"You're quite fertile, aren't you?": Constructing Motherhood through Factual Welfare Television in Austerity Britain (2010-2015)

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Abstract

This research is concerned with constructions and representations of motherhood within Factual Welfare Television, in the context of the 2010-2015 UK government austerity programme's welfare reforms. I investigated this through close textual analysis of Series One of Channel 4's *Skint* (2013), using Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, from a socialist feminist perspective. I found a range of representations and constructions of motherhood, which broadly conformed with those neoliberal discourses found in the mainstream media. I consider these to be largely demonising of these mothers, and of 'working-class' mothering practices and values, particularly within a welfare context.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

The period of 2010-2015 in Britain that followed the formation of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government in May 2010 saw a series of reductions to public spending under a government programme of austerity, a key aspect of which was Welfare Reform (DWP, 2012). Mainstream media (MSM) framing of poverty and welfare during this period largely revolved around anti-welfare discourses, legitimising these reforms (*Cf.* Tyler 2013; Jensen and Tyler 2015). A key site of such discourses has been the emerging Reality Television sub-genre Factual Welfare Television (Benedictis *et al* 2017) (FWT), a form of factual programming which follows the daily lives of 'ordinary' people who claim benefits. As will be explored in the literature review, such programmes have been found to often sensationalise poverty and demonise those who claim state welfare. Considering Jensen and Tyler's (2015) figure of the 'benefits brood' (the notion of a family who produces a high number of children in order to claim increased welfare benefits), in the context of the historical and contemporary 'representational denigration of White working-class women' (Skeggs, 1997, p.11), this study aims to identify how motherhood is depicted and constructed in the FWT genre, specifically within the context of the 2010-2015 government's welfare reforms, which indeed coincides with the emergence of this genre in 2013 (Benedictis *et al,* 2017)

This is researched through a case study analysis of the first series of Channel 4's *Skint* (2013), of which the first episode received over three million views when it was first aired (Broadcasters Audience Research Board, n.d.). Given that this series (which conforms to the type of programming Benedictis *et al* (2017) discuss in their definition of FWT) was released during the same year that this type of programme is considered to have been popularised, and its' popularity in terms of viewing figures, I consider it archetypal of this sub-genre.

Throughout this paper, I discuss conceptions and constructions of 'class', specifically referring to those characters portrayed in the programme (and in wider society) as working-class women and mothers (and men). I sincerely recognise that some of those to whom I explicitly or implicitly describe as 'working-class' may not identify with this category, and may indeed find it objectionable. On one hand I am therefore hesitant to impose this, however I find it necessary to use some form of terminology to describe such a system of hierarchical domination. Indeed, Gillies (2006) notes that 'some form of abstract theorising is necessary in order to understand and change material and social relationships' (2006 p. 39). I therefore invoke 'class' as regarding access to Bordieu's (1985) core capitals; economic, social and cultural, and consider working-class womanhood with relation to exclusion from these (Skeggs, 1997).

I will firstly present a review of relevant literature, on poverty, austerity and welfare in media and society, the emerging reality television sub-genre of Factual Welfare Television, and on representations and narratives of women and mothers in these contexts. I will then outline my methodological approach of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, and discuss its relevance for research into power and inequality and RTV. I will then present my analysis of how motherhood is represented and constructed within *Skint* Series 1 (Channel 4, 2013), which I will relate to the context of UK austerity and welfare in the 2010-2015 period.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Poverty, Austerity and Welfare in Media and Society

<u>Poverty and austerity in contemporary Britain</u>

Following a rise of neoliberal reforms under Thatcher that were largely continued by the New Labour government (Driver, 2011), the 2010-2015 Conservative-Liberal Democrat government's austerity programme was positioned by politicians as a response to the 2008 financial crisis, and therefore justified as a 'painful political necessity that would nonetheless bear long-term gains' (Bradshaw et al, 2017, p.2). Welfare reform became a key target of this austerity programme, with Beatty and Forthergill (2016) noting that '[t]he benefit changes introduced by the Coalition government from 2010 onwards were substantial and central to its social and economic strategy' (p.5). This period saw a range of cuts to welfare spending, including the introduction of Universal Credit, the Under-Occupancy Penalty (colloquially known as the 'Bedroom Tax'), a cap on the total amount of benefits to which a household is entitled, and the replacement of Disability Living Allowance with Personal Independence Payments (DWP, 2012).

