasional office-based work. When working from home he reports that domestic chores and work can more easily be accommodated and he is present for his children when they arrive home from school, but he concedes that regularly working from home blurs the boundary as hours designated as non-working time are often peppered with checking work emails, responding to queries and making occasional phone calls at unsociable times due to working with clients in different time zones. This experience accords with Wheatley (2022) who argues that managing home and work life can be a difficult juggling act. Furthermore, he finds it difficult to switch off from work; this is a feeling familiar to many hybrid workers according to Green and Riley (2021).

6.4 Home sphere experiences

The remainder of this chapter focuses on the men's experiences in the home sphere as part-time workers. Subsections consider the MPTs' contribution to domestic household tasks, the role they play in unpaid care work, their involvement in other activities including the amount of leisure time they enjoy. The final subsection of the chapter discusses findings collected during the Covid-19 pandemic and so provides insight into how household regimes of work and unpaid caring and domestic responsibilities were (re)calibrated during this period.

6.4.1 The division of domestic labour

The findings presented and discussed here concern the division of household responsibilities such as cleaning, cooking, shopping, washing and ironing, gardening and DIY, when MPTs work part-time. The section also provides insight into whether MPTs' participation in part-time work loosens the gendering of household tasks wherein certain tasks are seen as the preserve of men and others associated with women (Ciccia and Bleijenbergh 2014). MPTs do report undertaking more domestic work than men who work full-time, but scrutiny of their accounts and the accounts provided by HS participants facilitates a holistic view of how duties are divided and whether male part-time working does in fact result in a more equitable division of domestic labour and so greater gender equality in the home as Warren (2022) and

Bunning (2020) suggest it could. Assessing the parity of respective total workloads of adults in a household is complex given the mix of activities (paid and unpaid) each partner contributes, and comparison between households is further challenged due to different household configurations of work and care. The different voices in the study are however helpful in disentangling regimes.

In T3 there is no presumption that domestic duties should be solely, or predominantly, MPT3's responsibility because he works part-time and HS3 works full-time, rather the approach appears to represent the couple reaching a reciprocal agreement regarding paid work and unpaid care and household work (Carlson and Lynch 2017):

> *For me looking after children is a full-time job, like a full-time paid job so why would the domestic responsibilities fall to that home-worker* (HS3)

To ease the total household burden of domestic work, the couple enlist marketised help, as MPT3 explains:

> *We have a cleaner who comes for two hours a week to do the vacuuming and clean the bathrooms. We have got a gardener who comes for a few hours a week, we have got quite a big garden, so he comes and does the weeding effectively, but I mow the lawns and do most of the daily cleaning jobs and the DIY. I do the shopping each week and I do most of the laundry* (MPT3)

The couple share meal preparation:

> *On a regular week Monday to Friday, I will cook on three days, on a Friday we probably have a take-out and then* [HS3] *on average cooks one day during the week and she always cooks on a Sunday* (MPT3)

The summation in T3 is that use of a cleaner and a gardener eases the pressure on the couple such that a symmetrical arrangement can exist (Samtleben and Muller 2022) whereby MPT3's 'full-time' workload comprises paid part-time work, some

domestic duties and primary responsibility for childcare, and HS3's comprises predominantly full-time paid work outside of the home. This arrangement appears to represent a fair apportionment of tasks reflective of the couple's stance on gender equality, however the argument that *'looking after children is a full-time job'* is shown to become more tenuous as children get older, at least in terms of physical care needs. At the outset of the study the couple's children were 11 and 13 respectively and 13 and almost 16 when data collection concluded, during this period they became more self-sufficient such that MPT3 did not have to accompany the school run, supervise homework or assist with basic tasks. It is argued that this shift amounts to time gain for MPT3 and a situation in which HS3's total workload might more accurately be conceived as closer to full-time 'plus' (Craig and Churchill 2021). There is further evidence to substantiate this finding as the chapter progresses.

In T4, the other household with a female full-time worker and male part-time worker, housework is presented as appreciably undertaken by MPT4, without paid help, and with little support from his wife (HS4). MPT4 states '[HS3] *does all the gardening but you know the housework is my domain and has been the whole way through'.* HS4 confirms this situation:

> *I work away so he does all the domestic stuff. I do the things like decorating, and I look after the garden, and I do the bills or things that I can do remotely, but he does all the basic cleaning* (HS4)

She cites how people she works with consider her fortunate that her husband (MPT4) takes responsibility for domestic tasks leaving her free to focus on her work role:

> *I'll say my husband does it all. What and the shopping, yes...and they are gosh you are lucky. I haven't yet met anyone who say oh yes, my husband does the same* (HS4)

MPT4's greater role in day-to-day homemaking can be rationalised in the sense he is the only adult in the household during the week and so must therefore engage in

the jobs that have to be done for day-to-day living (washing, grocery shopping, cooking and basic cleaning). It is debatable therefore whether the arrangement can reliably be conceived as constituting a major departure from literature which argues that women take greater responsibility for domestic work irrespective of their employment status or earnings (Thebaud, Kornrich, and Ruppanner 2021). Indeed, the data shows that when HS4 is at home (weekends, holiday time and between contracts), she takes on large scale household projects such as deep cleaning, tidying, gardening and decorating that MPT4 does not attend to during the week:

> *We have a lovely phrase that, I said to him, well, you're good at cleaning in the middle of the room and then I do all the bottoming of everything else* (laughs)*. When you have got a family, it's too much to expect that's why* [MPT4] *and I do it together,* [MPT4] *hates decorating so I decorate, he doesn't do the garden, so I do the garden. He doesn't bottom clean he just puts piles of stuff down; I sort through the piles when I have got time* (HS4)

As these activities are attended to when HS4 has time, it raises questions in terms of the overall workload of paid and unpaid work undertaken by MPT4 and HS4 respectively, and when HS4 might get to experience free time. HS4's comment 'w*hen you have got a family, it's too much to expect that's why* [MPT4] *and I do it together'* is followed by a list of tasks she takes sole responsibility for because he dislikes them or appears to lack the ability to complete. The refrain suggests asymmetry in the relationship whereby greater power is afforded to MPT4 to resist activities he would rather not to do. He manages to do this by relying on essentialised assumptions surrounding gendered differences, which are treated as normative (Dzubinski and Dhiel 2018), and which HS4 herself is seen to validate. The inference in HS4's comment that she can naturally clean properly and maintain a tidy home for example, absolves him of these responsibilities. MPT4's actions in exonerating himself from certain feminised tasks and only involving himself in critical day-to-day household activities could also be interpreted as a way of distancing himself from (further) feelings of emasculation, since loss of the breadwinner role to work part-time might already have provoked a sense of loss of masculine identity (Nadim 2016).

Looking at other data drawn from other households taking part in the study is helpful in building a fuller picture of the ways in which MPTs' participation in part-time work influences the domestic division of labour. Whilst literature suggests that different sex dual part-time worker couples present the greatest chance of symmetrical apportioning of paid work and unpaid caring and household duties (Ibanez 2011), the evidence from the study is both encouraging and disappointing. In T2, greater sharing of tasks and a relaxation of gender specialisms relative to other couples (Ciccia and Bleijenbergh 2014) is reported, although it is significant that the HS participant is not part of the household and so the account is an observed one rather than a lived one:

> *He will do DIY, he will do the cooking, they will share the cooking pretty evenly, he helps with the housework, I would say he tends to do most of the ironing and* [wife's name] *will do the hoovering, but he will do that as well. I think they are relatively even. It's less clear demarcation along gender lines with them probably compared to a lot of other couples that I know* (HS2)

Despite describing a more equitable split, the expression *'he **helps** with the housework'* denotes deeply set societal assumptions that housework is the natural domain of women, and the template is invariably set in this way (Bear and Glick 2017). Similarly, MPT5 suggests responsibilities are shared, with a tendency for him to do more shopping and cooking than his wife, yet his account cannot be corroborated given the data derived from this triad is limited to the Phase A MPT interview:

> *We share it...I suppose I probably do more of the shopping and I would probably do more of the cooking and the ironing...neither of us likes ironing so we tend to share it between us* (MPT5)

Where MPTs' wives are active in the study, the division of domestic labour in dual part-time worker households is more contentious. In T7, HS7 explains that MPT7 *'picks up some chores, but he also has a day off, he has time for himself'*. She proceeds to describe the division of domestic duties in some detail:

> *I'd say he probably cooks more than half of the meals, but I'll do the meal plan, I mean, he's involved, and he is very engaged in it, but I'd say that I'm the one coordinating it. I am writing the grocery list, he might go out and get the groceries, so yeah, it is quite shared as long as I've kind of done the back work. He cuts the grass, he does like odd jobs, I guess, jobs that require tools. I do all the laundry, but he always folds it and puts it away* (HS7)

This split appears broadly equitable given MPT7 works four days per week and his wife longer hours over three days, but much of the *'back work'* as she calls it, is carried out by HS7. Her refrain it littered with tentative wording; '*I'd say he* **probably** *cooks more than half the meals*', '*I mean, he's* **involved***, and very engaged in it,* **but***...*', '*so yeah it's* **quite** *shared...*', '*he does odd jobs,* **I guess***'*. Her choice of words suggests she is thinking hard about his contribution and struggling to accept the distribution is fair. In practice therefore it appears that part-time working accentuates the role HS7 plays in domestic work in accordance with Craig and Powell (2018) but has less of an impact on the amount or share MPT7 does. In the final dual part-time worker household (T1), HS1 admits she does more, even after directing MPT1 to undertake his fair share:

> *When you are both working part-time, and the children aren't little any longer for me there is certainly an expectation that there will be a lot more sharing of domestic duties. I had to have a word, you know, at first, as he just wasn't picking up his share of jobs around the house, it's better now but no, it's not evenly divided, I still do far more...yeah, I do I still do far more* (HS1)

MPT1 does not reveal that he has been reproached for failure to shoulder a fair share of domestic work, rather he seems fixated on the fact that he does more than he did whilst working full-time, and happy to take on a task which he can combine with a favoured pastime. The work he describes is restricted to a narrow range of duties and appears light in volume:

> *I am far more involved now...so, Thursday I will normally do all the ironing, I like the opportunity to watch the telly to be honest with you...so I enjoy that...Friday I'll clean either the kitchen or the front room or the bedroom* (MPT1)

In T6, where MPT6 undertakes paid part-time work plus unpaid social enterprise activities and HS6 is at home full-time with the couple's young baby the stories differed; MPT6 claims a rich array of activities with little regard for traditional gendering of roles:

> *I do almost all the cleaning and all the domestic tasks...when I am at* [workplace] *and coming home late* [HS6] *often does the cooking... but things like hovering, mowing the lawn, both kind of traditionally gendered female and traditionally gendered male tasks, I do the keeping the house clean and tidy...not just the gardening* (MPT6)

HS6 also claims to do the cleaning and the cooking, not just on the occasions MPT6 arrives home late, her account suggests jobs are more gendered than MPT6's account infers:

> *We have naturally, sort of moved to more traditional roles in the home that you know I am doing the cooking and the cleaning and food shopping, I don't love doing these things at all* (laughs)*, but it is what it is you know.* [MPT6] *always does the garden; I have never used the lawn mower* (laughs)*. You know he always does the bins; he always does the cat litter; you know all the smelly jobs. So yes, it is pretty split* (HS6)

Given HS6 is presently temporarily not in paid employment whilst training for a career change, MPT6 appears to contribute the most to household duties relative to his level of participation in paid work and unpaid work beyond the home. He is an outlier among the MPTs participating in the study, although should HS6 re-enter the labour market, patterns reported in other households would suggest the current configuration of domestic responsibilities within T6 would likely be recalibrated.

Consistent with research, and in addition to their roles in domestic chores, the study shows that the men's female partners step up in the household to undertake invisible household labour (Ciciolla and Luthar 2019), for example remembering to buy gifts for birthdays, comforting and consoling children. Further, the men's wives appear to bear a mental workload too (Dean, Churchill and Ruppanner 2021) which involves thinking, planning and organising of family members to ensure the household runs smoothly. Dean, Churchill and Ruppanner (2021) argue that this work is continuous; thinking and scheduling encroaches on paid work time and filters into leisure time and even disrupts sleep. HS3 shares an excerpt from the family calendar/weekly organiser that she completes and updates to show the movements of all members of the family throughout the week (Image 6.2). The calendar discharges MPT3 of the mental chore of remembering afterschool activities, social commitments, dates of school holidays and the days HS3 will be working in the office, making his life easier to manage, but adding to HS3's workload. This is somewhat ironic since MPT3's handwritten plan and record of his work schedule (Image 6.1) is detailed to include holidays, income, hours and a code for different contracts he is working on and so shows that he is capable of a high level of organisation. His work record also shows that sometimes he works as few as two hours per day, arguably leaving ample time to assist with home-based organisation. His preparedness to organise work but not organise home indicates gendered prioritisation of work over home (Blair-Loy 2004), despite participation in part-time work, thus a mimicking of the behaviour of men in full-time work without working the hours a full-time worker would. The calendar HS3 prepares contains a pre-printed week number illustrating that this is a weekly undertaking, entries are all made in pencil and in the same handwriting, these factors would suggest that changes and adaptions to the calendar are accommodated as the week progresses, tentative arrangements are recorded and no one else within the household, besides HS3, contributes to this work.

Image 6.2: Weekly planner (supplied by HS3)
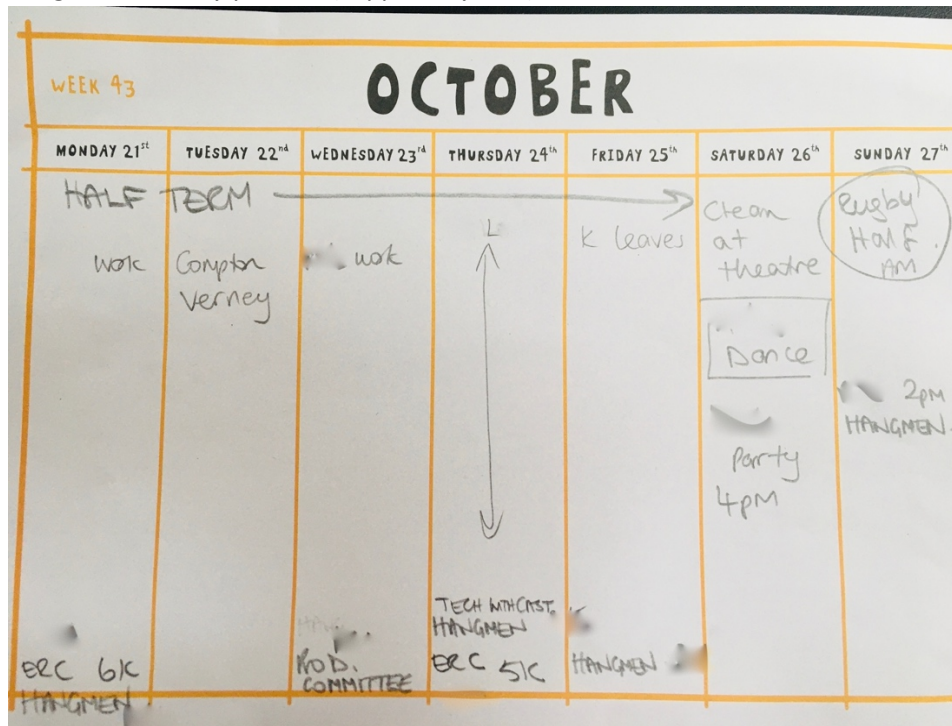
HS3 describes how she does more besides compile the calendar:

> *Birthday's, that's all me and his family's birthdays, children's parties, the family Christmas cards and all that* (HS3)

Similarly, HS7 comments *'I'll do the birthday card shopping and errands and all the other little bits that need doing'.* Her reference to *'other little bits'* is likely to be underplayed given the volume and variety of tasks and activities involved in running a household, particularly where young primary school aged children are present. In T4, where daily domestic chores fall more heavily on MPT4 as HS4 works away from home, HS4 retains prime responsibility for the mental load in the household:

> [HS4] *is very much better at it, than I am. I may end up doing the practical go and get the thing, but she would have the emotional cognisance to remember to do something like that* (MPT4)

These examples illustrate gendered imbalances in household labour with MPTs often choosing the tasks they will attend to and ignoring others. Furthermore, it seems MPTs fallback on essentialised notions of gender (Swigger and Meyer 2019)

at times to explain their lack of involvement in certain tasks as if differences are entirely natural. In the comment above for example, MPT4 suggests his wife has more emotional cognisance than he does and that his strength is the physical aspects of fetching the gift, thus legitimising his reduced role in the home.

Despite working full-time, HS3 laughs when she describes dealing with household administration:

> *So* (laughs) *the utilities, council tax all that stuff is me, so I guess I spent a bit of time yesterday switching our electricity, insurance though is* [MPT3], *I don't know how that is, I think it's sometimes just who did it on that day, and then from year to year* (HS3)

The laughter appears to denote sarcasm, as in, yes, of course it's me, but then she seems to backtrack a little, as if she is trying to convince herself it is shared. Her remark *'I don't know how that is'* in relation to the insurance however suggests this is an anomaly and dealing with bills and renewals is usually her responsibility.

In the households with dependent children the study provides ample evidence of mothers heavily engaged in planning and organising of their children's lives, despite their (male) partner's part-time working pattern and professed equal opportunities values. Indeed, evidence of this was acutely stark in T3 where HS3 works full-time, and MPT3 works very flexibly 1-3 days per week:

> *So, like today I got an email about* [son's] *archery, so I do that. I do all the school trips, I pay for the lunches, I organise, like* [daughter] *had a Halloween disco on Thursday, and I filled the form in and paid for the ticket and organised the pick-ups. I tell* [MPT3] *we have got parents evening on this this day. Uniform, school shoes, any new clothes that's all me, and you know organising piano lessons and guitar lessons, and yeah, any extracurricular things, it's on the calendar then and we work out who is going to take and pick up, but all that organisational stuff is done by me. Holidays always organised by me, every holiday, every trip every social trip that's organised by me* (HS3)

In one of the dual part-time worker households HS7 is categoric, *'I'm definitely the one who's got everything at the door ready to go. I'm the one who remembers stuff or else nags him to do it'* (laughs). Despite demanding careers of their own, the women in some of the triads appear to willingly concede to taking on significant invisible household labour, whilst the MPTs do either nothing to contribute to this workload or have negligible input. The input they do have tends to be instigated and directed by women and is practical and perfunctory in nature giving MPTs little to think about or worry about. These patterns seem to reflect gendered inequalities in the lived experiences of home life, irrespective of many of the couples' claims that their values reflect equal opportunities.

6.4.2 Caring and parental roles

Whilst research persistently shows that caring responsibilities more often fall on mothers (Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir 2021), the findings of the study illustrate that part-time work among men affords greater opportunity for them to become involved fathers and make time for caring (Hearn et al. 2012; van Breeschoten and Evertsson 2019) and they embrace this role. In the households with dependent children the MPTs appear to prioritise time with their children over greater participation in domestic responsibilities, perhaps because much domestic work can be neglected but children cannot be, and domestic work is less appealing. The MPTs sometimes strike a contrast between their own approach to fatherhood and that of their own fathers who were not as involved, MPT7 for example explains how he works locally and does not miss bedtime for his daughters:

> *I work 15 minutes' walk away, means I don't have to come home after bedtime, it means that I'm always, always around to do stuff, which in in my own childhood didn't happen* (MPT7)

MPT7's insistence *'always, always around'* implies that good fatherhood entails presence, this comment could be perceived as an act of othering (Ahmed 2007), directed at those men who cannot or do not make this commitment, including retrospectively his own father. MPT7 shares the school run with his wife, given start and end times in his part-time role are flexible, and he takes his daughters to dance

classes, clubs and swimming lessons after school. HS7 however notes that there has been no real change in the amount of childcare MPT7 does since he became a part-time worker; *'he's always been very hands on, he's a very hands-on dad so...I don't think that changed...or made him more hands on'*. To contribute to the photo elicitation element of the study, MPT7 provided Image 6.3 to illustrate his close relationship with his daughters and desire to be an integral part of their lives. In the photograph MPT7 is sitting on the kitchen floor, cuddling his children and showing off pictures they had each drawn.

Image 6.3 Craft activities with daughters (supplied by MPT7)
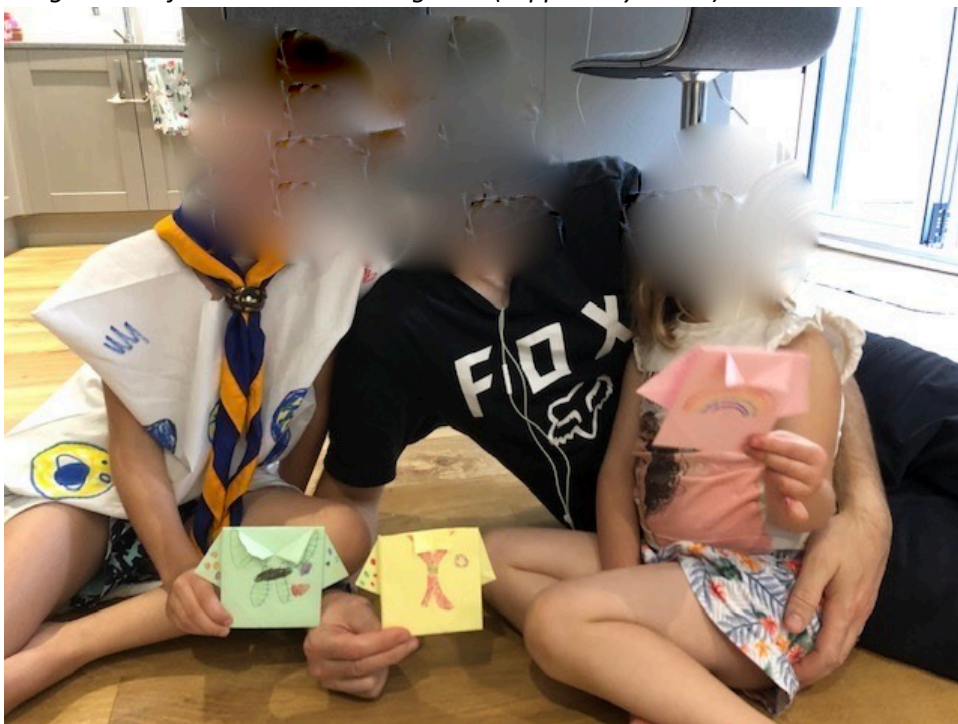
The men variously report time with their children in positive terms, MPT6 frequently refers fondly to *'daddy time'* as the time he spends with his daughter and MPT5 speaks with pride about how friends often comment on how well his boys have excelled academically and socially. He attributes their development to the couple's dual part–time work arrangement which affords them both quality time with their children as they can undertake chores in the week whilst the boys are at school, leaving evenings and weekend free for family time.

