The contradictions and intersections of class and gender in a global city: placing working women's lives on the research agenda

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to put a set of issues about working lives and care on the research agenda of urban studies. It is based on an exploratory rather than a definitive study, indicating issues that might productively become part of a new or expanded research agenda. One of the most significant features of advanced industrial economies is the growing dominance of service sector employment. Its growth is particularly evident in global cities—London, New York, Tokyo—where employment in financial and associated services has grown most rapidly, increasing the proportion of highly paid salaried professionals. At the same time, employment in lower paid and low-status ‘servicing’ jobs has also increased. At both ends of this spectrum, women’s participation is rising. The expansion is fastest among women with children, especially highly educated mothers who both delay child rearing and reenter the labour market after childbirth more quickly than less well-educated women. However, for mothers, whether in the highly paid or less well-rewarded occupations, labour-market participation raises the question of child care—in terms of quality of provision, location, cost, and available hours.
In this paper we examine the ways in which women in different occupational and class positions combine labour-market participation and mothering. We assess the variation in their strategies, evaluating the extent to which childcare is a gender issue uniting women or a class-based issue that divides women’s interests. As well as exploring the nature of material inequalities among women, we also address similarities and differences in the ways in which they speak about their caring responsibilities as they attempt to achieve a satisfactory version of work–life balance. On the basis of interviews in three contrasting areas in Greater London, we explore variations in the ways in which women combine waged and caring labour, arguing that a focus on the total labour performed by households adds a further dimension and new research questions to debates about polarisation in global cities.

New class divisions in postindustrial economies and global cities
In the current arguments about economic change, the nature of work and new class divisions, there is a noticeable distinction between optimistic and pessimistic commentators. Whatever the term used to capture the extent of recent economic restructuring in advanced industrial societies—the new economy, the postindustrial era, post Fordism or neo-Fordism—in grand-narrative reviews of contemporary changes, an optimistic scenario of a knowledge-based economy in which weightless goods and services are exchanged by well-rewarded middle-class employees is challenged by more apocalyptic versions of a casualised service class, exploited and poorly paid, and excluded from the benefits of a largely deregulated economic and social order. As Esping-Andersen (1993) noted, the current views about social stratification divide into a “rosy picture of a meritocratic knowledge-based class order” and a “gloomy scenario of a swelling service proletariat” (page 1). A similar polarisation is identifiable in commentaries on theories of work (Adkins, 2000; McDowell, 2003; McRobbie, 2002). One school paints a vision of mobile educated portfolio workers, untrammelled by the conventional structures of class and gender (Beck et al, 1994; Leadbeater, 1999) whereas another identifies new forms of deference, even a corrosion of character, among a disillusioned casualised labour force (Elliott and Atkinson, 1998; Sennett, 1998). Beck’s work (2000) seems to combine these tendencies as he both celebrates the ‘detraditionalisation’ of modern life for the successful middle classes and at the same time warns of the dire consequences of the ‘Brazilianisation’ of advanced economies, as collective social provision is abandoned. In each of these debates, however, the differential gender impacts of recent changes are seldom mentioned.

In mainstream economic geography, arguments about the effects of deindustrialisation literature and the recent emergence of dual labour markets (Atkinson, 1985; Castree et al, 2004; Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Harvey, 1989; Peck, 1996; Piore and Sabel, 1984; Sayer and Walker, 1992; Storper and Walker, 1989) provide a slightly different focus. Here it is argued that the combined impact of industrial decline and the emergence of new flexible forms of production and use of labour, result in core and peripheral labour markets. In the former a highly qualified, highly skilled, predominantly male labour force works under superior conditions; in the latter an expanding peripheral labour force is employed on insecure terms and impermanent arrangements. Here too gender relations are seldom a central part of the analysis. Women, if mentioned, are typically allocated to the peripheral or marginal labour market. Furthermore, the legacy of the deindustrialisation approach results in a limited focus on service sector employment as the decline of manufacturing employment remains at the heart of the argument.
Investigations of the consequences of these changes for the emerging shape of a new class order are still in an embryonic stage. A great deal more empirical work remains to be undertaken, at a range of spatial scales across economies. However, it is clear that class, and gender, relations have been substantially affected and recut by the emerging dominance of service employment which now accounts for well over two thirds of all employment in the United Kingdom (ONS, 2004). In 2003, 70% of all men and 91% of all women employees were working in service occupations. Although a large number of both the theoretical and the empirical analyses of new forms of stratification have documented the significance of class and/or income polarisation in service economies (Castells, 2000; Goos and Manning, 2003; Machin, 2003) and variously identified evidence for and against new forms of working patterns, characterised by greater instability (Doogan, 2001), relatively few class analysts have theorised class and gender together. This is despite the overall rise in women's labour-market participation and their continuing segregation (see table 1 which shows the pattern of gender segregation): both factors that affect the extent of polarisation and women's class position.

Table 1. UK employees by occupation and sex, 2003.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Men (%)</th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers and senior officials</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate professional and technical</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and secretarial</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled trades</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal service</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and customer service</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process plant and machinery operative</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ONS (2004), figures originally from Labour Force Survey Spring quarter, not seasonally adjusted.

Esping-Andersen's (1993) work on the changing class structure is, however, an exception as he attempts to think about class and gender together, suggesting that two particularly significant questions are raised by the shift towards the more polarised class structure evident in service-dominated economies. The first is the extent to which class closure is becoming stronger as opportunities for social mobility are reduced. A new class dualism seems to be emerging with “at the top, a closed professional elite stratum and, at the bottom, a new servant class, a new post industrial proletariat” (page 16). What is yet uncertain is the extent to which this latter class is also closed, its members disqualified by their low educational capital and so unable to experience the sort of sort of social mobility that typified the postwar decades in the United Kingdom, at least for many men (Halsey et al, 1980; McDowell, 2003). In Great Britain, research for the Cabinet Office (Aldridge, 2001) found clear evidence of reduced opportunities for social mobility in the future. The research, however, focused on fathers and sons, ignoring changes in women's labour-market position. There is evidence that for working-class women, life chances have improved compared with those for their mothers' generation (Egerton and Savage, 2000). Thus, an

(1) Service occupations are defined as distribution, hotels, catering and repairs, financial and business services, transport and communication, and other services which include public administration, education, health, and other community, social, and personal services activities.
important question is the extent to which women’s improved rates of educational participation and attainment will be reflected in rising rates of social mobility among young women or in whether (many) women will remain trapped in bottom-end jobs.