O'Brien and Kyprianou (2017) note a widening in the gap between rich and poor since the 1970s, and that a 'major cause' of recent social inequality has been the 'wholesale assault upon welfare spending since 2010' (p.13). Indeed, the increase in poverty and deprivation during this period of austerity has been well-documented. O'Hara's (2014) study involved interviews with those 'at the sharp end of the Conservative-led Coalition government's unprecedented "austerity" programme' (p.1). A recurring theme with interviewees at various locations around the country was that of food poverty and the 'mushrooming need for food banks' (p.21), highlighting how the poorest in society were

struggling to meet their basic physical needs. Mental distress was also a prominent theme. Having gained access to a summary of calls made to suicide hotlines in 2013, O'Hara notes a growing phenomenon of 'austerity suicides', with an increase in callers discussing financial problems, including references to 'specific austerity measures such as the 'Bedroom Tax'' (O'Hara, 2014, p. 210). These findings reveal a climate of increased deprivation and desperation for those with the lowest incomes during the period of 2010-2015. As first-person accounts are often absent from media coverage of poverty (Garthwaite, 2014), it becomes especially important to consider work like O'Hara's that is based on the lived experience of those who face poverty. The qualitative nature of the research also enables a more nuanced and complex understanding of the phenomenon than statistics alone could provide. With regards to gender in terms of poverty, it is important to note evidence which suggests that women may be particularly vulnerable. A report of poverty statistics in the UK and EU in 2015 highlighted that '[a] higher proportion of women (8.2%) were persistently poor than men (6.3%) – a trend that has continued since data became available in 2008'. (ONS, 2017, p.2).

Mainstream political rhetoric around these austerity welfare reforms has largely revolved around perceived problems of welfare misuse and over-reliance by claimants. A 2010 paper outlining the government's position refers to a 'culture of worklessness and dependency' and an intention to 'change forever a system that has too often undermined work and the aspiration that goes with it'. (DWP, 2010, p.1). Here, drastic measures (changing the system 'forever') are justified by typifying of welfare claimants as 'workshy', over-reliant and lacking aspiration, notions which dominate political discourses around welfare reform during the coalition period. Indeed, the 'skiver versus striver' discourse, a moralising distinction between those who aspire, or indeed succeed, to work, and those who do not, is well documented (O'Hara, 2014; Edminston, 2018). It is suggested that this distinction 'fuels a specious belief that socio-economic marginality is attributable to the

problematic lifestyle choices and orientations of low-income, unemployed individuals'
(Edminston, 2018, p.43). The 'making work pay' theme of reforms such as Universal Credit
is based on the predicate that welfare claimants are simply unwilling or unmotivated to
look for work. This justifies austerity welfare measures - which, as has been noted, have
coincided with an increase in material poverty for the poorest in society- as necessary,
based on the perceived poor character of those who will be adversely affected by them.

Media framing of austerity and welfare topics and debates

Before examining Factual Welfare Television specifically, it is useful to study how
general MSM narratives have addressed poverty, welfare and austerity over time, to locate
dominant discourses and provide context. Beresford (2016) describes a symbiotic
relationship between media and political elites, noting how 'successive governments have
carried out their welfare reform policies in close association with dominant right-wing
media' (p.422).

Harkins and Lugo Ocando (2017) undertook an analysis of news coverage of the
welfare state from 1985 to 2015, which they describe as a period of neoliberalism. They
note that the press responded to welfare spending in the 1980s 'by casting the welfare
state as a threat to British economy, justifying spending restrictions' (p.150). They found
that the conservative press during this period tended to focus on 'dole cheats' and
construct welfare recipients as 'criminals' (p.158), while criticising single mothers,
particularly with reference to John Major's 'Back to Basics' campaign around traditional
family values, which 'ultimately demonised single mothers because political and media
rhetoric constructed them as both a burden and a threat to society' (p.155). Liberal media
coverage was found to question welfare cuts, but provide little actual defence of the
welfare state.