MPT3 is at home when his children arrive home from school and during phase A of the study when his daughter was still at primary school, he explained how his flexible work schedule enabled him to do daily school-runs, and then support with

homework. He describes himself as an involved father (Hearn et al. 2012), with frequent reference to the daily routine and a father-daughter ritual of doing the weekly food shop, yet it was clear in section 6.4.1 that a raft of chores associated with the children's extracurricular activities are singlehandedly organised by HS3, suggesting MPT4 could be more involved in some aspects of parenting. In other respects, consistent with work by Bach (2019), MPT3 and HS3 show high levels of reciprocity and cooperation in managing childcare arrangements; If their children are off-sick from school the couple organise cover between them, as both benefit from flexibility at work, yet unless MPT3 has a fixed commitment for a work call or meeting the default position is that he will stay at home and provide care. HS3 resists interfering with the way in which her husband parents on non-school days and school holidays when care more often falls to him:

> *It has to be his domain, both of us have to look after the children in our way*
> *depending on who is looking after them at the time* (HS3)

In T2 family life has been challenging for MPT2 since the birth of the couple's disabled twins. In the earlier phases of the study (A and B), MPT2 is working part-time and sharing childcare responsibilities (school run, healthcare appointments, limited outings and activities) with his wife who also works part-time. Whilst their children are all teenagers, the twins require parental supervision because of their healthcare needs:

> *They can't really go out on their own so you still have to take them out like*
> *you would take a younger child out, it's still important to do that so, I think*
> *there are still big differences between the way we exist and the way a*
> *normal family might exist* (MPT2)

Image 6.4, supplied by MPT2 is highly significant. It represents one of just four or five photos of the family together because his son is severely autistic and refuses to be in photographs, also days out as a family are rare. MPT2 explains how his son who has never shown an interest in clothes asked to wear a suit for a family wedding:

> *I think, you know, for men of a certain class let's say you remember getting your first suit, I do, and there was something I never thought I would do with my son you know, and there we were shopping. We went to the wedding, and I think there was a time when we never thought we would reach that point and it was just a nice day you know. We didn't have to leave early, we all managed to go and it's just small things you know...anybody would take these things for granted* (MPT2)

The suit purchase and successful family time at the wedding was presented in detail, with animation and emotion, the event clearly represented an important milestone for MPT2 and his family. The labour market consequences for MPT2 of family devotion outcompeting work devotion schema (Blair-Loy 2004), were recognised in Chapter 5 and throughout section 6.2 of this chapter, amply illustrating that the stigma of caregiving (Epstein et al. 1999) impairs entrenched ideal worker norms, which carry an expectation of full-time working hours and an unfailing commitment to work (Acker, 1990).

Image 6.4 Family photo at a wedding (supplied by MPT2)

6.4.3 Male part-time workers; wider business and leisure time

Further analysis of MPTs' experiences of the home sphere of their lives is focused upon how time beyond paid work, caring and domestic work is spent. MPTs report various uses of their time besides these activities. Two of the MPTs have business interests. MPT1 and HS1 for example, have invested inheritance money and savings in property to provide for their retirement and so manage these properties alongside their paid part-time jobs:

> *Thursday and Friday we have got some property that we deal with any admin, deal with any tenants* (MPT1)

A more intense commitment is evident in T6 where MPT6 co-runs a social enterprise with a friend. He explains how it has grown from being an evening hobby activity to a venture which is quite demanding in time; *'because it overlaps with our hobby, we have all been quite reticent to feel that it's a proper job'.* HS6 recognises that the combination of paid part-time work, responsibilities in the home and for childcare, plus the social enterprise make it difficult to describe MPT6 as a part-time worker:

> *When you know you approached me to do this, and we were chatting about it at home I said for me it's kind of I appreciate he is part-time for* [name of employer] *but for me he is a full-time worker. I think in the earlier days when the social enterprise was building, he probably was a little bit more part-time* (HS6)

These accounts to indicate the fullness and breadth of part-time workers' lives provoke an interesting debate about what is meant by part-time work. The MPTs depicted here illustrate that part-time paid work can be combined with other forms of work and income generating activity which constitute a productive use of time and contribute to full lives but are not necessarily appreciated when contemplating the lived experiences of those categorised as working part-time. The notion of full lives in part-time work is not new however, it is a familiar scenario among women (mothers) who work part-time (Yerkes, Roeters and Baxter 2020), suggesting the term part-time worker is a poor descriptor for some of those who engage with it,

irrespective of gender. HS6's comment especially, calls into question the validity of common perceptions of part-time workers as uncommitted (Kropf 1998), since these views imply that to be committed in one sphere is to be uncommitted in another. Similarly, Blair-Loy (2004) talks of work devotion or home devotion as if they are two dichotomous orientations, which cannot be managed simultaneously; MPT6 illustrates that it is possible to be committed to activities in more than one sphere and manage these successfully. These findings do however imply that part-time work does not by definition increase leisure time for MPTs, as other non-work activities may curtail time for social pursuits. Many of the MPTs do undeniably benefit from a better work-life balance borne in part from the autonomy they experience in high status roles (Wheatley 2022). Findings partially accord with research which shows that men, as a group, enjoy more and better-quality leisure time than women (Haller, Hadler and Kaup 2013), although women in some of the households benefit too (but notably through couple time and family time rather than independent leisure time). The men in dual part-time worker households (MPTs 1, 2, 5 and 7) report greater time to pursue hobbies and interests, and more time together as a family or as a couple than households with a female full-time worker plus MPT, this is especially true for MPT1 who is free from the responsibilities of dependent children:

> *She* [adult daughter] *was very, very happy to see* [MPT1] *finish teaching because all of her life you know she had known him just sitting with a pile of marking looking miserable, and it's one of the first things she said you know it's just so lovely to see you sitting down reading or watching something on TV or out on your bike, or you know, rather than just sitting with a pile of marking* (HS1)

In other couples, leisure time is outlined. HS7 describes how MPT7 spends his non-working day:

> *He has a day off, he has time for himself now that they're obviously both in full-time school, I could imagine him loving another day off, it would probably mean another bike ride* (HS7)

Whilst MPT5 explains how a dual part-time worker arrangement facilitates couple time as well as quality family time:

> *We actually have a day off together which is very good. So last week we went out for lunch, and we get stuff done in the week when the boys are at school, so weekends are free, it's quite nice to have a bit of time* (MPT5)

There are significant departures from this position. MPTs whose wives work full-time (MPT3 and MPT4) report spending little time relaxing. MPT4 for example states:

> *If she comes home and its after eight o'clock it is theoretically possible that I may have my feet up and be watching the TV, but no, I would be doing something until eight most evenings* (MPT4)

HS4 concurs, claiming *'he never sits down'* and only rarely at weekends. Similarly, MPT3 suggests he does not indulge in leisure activities:

> *Generally, when the kids are at school, I am not going off to Zumba classes and I don't meet up with friends in coffee shops. I've watched virtually no daytime TV in the last ten years, so I am vaguely aware of who might be hosting This Morning, but I never have the television on, I have the radio on and if I am not working is probably sort of work-related so I might be watching coding videos or things like that* (MPT3)

Reference to Zumba, a dance class predominantly enjoyed by women, and daytime TV, programming first developed in the 1970s to cater for housewives, is pointed. Through these examples, MPT3 appears to imply that he does not behave like women who work part-time, by using non-work time to engage in frivolous activities, on the contrary he uses non-work time to engage in work related activity, demonstrating a strong work orientation despite participation in part-time work. These findings concerning a lack of leisure time are intriguing given earlier findings that the division of domestic responsibilities remains imbalanced in these households, marketised help is used in T3 and neither household contains young

dependent children; logically MPT3 and MPT4 should gain leisure time. It is contended that the men indulge in less leisure time to accentuate the productiveness of their lives (Calasanti 2003), so to appear equal rather than subordinate to their wives in full-time work.

6.5 The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the domestic division of labour and caring responsibilities

The timing of the study offered a unique insight into the impact of the 2020-21 Covid-19 pandemic within households where male partners work part-time. In this period, the propensity for family members to spend more time at home created increases in cleaning and laundry, food shopping and meal preparation and greater investment in emotional labour to care for loved ones and keep in touch with elderly parents, relatives, and friends, adding to the burden of unpaid work. The movement of workers into the home also changed family dynamics with potential to cause friction and disturb established routines. Consistent with Chung et al (2021) the findings of this study show that the pandemic created a more conflicted household–work interface in most of the seven households, with a tendency for women to do even more work around the home (Andrew et al. 2021; Warren and Lyonette 2021), irrespective of the hours they work, particularly where home-schooling was necessary.

In T1 the total household workload increased as both partners were working from home and their adult daughter returned from university for the lockdown period. HS1 describes how, to prevent all the additional workload falling on her, she instituted a weekly rota so that her husband and daughter were compelled to think ahead and share equally in planning and preparing meals. HS1 invested time in organising the shopping list and did the shopping, she also participated in the cooking rota, thus she carried a greater workload than other members of the household:

> *I think since we have all been at home more, we have shared things more and I suppose I kind of promoted that from the beginning and sometimes I think oh god am I being too bossy with all of this, but you know I just wanted us all to take some responsibility, because I am the only one going out and*

> *doing the shopping so I will go and do a weekly shop, but I ask people to think about what they want to cook, what days they are cooking so what are they asking me to shop for basically because I thought I am not going to take responsibility for all of this, it has to be a shared thing with three adults living in the house now* (HS1)

Whilst HS1 claims there has been more sharing, this is from a base of her doing far more than MPT1 (section 6.4.1), her remarks confirm arrangements remain inequitable. The degree of change to established patterns differed across the triads. HS3 reports:

> *In terms of our domestic duties there's still a division I suppose* [MPT3] *is really glad because I can get back to doing all the cooking which is really nice for me cos' I really like cooking. I don't do any of the shopping* [MPT3] *goes out once a week he does the shopping which is what he would normally do anyway. We obviously have got to take on extra domestic duties because we don't have a cleaner cos of the lockdown, so we're sort of doing all of that, it makes me really realise why I have a cleaner* (laughs) (HS3)

HS3's remarks show an increase in her workload, her refrain *'makes me realise why I have a cleaner'* suggests the cleaning duties disproportionately fell to her as well as responsibility for cooking. These findings are indicative of far greater inequality when considered in context; during the pandemic MPT3's working time decreased to 5 days per month, whilst HS3's full-time role as a University Professor enlarged considerably with the move to online teaching and learning, providing MPT3 with much more time and his wife with much less time than usual. HS3 tentatively claims that her husband did step up:

> *I think probably (laughs) given how things have gone really mad at work* [MPT3] *is probably taking more of the kind of childcare and domestic responsibilities than he would have done (laughs)* (HS3)

HS3's remarks are contentious. First, they reveal inconsistencies in previous accounts of the division of childcare responsibilities (section 6.4.2) where MPT3 claimed involved fatherhood, and second, they contradict MPT3's own accounts of his involvement during the pandemic in which he candidly states little has changed for him:

> *My routines didn't change, not really no, you know,* [HS3] *sort of does more, helps out with homework in certain subjects more...but yeah, cos I was always, you know, doing those supporting types of jobs anyway* (MPT3)

In addressing explicit questions concerning home-schooling, MPT3 retorts:

> *Um, I'm trying to think, at that point,* [HS3] *organised the schedule for the week. it was probably about half each on that, or half checking, certain subjects she'd always check on. Yeah, there was not too much, it was maybe, maybe an hour or so in the day where you might be sat with them going through something* (MPT3)

The evidence is clear that the pandemic created new expanses of time for MPT3 juxtaposed against added time pressures for HS3 in the form of extra domestic responsibilities, home schooling demands and the intensification of paid work responsibilities. This case reflects the position that women assume greater responsibility for caring and domestic work irrespective of their earnings or employment status (Thebaud, Kornrich, and Ruppanner 2021) and fully substantiates leading research on the impact of the pandemic on the gendered division of domestic labour and childcare responsibilities (Andrew et al. 2021; Warren and Lyonette 2021).

The pressures of home-schooling during the pandemic could only be explored within one other triad (T7) as the children within the other triads were older (T2 and T4), or too young (T6), and interviews in T5 did not continue beyond phase A. In T7 home schooling demands were difficult to accommodate particularly given MPT7's workload in the university increased, and his wife's part-time job, a training role based in the care sector intensified during the pandemic. MPT7 describes the

effects on the household, emphasising how the home-schooling baton was picked up largely by HS7, despite her escalating paid work commitments:

> *It's been difficult for me to get my work done but* [HS7] *works in a care home company and her workload has increased significantly combined with doing the vast majority of the schooling for the older one, so her workload has increased dramatically, so it's been quite tricky to manage* (MPT7)

HS7 elaborates on the pressures she experienced juggling paid part-time work and home-schooling and the lack of support from her employers:

> *So, I'll be there and everyone's eating dinner behind me and I'm catching up on work. I mean, that was just a very regular thing, in the last year because you'd get everything submitted for school, and home schooling and then you'd have to try and plug in your work hours. I'd say they get a full-time worker for part-time hours...it's been extremely difficult to get done the work that I should get done in part-time hours. My supervisors, so I think they might have been a bit removed from how that's impacted a mum who is home schooling and working* (HS7)

These findings reflect work on the intensity of part-time schedules per se (notwithstanding the extra demands created by the pandemic), where part-time workers feel pressure to fit full workloads into part-time hours and lack of workplace support to help them to ameliorate the difficulties they face (McDonald Bradley and Brown 2009). Moreover, they demonstrate gendered disparity in balancing work and non-work regimes. Similar experiences were not reported by MPT7, HS7 simply states *'the days that he was working, they were probably compromised to some extent,'* suggesting MPT7 faced far less disturbance to his working time. In common with the couple in T3, the mental load (Dean, Churchill and Ruppanner 2021) of organising home schooling was borne by the female partner (HS7), adding to her total workload, she explains:

> *I did the preparation. He was very hands on again, like he would take our*
> *youngest in the afternoon or in the morning while I had the other daughter*
> *in the front room, helping her do her schoolwork* (HS7)

MPT7's responsibilities appear far less intense, which helps to make sense of the enjoyment he experienced during the lockdown period:

> *I think I am the father on the YouTube round up of the week's work with an*
> *origami tie (laughs) and being able to do that, do bits of cooking and*
> *gardening and all of these things which has been kind of...amplified since*
> *March* (MPT7)

In contrast, MPT6's work-life balance suffered during the pandemic because of his inability to separate work and home, and his paid work role from his work with the social enterprise:

> *The opportunities that came out of social enterprise, the nature of academic*
> *work, and the Coronavirus merged everything together into one big*
> *stressful lump* (MPT6)

Despite his best efforts, MPT6 reports that maintaining boundaries became more challenging in the pandemic, he explains:

> *If it's a* [university] *day the laptop stays on, and when* [daughter's name]
> *has gone to bed I probably do another hour before I go to bed and then it*
> *all piles up for Thursday, Friday* [non-working days] *and I would need to*
> *catch up with it all on a Sunday night. So, the physical nature of work and*
> *not being able to have a separation between work and home life is difficult.*
> *I mean previously when I would have been doing* [name of social enterprise]
> *stuff I would have spent at least all-day Friday in a coffee shop somewhere*
> (MPT6)

Whilst the household in T4 does not have dependent children, MPT4 and his wife (HS4) entered unchartered territory as the pandemic forced HS4 to be at home

when she would normally be travelling for work and away for substantial periods of the week. As a consultant she also found it difficult to get contracts and so her work volume diminished at the height of the pandemic. MPT4 describes the effect on the household dynamic:

> *Oh god, get another contract woman please! Yes, she doesn't stop, she will turn her attention to turning the house upside down to do something of a project, be it decorating, or goodness knows what, but she will find something incredibly disruptive to do and just bury herself in that* (MPT4)

The humorous remark *'Oh god, get another contract please'* could indicate concern that by being at home HS4 will recognise the day-to-day imbalance in their respective total workloads. This inference stems from HS4's comment:

> *If I am between contracts and I haven't got any work, then I will do the housework and then he gets very edgy (laughs)* (HS4)

The accounts within this section illustrate that the pandemic was disruptive for households with paid work converging with additional domestic and care responsibilities in the home, and few opportunities for individuals to separate competing demands on their time. Findings relating to this unprecedented period solidify earlier pre-pandemic reports concerning the domestic division of labour in households (section 6.4.1) in showing that women are prone to assume a greater unpaid domestic workload irrespective of their own paid work demands. The pandemic appears to have exacerbated inequitable relations between men and women in the home, with women bearing the brunt of home-schooling and extra chores.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored MPTs' experiences of the work and home spheres of their lives as part-time workers to address the second research question of this thesis. In the work sphere the findings demonstrate that the quality of work MPTs encounter is difficult to classify as either wholly and consistently good or poor and so is best considered as occupying a position on a spectrum (Warren and Lyonette 2018).

Their experiences of job quality vary according to the sectors in which they work and the roles they perform, and there is evidence to suggest that MPTs' perceptions of job quality are favourably prejudiced by their motives for working part-time (Warren and Lyonette 2020). Broadly three groupings emerge. Firstly, MPTs working in academic roles as teachers and lecturers who appear to benefit from policies in their respective institutions which support flexible working. They receive pay, terms and conditions and social protection on an equalised basis with full-time academics (Nicholaisen, Kavli and Jensen 2019) and they enjoy work which is commensurate with their qualifications and experience. Outside of time in the classroom and meeting commitments, the lecturers more so, can exercise latitude in determining where and when to work, affording them the opportunity to organise their work schedules around their family responsibilities. Despite the high-quality facets of their jobs, instances of work intensity were evident and, in common with the other MPTs, job holders perceive that career progression is best facilitated in full-time work; these findings illustrate that high quality part-time jobs can display some negative characteristics (Kalleberg 2012).

The second broad grouping comprises non-academic staff in further and higher education. These MPTs show greater signs of precarity manifest as overqualification, temporary contracts, lower relative pay and less task discretion and autonomy. Egress from part-time work is also shown to be difficult for MPT2 (Fagan et al. 2014). Amidst this small group, MPT1 reports high job satisfaction despite experiencing elements of poor job quality, this apparent contradiction is attributed to interesting work and lower stress in part-time work. The third broad group, consisting of the two technology professionals working in the private sector, enjoy high status part-time work in which they can use their skills, intellect, and experience to exercise judgement in their jobs. They are trusted to deliver on projects and activities and can work remotely to do so. Again, despite several characteristics of good quality work, there is strong evidence that MPT3 is subject to pay exploitation and neither MPT3 nor MPT4 experience career growth over sustained periods in part-time work. Whilst both men gladly trade static careers for the flexibility part-time work affords them, the transition to full-time work proves difficult for MP4 even though he conceals his part-time work history from prospective employers. Difficult egress from part-time work is attributed to two key

factors, first tight job search criteria borne from desire to retain the best elements of part-time work in full-time work, notably flexibility and convenience, and secondly questionable motivation, which rests on satisfying normative (male) working ideals (Acker 1990) rather than true desire to work full-time.

The evidence shows that whilst in part-time work the MPTs engage in boundary management with varying degrees of success to prevent excessive home-to-work spillover. This work entails practices such as leaving work on time, not taking work home and carefully logging work time. Whilst MPTs are seen to use these tactics to contain their part-time working hours others show considerable flexibility in working at times to suit the needs of the employer and clients, in these instances hours of work and patterns of work can be erratic.

Reflecting on the MPTs' experiences in the home sphere of their lives, the evidence shows that men spend varying amounts of time on childcare/caring responsibilities and unpaid household duties, they combine this workload with part-time paid work, and in some cases (but not all), with other productive interests such as property management and social enterprise. Where other interests are sustained and time consuming, the evidence is that this blend culminates in full lives, in essence a full-time workload consisting of paid and unpaid work, raising questions about the appropriateness of the term part-time worker. The term risks failing to capture the fuller extent of workers' lives and can falsely give the impression that part-time workers are only partially productive.

The men claim to play a much greater role in domestic work and childcare than their male peers who work full-time, this should be expected given part-time work theoretically affords them greater time in which to fulfil these duties, notwithstanding the inclusion of other productive activities, where relevant. In practice, the division of domestic labour appears to be only loosely based on time availability and moreover is still gendered, although arrangements differed among households represented by the study; the sharing of childcare responsibilities was guided more so, but not solely, by time availability. The evidence shows that the MPTs whose wives work full-time undertake a workload of domestic work and childcare in their respective households alongside paid part-time work. There was ample evidence however of women in full-time jobs working 'full-time plus' (Craig

and Churchill 2021) to do the same, by attending to household tasks and childcare when they could during the week and on weekends (HS3), and in holiday periods and between contracts as well as at weekends (HS4). It appears in these households that only at times when women are physically absent from the home do MPTs consistently do more.

In accordance with Ibanez (2011) domestic chores and routine childcare for dependent children were more likely to be shared more equitably where both partners work part-time but again this was not uniformly so in all the dual part-time worker couples, particularly with respect to domestic chores. There were signs in some of these households that MPTs used non-working time to relax rather than undertake unpaid domestic work and cases of women having to cajole MPTs to do more. In all triads women almost exclusively shoulder the burden of home organisation and hidden forms of household labour (Ciciolla and Luthar 2019), regardless of their level of engagement with paid work with MPTs engaged in minor roles of fetching and carrying only. Much of this work entailed tasks associated with children's school attendance and extracurricular activities suggesting MPTs' roles in childcare could be more complete.

Parts of the data collection period which coincided with the lockdown period during the Covid-19 pandemic provided insight into how households with a male part-time worker adjusted, and how the additional domestic demands and responsibilities for home schooling were allocated. It was clear that the unusual circumstances caused new tensions in households stemming from an inability for partners to easily separate work and home, intensified work demands in some cases and depleted workload in other instances, the constant presence of dependent (and non-dependent) children within the home, lack of access to marketised support with chores and increased health and emotional concerns for others. Amidst the disruption, gendered regimes of care and domestic work remain remarkably resonant with pre-pandemic patterns. The findings are consistent with studies by Warren and Lyonette (2021), Andrew et al. (2021) and others in showing that the MPTs' wives undertook a disproportionate role in domestic work during the pandemic lockdown period and did more home-schooling (where applicable), regardless of whether their own paid work demands increased, remained stable or

decreased. MPTs tended to play a lesser, supporting role, demonstrating that the effects of the pandemic were felt more acutely by women. While Warren (2022) and Bunning (2020) express optimism that men's participation in part-time work offers couples a greater chance of equality in the home, the evidence extracted from most of the households participating in this PhD study appear to show little movement in real terms either during the pandemic or prior to this period.