Esping-Andersen’s second key question is about the emergence of gender-specific class distributions. As he and other commentators (see, for example, McDowell, 1991; 2001; Perrons, 2004) have noted, the old gender-specific divisions of waged and domestic labour that supported Fordism are being fundamentally recast as women enter the labour market in greater numbers, as parts of domestic and caring labour are increasingly commodified and as state institutions partially withdraw from supporting the traditional ‘breadwinner’ family. The shift in Great Britain and the USA, for example, towards a ‘workfare’ model of welfare provision, in which both men and women are expected to work for wages, supported by new work–life balance policies and new forms of childcare support, provides a clear example of the new assumptions about gendered responsibilities (McDowell, 2004). Furthermore, both these nations have relied heavily on the deregulated growth of low-paid consumer service employment [see Ehrenreich (2001) on the USA and Toynbee (2003) for the United Kingdom]. In the United Kingdom, as childcare support remains inadequate compared with that in a number of other European countries, especially in Scandinavia (Nyberg, 2003), many women work on a part-time basis, and so large gender differentials in income remain both through the working life and into retirement.

Service-dominated economies, therefore, generate growing labour-market opportunities for women, in both public and private services. Through the transformation of the tax and benefit systems, addressing practices that previously discriminated against women, and new policies to provide paid leave for caring responsibilities, more women also have the prospect of largely uninterrupted labour-market careers. It may be then that patterns of postindustrial stratification will exhibit different class and gender-based patterns than the Fordist regime. Esping-Andersen (1993) speculates that there is the prospect of a new “gender-divided stratification order with a male-dominated fordist hierarchy, and a female-biased post-industrial hierarchy. In the extreme case we might envisage two class structural logics, each being gender-specific” (page 17).

The significance of each will depend both on the history of an area and on its future pattern of economic growth, especially the extent and speed of the decline of male-dominated manufacturing employment (Alcock et al, 2003; McDowell, 2003) and so new comparative research will be needed to document the particular shapes of this new order in different cities and localities. Furthermore, interesting questions arise about the extent of closure at both ends of the new class structure, for both men and women, and about the relationship between class position and household structure. Will, for example, the new patterns of women’s paid employment, and growing polarisation between women, also be reflected in growing polarisation between households? Although these issues are outside the scope of this paper, it is clear that women’s labour-market participation raises complex issues for class analysts.

Before turning to examine women’s work in the home and in the labour market in more detail, we first look briefly at arguments about changing class divisions in global cities, where, it is argued, the shift towards a polarised service-dominated pattern is most extreme and where, perhaps, movement between each class stratum is least likely.

The debates about class divisions in the global city

It is in global cities that the emerging pattern of class polarisation and so inequalities in living standards are most extreme. The key proponent of polarisation in service-dominated cities is Sassen (1991; 2001) who has documented the extent of social and income polarisation in London, Tokyo, and New York. She found a bi-polar income
structure within business and financial services, which are the leading growth areas in these cities, and in the city as a whole. As low-wage service jobs in, for example, personal and office services, restaurants and bars, and in the construction industry, often in casualised or informal forms of employment relations, expand, in part to meet the growing demand for service from the high-status professional, financial, and business employees, income inequalities increase. Thus the emergent social order of global cities is one with a shrinking middle in its class structure compared with manufacturing dominated cities of an earlier era. Critics have disputed the extent of this hollowing out of the class structure [see for London Hamnett (1994; 2001; 2003a)], arguing that professionalisation is a more accurate summary of the changes. Thus Hamnett (2003a) suggests that the most significant aspect of current changes is the marked expansion in professional and managerial jobs, reflected in growing income inequality, especially because of the excessive increases in the incomes of those in the highest decile. However, there are problems with the socioeconomic group (SEG) classification that he uses which masks some changes through aggregation. Furthermore, categorical terms such as intermediate and junior nonmanual, which include over half of all women in employment in Greater London, reveal nothing at all of the changing terms and conditions of employment within these jobs over time. But whatever term most accurately captures changes in the class structure, it is undeniable that there has been an increase in income inequality among the employed workers in Greater London, as employment growth has been evident at either end of the income and status continuum. As Hamnett documents (2003a), “there is strong evidence for the growth in earnings inequality” (page 84) in London between 1979 and 1995, both between individuals and between households and furthermore, as the proportion of earners in the top and bottom bands increased (although much more significantly at the top end), a pattern that Hamnett terms “an asymmetric form of polarisation” (page 85).

In these analyses, the significance of gender divisions and differences are largely ignored. Sassen (2001), for example, merely notes women’s lower pay compared with that of men. In her comment on London, she remarks on women’s concentration in part-time employment and in the lowest paying category of employment: catering, cleaning, hairdressing, and other personal services, although she suggests that women as a group tend to be better paid in the capital than elsewhere in the country. Hamnett (2003a) also notes the rising incomes of well-paid women workers, which increased far faster over the 1990s than for women in poorly paying jobs, so widening the gap between the top and bottom ends of the income distribution (see also GLA, 2002). He notes that women’s average earnings remain lower than men’s despite their faster rate of increase in the 1990s.