This framing continued during the period from 1997 to 2010, with conservative coverage again focussing on 'fraud, single mothers and an underclass' (p.160). Liberal newspapers again offered little defence of the welfare state, and did not cover the topic as often as the conservative press for this period. In relation to the more recent political rhetoric around welfare dependency and proposed cuts under the government's 2010 austerity strategy, Harkins and Lugo Ocando note broadly that 'media framing echoed political rhetoric' (p.166).

In terms of coverage of austerity, Berry (2016) conducted a thematic content analysis of BBC News at Ten's coverage of the UK public deficit debate in 2009. He concluded that there had overall been little acknowledgement of the responsibility of the banks in causing the financial crash, with debate focussing on the need for cuts to public spending to reduce the national deficit. Given that the BBC is a public service that is nominally guided by values of impartiality (BBC, 2018), the way it frames austerity debates is likely to reflect the narrative that is generally accepted in the mainstream, and not considered controversial or disputed.

Together, these studies of welfare and austerity coverage reveal that the MSM climate between 2010-2015 was pro-austerity, helping to justify the economic need to reduce public spending. It was also anti-welfare, demonising those who claim benefits as criminal and immoral, a discourse which had been developing since at least the 1980s.

This anti-welfare media climate was not only present in news reporting. Tyler (2013) notes how various forms of media including certain television genres 'contributed to the formation of a moral panic about the "culture of worklessness" which [council] estates were said to both reproduce and represent' (p.160). She describes the media's employment of the 'chav' (a 'neoliberal name for the poor in Britain' (p.167)), which 'moved relentlessly through public culture on a wave of mockery, contempt and disgust' (p. 165), and notes the constant references in news report to the *Little Britain* character Vicky Pollard, an

'incurably sub-literate, sexually promiscuous, pregnant, teenage chavette' (pp. 27/28) in 'stor[ies] about the feckless, violent underclass' (p.165). This suggests how different media forms and genres collaborated to form anti-welfare narratives through depictions of a deplorable 'underclass'.

Nature and functions of anti-welfare media discourses: a question of power

Having explored some of the ways in which welfare, poverty and austerity have been represented in MSM, it is also important to consider what functions these representations serve. Jensen and Tyler's (2015) case study of media coverage of the case of Mick Philpott, who was jailed for the manslaughter of his six children who died in a house fire in 2012 (BBC, 2013), highlights some of the functions of media framing of welfare debates. They address the figure of the 'benefits brood' ('a cultural figuration of disgust aimed at famiies that are deemed to have become "excessively" large as a result of over-generous welfare entitlements' (p.9)) as '[a] technolog[y] of control (through which to manage precariat populations), but also as [a] technolog[y] of consent through which an anti-welfare commonsense is effected' (p.5). That is to say, figures such as these are weaponised to generate public consent for anti-welfare rhetoric and policy, and to subjugate welfare claimants. Jensen and Tyler (2015) describe how the Philpott case was represented across various media forms as being linked to Mr. Philpott's claiming of welfare, and how this functioned as a 'technology of control and consent':

> Through broader citations of large families as a 'welfare problem', the already-established 'disgust-consensus' around 'benefit brood' families was rapidly anchored to the Philpotts specifically. The receipt of state welfare, hitherto marked as disgusting, and now linked repeatedly to the

manslaughter of six children, becomes powerfully weaponised and in turn shapes public perceptions

around state welfare in general. (p.10)

They also note how this case was referenced by George Osborne in similar terms

during a speech about welfare reform, denoting the direct link between media narratives

and political rhetoric and policy.