Evidence that MPTs' status as part-time workers does not trigger significant disturbance to the gendering of the domestic division of labour might suggest that they enjoy expanses of leisure time. On the contrary, MPTs fail to consistently report that part-time work results in more leisure time, although the data does show couple time, and examples of men enjoying independent leisure time, dependent upon household composition. Unsurprisingly, the men whose wives also work part-time enjoy the most leisure time as a family and/or couple and cite this as a major benefit of part-time working. The MPTs in the study whose wives work full-time suggest they have little time to spend on leisure activities; this would be easy to comprehend were the MPTs in these households still caring for young children, or committed to business ventures as per MPT6, but it is difficult to make sense of given one of the households in the study with this configuration now contains teenage children and benefits from marketised help with household chores, and the other contains no dependent children. It is posited that these MPTs feel compelled to present productive lives; these arguments are developed and analysed in Chapter 7 in response to the final research question concerning the ways in which MPTs perform gender in the home and work spheres of their lives.

Chapter 7: Performing gender at work and at home

7.1 Introduction

Whilst the previous chapter explored MPTs' experiences of work and home as part-time workers in response to the second research question, this chapter examines MPTs' gendered identities and gender performances in the home sphere and work spheres of their lives, drawing on their talk about masculinity (Bloksgaard et al. 2015) and other participants' accounts of MPTs' actions, behaviours, and discourse at work and at home. The chapter addresses the final research question - how do male, middle-aged part-time workers in highly skilled occupations perform gender at work and at home, and what are the implications for the gender hierarchy?

As Chapter 3 of the thesis elucidates, both Butler's theory of gender as a performative (1990) and West and Zimmerman's (1987) theorisation of gender as done or practiced in interactions argue that gender is given social meaning and is so deeply embedded in society that the gendered performances of men and women give the impression that differences between the sexes are natural and oppositional. Gender is understood to be relational and subject to temporal and spatial variation. In practice this means cultural norms regulating gendered subject positions can alter over time and are constituted differently in different contexts. For men and women compliance with the dominant rules of gender is critical for gaining subject intelligibility (Butler 2009).

Where men are concerned, Connell (1995) argues that hegemonic masculinity presides as the culturally prioritised form of masculinity, within a given time and cultural setting, which legitimises unequal gender relations. For men, living up to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity safeguards masculine intelligibility and provides them with a prioritised place in the gender order, whilst other masculinities, and femininities, are relationally subjugated. Of course, since hegemonic masculinity is culturally constituted, it is subject to change across time and place and relies on legitimisation through the gendered performances of men (and women) to reinforce it (Bach 2019). As key sites of gendered performance, the workplace and the home are both vital settings in which to consider how MPTs' recognisability as (middle-aged) men and relationship to hegemonic masculinity

(Connell 1987) is preserved or dismantled by their participation in part-time work, and how the gender hierarchy is affected by their ways of working and living. In addressing the final research question, this chapter explores how MPTs perform gender in these spaces, and how age intersects with gender to confer or threaten subject intelligibility. Analysis is informed by literature which suggests that it is somewhat easier for those with higher social standing (in this case male professional workers), to deviate from social norms and conduct themselves in a wider variety of ways (Schneider 2004).

As the chapter progresses, several paradoxes arise with respect to the way in which the MPTs perform gender and the way they are perceived by others. Although in choosing to work part-time at this stage of their lives, MPTs ostensibly digress from normative life course expectations, the evidence presented demonstrates that this course of action does not appear to detract from their subject intelligibility or expose them to gender precarity as Butler (2009) suggests. This may infer that the heterosexual matrix, or similar normative schema, which influences the relative positions of men and women in the work and home sphere is fractured and no longer a pervasive force for structuring individuals' lived experiences and associated place in the gender order, but this appears not to be the case. As shown in the opening section of this chapter (7.2), MPTs' self-perceptions reflect an assuredness that their gender is inconsequential to their choice to work part-time, so reinforcing gender hierarchies within which men, as the prioritised gender, escape scrutiny. Furthermore, the MPTs are praised and envied by their peers, rather than seen as occupying a precarious masculinity position for defying normative life course expectations, thus enabling them to retain a privileged position in the gender order. In section 7.3 evidence is presented to show that whilst the MPTs articulate a new non-dominant, non-patriarchal form of masculinity in which reciprocal arrangements concerning the allocation of paid and unpaid work within the household are accentuated, their behaviours often belie this stance. These findings are compounded by analysis in section 7.4 to show that MPTs simultaneously expend considerable effort reframing their work to comply with dominant gender norms, and by discussion in section 7.5 which illustrates that the MPTs can rely on their gender, age and occupation to obscure the part-time nature of their work, enabling them to project a convincing impression of complying

with hegemonic norms. Considered collectively, these actions can be seen to reinforce Butler's heterosexual matrix and its associated normative life course expectations in work, rather than subverting it.

7.2 Progressive men

Stainback, Kleiner and Skaggs (2016) argue that men who are undoing gender must be included in research samples if studies are to advance understanding of how gender change arises, yet the ability to extract meaningful data relies on locating men who are carrying out practices which undo gender and for those men to appreciate that they are undoing gender. This PhD study focuses on a sample of men who appear to be undoing masculinity, and who, in recognising there are few men like them in part-time work in professional occupations, are likely to recognise that they are doing gender differently to their peers.

The paucity of men in part time work is generally acknowledged by the male part-time workers in the study and as such they accept their position is novel. MPT7 brought two images to the phase A interview, an infographic (Image 7.1) illustrating the far lesser proclivity for men to work part-time, and a stock image (Image 7.2) expressing surprise at male part-time working.

Image 7.1: Percentage of men and women in part-time work (supplied by MPT7)
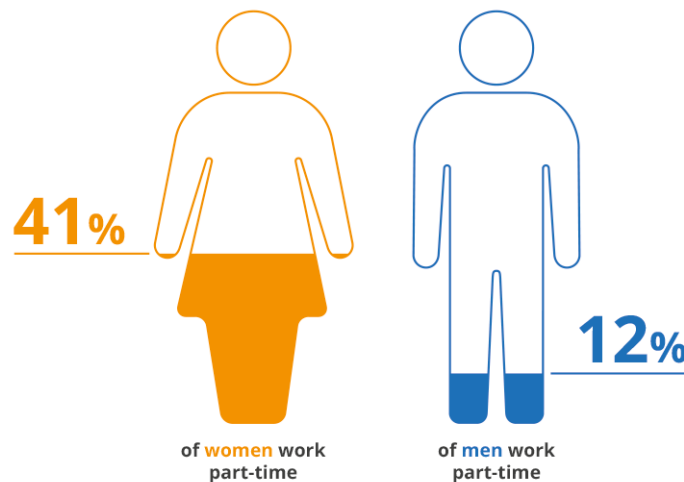
Image 7.2: Surprise at male part-time working (supplied by MPT7)
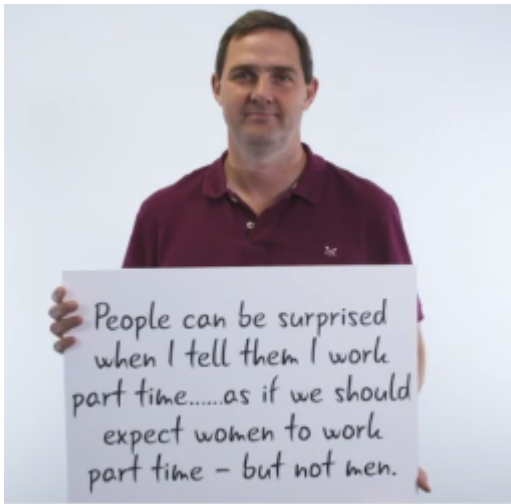
In choosing these images MPT7 appears to be drawing attention to his minority status in part-time work yet, as Lewis and Simpson (2010) argue, it is not uncommon for men who do gender differently to revel in their token status. As this section proceeds to demonstrate, for privileged individuals, such as MPT7 who has a PhD and a professional role, the risks of social derision or negative consequences for failing to conform to gendered expectations are lesser (Eagly and Steffen 1984) as their status provides protection. Other MPTs in the sample group take a similar approach by declaring how unusual they are among their peer group:

I don't think there are many [men in part-time work] *in my life-stage* (MPT5)

The inference in MPT5's comment is that other men of his age or life stage conform to the male-based chronology of career development (Duncan and Loretto 2004) and meet with age-appropriate recitals of gender (Riach, Rumens and Tyler 2014) by working full-time. Despite being fully cognisant that men's participation in part-time work, especially among men like them, is rare, evidence indicates that the MPTs do not consider their own gender in relation to their work mode. MPT1 states *'I don't suppose I would have given it any reflection had you not been asking the questions',* whilst MPT3 shrugs off attention, *'It's just what we do, seems perfectly normal to us.'* They seem impervious to the notion that they are transgressing embedded gendered norms surrounding engagement with paid work (Acker 1990; Padavic, Ely and Reid 2020; Benschop et al. 2013) and unperturbed in terms of their gendered identity, this finding is interesting since Butler (1990) maintains that

mimicking the dominant rules of gender affords subject intelligibility, and performances to the contrary carry risks. Their inability or unwillingness to reflect on their gendered identity suggests they do not regard themselves as having a gender (Reeser 2010), rather they are used to masculinity being unnoticed, taken for granted and uncontested. Their attitude reflects normalisation of the privileged position of men (Sheerin and Linehan 2018) and is interpreted as hardly dislocated from notions of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987) whereby power and patriarchy afford men a favourable position in the gender hierarchy.

According to Butler (1993) the way in which individuals perform gender in a particular context is important since the audience (others) use the information they receive to classify people as masculine or feminine. The study finds that the MPTs' adoption of a work pattern more commonly associated with women, at a time in their lives when work devotion schema especially for men is the norm (Blair-Loy 2004) provokes two principal reactions from others, adulation, and envy. First, contrary to claims that men who use flexible working, including part-time work, for caregiving and domestic reasons face stigma (Cook at al. 2021), the MPTs in this study, indeed men in general who work part-time, are widely applauded as pioneering and brave by the other participants in the study, in other words they attract the progressive badge for taking an enlightened path, as cited by Gerstel and Clawson (2018). For example, WS2 comments:

> *When I hear of a man who is working part-time you kind of think oh you*
> *know good for you, you know, you are being a bit of a pioneer sort of thing*
> *(WS2)*

Similarly, HS1 implies it is brave to do gender differently but especially difficult for men to sidestep the breadwinner role when the ideal of the male breadwinner is so strongly associated with manly status (Padavic, Ely and Reid 2020):

> *It takes somebody who really feels very secure about themselves and their*
> *masculinity or femininity to step over the boundaries of what is considered*
> *the norm. For men I thinks it's way harder because the expectation is far*

> *greater for men, that they will be the provider, the one who has the top-notch job and all of that* (HS1)

While WS7 says that, as a man, he feels a weight of expectation to be the provider for his family and so it must take courage for men to choose a different path:

> *So, my family, they will expect me to, yeah, as a breadwinner and all that, they don't expect me to take early retirement. So, it's in that context that I say if men decide to go part-time is a step into the unknown and I say they are courageou*s (WS7)

This finding accords with earlier work (Pini and McDonald 2008) which showed that men were regarded as slightly progressive for altering their working hours to care for their children. Within the contexts in which the MPTs live their lives therefore, they appear to avoid the type of forfeits Kelland, Lewis and Fisher (2022) find afflict caregiving fathers such as teasing and ridicule, neither are they chided socially (Berdahl and Moon 2013), or subject to difficult peer to peer relations (Burnett et al. 2013) on account of working reduced hours. Indeed, the undercurrent of a progressive discourse surrounding positionality, which is usually associated with femininity, in this case caregiving and working part-time, enables the MPTs to create an alternative construction of masculine identity which differentiates them from other men (Lewis and Simpson 2010) and justifies a counter-stereotypical position (Moss-Racusin, Phelan and Rudman 2010). Borgkvist et al (2018:710) argue that "*the most distinct attempt at an alternative construction of masculinity is the 'ground-breaker discourse"*, the notion of stepping up, paving the way and so creating new possibilities for other men, infers resolve, willpower and nerve, helping the men to distance themselves from feminised positioning.

The regard within which the men are held by others (the audience) appears to counteract the erosion of masculinity that Besen (2007) says men risk by moving away from breadwinning, and the struggle with masculine identity that Nadim (2016) suggests is likely to ensue. The choice they have made to work part-time preserves their masculine identity in the eyes of others, rather than weakens it, affording the men subject intelligibility despite transgression of gender norms. In

conferring masculine intelligibility on MPTs rather than reacting negatively, the audience appear to denounce the patriarchal power and conditions of compulsory heterosexuality which Butler (1990) argue beset negative reactions to non-normative performativity. It is contended that the MPTs' socio-economic status shapes the social and institutional environments within which they work and socialise such that the individuals they interact with to practice gender (West and Zimmerman 1987) share similar liberal values and beliefs, resulting in receptivity to men working part-time, even if they recognise part-time work among men runs counter to the dominant rules of gender, and it is different to their own way of performing gender.

The other dominant reaction to the MPTs' participation in part-time work is envy. It is asserted that desire among other men in the work sphere to emulate MPTs' work pattern and lifestyle reinforces masculine intelligibility by operating in conjunction with the narrative of progressive and brave. The combination of these audience reactions legitimises MPTs' departure from dominant gender scripts which lead most men to focus on work-centred lives and most women to prioritise home-centred activities (McGinley 2016). In both the phase A and phase B interviews WS2 describes himself as traditional whilst referring to MPT2 as different. He expresses admiration, tinged with envy for the lifestyle his co-worker had achieved by engaging in part-time work:

> [MPT2] *is willing to do new things and happy to do things differently, I admire him a lot for what he does and has done* (WS2)

WS6 also suggests there may be pockets of envy in the workplace:

> *Yeah, and I suspect there are one or two people who are you know sort of envious, that I wish I was brave enough to do that* (WS6)

Whilst MPT3 adds, *'Yeah, yeah, nobody says that must be rubbish only working 3 days a week'*. In the case of MPT3 the intersection of age and gender attracts special admiration (*'wow'*); the inference being that drawing back from full-time work at a young age denotes success:

> *You know he was sort of semi-retiring, wow, at whatever age that was, 35*
> *or something* (WS3)

Without exploring the financial and familial circumstances of WS participants, the fact that they are attracted to the proposition of part-time work but work full-time themselves supports Vandello et al (2013) who argue that even if men are attracted to flexible working, they are often deterred as they perceive it distracts from normative masculinity.

Building on the above discussion, just as Foweraker and Cutcher's study (2015) of older men working in pharmaceutical sales shows men constructing their masculine identities based on different ideals to younger salesmen (and elevating their masculinity above retired, non-productive, men), the evidence shows the MPTs seek to construct their masculine identities as part-time workers based on different ideals to men in full-time employment. Whilst men in full-time work might readily attract masculine intelligibility because they are seen to comply with the dominant rules of gender (Butler 1990), the MPTs retain their work status (as Chapter 6 verifies) but invest in cultural work (Swidler 2001) to reconfigure their masculine identities in a way which is more enlightened, and contemporary, suggesting, contrary to the work of Butler (1990), that subjects can be agentic (Brickell 2005), and do contribute to the gendering of self. MPTs are shown to construct a subject position which reflects an intelligent and creative way of playing with masculinity (Meijs, Lammers and Ratliff 2015) which is not dominated by acts of machoism such as long working hours and untrammelled devotion to career. The sentiment that working part-time is a smart choice is captured by MPT5:

> *It's so much better, I don't see any particular draw to working full-time*
> *unless you have to* (MPT5)

The MPTs suggest that new ways of doing gender afford them greater balance in their lives, with positive outcomes for themselves and their families as section 7.3 illustrates. The discourse they use infers that men who conform to the highly

gendered expectation of full-time male work are traditional, misguided and relationally subordinate for adhering to such scripts.

7.3 Equal opportunities advocates, altruistic partners and involved fathers

The enlightened and wise masculinity discourse the MPTs construct is often characterised by a strongly articulated allegiance to equal opportunities, manifest as reciprocity in their spousal relationships, and a concerted choice to be involved fathers. Whilst these masculinity discourses are evident, the analysis within this section demonstrates that the MPTs' performances are, in practice, confusing and often contradictory.

MPTs' desire to create (greater) gender equality in their households featured strongly in earlier findings (even if these outcomes were not always realised). In Chapter 5 for example, MPT6 speaks of admiring Northern European countries in which there is a stronger leaning towards shared parenting, whilst MPT3 and MPT4's take-up of part-time work to adopt a primary childcare role, is presented as a way of enabling their wives' careers, by alleviating some of the pressures of competing home devotion and work devotion schema (Blair-Loy 2004). Further, most MPTs in dual part-time worker households sought to use part-time working as a way of reaching reciprocal agreements with their wives in terms of the allocation of paid work, and unpaid household responsibilities and/or childcare duties. Since hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987) legitimates patriarchy, the equal opportunities narratives which underpin MPTs' motives for working part-time might logically be interpreted as a resounding rejection of the current most honoured way of being a man and instead identification with non-patriarchal ways of being. Indeed Messerschmidt (2010) makes clear, men who perform masculine subject positions underpinned by equal opportunities, must be prepared to subjugate themselves by relinquishing power in other realms. On the one hand MPTs' participation in part-time work itself might be interpreted as a clear act of conceding power, with the potential to undo gender since hegemonic masculinity is so bound up with work, necessarily full-time work, however Messerschmidt (2000) warns, it is precisely at times when hegemonic masculinity is disrupted or challenged that it becomes more apparent.

Across the data set, the evidence shows a range of ways in which MPTs perform masculinity at home as partners and fathers, some which appear to indicate that male part-time working among this group hardly disturbs hegemonic masculinity and may even reinforce it, and others which demonstrate that hegemonic masculinity is subverted by male part-time working, or can conceivably be loosened to legitimise different subject positions (Deutch 2007). With reference to the latter there are undoubtedly examples of MPTs rejecting the male breadwinner imperative which restricts men's (and women's) choices pertaining to the amount of paid and unpaid work they do (McGinley 2016), to replace it with a masculine position which emphasises reciprocal and cooperative decision-making in different sex relationships, underpinned by a narrative of choice (Bach 2019). MPT3 and MPT4 for instance are long-term secondary earners in their households, neither of these MPTs, nor MPT1 and MPT5 (also outearned by their wives), report being concerned that their wives earn more than they do, rather the implication is that joint decisions have resulted in particular household configurations of work and care which currently work well for the couples concerned. MPT5 comments:

> *We're a team, there's never really been a thing about that, we each play our part* (MPT4)

These MPTs appear to share the views of younger generations of men (those aged 25-39) for whom the link between gender and the activity of breadwinning is dissipating (Waldersee, 2018), and so show greater receptivity to egalitarian gender relations than other middle-aged men who tirelessly stick to traditional age-gender scripts (Foweraker and Cutcher 2015), in this sense it is easy to see how MPTs have developed a reputation as progressive (section 7.2). As Chapter 5 demonstrates the MPTs often present their engagement in part-time work as an act of altruism, to support their wives, rather than choice exercised for their own benefit. MPT4, for example, describes rescuing his family from the stresses associated with dual career parenting, whilst MPT6 explains his move to part-time work was in part a response to difficulties the couple were experiencing conceiving and his desire to be around should HS6 miscarry again. These reasons for working part-time suggest non-patriarchal acts of self-subjugation on the part of the MPTs and moreover a concern for their wives' welfare and priorities. Similarly, there is evidence of MPTs' willingly

giving up lucrative careers to be more present for their children and play a primary (or greater) role in childcare than they could as full-time workers. Their choice to do so reflects identification with new fathering (Bach and Aaseth 2016) or involved fatherhood (Atkinson 2021) and clear rejection of normative parenthood demands which are highly gendered (Niemisto et al. 2021). Consistent with Roy's work (2014), irrespective of the salience of the (male) provider norm and a supposed imperative to perform gender in accordance with dominant gender norms to secure subject intelligibility (Butler 1990), MPT5 for example, describes how he proactively prioritises his parental role and the interests of his children by working part-time:

> *I suspect if I worked full-time, I would be working 55-60 hours a week and I don't think I would be prepared to do that because I think it would affect the amount of time I could spend with the children* (MPT5)

The MPTs' level of education and socioeconomic status are not insignificant to their choices to become involved fathers, research indeed suggests there is greater propensity to follow this approach to fathering among educated men (Brandth and Kvande 2014) and among middle class men (Bjork 2013). For the MPTs, higher relative household income clearly enables their choice to do so as elucidated in Chapter 5. There is evidence within the study that MPTs' choices to deprioritise paid work and spend more time with their children and families are beneficial. MPT5 claims part-time working makes him a *'better parent',* with gains for their children (Allen and Daly 2007), who get to interact with both parents rather than *'being ferried back and forth to childminders'.* Others echo this narrative, MPT4 states, '*my two closest friends have both on several occasions outlined you know very much respect you for what you have done, and the outcome of the kids has been very positive, you can tell blah, blah, blah'.* Similarly, MPT2 reflects upon his decision to work part-time and the advantages it has afforded his children and family:

> *I think you know it comes back to success and you know what's important to you...I think if either my wife or I both pursued careers in the normal sort of way then we wouldn't have what we have now* (MPT2).

MPT1 meanwhile says, '*I feel lucky'* then, with the support of a recent family holiday photograph (Image 7.3), expands on how greater focus on family, facilitated by part-time working, has improved family relationships:

> *I feel much more connected with them* [family] *now, my daughter tweeted that I wasn't marking on Saturday, it was a big thing, ever since she can remember I'd spent the weekends marking* (MPT1)

The image MPT1 chooses to share is relaxed and fun, in sharp contrast to the stressful working life he once had as a full-time worker, captured earlier in the thesis.

Image 7.3: Family connectedness (supplied by MPT1)

These findings reflect those of Borkgvist et al (2018) who argue that men's well-being and that of their partner's and children is enhanced when men spend more time with their children and families. Collectively these findings are illustrative of the part MPTs are playing in developing iterative changes to cultural ideals of fathering, towards the notion that mothering can be done by fathers too (Bach 2019). Their performances may represent a subversive emergence (Borgerson 2005) of some sort with potential to challenge the dominant rules of masculinity, such that close connectivity with family becomes a strong signifier of manliness. MPT7's reflection on his own father's approach to parenting is added for contrast:

He wasn't standoffish, but he would leave for work on a Monday morning at five, five in the morning. He might come home on Thursday, yeah, normally, like in the latter stages he'd come home and work from the local office on Friday (MPT7)

7.3.1 Contradictions and tensions - undoing and re-doing gender

The discussion hitherto indicates that since MPTs cannot easily comply with a traditional masculinity script or frame (Goffman 1974), underscored by work devotion, they invest in cultural repertoires (Swidler 2001) to construct new non-dominant, intelligible forms of masculinity in the home which entail a voluntary commitment to equal opportunities, altruism and involved fatherhood, and which disempower patriarchy. Phrases such as *'better parent'* and references to those who use childminders (MPT5), plus MPT4's emphasis on *'very much respect for what you have done'*, however show, as Christensen and Jensen (2014) argue, that non-patriarchal versions of masculinity may still subordinate some men to others. Here MPTs infer that men who choose work over family are relationally inferior fathers, as are men who perform absent versions of fathering (MPT7's father).