The implications of the growth of service employment among women for gender divisions are in the main ignored and the commodification of domestic and caring labour receives no attention. But is clear that, in large part, one of the reasons for the growth of personal service jobs is the growing demand from dual-career households where the domestic labour of the expanding number of highly qualified women entering the labour market in global cities is replaced by other women’s poorly remunerated labour. It may be that the overall rise in female employment will be constrained by the cost and/or quality of commodified services to replace women’s own unpaid domestic and caring work. Alternatively, divisions between women may become more evident as growing numbers of working-class women are drawn into low-paid caring work to service their middle-class sisters, opening up new divisions between women in terms of income, lifestyle, and opportunities for social mobility.
New gender inequalities

One of the most complex questions for feminist scholars is the extent to which women are united as a gender. A long debate has waxed and waned within and outside the women’s movement about the extent to which women as a group have interests in common. As the second-wave women’s movement and the associated flowering of feminist theory began to influence both politics and academic disciplines from the 1960s onwards it seemed as if women were united; they even, some argued, constituted a class. In material terms, many of the old class-based distinctions between women seemed to be disappearing as more women entered the labour market in the postwar decades. Waged work became an increasingly common experience for women of all social classes, at the same time as women had fewer children and as domestic service collapsed.

“The housewife has all but disappeared, the working mother is now the norm, and as far as overall hours spent in paid employment are concerned, there is little to choose between the life of a middle class and a working class woman. Most women have children, most women go to work, most run their households without the help of servants. Compared with previous periods the lives of women are now amazingly homogeneous” (Phillips, 1987, page 61).

From the late 1990s onwards the assumption that most women work for wages has been strengthened and underpinned, as we mentioned earlier, by the active labour market policies of the New Labour governments that tie welfare benefits and tax credits to labour-market participation, thus enhancing a movement into employment by women supported and encouraged by, inter alia, changes in educational opportunities, in patterns of childbearing and rearing, and in housing standards and consumption practices over the last half century. By 2003 almost 70% of women in Great Britain were in employment: one of the highest rates in Europe although part-time participation by women in the United Kingdom is also among the highest in Europe (Rubery et al, 1999).

As the postwar decades progressed, however, it began to become clear that this homogeneity in women’s lives was not as clear-cut as it seemed. Even in the 1970s a new gap was appearing between the kinds of jobs that women do. In large part a reflection of the expansion of higher educational opportunities from the 1960s onwards, growing numbers of women found that they were able to secure the type of waged work that gave them a relatively secure income and prospects of promotion, especially in the expanding public sector (Crompton et al, 1998). As Westergaard (1984) noted, in the 1960s and 1970s a gap opened between what he termed the ‘job class’ (then estimated at about 60% of the working population) and the ‘career class’. The former consisted of routine jobs, requiring little skill and conferring even less autonomy on the job-holder. The latter, largely postwar creations in Westergaard’s view, conferred a much larger degree of autonomy as well as expectations of security. As Phillips (1987) pointed out:

“Women’s jobs are stratified into what can look like two different worlds: at one extreme, the growing army of part-time workers, disproportionately concentrated in ‘women-only’ jobs in sales work and cleaning and canteens, earning wages that even hour for hour are appallingly low. At the other extreme, the women who have been through higher education, who have full-time and relatively powerful jobs, earning wages that are good—if not brilliant—even for a man, And somewhere in the middle, the fragile bridge of office workers” (page 63).

Since Phillips’s comment, the division between women in employment has become more marked. One of the consequences of the rise of the new service economy and the rolling back of state services and so declining employment opportunities in the public sector for women has been their increasingly polarised distribution. The most rapid
recent growth in female-employing jobs and occupations has been at either end of the income and status distribution (Bradley et al, 2000; EOC, 2001; Lyons, 1999). Women in the better paying and higher status occupations are also more likely than other women to be employed on a full-time basis, exacerbating pay differentials between them and women in poorly paid work (Dex et al, 1996; Glover and Arber, 1995). Furthermore, the degree of polarisation among British women is greater than in other European countries and, as Bruegel and Perrons (1998) noted, more marked amongst women than men, supporting Esping-Andersen’s contention that gender-specific class structures may be emerging. A further consequence of this polarisation may be to exacerbate income inequalities among dual-earning households, as well-educated women tend to marry or cohabit with men of their own social status. Alternatively, the dual earnings of some middle-class households may reduce the gap between the accelerating incomes of the highest decile and the one below it. The evidence is inconclusive at present. What is clear, however, is the way in which the richest individuals and households (those at the top of the top decile) have accelerated away from those below them (Atkinson, 2003) and that many of these highest earners live in the Greater London metropolitan area (Hamnett, 2003b).

Gender commonalities
Despite the increasing differentiation in the income distribution for women, however, all women continue to bear the mark of their gender in the labour market. A gender pay gap remains, as even those women in the ‘career class’ find themselves in the lower ranks or the less well-rewarded sectors of their profession in comparison with their male colleagues. Currently women in full-time employment earn about 80 pence for every £1 that a full-time male worker earns and the gap is much larger for women in part-time employment (EOC, 2004). When the overall income distribution (including benefits as well as earned income) for all adults is examined, more than half of all men fall into the top two quintiles and more than half of all women into the bottom two (Cabinet Office, 1999). Furthermore, women continue to be responsible for the majority of domestic labour and childcare. Thus the number and age of a mother’s children continue to influence the extent of her labour-market participation. Women with young children are still more likely to be employed on a part-time basis than either women without children or men. In calculations undertaken for the Women’s Unit in the Cabinet Office in the late 1990s, it was shown that the total career cost of being a mother, or what was termed a gender deficit, is in aggregate more than £400 000 over a woman’s lifetime. For low-skilled women the gender deficit is largest—£500 000 over the lifetime compared with men in the same skill category; it is £338 000 for mid-skilled mothers and £160 000 for high-skilled mothers, reflecting the latter group’s greater likelihood of returning to full-time work after childbirth (Rake et al, 1999). Furthermore, for all women, even those who remain childless, widespread societal assumptions about the characteristics of femininity and the desirability of maternity continue to ensure that women’s place in the labour market is seen as less legitimate than men’s. Even in the new millennium, it is widely assumed that women’s paid labour should take a secondary place in comparison with their role as men’s helpmeets and as mothers. In a survey carried out for the Equal Opportunities Commission (Future Foundation, 2003) interviewees argued that women’s continued responsibility for domestic tasks and their concentration in low-wage jobs was either through their own choice or, was a reflection of ‘natural differences’ between men and women.