This link is also explored by Reeves and de Vries' (2016) study on the influence of

media coverage of welfare on public attitudes. With data from the British Social Attitudes

survey, they note that whilst attitudes towards welfare claimants were similar amongst

newspaper readers and non-readers alike before the 2011 UK riots, after the riots,

newspaper readers 'became more likely than non-readers to believe that those on welfare

did not really deserve help' (p.291). Having found through content analysis that an

average of 12% of coverage linked the riots to welfare (more so in right-wing newspapers

than left-wing newspapers), Reeves and de Vries suggest that this demonstrates the

influence of agenda-setting on public attitudes towards welfare, given that newspaper

readers now had a more negative attitude towards claimants that non-readers. Various

limitations are acknowledged, including issues regarding sampling, the likelihood of other

factors having influenced attitudes, and the failure to determine long-term effects.

However, their overall conclusion that media coverage can influence public attitudes to

welfare is further supported by Petersen *et al'* s (2011) psychological study which revealed

a tendency for their research participants to rely on heuristics provided as decision-making

shortcuts for their attitudes regarding deservingness of welfare for hypothetical claimants.

This provides an empirical basis on which to conclude that media framing of welfare is

likely to affect public attitudes to some extent.

The MSM's capacity to influence public opinion and even policy on the subject of

welfare functions largely through their possession of control over discourses and reach of

platform compared with the subjects often vilified by these messages. Hill's (2015) case study analysis of the *Jeremy Kyle Show* highlights the employment of technological devices (lie detectors, paternity tests, drug tests) as 'proof' to resolve disputes. He notes how 'the participants on the show cannot be trusted to engage in therapeutic talk by virtue of their lowly class position' which 'undermines the very foundation of self-help-through-talk […] and leads to the public shaming of individuals judged failures by middle-class norms.' (p.570). Here, agency and voice are removed from the subjects who are ostensibly provided with a platform to talk, demonstrating a tendency for the MSM to objectify and infantilise (whilst, paradoxically, blaming and scapegoating) those assigned such class positions, and highlighting barriers to accessing large platforms to share their own narratives.

Robinson *et al* (2009) highlight the importance of being able to share narratives from experience for those experiencing poverty, and suggest that new media might provide an opportunity for those 'whose voices are scarcely heard in the traditional media', acknowledging however that 'it can be very difficult to reach an audience' (Robinson *et al.*, 2009). One such employment of new media technologies in this way is blogging, a practice explored by Ibrahim's (2018) study of blogs on the topic of hunger during this austerity period in the UK. She describes 'new avenues for countering the official narrative' and the enabling of 'a plurality and participation where the historically "silent" can provide an access to their vulnerabilities and subjectivities' (p. 373). She describes these blogs as sites of resistance and disruption, 'renegotiat[ing] the moral politics of poverty and shame of a neo-liberal regime where the government shifts the responsibility and blame to individuals as dysfunctional' (p. 375).

There are, therefore, counter-narratives and platforms for first-person experience of poverty; however, whilst these exist and are important, they do not undermine the pervasiveness of MSM narratives.

2.2 Factual Welfare Television

Factual Welfare Television (Benedictis *et al*, 2017) is a sub-genre of Reality Television (RTV) that addresses the subject of 'the everyday lives of people claiming benefits' (p.337). Hill (2005) suggests for RTV as a whole, the term 'factual television [which] merges factual programming with entertainment-based television and highlights hybridisation, a common generic feature of most reality programmes' (p. 42). RTV first emerged in the 1940s, with US *Candid Camera* considered as one of the first of its kind (Clissold, 2004). The show involved ordinary people being 'caught' on camera without their knowledge, usually having been set up in unusual, humorous situations. Clissold (2004) locates the origin of *Candid Camera* within the geopolitical context of the Cold War, suggesting that it 'made surveillance entertaining, less threatening and ideologically acceptable' (p.35), and that its premise and format paralleled civic duties of 'hidden observation, recorded activities and public broadcast' (p. 37). The role and function of the genre has developed over time, with Hamad (2014) noting that 'since its dramatic rise to prominence as one of the dominant forms of television in the early twenty-first century, reality TV has been a significant site for the playing out of topical anxieties and concerns' (p.223).