Whilst the thesis finds empirical evidence to support the above discussion, the case for the existence of non-dominant masculine intelligibilities among MPTs which do not legitimise patriarchy is confused by contrary evidence elicited during the study. This subsection sets out this evidence with cross reference to earlier findings.

MPTs' ways of performing masculinity as reciprocation, altruistic partnering, equal opportunities and involved fathering, subsumed in a discourse of choice, are contested. Firstly, the notion of choice is challenged. In Chapter 5 slivers of data, predominantly drawn from HS participants suggested some of the MPTs entered part-time work because full-time work was unsustainable, not ostensibly because part-time work was a choice. Furthermore, in Chapter 6 there is evidence that MPT4 deploys choice as a useful narrative to convey masculine traits of power, control and agency and so detract from gender role incongruity in part-time work (Eagly and Karau 2002), and then later to emphasise freedom to work full-time once

his children are older. There is compelling evidence however to suggest that his motivation to switch to full-time work as a middle-aged man without dependent children is similarly based on a perceived need to perform gender in ways which comply with the dominant rules of gender (Butler 1990) to be assured of masculine subject intelligibility, rather than a choice, as the following remark attests:

> *Yes, the excuses are 23 and 20 years old respectively (laughs) so yeah, it's pulling a fast one* (MPT4)

MPTs' gendered performances as altruistic partners are also questionable. In Chapter 5 some of the MPTs claim career is not important to them, therefore working part-time to enable their wives' careers cannot be conceived as an entirely selfless act. On the contrary, as Chapter 6 shows, MPTs derive job satisfaction and benefit from a better work-life balance by working less, whilst continuing to enjoy a financially comfortable, if not prosperous, lifestyle, partially sustained by their wives' income. The MPTs' failure to acknowledge the role their wives play in enabling them to work part-time, undermines the discourse of reciprocity. Further evidence presented in Chapter 6 challenges MPTs' performances as equal opportunities advocates and involved fathers, suggesting perhaps, as Kelan and Wratil (2018) do, that men's professed support for equal opportunities is more a heroic act of helping women so is about doing gender not undoing it. Certainly, much of the data in Chapter 6 conveys a sense of the MPTs playing a secondary, supporting part in the home, their part-time work status appears to make little significant impact in terms of equalising the division of domestic labour and they overburden their wives with the mental workload of managing the household and hidden labour, which extends to tending to the emotional and practical needs of children. Furthermore, Chapter 6 illustrated that during the pandemic MPTs' wives shouldered the burden of extra domestic chores and the demands of home schooling, irrespective of their involvement in paid work.

The mixed evidence presented and discussed within this section points to the coexistence of performances of masculinity which subjugate women and those which support their emancipation, these findings illustrate work by Christensen and Jensen (2014) that masculinity positions are complex and nuanced. The data

suggests moreover that the MPTs masculinity talk (Bloksgaard et al. 2015) centred on progressive equal opportunities values, caring, selfless acts of partnering and involved fatherhood is more platitudinous than a consistent and deep lived embodiment of these ideals. Prospects therefore of gender itself being transformed by men working part-time in professional occupations are shown to overshadowed by MPTs doing gender in traditional ways in the home sphere, and through these acts contributing to the persistence of gendered differences and inequalities between men and women. This finding is reflective of men drawing on traditional expressions of essentialism to protect their masculine position when they perceive it to be threatened (Lewis and Simpson 2010). More broadly these findings appear to support West and Zimmerman's theorisation (1987) which leaves little room for gender undoing, and instead maintains that gender is done or practiced routinely in social interactions and individuals expend effort to produce sets of behaviours that others will interpret as gender normative behaviour. In other words, as West and Fenstermaker (2002) argue, accountability to sex category is enduring.

7.4 Productive men, job experts, proven career success

Evidence gathered during the study demonstrates that despite investing in cultural work to construct new ways of performing gender, MPTs vie for recognisability as men by simultaneously performing gender in traditional ways through remaining productive in (and beyond) paid work, showcasing their job expertise and emphasising prior career success in the work sphere. These performances might be interpreted as ways of reinforcing their masculinity in case new ways of seeking masculine intelligibility are fallible, however their actions and behaviours could be far less contrived than this. Since Butler (1993) maintains that individuals become accustomed to performing gender believably by watching others' performances and copying these, it is argued that as middle-aged men, the MPTs, have an abundance of tacit knowledge of how to do gender well. Specifically, as men with former work histories in full-time work it is likely MPTs implicitly know the script for performing gender convincingly at work and so they seek to continue to emulate it, even though they digress by working part-time, or perhaps more accurately, precisely because they work part-time. Their actions and behaviours emphasise the salience of hegemonic masculinity ideals in structuring men's lives as they

constantly try to match up to the standards it sets as part of its invention (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

This section provides evidence from the study to show how the MPTs draw on first, their productiveness, secondly their job expertise and thirdly their former career success, to construct themselves in alignment with the version of masculinity they perceive to be culturally prioritised in a particular context (Simpson 2011), in this instance in the work and home context as appropriate. Foweraker and Cutcher (2015) argue that particularly as men age, remaining useful and therefore being seen as distinct from unproductive men is considered key to maintaining a masculinity script, the research supports this argument in finding that the MPTs place considerable emphasis on productivity both in work and in the fullest sense of their lives. MPT1, the oldest man in the study, was keen to distinguish himself from male teachers he had taught alongside who had taken early retirement and ceased paid work altogether. Although he had no intention of returning to full-time work, when asked about retirement he retorted *'that's not on the cards yet'.* HS3 supported this stance, rebuking others' suggestions that MPT1 was close to retiring:

> *People kept saying, you know you are part retired now you or you're heading towards retirement...in the kind of way that some people that we know have kind of taken retirement and just go on endless holidays and don't do anything particularly meaningful. So, every time that got mentioned I would say he hasn't retired, and he is certainly not heading for retirement at the moment* (HS3)

Retirement is shown to be a precarious time for men's masculinity as it is associated with being looked after and dependence on others, conditions often associated with femininity, for men therefore remaining in work enables them to avoid this label (Calasanti and King 2003). HS3's reference to retired couples they know not doing *'anything meaningful'* seems to be used intentionally to emphasise that MPT1's role is purposeful in contrast to their friends' lives. In other triads MPTs stress how they are fully occupied despite working part-time. MPT3 for instance mockingly makes the following remark:

The notion that I am only working 3 days a week is, you know, not something that is accurate at all. The other time is involved in childcare which obviously is quite clearly not working (laughs) (MPT3)

However, the nuances of masculinity positions (Christensen and Jensen 2014) and the often-contradictory nature of gendered performances are apparent; in an excerpt from the Stage C interview MPT3 reflects on how he has recently changed the way in which he introduces himself:

I suppose now, I wouldn't say I am a primary child carer, I wouldn't say I look after the children. I'd probably now just focus on whatever work it was I did (MPT3)

The explanation for MPT3's change of stance appears to be nested in a need to demonstrate productiveness to others. Whilst care for two young children, coupled with part-time professional work, constituted full-time work for MPT3 and he could defend this position, it appears that he is less comfortable defining himself with reference to childcare now that his children are older. This insight reflects a tension between how MPT3 presents himself and the evidence presented in Chapter 6 where MPT3 consistently claims a high household workload, involved fatherhood and little leisure time. Both sets of evidence show that MPT3 is anxious to avoid being perceived as inactive or 'looked after' by HS3 who is in full-time employment and the main household earner and moreover that he is concerned to perform gender in ways which are likely to preserve subject intelligibility (Butler 2009). In other triads, MPTs with business interests which occupy their time beyond paid part-time work, talk of current and future work streams connected with their activities, for example MPT1 discusses listing properties on Airbnb:

We haven't done it yet, but the idea is that we plan to look into Airbnb and stuff...at the moment we have full time tenants in two properties that we have but we like the idea of trying out the Airbnb (MPT1)

The notion of taking on more work by running their properties as Airbnb lettings counters suggestions that MPT1 is preparing for retirement and close to entering

an inactive phase of his life. Similarly, MPT6 impresses the extent of the work involved in running the social enterprise. He describes how he is busy at weekends with commercial consultancy and then using his days off in the week when not in paid part-time work to apply for, and work on grants:

> *We are on our second National Lottery grant, so we won a 10K award and did a pretty good job of it and got quite a lot of coverage for it. So, we have just won another one and we have also won a County Council 3-year grant and a load of little grants. The medium-term objective is to be eligible for the National Lottery Reaching Communities Grant which will be £50,000 a year, where we can get premises and we can employ a couple of young people and pay for our own time* (MPT6)

These remarks show time dedication beyond paid work, but moreover acts which Kelan (2018) would describe as doing gender, such as impressing others through displaying exceptional talent, and showing heroism by engaging in competitive activity. In addition to productive work and work-related lives, fragments of evidence show the MPTs engaging in masculine hobbies and interests whilst participating in a work mode more commonly associated with women. These pastimes are likely to be readily verified as authentically masculine by the audience (Butler 1993), thus constituting to the MPTs' subject position. Masculine performances in leisure are exemplified by the HS participant in T2:

> [MPT2] *is a big barbecuer, so he picked that habit up when he was in America so the barbecue is his thing. Traditional masculine pursuit isn't it barbecuing? fire and meat that's quite exciting* (HS2)

In other cases, the activities the MPTs do in their spare time aligns with ONS data (2017) which finds that men tend to spend their free time playing sports, involved in hobbies, gaming or computing, or consuming mass media. MPTs 1, 3 and 7 are keen cyclists, whilst MPT4 follows live and recorded sport:

> *If it's the height of summer and I am in luck, then there would certainly be*
> *cricket involved, certainly test match special would be following me around*
> *wherever I am* (MPT4)

HS4 adds *'He loves rugby, watches Grand Prix goes away with his friends sometimes like they went to Le Mans'.* Whilst many women enjoy participating in and following sports, the context of sport, and its connotations with competitiveness, physicality and at times, aggression, make it a central site for the production and perpetuation of hegemonic and dominant forms of masculinity (Connell 2005). By declaring a keen interest in sports therefore, these findings can be interpreted as a further way in which some of the MPTs do gender (West and Zimmerman 1987) and are seen to conform to traditional gendered regimes (Connell 2009).

Turning to job expertise, consistent with Bosson and Vandello (2011) the MPTs show clear signs of defending and showcasing their status since outpacing other men is a way of proving their masculinity. The MPTs use their job expertise to do this. MPT1 for example, regards his expertise in supporting students to write UCAS statements as a key asset to the college and spoke proudly of this credential as a unique resource that other progress coaches could not offer. By comparing himself favourably to peers without a teaching background and stressing his superior expertise, MPT1 could be seen to be seeking to impress others, an act of doing gender (Kelan 2018). Furthermore, although MPT1 was disgruntled at being moved to work on a new site when his college merged with a neighbouring college, he chose to interpret the move as a signal the organisation needed his expertise to support a fledgling team, rather than dwell on his lack of agency to resist the move, this narrative shows a desire to feel valued and important based on the skills he brought as a former teacher; skills he perceived others lacked. Collectively this evidence suggests that MPT1 might be feeling bereft of some of the ways in which he could readily showcase his accomplishments and compete when in full-time work (Thompson 2006). In T6, MPT6 describes teaching and managing a project:

> *Right in the throes of teaching and also...doing the XXXX project which I*
> *ended up doing solo. So, it was a bizarre experience of presenting with the*
> *Vice Chancellor and um...Professor XXXX from XXXX and little old me* (MPT6)

The remark *'little old me'* is self-effacing yet is juxtaposed with reference to managing the project alone and presenting to two very senior men; these utterances demonstrate MPT6 creating connections with other men and impressing others by going for glory as the sole lead on a prestigious project; signs of doing gender (Kelan 2018). There is also evidence of women upholding masculine hegemony by endorsing their partner's skills, these actions appear to be not dissimilar to women in the workplace demonstrating complicity with hegemonic norms (Sheerin and Linehan 2018). HS4 boasts of MPT4's accomplishments in part-time work:

> *He was looking after, I can't remember the size of the contract, 430-million-pound contracts, dealing with senior vice-presidents being rated quite highly through his both technical ability, ability to manage contracts...his judgement, decision making* (HS4)

Furthermore, in the final phase interview, MPT4 describes early days in his new full-time role:

> *When I first started...my boss was coming up with a meeting pretty much every other day just to check that everything was okay. I am a very self-sufficient person who knows what needs to be done and I have my own way of doing it and it gets done in time. It took her about a month to realise that I was completely no maintenance* (MPT4)

This excerpt appears to demonstrate efforts by MPT4 to mobilise masculinity (Martin 2000) and so assert the gender hierarchy in early social interactions with others (West and Zimmerman 1987).

Lastly there is considerable evidence in the study to show that the MPTs rest their gender identities on historical actualities, reminiscent of the sentiment 'what I have done is who I am' (Nilsson, Hagberg and Jeppsson Grassman 2013). In other words, they construct their present selves in part-time work, based on their former selves in full-time work and rely on these performances for their masculine identities.

Through these actions the MPTs are seen to prove career success, breadwinner status, high earnings power and other credentials that they struggle to showcase in part-time work. These performances might be seen to add weight to the narrative of choice, and notions of altruism presented earlier in the chapter, yet they can also be interpreted as MPTs struggling with their gendered identity in part-time work (Nadim 2016) and seeking to overcome feelings of gender role incongruity (Eagly and Karau 2002). In reincarnating old versions of who they used to be, MPTs often draw on constructions of masculinity based on hegemonic masculine ideals of competitiveness, ambition, achievement and being a good provider. The narratives also show former success in following chrononormative patterns of male career development which Duncan and Loretto (2004) argue are imbued with notions of patriarchy. Somewhat paradoxically MPTs who have been working part-time for longer periods perform gender with reference to past work identities more vociferously than others. MPT3 for example says:

> *I worked for an investment bank in London for ten years and I was earning good money and things like that, kind of gradually moved up, started managing people, standard career progression, was generally going really well* (MPT3)

Use of the word *'standard'* implies progression was an expectation and taken for granted by MPT3. The lucrative nature of this past role is mentioned by his current manager:

> *I am speculating I suppose, but I know when he left, you know he used to work for* [name of organisation]*, and I am sure he was absolutely rolling in money* (WS3)

HS3 who had been the family breadwinner for more than 12 years when the study commenced similarly refers to MPT3's former salary *'he made huge amounts of money compared to me'*. A virtually identical boast is provided by MPT4:

> *I was a project management consultant with* [name of organisation] *at that point in time and that's like world at your footstep, world at your feet kind*

> *of scenario. ... I noted the other day when it came to annual pay rise time*
> *that only now sort of eighteen years later have, I actually gotten back to the*
> *same salary level as I was in the year 2000* (MPT4)

MPT4's quote is interpreted as a way of reinforcing how advanced his career was prior to taking up part-time work. The phrase *'world at your feet' s*uggests he had risen to an enviable position in the organisation where anything was possible, but he had sacrificed a plethora of opportunities for his family, the performance of masculinity here, in common with the other cases, is heroic (Holt and Thompson 2004) and a clear sign of doing gender (Kelan 2018; West and Zimmerman 1987). Meanwhile MPT1, who has more recently transitioned to part-time work after spending all his adult working life in full-time work recounts a long history of compliance with the normative (male) working model (Acker 1990):

> *So yes, a teacher for 23 years and many years ago, I was a sales manager*
> *for a brewery so just at the time when the pub hours changed, and pubs*
> *were open all day so there was like an expectation that you would be in the*
> *job all day, and I was. In teaching I was constantly assessing, I would work*
> *a 60-hour week easily, including all day Saturday marking and most*
> *evenings* (MPT1)

Hours of work feature strongly in his refrain, as well as celebrating long working hours he infers work loyalty through long service and self-sacrifice by working at weekends and in the evenings, these elements, according to Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990), arise from normative conceptions of what it means to be a committed worker.

The MPTs' fervour to rely on the traditional masculinity scripts supports Bosson and Vandello (2011:82) who claim that masculinity is "*relatively difficult to earn and easy to lose".* It is argued that the MPTs feel compelled to draw on all the tools they can to ensure their masculine subject positions remain intact and are not diluted by a lesser focus on paid work and greater focus on home-centred activity. Moreover, the MPTs' behaviour is shown to support the work of Deutch (2007) that

individuals act in the awareness they will be judged in terms of what is deemed acceptable masculine (or feminine) behaviour.

7.5 Concealing part-time work

Since West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that gender accountable ways of doing gender are those which are unremarkable on account of their fit with acceptable standards of culturally appropriate or normative behaviour, the most orthodox way for MPTs to secure masculine intelligibility at work is to appear as if they work full-time. The research provides evidence of MPTs engaging in this practice. First, some of the MPTs use semantics to reframe part-time work as full-time work. MPT4, for example, remarks:

I work French full-time as it's referred to (laughs) (MPT4)

His humorous reference to French working arrangements is interpreted as a clever way to detract from part-time work status and so minimise the implications for his identity of being a part-time worker (Nadim 2016). Similarly, as reported in Chapter 6, MPT7 comments *'It feels like I'm a full-time member of staff',* on the basis his non-working day falls on a Thursday, he refers to working Monday to Friday to obscure part-time hours. It is contended that the university setting within which MPT7 works supports him to assume a full-time worker identity, since Borgerson (2005) argues that organisational cultures endlessly re-create normative identities for workers to access which operate in conjunction with the subject. In the work setting MPT7 readily accesses an academic work identity in which hours of work are fluid and ostensibly irrelevant.

Indeed, for most of the MPTs, their occupational gravitas provides the opportunity for them to obscure or conceal their part-time work status at work. As Chapter 6 demonstrates MPTs generally enjoy greater autonomy regarding how work is done and where it is done than might be available to workers in skilled trades and roles for example in customer service, healthcare, and routine assembly/production (Choi, Leiter and Tomaskovic-Devey 2008). As autonomous workers, MPTs often become invisible in the workplace as part-time workers, and rarely need to do

cultural work to convince others of their adherence to the ideal (male) worker model (Acker 1990), despite their part-time credentials. MPTs variously report that they have opportunities to work from home, to work irregular hours to mould around other commitments and to work in a self-directed capacity. The MPTs in the study use this to their advantage to operate covertly as part-time workers. In other cases, the way the MPTs manage their part-time working hours produces the same effect. MPT2 for example organises his time at work carefully, he does not deliberately act to conceal his part-time work status but is adept at optimising his time and pre-planning so as not to frustrate full-time colleagues:

> *I don't think I ever sort of thought about him being part-time. I think that's partly because he is very impressive in the way that he manages himself you know. He is very good at organising meetings with people even through informal ways. He would say shall we meet for a coffee next Tuesday, stuff like that and I go yes sure, probably not even thinking that's because he is planning out his next week on the three days that he is in* (WS2)

Furthermore, the study finds that because the workplace participation levels of the MPTs are atypical of middle-aged men in highly skilled professional occupations, they can, if they so choose, successfully conceal their engagement in part-time work from prospective employers. As Whitehead (2002) remarks men are not rendered visible by their privileged position and therefore do not become the subject of scrutiny. Accordingly, the evidence suggests that employers tend to presume MPTs have a heteronormative and chrononormative work history, comprised full-time, uninterrupted service. This finding is exemplified by MPT4 who, when applying for full-time roles following redundancy in 2019, provided his past employment dates, role details and salary yet omitted to show pro-rata salary or declare his 18-year part-time work history:

> *None of the applications ask me to declare hours of work in previous roles, I probably had about a dozen interviews if you include first and seconds and the question was never raised. I don't know if there is a gender bias in even asking that question, I suspect there probably is* (MPT4)

Critically, employers did not ask at application stage nor in subsequent stages of the selection process and so the work mode of MPT4 was never questioned. MPT4 claimed he was not aiming to deceive, rather he did not believe the details of his work model to be relevant to his application. In short whilst the MPTs are not always able to avoid some of the characteristics of poor job quality associated with part-time work, for example low pay, poor career prospects (see Chapter 6), this finding demonstrates that their credentials as middle-aged men in highly skilled professional occupations provides a heightened level of privilege; it affords them numerous opportunities to produce convincing gender performances (Butler 1993) and so protect their masculine subject intelligibly at work.

The evidence presented and discussed in sections 7.3 to 7.5 of this chapter demonstrates that MPTs perform gender in several different ways. Their performances are often contradictory and confusing, such that it is difficult to tell, at times, whether they ascribe to hegemonic or non-hegemonic masculinity ideals, the way they perform gender in the home sphere (section 7.4) for example accommodates both possibilities. Holistically the evidence appears to show that the MPTs seek to construct their gendered identities on a blend of subordinated feminine displays and convincing masculine displays, the latter predicated to a large degree on their occupational status. The melding of these gendered performances is reflective of hybrid hegemonic masculinity (Bridges and Pascoe 2014; 2018), whereby MPTs' hegemonic power is simultaneously secured and obscured. The analysis suggests therefore that hegemonic masculinity is little troubled when middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations participate in part-time work. Findings accord with Jewkes et al (2015) who struggle to see that hegemonic masculinity can ever develop such that the oppression of women fails to feature, and with Moskos (2020) who argues that the gender binary, and with it the prioritisation of the masculine over the feminine, has a habit of reinventing itself even when there is a chance to breakdown differences.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has considered the ways in which the MPTs perform gender as part-time workers in both the work sphere and home spheres of their lives and the implications for the gender hierarchy. The findings and discussion address the third

and final research question posed by the thesis (how do male, middle-aged part-time workers in highly skilled occupations perform gender at work and at home, and what are the implications for the gender hierarchy?). The evidence drawn from the study in response to this question demonstrates that MPTs' gendered performances are complex, layered, and at times contradictory. Through analysing the data surrounding MPTs' actions, behaviours and talk in the work and home context, together with the accounts of other participants, there is evidence to support Butler's (1990) premise that individuals learn how to perform gender believably by considering the reactions they receive from others and by watching others' performances and emulating these, in order to garner subject intelligibility. In addition, there is also evidence of MPTs constructing their gender in new ways which appear to detract from the dominant rules of gender, and which could potentially undermine their subject position, giving rise to gender precarity (Butler 2009).