(2) These results are from four focus groups and four matched-pair interviews and so are indicative rather than representative.
It is clear that these assumptions affect individual women and their partners as they make decisions about divisions of labour in the home and in the labour market, especially when there are dependent children in the household. All parents of preschool and younger schoolchildren have to decide who is to care for the children: whether this is a task to be shared within the immediate household, with a wider group of relatives, friends, or voluntary groups, or through the purchase of replacement care. Given the current gendered pattern of income inequalities in the United Kingdom outlined above, it seems evident that the most economically rational decision for most women is to care for their own children, often making job/career compromises to do so, whereas for high-paid women economic rationality would seem to dictate that they replace their own caring labour with the labour of others. As a growing body of research has found, however, it is clear that the decision about care, employment, and a satisfactory work–life balance is not solely a financial one. An ideology of care, underpinned by a set of gendered moral obligations (Carling et al, 2002; Finch and Mason, 1993; Mason, 1996), especially the belief that the care of children is most appropriately undertaken by kin, unites women in different class positions and income groups (Land, 2002) and affects childcare decisions. It is self-evident, however, that the purchase of high-quality childcare is open to those only with a certain level of earnings. It is clear that the one area where the earlier arguments about the similarities of women’s lives were not correct was in the ability and propensity to purchase commodified domestic services and childcare. A ‘new servant class’ (Anderson, 2000; Gregson and Lowe, 1994) has been identified as expanding numbers of British households employ cleaners and nannies within their own homes or purchase other forms of childcare from an expanding range of market-based providers. Childcare provision in Great Britain is extremely expensive. The costs charged to the consumer are among the highest in Europe. A survey carried out by the Daycare Trust (Daycare Trust, 2001; Smithers, 2003) found, for example, that the typical cost of a nursery place for a child under two years was £128 a week in Britain as a whole, rising to £168 in inner London. Although new government policies through tax credits have extended help to many parents, most households pay three quarters of these costs from their after-tax wages. In the main the employees of nurseries and other forms of domestic services and childcare provision are women earning low wages, further increasing the degree of polarisation among women employees in the British labour market. In the same survey the Daycare Trust (2001) showed that the average pay for childcare employees working full-time was less than £11,000 per annum in 2001, making it one of the lowest paid jobs in the United Kingdom.

It might be assumed, therefore, that among mothers there would be a straightforward positive correlation between women’s hours of labour-market participation, their incomes, and their propensity to purchase childcare and other forms of domestic service, with a class-specific pattern emerging. Women in different occupational categories with different levels of income might be assumed to make different choices. If women with high earning capacities are able to afford, assuming availability, high-quality childcare then their rational choice might appear to be full-time employment. Indeed, the current government’s childcare policy statements seem to be based on such a premise. Aggregate statistical analysis supports this contention. Women with degrees, for example, are far more likely than other women to work full-time and to reenter the labour market immediately after childbirth, taking only the minimum official maternity leave. Women with fewer qualifications, in comparison, are more likely to return to part-time work, whereas single parents, especially those without educational credentials, are the group who are least likely to combine paid work with motherhood. But what is not clear from these aggregate statistics, although Hakim (2000) claims to have
distinguished three groups of women (career oriented, ‘adaptives’, and home centred) with different goals and orientations, is whether women do make different sets of choices and, if so, how they justify their decisions. Is the growing class and income polarisation among women in London paralleled by a similar polarisation in their life choices? And if women in highly paid occupations purchase childcare from their after-tax incomes (women with partners typically both organise and pay for childcare), what are the implications for comparisons of disposable incomes among women and between households? Furthermore, do well-paid women employees have a different orientation toward maternity and childcare than other women, or are both groups constrained by income to a limited range of perhaps less than satisfactory options? And does location in the city, as well as type of employment, affect the options open to women to combine paid and unpaid labour (see also Vincent et al, 2004)? Building on the brief outline of London’s changing social geography in the next section of this paper, we explore the extent to which a class-specific pattern is evident in women’s work–life choices in Greater London.

Class and gender divisions in Greater London

The transformations in London’s economy in the last twenty-five years have been significant for its social geography. The creation, or rather re-creation, of Docklands, the expansion of the City of London in situ, the extent of rebuilding and of gentrification in the inner boroughs have altered the class and household composition of many areas of central and inner London. In large part these changes are a consequence of London’s position as a global city, as “London seeks to maintain and expand its role as provider of high-level specialized services to the world, ranging from banking and finance to entertainment, culture and tourism” (Buck et al, 2002, page 27). Business services, financial services, and information technology have been the leading sectors of growth, and employment in these industries is highly concentrated in the centre. Associated with these expanding service functions, a new professional and managerial middle-class has accelerated the rate of gentrification in inner London. Warehouses have been converted into lofts in old industrial districts and the terraces of Georgian and Victorian housing in inner boroughs and, increasingly, in some of the outer boroughs now accommodate mainly middle class households. Buck et al (2002) note the rising numbers of professional and managerial households in the middle and inner-western boroughs in the 1980s which they attribute to “a stronger taste for more ‘urban’ leisure pursuits as well as for closeness to work” (page 37). An alternative, or rather complementary, explanation might be the growth of dual-income households, which both increases house-purchasing power and makes residential decisions more complex. Although many of these new middle-class households are childless, as couples defer childbearing and as the proportion of single-person households rises, for those with children access to work and to childcare affects locational decisions.

In the 1990s, in part reflecting high house prices in the inner and western boroughs, where gentrification was identified from the late 1960s (Hamnett and Williams, 1980), middle-class gentrification spread eastwards through parts of the London Borough of Hackney to the Lea Valley (Butler, 2003). But not all parts of these inner boroughs, even in the west, have been gentrified. Among the streets and terraces of middle-class housing there are estates of public housing built in the postwar boom years, often in high-rise blocks, to house working-class tenants, leading to what Lyons (1999) termed “the fine-grained, localised nature of gentrification” (page 493) in inner London. In many areas these estates are increasingly hard to let and house a residual population of the “least fortunate and the most desperate” (Buck et al 2002, page 29). Thus to an extent unparalleled in other British cities, the rich, or rather the relatively well-off...
middle class, live in close proximity to some of the poorest of London’s residents. Huge class and income differentials are common within small areas in London and some of the newly gentrifying areas, Hackney, for example, remains among the most deprived areas within the United Kingdom, despite the growth in middle class occupation between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses.