Figure 7.1 summarises the findings revealed by this chapter that MPTs are described as brave and progressive by others for working part-time and so are conferred masculine intelligibility by the audience (Butler 1993) despite their digression from the dominant rules of gender. They construct new, non-patriarchal gendered identities based on home-centred intelligibilities yet buttress these with reliance on traditional masculinity scripts reflective of doing gender in accountable ways (West and Zimmerman 1987). Furthermore, the MPTs are shown to be able to count on their age and occupational status to obscure or conceal their participation in part-time work, this is deemed helpful for the men's subject positioning. In Figure 7.1 these sets of findings are notionally arranged in a stepped fashion. A stairway is considered a useful analogy for drawing together the conclusions of this chapter since whilst it might appear logical to approach steps one at a time and sequentially this is not the only way; steps can be ascended or descended, taken two or more at a time to skip steps, and it is common to place one's feet on two steps simultaneously, the relationship between adjacent steps is therefore not absolute, linear or progressive necessarily. Indeed, drawing a firm conclusion that the bodies of evidence revealed by this study are so neatly ordered to be progressive or cumulative feels too simplistic and contrived.

Figure 7.1: MPTs - performing gender
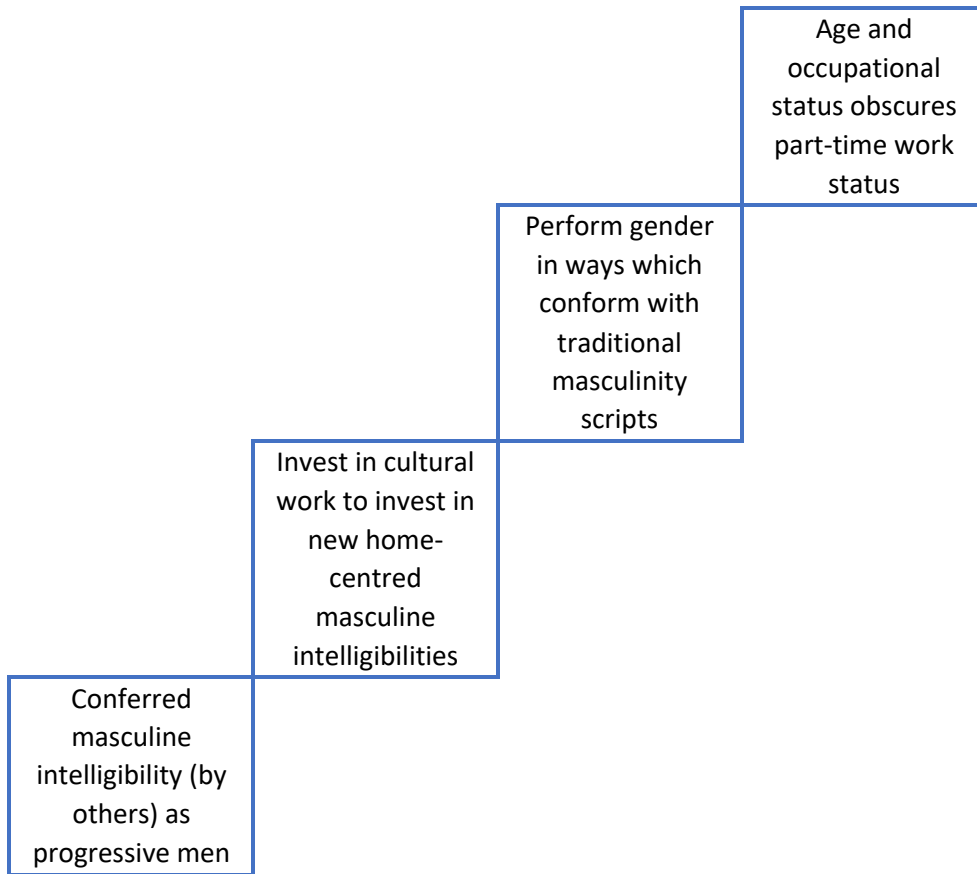
In practice the gender talk of the MPTs, and the evidence gathered from other participants suggests the ways in which the MPTs' do gender is messy, dynamic and variable across contexts, Figure 7.1 is thus intended as a vehicle to consider alternative configurations and different ways of making sense of the data to decipher what it tells us about the gendered performances of men working part-time in highly skilled professional occupations. For example, MPTs who are complicit in using their age and occupational status to conceal their part-time work status appear several steps away from progressive if they are unprepared to be transparent about their work mode, on the other hand, to take adjacent steps, others' perceptions of MPTs as progressive augers well with MPTs' own gender talk of constructing new family-centred masculine intelligibilities. The two central steps meanwhile represent the principal ways in which the MPTs perform gender, these alternative sets of performances are represented in different quotients in individual MPTs' stories and arise in different contexts; in some cases, the performances are shown to be unstable and conflicting. Either ends of the stairway are flanked by

safe landings, which assure MPTs of masculine positioning by the audience (Butler 1993); on the one hand the reception MPTs receive by doing gender in new ways as part-time workers, and on the other, the other audience presumption that the MPTs work full-time on account of their age and occupation and so naturally comply with the dominant rules of gender. The analysis suggests therefore that the MPTs cannot lose; their gender performances are recognisable irrespective of whether they emphasise new or traditional positioning. A summary of the bodies of evidence presented within the chapter and the relationships and tensions between them are highlighted in the remainder of this concluding section.

The study demonstrates that MPTs are aware that their mode of engagement with paid work is non-normative for men of their age and occupational status, however they are un-reflexive, they do not pause to consider if, and how, their part-time worker status affects their gendered identity. This finding suggests that as members of the prioritised gender they are used to their masculinity evading scrutiny (Sheerin and Linehan 2018). Drawing on the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3, Butler (2009) however is shown to emphasise that those who try to live beyond established modes of intelligibility, in other words, those who fail to conform to dominant gender norms, risk gender precarity. Since others (the audience) use the ways in which individuals perform gender to confer masculine or feminine intelligibility (Butler 1993), mounting convincing displays of gender which mimic the culturally dominant regulations of gender is considered important. The triangulated nature of the study enabled evidence to be gathered from WS and HS participants pertaining to how the MPTs are read as gendered.

Findings show that the MPTs are frequently referred to as progressive and brave for organising their lives differently to most other men, they therefore evade gender precarity (Butler 2009) despite operating in a work more commonly associated with women. WS participants also reveal that there are pockets of envy in the workplace among other men, this evidence reinforces the progressive narrative, yet also emphasises how the dominant rules of gender inhibit perceived life orientations for men and women and result in inequalities between the sexes (Saguy, Reifen-Tagar and Joel 2021). The MPTs are seen to invest in cultural work (Swidler 2001) to construct family-centred masculine identities based on new ideals

of equal opportunities, altruistic partnering, reciprocity and involved fatherhood (Atkinson 2021; Bach 2019), these performances map to the wider discussion in Chapter 5 concerning their motives for engaging in part-time work. They present these as choices that are clever ways of playing with gender (Meijs, Lammers and Ratliff 2015) which adds positively to their subject intelligibility, and they appear to position men who do not see the sense in making similar choices as relationally subordinate.

Through these actions the MPTs show signs of creating new non-dominant, non-hegemonic forms of masculinity (Messerschmidt 2010) which are based on non-patriarchal social relations, however much of the evidence pertaining to men's experiences in the home sphere of their lives (presented in Chapter 6) contradicts these productions and shows that their lived behaviours do not necessarily align. For example, MPTs' were shown to benefit from a lighter domestic load and home-schooling role than their wives during the pandemic and routinely women in the household carry more than their fair share of domestic chores. The picture is further confused as the MPTs appear to be constructing performances of gender based on new intelligibilities whilst simultaneously performing traditional masculinity scripts based on productiveness, expertise and proven career success and so doing and undoing gender at the same time. The MPTs are also complicit in relying on chronomomative assumptions of career development, and institutional norms and practices to obscure their part-time work status suggesting they are more drawn to performing gender as pseudo full-time workers, and less comfortable risking their subject intelligibility by performing gender in new ways.

In analysing the balance of use between new and traditional gender scripts, it is significant that the MPTs with the longest service in part-time work show the greatest propensity to perform in ways which align more closely to hegemonic masculinity ideals, it is conjectured that these men feel a greater sense of gender role incongruity (Eagly and Karau 2002) and thus a stronger compulsion to augment their stories to produce gender in ways they perceive to be most convincing. The chapter concludes that the MPTs perform masculinity in a cacophony of ways which are difficult to order or arrange. They tentatively embrace subordinate feminine performances of gender which emphasise family and home-centred roles but blend

these displays with deeper layers of traditional masculine work-centred scripts (to include reliance on past career prowess, past earnings, productiveness, and expertise) resulting in hybrid hegemonic masculinity (Bridges and Pascoe, 2014; 2018; Messerschmidt 2018). This combination secures MPTs privileged position in the gender hierarchy as high-status middle-aged men, irrespective of their engagement in a work mode more commonly associated with women. Moreover, the MPTs are cushioned from gender precarity (Butler 1993) by their age and occupational gravitas; it is contended that these characteristics are read as shortcuts for masculinity and so in practice the MPTs have little cultural work to do to uphold their subject position in the eyes of others, even though they may be privately anxious of the ramifications of defying the dominant regulations of gender.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This PhD study is a theoretically informed longitudinal investigation of part-time work and gender, focused on middle-aged men working part-time in highly skilled professional occupations. It has drawn on literature and associated secondary data chronicling the prevalence of part-time work, characteristics of part-time workers and the quality of part-time work. The gender lens of the thesis builds on elements of gender theory, specifically the concepts of gender performativity, doing gender and hegemonic masculinity. Since the study considers middle-aged men, intersectional theory at the interstices of age and gender was also critically explored together with the concept of chrononormativity. The review of literature was used to develop a theoretical framework for this thesis.

Following this introduction, the chapter focuses on the findings and contributions to new knowledge made by the thesis. These findings satisfy the key aims of the PhD in exploring middle-aged men's relationship with part-time work in highly skilled professional occupations. Clear reference is made within this concluding chapter to findings pertaining to each of the research questions:

1. What factors induce middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations to work part-time and how is this work mode accommodated within their careers?

2. How do middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations experience the workplace and the home sphere of their lives as part-time workers?

3. How do male, middle-aged part-time workers in highly skilled occupations perform gender at work and at home, and what are the implications for the gender hierarchy?

To answer these research questions a longitudinal mixed qualitative method intra-paradigm approach was followed. Two qualitative methods (in-depth semi-structured interviews and photo-elicitation technique) were deployed

simultaneously to gather data from seven cases (triads), each comprising a male part-time worker (MPT) and a related work sphere (WS) and home sphere (HS) participant. Three interviews took place with each participant at intervals broadly 6 months apart to capture lived experiences and change over time. The interview series also helped the researcher to build rapport with the participants and so extract deeper data. The novel research design, introducing WS and HS participants, enabled others' thoughts and perceptions to enter the study to triangulate with the data gathered from the MPTs. This approach sometimes exposed contradictory accounts, and/or resulted in dichotomous reflections and meanings attributed to stories or events by the different types of participants involved in the study.

The contributions to knowledge made in this thesis are highlighted in section 8.2. Section 8.3 follows on to highlight the contribution the research makes to practice in terms of the future structuring of part-time work, the processes for access to, and egress from part-time work and the terms and conditions upon which part-time workers are engaged. Recommendations are offered to employers, suggesting how they can shape the future of part-time work and the value it is afforded in relation to other modes of working. The final segment of the chapter summarises the strengths of this study, its limitations, and suggests ways in which it might be used as a springboard to exploit future research opportunities in the field of part-time working among men.

8.2 Key findings and contributions to knowledge

This section summarises the key findings of the study. It addresses each of the research questions in turn, referring to findings from both the review of academic literature and the empirical analyses undertaken. In each instance the contribution to knowledge/theory is presented first in a text box.

1. What factors induce middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations to work part-time and how is this work mode accommodated within their careers?

Contribution to knowledge (1)

Consistent with the literature and statistical data pertaining to the practice of part-time working, MPTs cite several reasons for following a different work path to most other men by working part-time. Their motives include caring responsibilities, a desire to improve work-life balance, health and well-being or a mix of these factors. The MPTs describe themselves as voluntary part-time workers, this finding is plausible since men in higher level occupations are reportedly less likely to be plagued by involuntary part-time working (Warren and Lyonette 2020), however the extent to which their choices to work part-time are free or a true preference, rather than constrained (to a greater or lesser extent), as many female part-time workers (especially mothers) are, by their individual and household circumstances is contestable.

Arguably the most important contribution to knowledge to stem from the first research question is the apparent presence of a subtext which appears instrumental to MPTs' rationale for moving from full-time to part-time work in some of the triads. So, whilst some of the MPTs profess to be disinterested in career and use this narrative to support their rationale for moving to part-time work, their wives (HS participants) reveal they were struggling to cope in full-time work, disliked responsibility and readily grasped the opportunity to work part-time to relieve these pressures. Part-time work may therefore represent a safe, comfortable space for these men.

To address the first research question, a review of literature and statistical evidence pertaining to the practice of part-time work and part-time working was conducted and presented in Chapter 2, this work formed part of the theoretical framework for the thesis. Chapter 2 confirms that part-time work is highly gendered, it is a work mode often associated with women, particularly mothers, who use it to accommodate paid work alongside caring commitments and household responsibilities (Wheatley 2017a; Nightingale 2021). Men's participation in part-

time work peaks among young men aged 18-24 who often use it to support study (Evans and Yusof 2021) and among older men who use it as a pre-retirement strategy or to prolong their working lives (Hofacker and Konig 2013), but in the middle age ranges men's use of part-time work is scant. More recent evidence points to an increasing and more diverse male part-time workforce (Belfield et al. 2017), yet part-time work remains unusual outside of the peak age ranges, and among men working in professional and managerial occupations (Warren and Lyonette 2020). Whilst part-time work might be appealing to some men (and women) who do not want to or do not need to work full-time (Higgins, Duxbury and Johnson 2000), or as a means of managing health conditions in later working life (Barnes, Smeaton and Taylor 2009), increases in male part-time working are often attributed to involuntary reasons, as opposed to representing a desire among men to work fewer hours. Men's aversion to part-time work as a choice, is likely to be integrally bound with the notion that hegemonic masculinity is not just associated with work, but it is more acutely associated with work that entails long (full-time) hours and behaviours which demonstrate prioritisation of work over family and other commitments (Lewis and Humbert, 2010); deviation from this script carries risks to men's subject position (Butler 2009). As a group, men in professional and managerial occupations have been shown to be least affected by involuntary part-time working (Warren and Lyonette 2020) which would suggest that the small number of men who do participate in part-time work in these occupations do so out of choice, and so draw back voluntarily from a key space in which gender norms are reinforced and gender intelligibility is conferred on individuals.

Consistent with the literature, the findings of the empirical analysis presented in Chapter 5 show that across the sample group, MPTs describe themselves as voluntary part-time workers, although the notion that part-time work is entirely voluntary - a free choice, in all of the triads is contestable; their motives for participating in part-time work at this stage in their lives and careers can be broadly categorised as firstly, to play a primary (or greater) role in childcare secondly, to protect their health and well-being, and thirdly to achieve a better work-life balance. In practice their stories of when and why they entered part-time work, and their current, and likely future relationship with part-time work are individual and complex, shaped, and sometimes constrained as are many part-time workers, by a

web of personal, household, organisational and societal factors. Whilst practical factors appear to dominate their decisions, the study reveals gendered tensions in the data, often manifest as a tussle between a desire to work less and correspondingly dedicate greater time to other activities, and gendered expectations to follow a normative (male) work mode (Acker 1990) and normative chronology of career development (Duncan and Loretto 2004). The involvement of HS participants in the study proved valuable in teasing out these tensions to uncover this contribution to knowledge pertaining to a niche subset of male part-time workers.

The research highlights that MPTs' experiences of entering part-time work were varied with sector playing a key role in terms of access to part-time work. Part-time work was shown to be easier to secure in the education sector, indeed the MPTs working elsewhere resorted to nepotism to secure part-time work, concurring therefore with prior studies which suggest that opportunities to work part-time at senior levels and in managerial and professional roles are relatively scarce (Fagan et al. 2014). The MPTs' displayed different ways of accommodating part-time work within their careers; some were intent on moving from part-time work to resume full-time careers as their circumstances altered, whilst for others there was evidence of part-time work potentially being a work mode that they could be drawn to for spells throughout the remainder of their career. For others part-time work was positioned as a permanent work mode that they did not intend to relinquish, since they derived valuable lifestyle benefits from working in this manner. For these MPTs their choice to work part-time seemed to signal, in accordance with research by Sorrell, Gatersleben and Druckman (2020), that work was less central to their lives. Findings analysed in Chapter 6, indicate that continuing to enjoy interesting work commensurate with qualifications and experience and reaping job satisfaction however remained important for these men.

The most interesting contribution to new knowledge in relation to the first research question arises from the juxtaposition of MPTs' stated reason(s) for working part-time and the accounts of HS participants in the triads. Some of the MPTs actively supported their rationale for working part-time by downplaying their attachment to career, yet snippets of evidence from HS participants show, in some cases, that

an inability to cope with demanding full-time careers and the responsibilities which accompanied these trajectories were key triggers for MPTs entering part-time work. Dismissal of the salience of career in conjunction with emphasising pull factors for choosing part-time work is interpreted as a tactic the MPTs use to detract from a narrative perceived to be more emasculating than the act of part-time work itself, that is pressures of work and inability to continue to follow a normative (male) working model (Acker 1990). This conjecture is corroborated later in the study since some of the same MPTs seek to revitalise careers in full-time work on their terms as their circumstances alter (Chapter 6), showing that career is important for their identity. Furthermore, MPTs who claim career is unimportant nevertheless boast of past career accomplishments to signal their compliance with hegemonic masculine ideals (Chapter 7). Evidence of this nature shows that MPTs are conflicted in part-time work and conscious of the gendered connotations of their actions; they are anxious to package their motives for their level of engagement in paid work in ways that best protect their masculinity.

2. How do middle-aged men in highly skilled occupations experience the workplace and the home sphere of their lives as part-time workers?

Contribution to knowledge (2) - work sphere

Despite their age, gender, and occupational status, MPTs' part-time jobs comprise a mix of poor quality and good quality job characteristics. Consistent with the job quality literature (e.g., Rubery and Grimshaw 2016) which points to the association between reduced hours working and poor(er) job quality indicators, MPTs, in common with other part-time workers, often willingly trade poor quality job characteristics for the flexibility part-time work provides and accept that career progression is best enabled in full-time work. To guard against work-to-home spillover and self-exploitation, MPTs are shown to engage in boundary work, yet at times some of the MPTs display a willingness to be flexible to meet the needs of their employers by interrupting non-working time to attend to work issues. These actions are interpreted as ways of showing gratitude for the opportunity to work part-time to fit paid work around other life commitments and interests. Furthermore, the research illustrates that MPTs are often engaged in productive activities beyond part-time paid work, some of

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which are income generating and some unpaid, these endeavours provide a sense of full lives lived beneath the designation part-time worker, suggesting the label part-time worker is disingenuous.

Contribution to knowledge (3) - home sphere

In the home the MPTs report doing more housework and childcare than men who work full-time. In practice male part-time working does not radically reshape the domestic division of labour; consistent with the literature pertaining to the gendering of unpaid, home-centred work, women continue to make a major contribution to housework, plus undertake almost all the hidden domestic labour and bear the mental load of family life, irrespective of their paid work commitments. The MPTs' wives also consistently undertook a disproportionate amount of additional domestic work and home schooling during the Covid-19 pandemic, adding to their burden. This finding embellishes existing accounts of the pandemic (e.g., Warren and Lyonette 2021) by showing that the pattern of women doing more unpaid work in the home during this period extends to households with high socio-economic status, which include a male part-time worker.

Empirical findings in relation to the second research question are presented in Chapter 6. These findings draw on literature reviewed in Chapter 2 which details assessments of job quality in part-time work and considers the implications of part-time work regimes for individuals' levels of engagement in non-work activities such as unpaid caring, household labour and leisure. The theoretical framework developed for the thesis around these themes helps to make sense of the MPTs' experiences as part-time workers in the home and work spheres of their lives.

In connection with the work sphere element of the second research question, Chapter 2 illustrates that better quality jobs are associated with higher levels of task discretion and autonomy, higher pay, job security, and opportunities for training and development (Bartling, Fehr and Schmidt 2012), whereas low-quality jobs exhibit low skill and autonomy, inferior pay, training, and job security, and are often linked with highly flexible forms of employment (Avram 2022). In practice however

Warren and Lyonette (2018) suggest that jobs are rarely wholly comprised of good characteristics or poor job quality characteristics and so job quality is best envisioned as a spectrum. Debates surrounding the quality of part-time work are vibrant. Since much part-time work resides in low skill, low status work, even more so for men (Warren 2022) and is often used by employers to provide maximum operational flexibility whilst controlling costs (Fagan et al. 2014), part-time work is frequently considered to be poor-quality work and linked with precarious work (Rubery and Grimshaw 2016). On the contrary organisations will sometimes use part-time working as a way of retaining valued workers by structuring jobs to meet individuals' requirements; part-time work developed for these reasons tends to be better quality (Fagan et al. 2014). Green and Livanos (2015) suggest a mix of outcomes for men in part-time work but the presence of high paid part-time work among highly skilled older men with higher social capital and high occupational status. Haines III, Dorey-Demers and Martin (2018) concur, suggesting the majority of those in good part-time employment enjoy a better level of household income than those in poor part-time work, they are also more likely to be better educated and more experienced.

As a prime user of part-time work, greater participation rates in part-time work among women accentuates the role they play in the home, both in terms of taking on a greater share of domestic work (Craig and Powell 2018) and childcare (Franklin and Hochlaf 2021). Women also tend to undertake hidden household labour (Ciciolla and Luthar 2019) and carry the mental load of managing a household (Dean, Churchill and Ruppanner 2021). Men's participation in part-time work, however, is sometimes positioned as a means by which couples can achieve greater gender equality in the home and for fathers to be more involved in the care of their children, with potential benefits for all (Warren 2022; Bunning 2020). Dual part-time worker households are perceived to offer the greatest chance of equality (Ibanez 2011).