In outer London where previously many of the middle-class and working-class employees in manufacturing industries lived in suburban dwellings, economic change has also had an impact. Manufacturing industries have relocated or declined and closed. Eastern boroughs in particular have been adversely affected by this decline: the large car plants at Barking and Dagenham have now closed. New types of developments have taken the place of production industries, although their expansion is concentrated in the west rather than the east of London. Back offices, retail parks, warehouses, and leisure complexes are now more typical employers than manufacturing and wages are lower and unemployment higher, among men at least, than in the early decades of the mid-20th century.

The three localities
In order to capture these changes in London’s economic and social structure, to ensure that a range of individuals and households with different income levels and differential access to and the use of childcare provision were included, we selected three different localities within which to interview mothers with dependent children. These areas were chosen largely on the basis of differences in their class structures and associated differences in housing tenure and costs. The first area in the south of the London Borough of Islington close to the Angel is characterised by huge class differentials within areas in close spatial proximity. It is a typical ‘mixed’ area of inner London with a long-established pattern of middle-class gentrification, as well as a local authority estate and low-quality, often privately rented, properties. The second area also in Islington—near Finsbury Park—is further north and consists of both private and publicly rented houses, in Victorian streets as well as local authority estates. As in the southern parts of the borough, in Finsbury Park there are also significant inequalities within small areas with rundown ‘guesthouses’ (where rooms are rented to refugees, economic migrants, and formerly homeless families waiting for rehousing) in the same streets as gentrified flats and large houses returned to single-family occupation. The final area, Bowes Park, is in the London Borough of Haringey (which is officially classified as an outer London borough with inner London characteristics) and is a less diverse area of mainly middle-class homeownership where house prices are lower than in more central areas. Through this strategy we hoped to cover the range of income and housing positions in areas of London where the processes of economic growth and labour-market change in a global city are typical.

In each area we interviewed between fifteen and twenty mothers with dependent children. We used a wide variety of methods to contact respondents ranging from leafleting schools and nurseries to visiting play schemes and libraries as well as an element of snowballing. Each interview took place in a woman’s home and lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was taperecorded and later transcribed. In most cases the mother was interviewed without her partner (where there was one) present. Sometimes her children were in the room. Our aim was to identify households with young children with at least one adult in paid work. In a small number of cases we also interviewed households without a paid worker. Our respondents were in the main middle class, in part reflecting their greater use of formal childcare provision. Women who relied on their mothers, on other family members, or on informal arrangements with friends were considerably harder to identify.
Class-based differences in work – life patterns

Careers and jobs: the choices

If, as we suggested earlier, women are rational decisionmakers then there should be a clear difference in the pattern of choices made by career women on childbirth in comparison with those made by women in jobs. Full details of the job title, hours worked, salaries and occupational status are available for forty eight of the respondents in London. In table 2 these women are grouped into two categories, based on Westergaard’s distinction between careers and jobs (based on their current occupational position, entry qualifications, and promotion prospects). Five of the career women and three of the women with jobs were either full-time mothers (that is, a positive decision) or unemployed (through lack of choice). More of the women in jobs rather than careers are employed on a part-time basis and this, as well as the rate per hour, is reflected in a large income differential. It is clear, however, that our respondents are, in the main, successful women who have been able to achieve career positions. In part this is a reflection of the importance of Greater London for successful women but also a reflection of our selection strategy through childcare providers. Inevitably, women who are in better occupational positions are more likely to be able to afford childcare. Thus of the forty-eight women, thirty nine were career oriented, employed in, or had been employed in, professional and managerial positions, as teachers or as social workers, for example. Currently thirty one of these women were in employment, many but not all of them full-time, and their earnings varied from well over £50 000, for those in banking and medicine, for example, to under £20 000 for the women employed on a part-time basis as supply teachers and agency social workers. On average, and unsurprisingly, women with jobs were considerably lower paid, often dependent on an hourly rate. There was little difference between the three areas in terms of the job – career distinction. In the Angel and in Bowes Park more than four out of every five interviewees had careers and in Finsbury Park, almost three quarters.

Table 2. Careers and jobs, 2003 (source: authors’ interviews, 2002, N = 48).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational status</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career and currently employed</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career and not employed</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job and currently employed</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job and not employed</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time student</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 (see over) shows the relationship between current employment status, full-time and part-time work (where part-time work has been defined as fewer than thirty hours a week), and age of youngest child for these women. The women not in employment at the time of interview have been excluded from this table.

The numbers of women with noncareer jobs are small and so must be treated with caution: eight in total, of whom half were working full-time when they were interviewed. Among the career-oriented women, eighteen out of thirty one were working less than thirty hours a week, and the rest full-time. As the table shows, there is no clear relationship among our interviewees between hours of work and age of the youngest child. Indeed, women whose children had reached school age were more likely to work on a part-time basis, which may reflect the difficulties of organising full-time care during school holidays. In both the job and the career categories, it was

(3) The research also included a comparative set of interviews in three areas in Greater Manchester. This comparison will form the subject of future papers.
not unusual for the interviewees to return to work soon after giving birth. For example, two respondents had returned to full-time employment by the time their child was eight weeks old, and one to part-time employment three weeks after giving birth. One of these women had a stressful job at a news agency working up to sixty hours in some weeks, another was a product designer who, as a single parent, felt she had little option but to return to work as quickly as possible.

For all women who are employed, unless they are fortunate enough to have a partner, parent, or other relative prepared to undertake childcare for love, the cost of care becomes a key variable in the decision about hours of paid work. Only three of the women whom we interviewed who were employed had familial help and no other forms of care. Table 4 outlines the strategies of the other forty-five interviewees.

For those in employment with no childcare arrangements, in most cases the children were school age and so the mothers’ hours were adjusted or, in one case, a woman had a partner who was not employed and so took care of the children. Those classified under the ‘mix’ category included the use of after-school and holiday playschemes as well as both nurseries and childminders for example. It is clear that commodified forms of private provision are crucial for women in career positions. This parallels the findings of a similar study (Vincent et al, 2004) in two contrasting areas of London (Stoke Newington and Battersea). Further, as in our work, Vincent et al found intraclass similarities were more significant than area-based differences. The women in our study with less prestigious, and so lower paid, jobs, tended to use a mixture of forms of childcare or relied on their families. Nine of the women in career positions used private nurseries and five employed nannies. Interestingly none of the women to whom we talked used workplace-provided forms of care, although some women had access to public nurseries because of their employment. Private provision in London is extremely expensive. Katia, a financial analyst with one child

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**Table 3.** Occupational status, working hours, and age of youngest child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational status</th>
<th>Average age of youngest child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>2 years 1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>2 years 7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>2 years 4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>7 years 6 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table 4.** Use of childcare (source: authors’ interviews, 2002, N = 45).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational status</th>
<th>Type of childcare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>private nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>public nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nanny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>childminder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time career</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time career</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career but not working</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time job</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time job</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job but not working</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time student</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
aged nine months paid £1200 a month in 2003 for a full-time place for her child, whereas another woman, Diana, employed by a large telecommunications company three days a week paid £1600 for three days' childcare for two children, aged three years and ten months. The highest cost of childcare was £500 a week: paid by two academics with a seventeen-month old child for a live-in nanny (the figure of £500 included national insurance payments). This compares rather unfavourably with the £28.60 a day paid by a teacher and her university lecturer partner for the care of their two preschool children in a local authority nursery, accessible because she worked for the local authority. It is clear, however, that many of the women we interviewed paid a great deal more than the official estimate of the average cost of childcare in London: £168 a week.

The significance of sector
One of the key distinctions that emerges from the interviews is the significance of employment in the public sector or in private firms and organisations in decisions about working hours. It is clear that for women, the economic return on credentials is not straightforwardly linear but also depends on the sectoral location of their employment. Income levels, but also the conditions under which women work, differ in the public and private sectors and so divide women with careers rather than jobs into two distinct groups. The expansion of public sector employment in postwar Britain created not only new occupational groups, some of them feminised, but also a production and reward system largely unrelated to market criteria, of productivity and profitability for example. Instead, the numbers of jobs and conditions of employment are related to political decisions about the importance of collective provision and government fiscal measures. Despite the challenges to the public sector since the election of the right-wing Conservative government in 1979, and recent New Labour policies such as Private Finance Initiative and Public–Private Partnerships, the public sector—the institutions of both central and local government as well as those of the welfare state—continues to provide significant employment opportunities for well-educated British women. Furthermore, it is in the public sector that family-friendly policies are most well developed, although contracting out and the use of agency staff have eroded women's entitlements. Among the public sector employees we interviewed, for example, was a single parent working as an agency social worker with less entitlement to a range of work-related benefits than full-time local authority employees doing similar work.

In the private sector, by contrast, women's caring obligations were largely disregarded, although in a small number of cases we found, for example, in-house arrangements to cover childcare emergencies. Profitability drives decisions about employment conditions in this sector. Thus, women in our study working for private sector institutions, such as investment banks and law firms, felt the most pressure to return to full-time employment as soon as possible after childbirth. This is Val, a global recruitment agent for an investment bank with a three-year-old daughter, describing her maternity arrangements:

“I left on the Friday and had her on the Tuesday,... I went back 3 days a week when she was 6 weeks old, and then by the time she was about 10 weeks old I was back full-time.”

But it also became clear that Val was highly committed to her work, and a mixture of enjoyment of the pressure but also fear that she might be replaced shaped her decision:

“there was a hell of a lot going on that year, ... it was one of those sort of situations where I kind of needed to be back, but I was also a bit nervous, as people are in those situations, that if I didn’t get my arse back soon, I might find someone else sitting in my seat, you know, permanently!... I never even entertained the idea that I might take 6 months off or not come back at all, it just wasn’t on the cards.”
Some of these women also found it hard not to accept the long-hours culture. Sandra, also an employee of an investment bank, works marketing securities. Her day is usually from 8 AM to 6 PM and she travels to Europe about three days a month. She explained that she was asked to sign an opt-out to the European Working Time Directive in order to work long hours. Although her attendance was not monitored, her presence at work was essential.

“There’s no monitoring of time, as such, but you would be missed from your desk. There’s a trading floor, my manager sits behind me and I sit in front of the traders. There’s no presenteeism or ‘face-ism’ as such, but people like to do a good job, there’s always the bonus in the background and, you know, there is competition from colleagues, but really people like what they are doing and really like to do a good job. You need to be there while the trading’s going on.”

It also became clear that some of the women with young children in private sector firms felt unable to exercise many of the statutory rights recently introduced in the United Kingdom, such as parental leave or part-time and flexible working patterns for mothers with children under six years of age. Those with older children also explained the ways in which cultural assumptions within their organisations worked against the needs of parents of school-aged children as well as new mothers. Several women found that their employers, or their immediate superiors and coworkers and colleagues, were unsympathetic to arguments about working mothers’ rights. Liz, for example, who sometimes worked at home, told us that “personnel has been checking on me that I was actually working from home as I had said and things like that.” Sandra in response to a question about flexible hours or job sharing responded as follows:

“Do you want the official view or the actual view? Officially we can ask for flexitime or for job shares, but it all depends on your manager, it doesn't really happen. It’s hard to organise a job share because jobs are quite specific, some people work a four day week, but in practice it is rare, it’s the job, they’re not really suitable.”

Many of the interviewees in this situation decided that their best option was to accept the status quo and continue in full-time work, usually to protect their seniority or promotion prospects. Emma, however, a senior manager for a large international telecommunications firm, made a different decision after the birth of her first child:

“I’d planned to go back full-time and... towards the tail end of my maternity leave I had to go in and have a chat with my boss. I’d worked with him for a long, long time, and I think that probably paid off. But yeah it came as a bit as a shock to him that I was only going to go back part-time. And I actually did my full-time job in part-time hours, for quite, about 4 or 5 months, while we were trying to sort out how they could restructure to accommodate. And it was really difficult... It just didn’t work.... But it, once we’d agreed that you know, I would have a different role and it wasn’t a full-time role and it wasn’t, it was much more self-contained, and project-based, then it was fine.”