The contribution made by the PhD study in response to the second research is twofold to reflect the work and home dimensions of the question. First, concerning the work sphere, empirical findings elucidate MPTs' experiences of job quality in part-time work and ways in which they manage part-time work. The study

highlights that by working in part-time roles, middle-aged men in highly skilled professional occupations risk exposure to the range of detriments women, more specifically, mothers face when working part-time (Bear and Glick 2017), although job quality is variable across the triads and moderated by role and sector. Consistent with Chung (2020) some of the MPTs in the study experience penalties in part-time work manifest as poor relative pay, overqualification for the work they undertake, job insecurity and in some cases a reported lack of agency in part-time work. These experiences often coexist with factors indicative of high-quality work such as job satisfaction and autonomy which reflect the fact that the jobs the MPTs inhabit are generally higher quality than most part-time jobs. The most equalised terms and conditions and social protection are found among academics in further and higher education who appear to benefit from a developed policy framework regulating flexible working. The university lecturers in this group also enjoy part-time jobs which are operationally barely distinguishable from full-time academic roles, yet even in this environment there were signs of poorer quality job quality indicators such as spells of job intensity, and, in common with all other MPTs, career progression (and associated financial progression) is perceived to be best enabled in full-time work (Nightingale 2019). Poor job quality characteristics were shown to impede experiences of part-time work among MPTs in non-academic roles in universities and colleges suggesting job type is a crucial mediating factor for workers' experiences of the quality of part-time work they undertake. The experiences of MPTs working as technology professionals in the private sector suggest high skill, high autonomy and high levels of job satisfaction coexist with characteristics associated with poorer job quality such as career stagnation and hours uncertainty (Kalleberg 2012). The study contributes to theory by illustrating that the intersectionality of gender, middle-age (translatable to years of experience) and occupational gravitas is not enough to fully insulate MPTs from experiencing poor job quality characteristics in part-time work. The study concurs with Warren and Lyonette (2020) however that worker's rationale for working part-time can influence their perceptions of job quality; MPTs are often prepared to settle for the deleterious aspects of part-time work to pursue a mode of working which is conducive to the way in which they wish to live their lives and manage the home-work interface.

In terms of navigating part-time work, the data provides evidence of MPTs managing the boundary between work and non-working time by for example, fastidiously logging work time, leaving work on time, and avoiding taking work home such that they can maintain a good work-life balance. There are some signs however, to indicate that at times, MPTs engage in enabled intensification (Chung and van der Lippe, 2020) by working longer than contracted and offering flexibility around their part-time hours, perhaps in a display of gratitude for the opportunity to work flexibly (Kelliher and Anderson 2010). The choices the men make to work part-time influence their future decision-making and foreshadow their work-life trajectories. Irrespective of the reasons why the MPTs first embarked on part-time work, or their tenure in part-time work, the experience of using this work mode appears to have altered their relationship with paid work, such that long hours and onerous workloads which are bound with hegemonic masculinity (Messerschmidt, 2018) and notions of the ideal (male) worker (Acker 1990) are rejected. For others searching for full-time work, the evidence shows MPTs seek jobs on their terms, with work-life balance a prime objective. The study accords with Fagan et al (2014) in finding that that MPTs' experience difficulties transitioning from part-time work to full-time work, this is particularly so in environments in which their part-time work history is known. The legacy of part-time work appears to scar their prospects, leading to temporary contracts and work for which they are overqualified. Consistent with the findings of Nätti and Nergaard (2019) the study shows however that that part-time work can provide a route back to full-time employment, even if the process is sometimes lengthy and arduous and the (full-time) jobs they manage to secure entail compromise.

Concerning the home sphere dimension of the second research question the study concludes that part-time working among men in professional occupations generally underdelivers in terms of realising greater equality in the division of domestic labour and childcare responsibilities in the home. Whilst MPTs report doing more unpaid work and caring than men who work full-time, the extra work they do in this regard appears incongruent with the time they recoup by not working full-time, sending a resounding message that gender rather than time remains a key determinant of who bears the greatest unpaid workload in most households. The gains evidenced are therefore unlikely to go as far as studies hoped in achieving

greater gender equality (Warren 2022; Bunning 2020). The study points to a minority of MPTs using their time beyond part-time paid work to engage in other work-related activities such as social enterprise and property management, but this was not a universal finding across all triads, or always a major consumer of MPTs' time, and so cannot be relied on to explain why greater gains in equalising the domestic division of labour via male part-time working appear not to have been realised. In most of the households, MPTs' wives continue to play a major role in domestic work and a greater emotional (if not always practical) role in childcare for dependent children, irrespective of their own paid work commitments. Although some differences in workload allocation are apparent between households represented in the study, household composition appears to make less of a difference than might be anticipated in terms of who does what or how much each partner contributes to the household, or overall to caring and nurturing responsibilities for dependent children.

In households which comprise a male part-time worker and female full-time worker the MPTs' wives remain integrally involved in domestic work either regularly or intermittently, suggesting that they undertake full-time work 'plus', workload (Craig and Churchill 2021). The division of labour in dual part-time worker households is shown to be more equalised as both partners undertake some paid work and some unpaid work. This finding is consistent with Ibanez (2011) who suggests a dual part-time working configuration offers the greatest prospect of symmetry between the paid market work and unpaid household work men and women do in different sex couples. Even within these more egalitarian households however there were examples of MPTs doing less than their fair share despite being cajoled to do more, and evidence of MPTs, but not their wives, benefiting from personal leisure time. There is robust evidence that women's workloads across several of the households are compounded by hidden household labour (Ciciolla and Luthar 2019), furthermore they carry a mental workload (Dean, Churchill and Ruppanner 2021), with MPTs only making a minor contribution to this work. MPTs' role tends to entail fetching, carrying, enacting plans, rather than cognitive or emotional involvement, which only serves to reinforce the notion of essentialised natural differences between men and women (Whitehead 2002).

The theme of women doing more in the home is amplified by data collected during phases of the study which coincided with the Covid-19 induced lockdown (in 2020), when non-essential workers were compelled to work from home causing new tensions and a call to renegotiate household living and working regimes. Findings illustrate that households were burdened by additional domestic responsibilities caused by greater time spent at home by family members, the demands of homeschooling, and a need to simultaneously manage paid work responsibilities; the study concurs with other research covering the pandemic (Warren and Lyonette 2021; Andrew et al. 2021) in determining that greater additional workload in this regard fell to the MPTs' wives irrespective of their paid work commitments.

The study makes an important contribution to research on the domestic division of household labour during the pandemic not least because it provides insight into the division of domestic labour and childcare responsibilities in households with high socio-economic status, where work (paid and unpaid) was confined to home for long periods of time and where male part-time working is present. Despite the existence of a male part-time worker, the evidence points to the lockdown period being particularly difficult for women in the households included in the study as some encountered intensification in their paid work roles, whilst taking on additional paid work in the home. Meanwhile MPTs' part-time workloads appeared to be less disrupted, or were diminished, such that they could enjoy the experience of lockdown. The imbalance in unpaid workloads evident between MPTs and their (female) partners during the pandemic indicates that any marginal gains seen in MPTs' uptake of household chores and childcare, owing to their part-time work status, are poorly rooted and fragile.

Excepting the (comparatively greater) gains in some of the dual part-time workers households, the study concludes that MPTs' part-time work status marginally modifies but does not fundamentally revolutionise the gendered division of labour within the home. The extent of the women's paid and unpaid work activity overshadows that of the MPTs', indicating that the women had more tasks to juggle, and their lives were more intense and complex.

3. How do male, middle-aged part-time workers in highly skilled occupations perform gender at work and at home, and what are the implications for the gender hierarchy?

Contribution to knowledge (4)

The findings of the study represent an empirically grounded challenge to Butler's work on gender precarity, adding a new dimension to knowledge in terms of how subject intelligibility is read when men defy the dominant rules of gender. The research finds that instead of experiencing precarious masculinity positioning for deviating from the heterosexual matrix as Butler (2009) suggests is prone to occur, the MPTs evade scrutiny and on the contrary, are considered brave and progressive by others for opting to work part-time. The study represents a clear application of Butler's theorisation of gender precarity in a workplace context, with respect to a niche group of privileged, male workers. The study advances appreciation of Butlerian thinking surrounding gendered subject intelligibility, notably by recognising that age and status can safeguard masculine intelligibility despite acts which could, in 'othered' men, be interpreted as overtly feminine digressions.

The study finds the MPTs retain a prioritised position in the gender hierarchy by performing a hybrid form of hegemonic masculinity (Bridges and Pascoe 2014: 2018) which simultaneously hides and secures their hegemonic power. In practice, this hybrid performance sees new masculine intelligibilities, based on pro equality values and home/family-centred ideals, underscored by a discourse of choice, combined with patriarchal acts of doing no more in the home sphere, despite working fewer hours, plus strongly curated narratives of productiveness, job expertise, and successful (full-time) work histories which reflect the normative (male) working model. MPTs are also complicit in using their age and occupational status to conceal their part-time work mode. This evidence makes for a new contribution to theory by illustrating that although MPTs claim to be at ease with their work mode, they privately harbour anxieties that part-time work in middle-age runs counter to the dominant rules of gender and poses a risk to their subject intelligibility.

Empirical findings in relation to the third and final research question are analysed in Chapter 7. These findings draw on literature reviewed in Chapter 3 which centres on the gender and masculinity literatures, and research the concept of chrononormativity, with a focus on age and gender intersectionality. Critical review of the gender literature exposes similarities and differences between leading theorisations of gendering namely Butler's (1990) poststructuralist theory of gender performativity and on doing gender (West and Zimmerman 1987), an ethnomethodological approach to gender construction. Both understand gender to be socially constituted rather than static, binary categories based on sexual differences, and both recognise that subject intelligibility is conferred on those who comply with dominant gender norms. Differences lie in the process by which one becomes gendered. Whereas West and Zimmerman (1987) stress that gender is something Individuals do or practice in social interaction, Butler (1990) views gender as a performative act, something that is only real to the extent that it is performed. Repeated discontinuous acts mimic the dominant rules of gender such that natural gendered differences appear to exist, when in fact they are only illusionary. Intelligibility as masculine or feminine is conferred on individuals whom the audience (others) believe perform gender convincingly, whereas negative audience reactions are triggered by individuals who fail to perform gender in ways which comply with the dominant rules of gender, resulting in gender precarity and loss of subject intelligibility in the eyes of others. Since the thesis concerns men, the theoretical framework focuses on hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987) as the current most culturally honoured way of being a man, which legitimises the subjugation of women to men and requires all other men to position themselves relationally to it. For men it is recognised that living up to hegemonic masculine ideals requires cultural work (Swidler 2001). Despite the cultural prioritisation of hegemonic masculinity, it is shown to be fluid and context dependent, attempts at subversion, or undoing, through social interaction are thus conceivable (Connell 2009; Deutch 2007), giving rise perhaps to new variants which either do, or do not, legitimise patriarchy. On the contrary Jewkes et al (2015) find it difficult to see how hegemonic masculinity can ever not oppress women.

In analysing the empirical evidence drawn from the seven triads, the study concludes the middle-aged men in professional occupations recognise that it is

unusual for men like themselves to work part-time, yet they are disinclined to dwell on the significance of their choice from a gendered perspective, instead they expect their choice to garner little scrutiny. This stance concurs with literature which refers to the normalised privileged position of men (Sheerin and Linehan 2018) whereby men's actions are rarely questioned. Despite following a life course which is non-normative in terms of pared back engagement in paid work and greater involvement in home-centred activities, the MPTs are perceived as progressive and brave by the audience (HS and WS participants), rather than emasculated and othered, thus protecting the men from the gender precarity that Butler (2009) argues is inflicted on those who operate on the far side of intelligibility. Importantly, the study therefore challenges Butler's notion that masculine intelligibility is lost or impaired when men act outside the bounds of dominant gendered norms. Not only are the men adulated by others for failing to follow a conventionally gendered path, but there is also evidence that they are often envied in the workplace by male peers, who infer that the normative regulations of masculinity, that they personally feel obliged to comply with, are overly restrictive. To this end the study concurs with Schneider (2004) that it is often easier for those with higher social status to deviate from social norms and conduct themselves in different ways. Accordingly, the MPTs construct new masculine intelligibilities based on voluntary, pro-equality values, altruistic partnering, and greater participation in the home particularly as involved fathers. The MPTs articulate their choices as clever ways of playing with gender (Meijs, Lammers and Ratliff 2015), and they appear to subjugate men who do not see the wisdom in performing gender in similarly enlightened ways.

A key expressive of equal opportunities values in several of the MPTs' discourses is the notion of supporting their wives' careers by taking a primary or greater role in childcare and household tasks. In line with this, they seek to display iterative performances of an alternative masculinity which suggests a mimicking of the new models of fathering (Bach and Aarseth 2016; Hearn et al. 2012) seen in Nordic and North-Western European countries, they also compare themselves favourably to men in full-time work by claiming to do more housework. These performances, however, are shown to be a thin veneer of new non-hegemonic, non-patriarchal ideals of masculinity as the men subjugate their wives in the home, for example, by failing to assume a fair share of domestic responsibilities despite working fewer

hours, and by leaving home organisation and the mental workload of running a household/family to their wives irrespective of their working pattern. Furthermore, they cite successful former careers in full-time work, emphasising their level of commitment, salary, long working hours, and career progression, they also stress their life-wide productivity, and expertise. These performances are interpreted as ways of reflecting compliance with hegemonic masculinity ideals (Connell 1987), necessarily underpinned by patriarchy and hegemonic power, and so a safer basis for being conferred masculine status and evading the precarity associated with deviating from the dominant rules of gender (Butler 2009). The traditional scripts the MPTs cling to mirror normative life course expectations and are more reflective of men like them in full-time work, suggesting that whilst they have chosen part-time work, it is an uncomfortable space for middle-aged men in highly skilled professional occupations. Their behaviours suggest anxiety at breaking out of traditional gender frames (Goffman 1974) and risking their intelligibility as men by doing so, these feelings are likely borne from deep feelings of gender role incongruity (Eagly and Karau 2002). Such feelings are more apparent among MPTs with longer service in part-time work, who work harder at doing gender in traditional ways.

A key contribution of the study revolves around the nature of the sample group this PhD thesis focuses upon, notably a privileged, niche group of middle-aged men with high socio-economic status who work part-time in highly skilled occupations. The study provides a hitherto untold account of their experiences as part-time workers and the gendered ramifications of working in a work mode which is much more readily associated with women. The MPTs' apparent anxieties surrounding their subject position as men, which cause them to hold on to proven gender scripts are found to be substantially alleviated by their age and occupational gravitas, rendering their concerns as overwrought. Most of the MPTs in the sample, can control their work schedules, choose where and when to work and how to manage their time resulting in muted visibility as part-time contributors in the workplace. The absence of gaze directed at this subset of male part-time workers can be contrasted with the highly transparent working shifts and workplace presence required of most part-time workers in working-class occupations, for example, retail and hospitality workers, manual operatives, cleaning staff and healthcare

workers who tend to have far less control over when, how, and where they work (TUC, 2021). As a result of the latitude they are afforded, the men can operate covertly as part-time workers, escaping the label of part-time and rebuffing the associated negative connotations arising from participating in a work mode more commonly associated with women. In other words, they can successfully demonstrate gender accountable actions which are unremarkable for their 'fit' with acceptable standards of culturally appropriate or normative behaviour (Zimmerman and Wieder 1970) and feign full compliance with age-appropriate recitals of gender (Riach, Rumens and Tyler 2014; Foweraker and Cutcher 2015). This discovery within the thesis, contradicts the argument positioned by Bosson and Vandello (2011) that masculinity is hard fought and easily lost, indeed the MPTs appear to find it easy to be read as masculine irrespective of their unconventional gendered lives. Moreover, when MPTs seek to transition to full-time work prospective employers presuppose that as middle-aged men in high skilled occupations the men have a normative full-time work history and so align closely with gendered and chrononormative expectations (Duncan and Loretto 2004). Given the study indicates time spent in part-time work can be an impediment for those seeking to transition to full-time work (Fagan et al. 2014), MPTs' ability to conceal periods of time spent in part-time is considered an advantage.

The study shows the conflicted and contested nature of gender through the lens of men working part-time in highly skilled professional occupations. A complex set of gender performances are evident, whereby some subordinated feminine displays such as caring and housework are incorporated into the MPTs' identities, alongside traditional acts of doing gender in normative, highly accountable ways (West and Zimmerman 1987), the blended effect hides and obscures their identification with hegemonic masculinity at the same time and is consistent with notions of hybrid hegemonic masculinity observed by Bridges and Pascoe (2014; 2018) and Messerschmidt (2018). The study exemplifies the notion that hegemonic masculinity becomes more, rather than less apparent when it is under threat, challenged or disrupted (Messerschmidt 2000).

8.3 Contribution to practice

The findings of the study have ramifications for organisational practice. They show that part-time jobs, even in professional occupations can expose workers to aspects of poor job quality, notably career advancement is hampered by engagement in part-time work. Whilst employers are likely to be familiar with women working part-time, especially mothers, male part-time working remains less common and as such it can be a challenging space for men to occupy whilst preserving their masculinity.

The study highlights that organisations could do much more to enable good quality part-time work to be widely available in highly skilled occupations, to embrace greater diversity among part-time workers and to value the contribution workers make, irrespective of their time commitment to paid work. These developments in organisational practice would serve, over time, to sever the stark division between full-time work and part-time work and relax the concomitant notions of heteronormative and chrononormative life course such that individuals can configure their lives in a multitude of ways to suit their circumstances and preferences without personal or professional repercussions.

This thesis makes a significant contribution to practice. It demonstrates that part-time work can offer middle-aged men in highly skilled professional occupations a viable way to engage in paid work whilst also playing a primary/greater role in childcare, sharing domestic duties with their partners, accommodating other activities and interests, and remaining active in work whilst managing health concerns. However, even among this agentic group, who possess occupational gravitas and high socio-economic status, part-time work is shown to be inferior to full-time work in terms of some measures of job quality and a difficult space for men to navigate whilst preserving their gendered identity. Notably whilst part-time work remains associated with career stagnation and poorer relative pay and men are anxious about how it reflects on their masculinity, it is unlikely to become the work mode of choice for significantly more men.

The findings of this thesis are important for employers who wish to attract, manage, and retain part-time workers. The practical ramifications of the study are heightened given the increase in incidence of part-time work among men and heterogeneity of men using this mode of working, yet it would be disingenuous to target enhancements in part-time working practice at male part-time working alone. As noted above many of the contributions which flow from this study reverberate more widely and improvements are salient for the benefit of all who choose, or who are restricted to working reduced hours.

Employers play a key role in advancing the quality of part-time work, for example by broadening opportunities for development and career progression, improving pay and conditions relative to full-time workers, and reviewing job content and operational practices such that part-time workers are better able to use their expertise and experience in the workplace. In sum, this thesis calls for the contribution, and potential future contributions of part-time workers (regardless of gender) to be better valued and recognised.

The thesis also calls for part-time working opportunities to be made more accessible to highly skilled workers to break the unnecessary presumption that part-time routines have only a limited application within the confines of low paid, low status roles. The findings show that highly skilled jobs tend not to be advertised as part-time; current routes into part-time work for individuals in these occupations appear to be through amendment to existing full-time contracts or nepotism, thus direct and transparent entry routes are rare. Explicit job advertisements for part-time workers should be encouraged to extend part-time working opportunities to a wider demographic of workers; this measure stands to benefit employers in terms of sourcing talent whilst catering for the lifestyle needs and preferences of workers. Although based on a small sample, the thesis also showed that some of the MPTs experienced difficulties in transitioning between part-time and full-time work. The findings register a need for employers to scrutinise their selection policies and practices to eliminate conscious and unconscious bias against part-time workers, such that the skills and experience they contribute is valued and properly recognised. In doing so employers must train hiring managers to embrace individual life choices and circumstances, beyond the traditional, without reference to gender, age or other chrononormative expectations, such that how, when, and why

individuals engage with paid work ceases to be a salient factor which structures workers' opportunities and experiences. As work is a primary site of gender performance, change in this arena offers scope for a loosening of the binary gendered ties that continue to regulate ways of living and being for men and women. Linked to these points, there is a need to disrupt the association between paid work and masculinity and alter organisational assumptions that part-time work is solely or mainly the domain of women, such that more men feel willing or able to request part-time work/maintain an attachment to part-time work, regardless of age, occupation, or motive for participating in part-time work. The introduction of Shared Parental Leave only structurally legitimises a greater role for fathers in childcare, this thesis shows that cultural change needs to occur in unison else inequalities will persist, and change will continue to be slow and faltering. Employers have a responsibility to challenge workplace cultures and shape their work environments such that gendered performances, of men and of women, do not require rigid adherence to societal norms. More broadly the thesis calls for flexible working practices, including part-time work, to be given greater consideration as a means of achieving a better work-life balance for all and so preserving individual and societal well-being. The pandemic shone a spotlight on working hours and modes of working as illustrated by the growing strength of the 4-day working week movement and the continued popularity of remote and hybrid working, this study demonstrates focus in this direction, to embrace greater flexibility in working regimes, is welcome.

At a more conceptual level the study suggests that perceptions regarding what constitutes a part-time job and notions of who is a part-time worker need to be reframed such that the holistic value of part-time working, and of part-time workers can truly be realised by employers and by society more widely. The evidence gathered in this study has shown that part-time workers are sometimes taken advantage of by employers who prey on workers' desire for flexible working regimes. Moreover, the study illustrates that workers who are labelled part-time do engage in other work to a greater or lesser extent, some of which is income generating, yet they are recognisable only for their conventional (paid) part-time work endeavour. Unpaid activities tend to become invisible and are deprioritised in the shadows of paid work, yet are important for the economy, either directly in terms of job creation and tax revenue, or indirectly by enabling others to be

available for paid work. The terminology part-time work(er) is thus an ill-conceived descriptor, deserved of review; it is suggested that part-time *paid* work is a more accurate label which leaves scope for the notion that many individuals who are classed as part-time workers, do in fact work full-time or close to full-time, carrying out a blend of paid and non-paid activities. The study emphasises that the label part-time worker does not have to denote part-talented, part-ambitious, part-driven, part-committed, or partially productive.

8.4 Strengths of the study, limitations and future research opportunities

This mixed qualitative methods study provides an in-depth exploration of the experiences of a hitherto under-researched group of male part-time workers, contributing both to analyses of part-time work and gender. As highlighted in Chapter 4, the triangulation of self-reports from the MPTs themselves with the thoughts and perceptions of WS and HS participants produces a holistic investigation into the MPTs' lived experiences and the way in which they perform gender at work and at home as part-time workers. Furthermore, the combination of semi-structured interviews with photo elicitation over a longitudinal timeframe captures changes over time in MPTs' experiences, their accounts of these and the accounts provided by WS and HS participants in relation to the research questions. Notably, parts of the data collection exercise which took place during the pandemic, add new real-time insight into how paid work commitments and unpaid care and domestic responsibilities were negotiated and (re)calibrated in households during this period. These factors add to the strength of the study and are key to the contributions to new knowledge created by the research as detailed within this concluding chapter.

The niche group of male part-time workers the study concentrates upon is both a strength and a limitation. Given the present study focuses exclusively on a sample of middle-aged, highly skilled, white British, heterosexual, cisgender, married men in different-sex couple households, there is scope to replicate the research across a larger stratified sample of male part-time workers more representative of UK society. Future studies could include greater diversity with respect to age, class, ethnicity, sexuality, relationship status and family/household composition, broadening the sample in this way would allow greater scope for exploring men's

use of part-time work, their experiences of work and home as part-time workers and the way in which they perform gender in these spaces through different intersectional lenses. Further research opportunities also exist to investigate men's participation in part-time work, and experiences of using this work mode in a wider range of occupations, sectors and skills levels. The experiences of men in skill levels 1-3 of the SOC 2020 to include elementary and skilled trades, customer service and sales occupations, for example, and men working part-time across a broader tranche of sectors such as health, construction, manufacturing, or retail, for instance, would enrich understanding of how different occupational and organisational contexts make part-time working more, or less, contentious for men and masculinity. Additionally, studies could entail comparative analysis with male part-time workers in other economies such as the Nordic countries, China, and the USA. Comparative studies of this nature would reveal whether the present findings and conclusions are fully or partially replicated in these locations, and thus the extent to which men's motives for working part-time, their experiences of home and work as part-time workers and how they perform gender in these spaces are idiosyncratically shaped by factors such as the regulatory environment, employer practices, and prevailing chrononormative expectations in each world region.

The thesis makes an important and novel contribution to the field of part-time work among men and the study of gender. It is hoped that the research will inspire researchers and employers to think more expansively about the changes that need to take place to ensure that part-time working is a positive experience for workers and organisations alike. The study has shown that middle-aged men in part-time work in highly skilled occupations are adept at their work, they enjoy their jobs and are dedicated to their professions, but they feel conflicted working in a work mode more commonly used by women. The narrative that part-time workers matter less, on the grounds that paid work is just part of their lives could, and should, be reframed. It is time to dispense with using hours of paid work as a proxy for worth or viable subject intelligibility.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview guides

Phase A interviews (month 1)	
Male part-time workers (MPT)	The phase A interviews with male part-time workers will take a life history perspective with a view to identifying the factors that have been influential in shaping the men's engagement with part-time employment. Particular attention will be paid to events considered by the participants to be critical incidents. Questions will focus on education, family background, early career choices, career trajectory/job changes/career progression, friends and other influences, income/wealth, personal values and priorities, health and well-being, leisure interests and family circumstances. Further themes will include: - • The extent to which the men freely chose part-time work • How long they have been working part-time • How the men's part-time working arrangements are operationalised in the workplace (e.g., hours worked, pattern of working, work location) • How the men perceive their part-time work status impacts on their working relationships, job quality and their career prospects • The role the men play in care and domestic work in the home. • The economic and social impact of their part-time work status within the household • How the men spend their non-work time. • The degree to which the men are content with part-time work • Men's longer-term commitment to part-time work
WS participants	Phase A interviews with colleagues, managers and contacts in the work sphere will pursue the following themes: - • The prevalence of part-time working in the organisation • The profile of those engaged in part-time work e.g., gender, age, occupation/status • Broad attitudes to part-time work and part-time workers • The contribution of part-time employees in the workplace • Others' perceptions of the contribution part time employees make • Perceptions of the flexibility part-time employees do/do not offer • Experiences of working alongside part-time employees

	• 'Acceptable' and 'non-acceptable' reasons for working part time • Views concerning ease of access to part-time work in highly skilled occupations • Comfort with and normality of men in part-time work • Perceptions of the key reasons men work part-time
HS participants	Phase A interviews with the men's friends, spouse/partner and family members will pursue the following themes: - • Participants' common perceptions of part-time work and who inhabits part-time work • The perceived merits of part-time employment • The perceived negative implications of part–time employment • Attitudes to their friend/relative/partner's part-time work status • The economic and social impacts of their friend/relative/partner's part-time work status on the household • Perceptions of how their friend/relative/partner spends their non-work time • Ways in which their relationship with the male study participant is affected by his part-time employment status
Phase B telephone/MS Teams interviews (month 6/7)	
All participants	Phase B will involve a shorter semi-structured telephone or MS Teams interview with each of the participants in the study to revisit and capture updates stemming from the phase A interviews and to help to build rapport to enable deeper data to be successfully drawn at phase C The telephone/Skype interviews with each set of participants will thus revisit key themes in the stage 1 interviews and record new information, reflections, and views. No new themes will be pursued.
Phase C interviews (month 11/12) Final interviews will be arranged with each of the participants to develop their respective narratives.	
Male part-time workers (MPT)	The interview schedule used with the men themselves explores the following themes and issues: - • To what extent respondents are comfortable following a work mode more commonly associated with women • Other men's reactions to their part-time work status • Feelings of acceptance and belongingness at work

	• Feelings of acceptance and belongingness in the non-work sphere/context specific feelings e.g., playground, neighbourhood, sports club, supermarket • Whether the men feel emasculated in any sense because of working part-time • Whether breadwinner status is important to the men • Men's perceptions of the regulations of gender (masculinity) in the workplace • Men's perceptions of the regulations of gender (masculinity) in social spaces • Men's perceptions of the risks, if any, associated with working part-time in highly skilled occupations • Evidence that the men recognise involvement in compensation activity (in work or outside of work) to preserve/assert their masculinity • Evidence of concealing their part-time work status • Evidence of differentiation strategy at play to disassociate themselves from other part-time employees (e.g., female part-time employees, junior or unskilled part –time workers) • The ease with which men believe that they could gain/re-gain full-time work if they so desired.
WS participants	Phase C interviews with colleagues, managers and contacts in the work sphere will pursue the following themes: - • The extent to which the practice of men working part-time in highly skilled roles disrupts gendered relations in the organisation • The degree to which flexible working practices are gender neutral in the workplace • Whether part-time work is experienced similarly by male and female employees • Whether men can secure credibility with the senior management team /CEO when employed on a part-time basis • Whether men can exert power when employed on a part-time basis • Whether men's career prospects are negatively affected by part-time work • The ability of male and female managers and professionals to change between full-time and part-time work within the organisation and vice versa
HS participants	Phase C interviews with the men's friends, spouse/partner and family members will pursue the following themes: - • Degree of contentment with a domestic and work arrangement which defies traditional stereotypes • Children's reactions to dad working part-time

	- The broader level of social acceptance of a man in the household working part-time - Role models and comparators - The representation of male part-time employees on TV and in other forms of popular media - The extent to which male part time working resonates with participants' perceptions of masculinity - Potential evidence of men's compensating activity to safeguard masculinity - To male friends and family – would you personally consider part-time employment and if not, why not? - The gendering of part-time work, changing attitudes and perceptions - Performing gender at work - Performing gender in the home sphere

Appendix B – Participant consent form

Gender and part-time work; middle-aged men's experiences in highly skilled occupations

Please read through the **participant information sheet** attached which provides all the information you need about the research, before reading and signing this consent form. Participation is voluntary and greatly appreciated. If you are happy to take part in this research, please sign and date below. If you have any questions or concerns before, during or after your participation in this research, my contact details are on the bottom of this form. If you are happy to take part in this research please indicate your agreement with the following statements, and electronically sign and date below.

Agreement to consent

Please read and confirm your consent to participating in *interview 1/interview 2/ interview 3 for this project by initialling the appropriate box and signing and dating in the signatory space at the end of this form.

(*circle as applicable, consent will be sought prior to each interview)

		INITIALS
1.	I confirm that the purpose of the study has been explained to me, that I have been given information about it in writing, and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research	
2.	I understand my part in the research	
3.	I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time (by sending an email to the researcher) without giving any reason and without any implications for my legal rights	
4.	I understand that I can decline to answer individual/multiple questions asked during the course of	

	the interview without giving any reason and without any implications for my legal rights	
5.	I give permission for the interview transcript, including reference to any photos or images shared during the interview to be analysed by the researcher, on the understanding that the transcript and any unused photos/images will be destroyed following a period of 10 years after the project has ended and the researcher has submitted her thesis.	
6.	I understand that any photos or images that I share as part of the interview will not be used or reproduced in the project without my express consent and the consent of any persons and/or organisations featured in the photos/images	
7.	I agree to take part in this interview	

Please sign and date two copies, which will also be counter signed and dated by the researcher. You should retain one copy and the other will be retained by the researcher.

Name of participant	Date	Signature
Name of researcher		
Amanda Thompson		

Appendix C – Participant information sheet

Dear …………….

My name is Amanda Thompson, and I am currently at part-time PhD student at Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University. The title of my doctoral study is 'Gender and part-time work; middle-aged men's experiences in highly skilled occupations'. I am pleased to be able to invite you to participate in the study and would very much value your contribution. You are under no obligation whatsoever to agree to take part. This participant information sheet is designed to tell you more about the study so that you can make an informed decision as to whether or not you wish to take part.

Purpose of the study - The aim of the investigation is to explore why middle-aged work part-time in highly skilled occupations, how they experience work and their home lives as part-time workers and how they perform masculinity in these spaces. The research topic is set against some interesting background facts. We know that despite the development of legislation in the UK granting both men and women the right to request flexible working, and the introduction of shared parental leave, around 38 percent of women work part-time compared to just 13 percent of men. In addition, among both sexes part-time work is less common in highly skilled occupations than it is in lower-level occupations.

This study seeks to find out more about men in part-time employment. By involving other key figures (e.g., employers and colleagues in the work sphere and friends and family in the home sphere) the research hopes to be able to provide new insight not only into how the men themselves feel about being a part-time worker, and deal with working part-time but also how family/social relationships are affected and how employers/work colleagues accommodate and react to men working part-time.

What's the scope of the study? - The study will involve 6-8 men working part-time in a highly skilled professional occupation. Each of the men who express an interest in the study will be asked to nominate a work associate (e.g., colleague, line

manager, client) and someone known to him outside of work (e.g., partner, spouse, friend) that I could approach to explore men's experiences both in work and in the home sphere of their lives.

What do you want me to do? – as explained in the introductory section, your participation is entirely voluntary, equally if you do decide to take part but later change your mind you can opt out at any stage by emailing me at amanda.thompson@ntu.ac.uk If you agree to take part in the study, I would like you to take part in 3 semi-structured interviews with me over the course of 12 months. Interviews 1 and 3 will be face to face interviews each lasting approximately 60-90 minutes to be held at NTU, Nottingham or at a suitably safe and private location which could include your workplace or a public meeting space. Exceptionally meetings could be arranged at your home, if this is necessary then a protocol will need to be followed whereby my project supervisor is aware of the location and date and time of the meeting and a phone call is logged with her following the meeting to report that the meeting has ended and both participant and researcher are safe. The mid-year interview can be conducted via MS Teams and will be a shorter (up to 30 mins) conversation. I will ask for your written permission to record each of the interviews and to take notes. I will also seek your written consent to retain a copy of the audio/video file and notes in safe storage for the duration of the study. If at any point in the interview you are asked a question you would rather not answer, then you are not obliged to do so and do not need to tell me why you declined to answer. At the end of each of the interviews you are free to ask any questions you may have about the research in general. I will also be using a research technique known as photo elicitation, to trigger conversation and help participants summarise key thoughts and feelings. I will invite you to bring along a photo or image (picture, postcard, cutting) to interviews 1 and 3 which means something to you and speaks about an aspect of your feelings related to the topic of the study.

What will happen to the information I give in the interviews? - The recordings of each of the interviews will be analysed and I will draw conclusions from the results. The dialogue prompted by the sharing of photos/images during interviews 1 and 3 will feature in the interview transcripts. Once the study has concluded and I have

submitted my thesis I will retain the transcripts for a period of 10 years thereafter to enable me to work on journal articles for publication and potentially to apply for further funding to extend the study or participate in related research. Once this period has elapsed and work streams have concluded all the transcripts will be confidentially destroyed.

With regards to the photos and images supplied to me as part of the study express permission will be sought from you and any person and/or organisation/place appearing in any of the images should I wish to reproduce any of the photos in my PhD thesis document and copyright will be observed as applicable. All photos/images gathered over the course of the study will be subject to the same data retention practice as outlined in the paragraph above (i.e., they may be retained for a period of 10 years following completion of the study and submission of the thesis). Photos and images will be confidentially destroyed once all work has concluded.

How will you protect my confidentiality and anonymity? - The interview transcripts will be handled only by the researcher and a designated transcription service. The transcription service will always be provided with recording files in safe mode (password encrypted) to ensure the interviews cannot be opened and listened to by other parties. Hard copies of research notes, photos/images and any other relevant documentation will be stored in locked filing cabinets, and electronic files will be kept on password protected computers. Any information that identifies you or your organisation, or that gives any clues to your identity, will be removed and pseudonyms or codes assigned to anonymise the data. Photos or images that compromise anonymity will not be reproduced in the thesis and will be described without reference to specific identifiable features, premises, or individuals. I am confident that these precautions will ensure that no-one will be able to trace the data you supply back to you or your organisation. Information that is provided will be treated confidentiality and will not be shared with other participants to the study or anyone external to the study. Extracts/quotes from the interviews will be used in the final thesis and could be used in published academic journal articles during following the completion of the PhD as detailed above.

What are the possible benefits of taking part? – I hope that you will find the study interesting and will take satisfaction from helping to develop greater knowledge of this important topic, in an era in which equality of opportunity and respect for diverse lifestyles is at the forefront of much social and political debate. Ultimately the research will inform employers and professional bodies and help to ensure that there is wide acceptance of, and greater access to part-time employment, regardless of gender, occupation, sector, or any other irrational impediment.

What are the disadvantages and risks in taking part? - The main cost to you will be the time taken to contribute to the three interviews over the course of 12 months. I am confident that the arrangements described above will prevent any of the information you provide, or your details being shared beyond the confines of the study. For this reason, I believe that the risks of taking part are negligible.

What will happen to the results? – they will form part of my PhD thesis and may inform academic journal articles that I write and publish.

Has anyone reviewed the study? - The proposal for this PhD study has been vetted and approved by the NTU College Research Ethics Committee. Throughout the research period there are stringent reporting requirements back to this committee and my team of supervisors as regards the progress of the research. Any issues will be raised in these forums. As my PhD is registered at NTU, the university is ultimately responsible for the conduct of the project, and it is my responsibility to work within the institution's strict protocols.

For more information, please contact me (the Principal Investigator) at the address below:

Amanda Thompson, Room 802, Floor 8 Newton Building

Nottingham Business School,

Nottingham Trent University,

50 Shakespeare Street,

Nottingham NG1 4FQ

Email: Amanda.thompson@ntu.ac.uk   Telephone: 0115 848 8220

Appendix D – Phase 1 of analysis (logged memos in NVivo**)**

Transcripts – overall impression of interview data (first passthrough)

Words/labels for part-time work - MPT framed as semi-retired not part-time, able to do this early - signifies wealth and success, applauded.

Referred to as flexible working not part-time work - emphasis on the way work is organised and not the amount of time undertaking it.

Referred to as 'less than full-time' but not explicitly as part-time - what does part-time mean?

French full-time, to legitimise work commitment?

Reasons for participating in paid part-time work are varied - ultimately does it all comes down to choice for these men?

Past work of interest - what did they do before PT work, usually higher status, higher salary, 'career', is this now just a 'job'? how do we define career? work?

Children a turning point for many and/or their own health and well-being.

Priorities and values - could've been dual career households, paid for childcare, why didn't they?

What was the real reason? were they not coping FT and altered their outlook on life / changed priorities? (like me when I changed to PT)

Why did the man move to PT work?

In some cases MPT and partner both work part-time - because they can afford to do so?

They claim to have been very successful previously, but were they really? what is the measure of success? - did they burn out and rethink their life course?

Is career/occupation important to them or are they just trying to come across as unconcerned about current PT status? would they settle in any form of paid work, is the nature of work itself important to them?

If they've "never really been" career oriented, then why did they do high flying roles when they were younger?

How do we articulate career - what does career success mean? what is work? can this all change over time? notion of career success is dynamic, might be max salary and high status or max flexibility and wlb.

Are the men really part-time workers? is this a fair label or disingenuous? several do unpaid work in the remainder of their time e.g. housework, volunteering, childcare, property management so they do work FT, it's just the balance of their week is split between paid and unpaid activity.

Could choose to marketise this activity and pay others to do it so they could engage in paid work FT but choose not to - why?

Does it ease the MPT's partner's conscience to say he's never been as concerned about his career as I am? allows her to pursue her career and interests?

Positive experiences of part-time work - better wlb, more time with family, more equal share of household chores, flexibility, less stress, better parent?

Negative points - pay - but not an issue for all, less control/agency as a PT worker, working below capacity/capability level? feel insecure? ease of transition to FT work impacted by PT work status?

Challenges - managing boundaries - is this difficult? men seem good at it!

Outside of work - small circle of friends, very family centred, quite reserved - is this because of the amount of time they spend at home, or have they always been home focused/ content, not adventurers?

Are they really happy to undertake chores at home, shopping, cooking, ironing, helping children with homework etc. How much do they do?

Emotional labour in the home done by wife/female partner - thinking about and buying gifts for parties, comforting children, organisation too (meal planning, holidays, bills, activity calendar for children etc.) - men will follow plans but often female partner who makes the plans.

Involved fatherhood - references to their own fathers - don't want to be like them?

Recognise they are in the minority - has changed a bit now WFH has become more prevalent (Covid) - more men at school gate.

How are PT colleagues viewed in the workplace - sometimes frustrating, have to work around their days off, have to have a lot of trust in them, competent people - their talents make up for their lack of availability?

Lots of benefits of PT work - can use it when can't get the budget for FT posts, cheaper alternative, often get good value from PT workers (does this = exploitation) - fit with precarity lit?

Still strong gendered expectations in society - male PT work a leap of faith, going out on a limb.

Images - overall impression of participants' images (first passthrough)

n=8

3 family pics provided by MPTs - two show entire family together at a social event (one on holiday, the other at a wedding), the other is MPT and his two children (after school activities) - showing up as home centred and family oriented?

T3 - big focus on planning - MPT work plan, HS - family organiser – is this representative of the tensions of managing a p/t workload and other responsibilities / the complexities of managing a household where both partners work?

MPT7 - man with placard, people surprised when I say I work PT, as if women can work PT not men – is he highlighting how rare/novel he is? Is he proud of being in a minority?

MPT7 - MPT - gender gap image, highlighting % of men who work PT compared to % of women - second image on same theme – conscious of underrepresentation.

HS6 - Venn diagram type graphic – partners facing outwards, away from one another, one with baby in arms one with ipad. Revolving image? suggests fluid, flexible, headspace shared (both could be male or female, who is who is not obvious), how important is gender, how prevalent are stereotypes?

Appendix E – Phase 2 of analysis (NVivo Codebook)

Phase 2 reflexive thematic analysis – systematic data coding.

Name	Description	Files	References
2 p/t roles	Reference to working more than one p/t role	4	8
Ambassador for flex working	Promoting the virtues of flexible working	1	3
Boundary between work and home	Delineating work and home, preventing overspill	9	15
Breaking the mould	References to the originality of male part-time working - pioneering, novelty, ability to set the pace/ trend for other (men) to follow	16	30
Career prospects +ve and -ve	Career damage caused by part time work, or chequered/atypical work history, or alternatively evidence promotion is not hindered by p/t and flex working options	6	11
Changing nature of childcare	Phases of childcare, transitions from nursery to school, primary to secondary school, moving away from home / to university etc.	11	26
Changing nature of work	Changes in working patterns, attitudes, values, approaches over time	6	21
Checking emails out of hours	Reference to picking up and /or replying to emails out of working hours	5	9
Close friends and family	How friends and family organise their lives, who are the MPTs' friends? Friends and family attitudes/comments/support	8	14
Concealed p/t work in HE environment	The way in which part-time work can go undetected by others in high education	1	1
Contacts	The MPTs contacts	1	2
Couple relationship	Insight into the couple's relationship, longevity, comfort, ease of rapport	6	11
Covid impact on work and life	Covid-19 influences on home and/or work routines	18	91
Critical incident	Tipping point, triggers for big changes	9	11
Defining, labelling p/t work	Respondents' notion of p/t work	1	2
Disincentives to	Reasons to eschew promotion at work	1	2

Name	Description	Files	References
promotion			
Extent of choice or agency	Inability to control or choose in work or home scenarios	6	11
Family/spouse encouragement	Supportive comments/ actions from family and/or spouse	5	8
Family time +ve and -ve	Talk of the absence or presence of family time /time spent with his children	13	20
Feelings about p/t work	MPT's own reactions to p/t work and how it makes him feel	11	20
Finances (income, savings etc.)	Reference to the financial status/security of the MPT/his family	17	32
Future work and life plans	Plans regarding work and retirement, whether MPTs plan to remain in p/t work, change to f/t, how many more years they intend to work	21	49
Gendering of work and non-work activity	Reference to the way in which work role and/or home responsibilities are gendered. Entrenched ideas about the roles men and women should perform, who does what, availability of p/t roles at senior level, for men etc.	26	72
General views of p/t work	Views from any of the participants about p/t work, who does it, status, pay, prospects etc.	16	44
Generational gulf	Differences between MPTs lives and their parents' lives	3	8
Health and well being	Information about health issues affecting life and/or work	8	18
Hopes for future of work	Comments from all participants concerning their future hopes/aspirations for work and working	6	13
Household tasks	Couple allocation of household duties such as cooking, cleaning, washing, DIY, gardening, shopping plus emotional labour, organising and planning, home admin.	24	89
Ideal job	Qualities/features the MPT was looking for in a job	3	5
Identity	How the men describe themselves, factors pivotal to their identity, degree to which work shapes identity	7	19

Name	Description	Files	References
Impact of children on career	Family constraints on career and career advancement or career change	4	7
Inspiration for other men	References to MPTs setting the tempo for others, paving the way, making male p/t working acceptable	1	2
Institutional disadvantages of being a p/t worker	Situations where policies and practices in organisations are skewed in favour of full -time workers/or that's the appearance	1	3
Job content p/t	Tasks/activities undertaken in p/t work role	9	16
Job discretion in p/t work	Scope to shape the job/ways of working, use expertise etc.	1	2
Job insecurity - precarity of p/t work	Issues with job insecurity, temp contracts, redundancy susceptibility etc.	4	8
Job satisfaction in p/t work	The factors that make work enjoyable	9	14
Job search	Ease or otherwise of job search/finding p/t work	10	41
Job status p/t	Perceptions of the status p/t work is afforded	3	3
Joint decision making	Evidence of MPT and his partner/wife discussing aspects of their lives with one another	13	34
Lacking in confidence	Suggestion of weakened confidence	1	1
Leisure time	How the MPT spends his leisure time, refs to how much leisure time is enjoyed	16	32
Liberated	Feelings of liberation in lifestyle as a result of working pattern and other circumstances	1	1
Location of work and travel for work	Reference to the location of work, proximity to home, commuting time and travel for work	22	37
Masculinity inferences + or -	References or inferences to additions or subtractions from masculinity/masculine identity	10	29
Mgt, work, individual reticence to p/t work	Where orgs, managers or individual respondents express a hesitation around p/t work	6	9