There were career implications for Emma though.

“Well, ... you could actually say [it was a] backwards step. It depends on what criteria. I mean financially nothing changed, but in terms of where it leaves me in getting another job, it would be very difficult to replicate the role that I had, in another organisation... it’s difficult to say, it's certainly not, certainly not an upwards move. Definitely sideways.”

Other women in our survey, when they had their requests for part-time work or reduced hours denied, felt that they had little option but to resign. Women in public sector employment, however, were more likely to be able to reduce their hours with a guarantee to return to their original conditions of employment after a specified period.
It is clear that recently introduced official policies such as, for example, reduced working hours and parental leave entitlement, will have relatively little purchase in the leading-edge sectors of high-status women’s employment in a global city like London if working mothers feel constrained by the cultural assumptions and expected working practices from accessing their rights. As Lewis (1997) found in her study of accountancy firms a decade ago, few women in career track positions took advantage of special schemes for reduced hours as they feared damage to their promotion prospects [see also Hochschild’s (1997) evaluation of similar US schemes]. New forms of regulation as well as measures to ensure that progressive EU legislation such as the Working Time Directive are not evaded in the United Kingdom (as the current opt-out provision permits) and policies to challenge the long-hours culture are needed, although this challenge will not be easy.

Ideologies of care
It is also evident, however, that it is not only factors such as sectoral location, the status of work, and organisational cultures and practices that affect working mothers’ choices. Our interviews showed that women face a series of constrained choices about how to combine motherhood and waged work. There was no obvious difference, for example, between women on career paths or women currently employed in lower status jobs (a number of whom had or hoped to achieve higher educational credentials). Indeed, what emerged was the similarity in women’s preferences but their differential capacity to overcome constraints, so leading to different labour-market options (see also McRae, 2003; Perrons, 2000). Women working full-time, women working part-time, and those who currently not working relayed a remarkably similar story about their desire to combine paid work with their own caring work as mothers and with good, high-quality substitute care for limited periods.

The first voice is that of Emma who earlier explained why she had decided to work part-time. She currently works three days a week and her children are in a private nursery.

“I think the mix is about right, for me to work less than 3 days, I wouldn’t really feel like I was actually working. And I do think I’m a better mum for not being a full-time mum. I don’t think I would make a very good full-time mum. ... I need that time [at work] to be an adult.”

But there are employment costs to her decision:

“I think there’s a question mark as to how credible you are as a part-timer. Because you’re not there whenever the big announcement comes out if it’s not one of the days you work. And if people don’t bother to tell you in advance, because they’ve forgotten, or because they’re so caught up with the big announcement, ..., you do get a bit forgotten.”

But it also has work-related benefits: “I still think I actually achieve as much but I don’t feel as stressed by it. ... I’m a bit more definite about what I will and won’t do.” And, of course, as for most families with young children in London, Emma noted: “We need the money.”

Other women working full-time also expressed the desire to spend quality time with their children, whereas some full-time mothers wanted a different mix of home and work. Cecile, an analyst working full-time, wanted to work fewer hours: “in an ideal world, I wouldn’t mind to sort of start as early as I do, but to go at 3 PM everyday, and to have three good hours with Mia [her daughter].” Alice, who had worked for a campaigning organisation, had recently stopped work to care for her two children aged five and two:
“[My husband] got promoted and we realised we could afford for me to be at home and I really wanted to be at home as well and erm, even though I’d gone part time after Khalid [her second child] was born. Before that I’d been full time. It [part-time work] still was too much of a rush. I really like my work and it’s very, very interesting and, but even so it’s hard…. I didn’t have enough time with them.”

In several cases it was clear that a familial model of caring was seen as an acceptable substitute for a woman’s own care for her children. If grandmothers of other female relatives were available, their caring labour was often preferred to that of other forms of substitute care, and as it was often ‘free’, in monetary terms if not in terms of duties and obligations, it enabled women with relatively low earning capacities to return to employment.

Our interviews provided little support for Hakim’s (2000) emphasis on choice rather than constraint in explaining women’s work–life balance decisions or for her threefold distinction, mentioned earlier, between women who, Hakim suggests, make different work–life choices. Rather, we found that different patterns of work–life balance that were underpinned by a general commitment among all the interviewees to the belief that women’s own informal caring labour and involvement in bringing up their children had a value that was not simply reducible to a cash equivalent or a rational trade-off. These women all maintained a strong belief in the ideology of mother love and personal care, even when their own circumstances prevailed against a significant input of their own time. Even the women closest to Hakim’s career-centred category, who took full advantage of the long hours of care available in high-cost private nurseries, justified their decisions in terms that emphasised the advantages for their children. In explaining decisions about, for example, starting early and leaving late and so taking up options for breakfast and/or supper at the nursery, emphasis was placed on how the children eat better at the nursery or how they were happier in the company there. Furthermore, most women we interviewed recognised that arrangements were never ideal, not unquestioned and permanent, but instead ‘good enough’ [to use Nancy Chodorow’s (1978) term about mothering]. Our interviews revealed the extent to which what may seem like ‘choices’ in survey data are more likely to be complex, sometimes contradictory, decisions reflecting the conflicting pressures of workplace demands, the ideologies of caring and societal views about acceptable practices of mothering, as well as income constraints.

It is clear that assumptions about preferences cannot be read off from aggregate data about women’s work–life balance decisions at a single point in time and that financial constraints, as well as the impact of inflexible working hours (see Fagan, 2001), remain critical. In our interviews, for example, we spoke to several single mothers who both wanted and needed to work to raise their incomes. And yet only the women with a high earning capacity were able to take paid work, as for less-skilled women the costs of childcare outweighed the benefits of labour-market participation. Kathy, a single mother with three dependent children, currently not employed, explains why:

“It’s easy to find a job, it’s ... how much the childcare costs at the end of it; it worked out that I’d just be paying so much childcare off, it was unbelievable ... there’s loads of jobs round here that you can get like from say like 10 in the morning till 2 in the afternoon, and that, I can find loads of them, but it’s just the childcare.”