Name	Description	Files	References
Miscellaneous interesting quotes	Quirky stories from participants (often gender related)	7	9
Modest living, time rich	Expressions to indicate time is more important than lavish living	1	1
MPTs resistance to p/t work	Reluctancy to embrace p/t work	1	3
MPT upbringing	MPT own formative experiences - parent's work -life schedule etc.	3	6
MPT work orientation & commitment	The centrality of work in the MPTs' lives	10	21
Other (unpaid) work	Information concerning other work activities MPTs engage in beyond paid p/t contracted work	14	39
Others' reactions to MPT p/t working	WS and HS reactions to the male p/t worker in the triad	17	62
Parenting	Role respondents perform as parents and their attitudes towards parenting	20	71
Partner's career and work pattern	Reference to wife's job and working days/hours	22	67
Pay in p/t work	Reference to pay in p/t work and/or pay progression/review	12	23
Planning and organising	Planning and organising family time, social life and work schedules	3	7
Presenteeism	The practice of feeling pressure to be present at work	1	2
Priorities	What is most important to the MPT /family /couple	3	12
Recruiter bias	Where selection panels might look less favourably on part-time work experience	1	3
Role reversal anecdotes	Examples and comments about role reversal e.g. stay at home dad, breadwinner mum	8	13
Routines	Regular patterns in home or work lives	6	10
Skills and competences in p/t role	Claims of expertise/skills in p/t work	11	19
Stigma of p/t work	Where participants express a sense that people are embarrassed about part-time working and might try to hide it	1	1

Name	Description	Files	References
Stress and work-life pressure	Examples of particularly stressful work regimes or home situations	10	19
Support networks	Extent of family, friends support to help with children and/or household tasks	4	5
Tracking work time	Calculating and tracking time spent on paid work	1	3
Transition f/t to p/t and p/t to f/t	Comments about changing from f/t to p/t work or vice versa, challenges or positive experiences	13	44
Trigger to change to p/t work	Factors which instigated the MPTs' movement into p/t work	15	22
Value of other (unpaid) work	Respondents' comments re the perceived value of unpaid work, including childcare	3	3
Wider societal views of p/t workers	Respondents' comments on general views of part-time workers - not their own views	2	5
WLB comments	Reference to WLB – poor and good	22	42
Work history	MPTs' previous working lives, prior to change to p/t work	14	39
Working below ability level	Situations when someone is overqualified for the work they do/has traded work status/level for hours or convenience, is not being used to full capacity, has greater skills and competences than the role requires	4	11
Working beyond contract (past and current)	Work done in own time, at weekends/evenings/holidays. Past and current work.	20	45
Working flexibly & WFH	Examples of flexible work schedules (control exercised by MPT over hours/days of work) and ability to work from home	15	25
Working hours and pattern p/t work	MPTs' working hours and pattern of work in p/t work	20	59
Working with p/t colleagues	Frustrations and benefits of working with p/t colleagues	6	17
Workload p/t work	References to the extent of the workload in p/t jobs	4	8
Workplace accommodation of	How receptive the employer/workplace is to flexible	23	59

Name	Description	Files	References
flex working	working per se		
Workplace expectations	Reference to expectations placed on workers by their employers, explicit and inferred	6	18

Appendix F – Phase 3 of analysis (NVivo Codebook)

Phase 3 reflexive thematic analysis – generating initial themes from coded and collated data.

Name	Description	Files	References
COUPLEDOM			
Couple relationship	Insight into the couple's relationship, longevity, comfort, ease of rapport	6	11
Family/spouse encouragement	Supportive comments/ actions from family and/or spouse	5	8
Joint decision making	Evidence of MPT and his partner/wife discussing aspects of their lives with one another	13	34
Priorities	What is most important to the MPT /family /couple	3	12
Modest living, time rich	Expressions to indicate time is more important than lavish living	1	1
FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES			
Close friends & family	How friends and family organise their lives, who are the MPT's friends? Friends and family attitudes/comments/support	8	14
Finances - income, savings etc.	Reference to the financial status/security of the MPT/his family	17	32
MPT upbringing	MPT own formative experiences - parent's work -life schedule etc.	3	6
Own parents' attitudes	Generational changes, own actions contrasted with actions of parents/grandparents	3	8
Partner's career & work pattern	Reference to wife's job and working days/hours	22	67
Support networks	Extent of family, friends support to help with children and/or household tasks	4	5
FUTURE		0	0
Changing nature of work	Changes in working patterns, attitudes, values, approaches over time	6	21
Hopes for future of work	Comments from all participants concerning their future hopes/aspirations for work and	6	13

Name	Description	Files	References
	working		
GENDER AND SOCIETY			
Gendering of work and non-work activity	Reference to the way in which work role and/or home responsibilities are gendered. Entrenched ideas about the roles men and women should perform, who does what, availability of part time roles at senior level, for men etc.	26	72
Stigma of PT	Where participants express a sense that people are embarrassed about part-time working and might try to hide it	1	1
LIVED EXPERIENCE OF P/T WORK			
Boundary between work and home	Delineating work and home, preventing overspill	9	15
Career prospects +ve and -ve	Career damage caused by part time work, or chequered/atypical work history, or alternatively evidence promotion is not hindered by p/t and flex working options	6	11
Checking emails out of hours	Reference to picking up and /or replying to emails out of working hours	5	9
Concealed p/t work in HE environment	The way in which part-time work can go undetected by others in high education	1	1
Extent of choice or agency	Inability to control or choose in work or home scenarios	6	11
Institutional disadvantages of being a p/t worker	Situations where policies and practices in organisations are skewed in favour of full -time workers/or that's the appearance	1	3
Job content p/t	Tasks/activities undertaken in part-time work role	9	16
Job discretion in p/t work	Scope to shape the job/ways of working, use expertise etc.	1	2
Job insecurity - precarity of p/t work	Issues with job insecurity, temp contracts, redundancy susceptibility etc.	4	8

Name	Description	Files	References
job satisfaction in p/t work	The factors that make work enjoyable	9	14
Job status p/t	Perceptions of the status p/t work is afforded	3	3
Juggling paid and unpaid roles	Working more than one job or s/emp + employed, or social ent + part-time work	4	8
Location of work and travel for work	Reference to the location of work, proximity to home, commuting time and travel for work	22	37
Pay in p/t work	Reference to pay in PT work and/or pay progression/review	12	23
Tracking work time	Calculating and tracking time spent on paid work	1	3
Working below ability level	Situations when someone is overqualified for the work they do / has traded work status/level for hours or convenience, is not being used to full capacity, has greater skills and competences than the role requires	4	11
Working flexibly and WFH	Examples of flexible work schedules (control exercised by MPT over hours/days of work) and ability to work from home	15	25
Working hours and pattern p/t work	Men's working hours and pattern of work in p/t work	20	59
Workload p/t	References to the extent of the workload in p/t jobs	4	8
LIVED EXPERIENCES OF HOME			
Better WLB	Comments from any of the participants about work life balance, positive or negative	22	42
Changing nature of childcare	Phases of childcare, transitions from nursery to school, primary to secondary school, moving away from home / to university etc.	11	26
Covid impact on work and life	Covid-19 influences on home and/or work routines	18	91
Family time +ve and -ve	Talk of the absence or presence of family time /time spent with his children	13	20

Name	Description	Files	References
Household tasks	Couple allocation of household duties such as cooking, cleaning, washing, DIY, gardening, shopping plus emotional labour, organising and planning, home admin.	24	89
Impact of children on career	Family constraints on career and career advancement or career change	4	7
Leisure time	How the MPT spends his leisure time, refs to how much leisure time is enjoyed	16	32
Parenting	Role respondents perform as parents and their attitudes towards parenting	20	71
Planning and organising	Planning and organising family time, social life and work schedules	3	7
Routines	Regular patterns in home or work lives	6	10
MASCULINITY			
Breaking the mould	References to the originality of male part-time working - pioneering, novelty, ability to set the pace/ trend for other (men) to follow	16	30
Identity	How the men describe themselves, factors pivotal to their identity, degree to which work shapes identity	7	19
Inspiration for other men	References to MPTs setting the tempo for others, paving the way, making male p/t working acceptable	1	2
Masculinity inferences + or -	References or inferences to additions or subtractions from masculinity/masculine identity	10	29
MPT as change agent pro flex working	Promoting the virtues of flexible working and helping others to secure flex working	1	3
MPT reactions to own p/t work status	MPT's own reactions to PT work and how it makes him feel	11	20
MPT rebuffing of p/t work	MPT reluctance to drop from full-time to part-time work	1	3
Presenteeism	The practice of feeling pressure to be present at work	1	2

Name	Description	Files	References
Role reversal anecdotes	Examples and comments about role reversal e.g. stay at home dad, breadwinner mum	8	13
Self-defined work orientation and others' view	Comments from MPT or HS/WS concerning how central undertaking paid work is to the MPT	10	21
Working beyond contract past and current	Work done in own time, at weekends/evenings/holidays. Past and current work.	20	45
Miscellaneous interesting quotes	Quirky stories from participants (often gender related)	7	9
OTHER'S VIEWS			
General views of p/t work	Views from any of the participants about p/t work, who does it, status, pay, prospects etc.	16	44
Mgt, work, individual reticence to p/t work	Where orgs, managers or individual participants express a hesitation around p/t work	6	9
Others' reactions to MPT p/t working	WS and HS reactions to the male P/T worker in the triad	17	62
Wider societal views of p/t workers	Respondents' comments on general views of part-time workers - not their own views	2	5
TRIGGER(S) FOR P/T WORK			
Challenge v stress	Relationship between challenge and stress	1	1
Critical incident	Tipping point, triggers for big changes	9	11
Health and well being	Information about health issues affecting life and/or work	8	18
Stress & work-life pressure	Examples of particularly stressful work regimes or home situations	10	19
Trigger to change to p/t work	Factors which instigated the MPTs' movement into p/t work	15	22
Work history	MPTs' previous working lives, prior to change to p/t work	14	39
Unpaid work	Other work activities outside paid p/t contracted work	14	39

Name	Description	Files	References
WORK TRANSITIONS			
Future work trajectory	MPT work and retirement intentions in the future	21	49
ideal job	Qualities/features the MPT was looking for in a job	3	5
Job search	Ease or otherwise of job search	10	41
Recruiter bias	Where selection panels might look less favourably on part-time work experience	1	3
Transition f/t to p/t and p/t to f/t	Comments about changing from f/t to p/t work or vice versa, challenges or positive experiences	13	44
WORKPLACE VALUING OF P/T WORK			
Skills and competences of MPTs	Expertise, skills and competences MPT brings to the role	11	19
Working with p/t colleagues	Frustrations and benefits of working with p/t colleagues	6	17
Workplace accommodation of flex	How receptive the employer/workplace is to flexible working per se	23	59
Workplace expectations	Reference to expectations placed on workers by their employers, explicit and inferred	6	18

Appendix G – Phase 4 of analysis (NVivo Codebook)

Phase 4 reflexive thematic analysis – developing and reviewing themes.

Name	Description	Files	References
CONTEXT	Contextual factors affecting MPTs' decisions to work p/t		
Close friends and family	How friends and family organise their lives, who are the MPTs' friends? Friends and family attitudes/comments/support	8	14
Couple relationship	Insight into the couple's relationship, longevity, comfort, ease of rapport	6	11
Family spouse encouragement	Supportive comments/ actions from family and/or spouse	5	8
Finances - income, savings etc.	Reference to the financial status/security of the MPT/his family	17	32
Gendering of work and non-work activity	Reference to the way in which work role and/or home responsibilities are gendered. Entrenched ideas about the roles men and women should perform, who does what, availability of p/t roles at senior level, for men etc.	26	72
General views of p/t work	Views from any of the participants about p/t work, who does it, status, pay, prospects etc.	16	44
Joint decision making	Evidence of MPT and his partner/wife discussing aspects of their lives with one another	13	34
Mgt, work, individual reticence to p/t work	Where orgs, managers or individual participants express a hesitation around p/t work	6	9
Modest living, time rich	Expressions to indicate time is more important than lavish living	1	1
MPT upbringing	MPT own formative experiences - parent's work -life schedule etc.	3	6
Others' reactions to MPT p/t working	WS and HS reactions to the male p/t worker in the triad	17	62

Name	Description	Files	References
Own parents' attitudes	Generational changes, own actions contrasted with actions of parents/grandparents	3	8
Partner's career and work pattern	Reference to wife's job and working days/hours	22	67
Priorities	What is most important to the MPT /family /couple	3	12
Stigma of p/t work	Where participants express a sense that people are embarrassed about part-time working and might try to hide it	1	1
Support networks	Extent of family, friends support to help with children and/or household tasks	4	5
What's socially acceptable	Actions/behaviour/lifestyle that meets with broad societal approval	1	1
Wider societal views of PT workers	Participant's comments on general views of part-time workers - not their own views	2	5
Work history	Previous work, prior to change to p/t work	14	39
EXPERIENCES OF HOME	MPTs' experiences of home as p/t workers	0	0
Changing nature of childcare	Phases of childcare, transitions from nursery to school, primary to secondary school, moving away from home / to university etc.	11	26
Covid impact on work and life	Covid-19 influences on home and/or work routines	18	91
Family time +ve and -ve	Talk of the absence or presence of family time /time spent with his children	13	20
Household tasks including childcare	Couple allocation of household duties such as cooking, cleaning, washing, DIY, gardening, shopping plus emotional labour, organising and planning, home admin. Childcare, responsibilities – who does what? school pick-ups, after school activities.	24	89
Impact of children on career	Family constraints on career and career advancement or career change	4	7

Name	Description	Files	References
Juggling paid and unpaid roles	Working more than one job or s/emp + employed, or social enterprise + part-time work	4	8
Leisure time	How the MPT spends his leisure time, refs to how much leisure time is enjoyed	16	32
Parenting	Role participants perform as parents and their attitudes towards parenting	20	71
EXPERIENCES OF WORK	MPTs' experiences of work as p/t workers	0	0
Boundary between work and home	Delineating work and home, preventing overspill	9	15
Presenteeism		1	2
Career prospects +ve and -ve	Career damage caused by part time work, or chequered/atypical work history, or alternatively evidence promotion is not hindered by PT and flex working options	6	11
Checking emails out of hours	Ref to picking up and /or replying to emails out of working hours	5	9
Concealed p/t work in HE environment	The way in which part-time work can go undetected by others in high education	1	1
Extent of choice or agency	Inability to control or choose in work or home scenarios	6	11
Institutional disadvantages of being a p/t worker	Situations where policies and practices in organisations are skewed in favour of full -time workers / or that's the appearance	1	3
job content p/t	Tasks/activities undertaken in p/t work role	9	16
Job discretion in p/t work	Scope to shape the job/ways of working, use expertise etc.	1	2
Job insecurity - precarity of p/t work	Issues with job insecurity, temp contracts, redundancy susceptibility etc.	4	8
job opportunity		1	2
Job search	Ease or otherwise of job search/finding p/t work	10	41
job satisfaction in p/t work	The factors that make work enjoyable	9	14

Name	Description	Files	References
Job status p/t	Perceptions of the status p/t work is afforded	3	3
Location of work and travel for work	Reference to the location of work, proximity to home, commuting time and travel for work	22	37
Pay in p/t work	Reference to pay in PT work and/or pay progression/review	12	23
Planning and organising	Planning and organising family time, social life and work schedules	3	7
Recruiter bias	Where selection panels might look less favourably on part-time work experience	1	3
Routines	Regular patterns in home or work lives	6	10
Tracking work time	Calculating and tracking time spent on paid work	1	3
Transition f/t to p/t and p/t to f/t	Comments about changing from f/t to p/t work or vice versa, challenges or positive experiences	13	44
Unpaid work	Other work activities outside paid p/t contracted work	14	39
Working below ability level	Situations when someone is overqualified for the work they do / has traded work status/level for hours or convenience, is not being used to full capacity, has greater skills and competences than the role requires	4	11
Working beyond contract past and current	Work done in own time, at weekends/evenings/holidays. Past and current work.	20	45
working flexibly & WFH	Examples of flexible work schedules (control exercised by MPT over hours/days of work) and ability to work from home	15	25
Working hours and pattern p/t work	Men's working hours and pattern of work in p/t work	20	59
Workload p/t work	References to the extent of the workload in p/t jobs	4	8
FUTURE PROJECTI0NS	MPTs' outlooks on their future working life and the role of p/t work as a work mode	0	0

Name	Description	Files	References
Changing nature of work	Changes in working patterns, attitudes, values, approaches over time	6	21
Future work trajectory	MPT work and retirement intentions in the future	21	49
Hopes for future of work	Comments from all participants concerning their future hopes/aspirations for work and working	6	13
ideal job	Qualities/features the MPT was looking for in a job	3	5
MASCULINITY	Men and masculinity in the context of p/t work	0	0
Breaking the mould	References to the originality of male part-time working - pioneering, novelty, ability to set the pace/ trend for other (men) to follow	16	30
Identity	How the men describe themselves, factors pivotal to their identity, degree to which work shapes identity	7	19
Inspiration for other men	References to MPTs setting the tempo for others, paving the way, making male p/t working acceptable	1	2
Masculinity inferences + or -	References or inferences to additions or subtractions from masculinity/masculine identity	10	29
Miscellaneous interesting quotes	Quirky stories from participants (often gender related)	7	9
MPT as change agent pro flex working	Promoting the virtues of flexible working and helping others to secure flex working	1	3
MPT reactions to own p/t work status	MPT's own reactions to p/t work and how it makes him feel	11	20
MPT rebuffing of p/t work	MPT reluctance to drop from full-time to part-time work	1	3
Role reversal anecdotes	Examples and comments about role reversal e.g. stay at home dad, breadwinner mum	8	13
Self-defined work orientation and others' views	Comments from MPT or HS/WS concerning how central undertaking paid work is to the MPT	10	21

Name	Description	Files	References
TRIGGER(S) FOR PT WORK	Rationale for MPTs' p/t work pattern	0	0
Better WLB	Comments from any of the participants about work life balance, positive or negative	22	42
childcare & family triggers	Critical incidents / factors which cemented the move to PT work	15	22
Critical incident	Tipping point, triggers for big changes	9	11
health and well being	Information about health issues affecting life and/or work	16	37

Appendix H – Phase 5 of analysis (NVivo Codebook)

Phase 5 reflexive thematic analysis – refining, defining, and naming themes.

Name	Description	Files	References
CONTEXT	Contextual factors affecting MPTs' decisions to work p/t		
Couple relationship, values, and beliefs	Insight into the couple relationships, longevity, comfort, ease of rapport, plus their values and beliefs, family priorities etc.	20	77
Family composition and support networks	Family circumstances, friends, and family attitudes/comments/support	9	18
Gendering of work and non-work activity	Reference to the extent to which work roles and domestic/childcare responsibilities remain gendered. Entrenched sex role stereotyping.	26	72
Others' reactions to and perceptions of MPTs	WS and HS reactions to the male p/t worker known to them in the triad	17	62
Partner's career and work pattern	Reference to wife's job and working days/hours	22	67
Perceptions of the readiness of workplaces to embrace part-time working in highly skilled occupations	References to workplace receptivity to p/t work regimes especially among men and in highly skilled occupations	6	9
Societal perceptions of p/t work and p/t workers	Respondents' comments on general views of part-time workers - not necessarily their own views	20	71
Socio economic status	Reference to the financial status/security of the MPT/his family	17	32
MPTs' EXPERIENCES OF HOME	MPTs' experiences of home as p/t workers	0	0
Childcare responsibilities	MPTs parenting role and changes over time dependent on phases of childcare, transitions from nursery to	31	119

Name	Description	Files	References
and involvement in parenting	school, primary to secondary school, moving away from home / to university etc.		
Covid impact on work and life	The extent to which and ways in which Covid-19 caused a reconfiguration of work and home life in the households participating in the research.	18	91
Division of domestic labour	Allocation of household duties such as cooking, cleaning, washing, DIY, gardening, shopping plus emotional labour, organising and planning, home admin etc.	24	89
Leisure time	How the MPT spends his leisure time, reference to how much leisure time is enjoyed	16	32
Unpaid work	Other work activities outside paid p/t contracted work	14	39
MPTs' EXPERIENCES OF WORK	MPTs' experiences of work and the workplace as p/t workers	0	0
Future work trajectory	MPT work and retirement intentions in the future	22	54
Job quality in part-time work	References to indicators of job quality including pay, job satisfaction, autonomy, career progression	29	100
Managing the boundary between work and home	Delineating work and home, preventing overspill	24	64
Process of job search and transitions f/t to p/t and p/t to f/t	Experiences of securing p/t work and of transitioning from f/t to p/t work and p/t work to f/t work	16	81
Work location and logistics	Reference to the location of work, proximity to home, commuting time and travel for work	27	57
Working hours and pattern of working	MPTs' working hours and pattern of work in p/t work	21	78
MASCULINITY IN THE CONTEXT OF P/T WORKING	Men and masculinity in the context of p/t work	0	0

Name	Description	Files	References
Masculinity - expectations and tensions	References or inferences to additions or subtractions from masculinity/masculine identity	11	32
MPTs as pioneers	References to the originality of male p/t working – pioneering/trailblazing, novelty, ability to set the pace/ trend for other (men) to follow	16	32
MPTs' gendered performances as p/t workers	Ways in which MPTs navigate p/t paid work and wrestle with their masculinity	16	40
Others' perceptions of the centrality of work to MPTs' lives	Comments from HS/WS respondents concerning how central undertaking paid work is to the MPT	10	21
Traditional masculinised work history/proven credentials	MPTs' work history prior to movement into p/t work	14	39
MOTIVES FOR WORKING PART-TIME	Rationale for MPTs' p/t work pattern	0	0
Childcare and family reasons for p/t working	Past or existing family circumstances which shape (constrain?) MPTs' level of engagement in paid work	15	22
Critical incidents	Key life events/situations which underpin MPTs' decisions to work p/t	9	11
Health and well-being	Health and well-being issues underpinning MPTs' decisions to work part-time	16	37
Work-life balance	Work-life balance aspirations underpinning MPTs' decisions to work part-time	22	42