The majority of our interviewees expressed some dissatisfaction with their current lives, suggesting that their current work–life balance reflected the compromises that they were forced to make. Many argued persuasively for policies that would enable them to negotiate a new, more equitable, balance both between home and paid work and between partners and others involved in the care of their children. As McRae
(2003) has argued, all women face a series of constraints in ‘choosing’ how to balance work and life. These constraints are both structural (class position, education, and income) and normative, based on women’s own sets of beliefs and identities, reflecting prevailing ideologies about the nature of ‘good mothering’. Currently, women continue to undertake most of the labour of care. We found little evidence from our interviews that men are altering their patterns of work to increase participation in the labour of caring for their children (see also Harkness, 2003). Although women’s labour-market participation rates have increased in recent decades in the United Kingdom there remains a marked gender differential in the participation rates for parents. Currently, among parents of children under four years old, 55% of mothers are in waged work compared with 94% of fathers. A reduced gender gap, but a gap nevertheless, remains evident among parents of older children. Thus, 73% of mothers but 93% of fathers of five-to-ten-year-old children are in employment (National Statistics, 2004).

It is clear then that women make different sets of ‘choices’ about combining employment and care. Clearly some women have greater opportunities than others to overcome the structural and normative constraints or to adapt to them, and so to live as if they had a choice, or to report that they do. As McRae (2003) noted, “understanding which women and why them and not others [seem to have choices] is the task of sociology” (page 329). We endorse this research agenda, adding a plea to geographers to explore the difference that place makes to work–life balance decisions. As interviewees reported, the location of childcare facilities is another structural constraint on work–life-balance decisions and an important factor in the choice of childcare and in working patterns. Central-city locations, while good for workplace accessibility, often raised concerns about schooling and safety (see also Jarvis, 2004). Almost a third of the mothers in the most central location planned to move further out, and in some cases out of London altogether, within the next five years, which in turn may enforce a new ‘choice’ in relation to employment. Butler (2003) found an even larger proportion of households planning to leave inner London because of schooling in his comparison of the changing class composition of the capital.

Conclusions: gendering and expanding the global city research agenda
The main body of the paper draws on an account of some work in progress. Rather than drawing firm conclusions, the aim here has been to suggest new questions. It has become clear that global economic and social changes are transforming the nature of waged work and domestic life, the class structure and its effects, and the relationships between men and women as they struggle to make a living and to care for their dependents in ways that are congruent with social beliefs about gendered identities. In Greater London there seems little doubt that new patterns of inequality and exploitation are the result of its place in the global division of labour and increasing dependence on the flows of transnational capital and labour. Although the implications for the distribution of income and for the overall class structure of these cities have been investigated, as well as new patterns of sociospatial polarisation, housing inequality and gentrification, these areas have seldom been brought together and studied through the lens of gender divisions. Women’s participation in waged work is rising and women are increasingly concentrated at either end of the status and income hierarchy in the London labour market, but the implications of these changes for wider social relations are not yet the subject of a sustained research effort. It is not clear whether this pattern of polarisation among women’s earnings is a particular feature of London, nor whether it will intensify. Is the pattern of women’s participation in London a reflection of the specificity of a global city or part of a wider change in contemporary Britain? The specificity of the London
labour market and its reliance on the continuing supply of migrant labour to fill the
lowest paid and most menial bottom-end service sector jobs (Wills, 2001) seems to
ensure the stagnation of wage levels at this end of the market and so exacerbates
income inequality as top-end incomes continue to rise. In other parts of the country
increasing polarisation is in part a consequence of the continuing decline in oppor-
tunities for the less skilled, especially for less skilled men for whom, despite the
overall recovery in employment growth, unemployment is increasing. Male inactivity
and rising rates of sickness and incapacity are evident outside the core areas of
economic growth in Greater London and the southeast (Faggio and Nickell,
2003), whereas women’s rising employment participation is a more geographically
widespread phenomenon.

A range of other research questions about the connections between class and
gender and development of a polarised class structure also needs attention. It is not
yet clear whether current labour-market and welfare policies will exacerbate emerging
patterns or whether gender disparities in employment participation rates will continue
to close, albeit within class fractions. If the labour market of London and the United
Kingdom as a whole continues to become increasingly feminised, new explanations for
labour market change may need to be developed as women’s decisions may/do take
a different path from those of men. Furthermore, research exploring the extent to
which less educated women who enter poorly paid and low-status service sector work
are able to move out of these forms of work is needed. We also predict that polarisation
will continue to dominate men’s as well as women’s class distribution, as the old
Fordist manufacturing jobs continue to decline. It might be that Esping-Andersen is
incorrect in his prediction of a dual class structure: the emerging ‘feminised’ polarised
pattern may come to dominate men’s as well as women’s class and income distribution.
New comparative research following men and women throughout their working lives is
necessary to confirm our prediction.

Other questions about gendered patterns of employment, working careers, and
policy also remain to be answered. It may be that the growing numerical significance
of women in ‘top’ jobs and recent policies to improve work–life balance will com-
bine to change the nature of work and associated sets of cultural attitudes among
both men and women at the top of the income and status hierarchies. Recent
evidence, however, about the continued patterns of sexual harassment in, for example,
the financial services sector provide little room for optimism here. But the current
bargain in which women continue to provide informal care in the household as well
as expand their labour-market commitments is not infinitely flexible. State provision
of full-time, high-quality childcare in Greater London remains inadequate, however,
and market provision remains well beyond the financial reach of most households. It
seems likely that the growing divergence in employment participation and in earned
incomes between women with careers and those in jobs will continue. What is clear,
however, is that the connection between class and gender are currently being
reshaped and more research is needed on the diversity of patterns in different cities,
including global cities.

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the work reported here.

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Placing working women's lives on the research agenda


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