Hill suggests that it is 'the "see it all happen" style of reality programming that makes it appealing to its audiences' (Hill, 2005, p. 39). However, the authenticity of RTV is critiqued, due to various elements of production including casting, framing and editing. Andrejevic notes how 'in the digital era, not only is it easier to capture and record reality; it is also easier to manipulate the images that are captured' (p.69). Yet, as Dovey suggests regarding the docu-soap sub-genre, 'there is a curious absence of any sense that this is a social reality that is any way contested or constructed' (p.153). It is important to recognise, therefore, that whilst these programmes may be presented as 'real', and appeal to

audiences on this basis, in fact they are highly packaged and edited. Dovey notes that one

such technique is a tendency to use commentary and narration to guide the viewer's

interpretation of events, suggesting that 'this is a very highly packaged account of the

world in which the space that the traditional observational film tried to open up for

audiences is closed down as we are told what to think and how to interpret the action'

(Dovey, 2000, p.143). If such programmes are framed and edited in a particular manner, to

form particular narratives, and influence audiences to form particular conclusions, it is

therefore important to consider what these narratives are and what functions they serve,

as is the focus of this study.

One of many sub-genres of RTV which has developed over time, the 'docu-soap'

format, is defined as 'multi-part series, each episode featuring strong recurrent

"characters" engaged in everyday activities, whose stories are interleaved in soap opera

style' (Biressi and Nunn, 2005, p.64). It emerged in the late 1990s, with landmark shows

such as *Airport* and *Vet School* on BBC1 which drew audiences of 10 million (Dovey,

2000). Docu-soaps 'use multiple character-led storylines, generate their own stars, are set

around one physical location and use the day-to-day chronology of popular drama'

(Dovey, 2000, p.133). Most documented examples of Factual Welfare Television take this

format.

2013 first saw the 'explosion' of Factual Welfare Television (FWT), a genre

described by Benedictis *et al* (2017), as 'highly popular and deeply controversial' (p.352),

the emergence of which 'has coincided with intensifying public and political debates about

poverty and the British welfare state' (p.337). Popular programmes have included *Benefits*

Street, How to Get a Council House and *Britain's Benefit Tenants (*Channel 4), as well as

Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole (Channel 5)*.* Like the majority of programmes in the FWT

genre, these take the docu-soap form, following the lives of 'real people' who claim benefits, ostensibly providing viewers with an insight into real lives and experiences on the subject of welfare. 'Poverty porn' is a term which has also been used to describe programmes of this genre; Jensen (2014) notes:

> Such programming is 'porn' in the sense that it aims to arouse and stimulate the viewer, to provoke an emotional sensation through a repetitive and affective encounter with the television screen. Poverty porn is an all-surface, no-depth visual culture of immediacy and its semiotic cues - its red flags of moral outrage - require no interpretative work from the viewer. (p.6)

Using their analysis of two public debates, Benedictis *et al* (2017) criticize FWT in terms of its production as 'governed by market logics' (p. 339), meaning that 'to stand out in a fast-paced, multifarious media landscape, representations of poverty and welfare within FWT become flattened to align with commercially successful generic television and film conventions' (p.348). They describe 'a limited (but dynamic) repertoire of frameworks and figures – such as the "benefit scrounger" or "dole cheat" – that may be used to justify future withdrawals of welfare' (p.340). They also note that the production workforce largely consists of the middle classes, and question the impact of this on its representations of poverty.

A landmark programme of this genre, and the focus of the majority of existing literature on FWT, is Channel 4's *Benefits Street* (2014-2015). Love Productions produced two series, one set in Birmingham and the other in Stockton-on-Tees, following the lives of welfare claimants. Lee (2018) describes it as a docu-soap with 'over-the-top, hyperbolic and extreme characters who we come back to in consecutive episodes, allowing their stories to be developed' (p.172).

Themes of worklessness, criminality, disobedience and the striver/skiver binary as explored in previous literature on MSM coverage all form part of *Benefits Street*'s central tenets. Jensen notes that:

> The skiver inherits the ideological baggage of preceding abject figures; the single mother, the troubled family, the unemployed, absent or feckless father. It is not surprising therefore to see a similar pejorative shorthand used in *Benefits Street* as that used in earlier waves of 'underclass' media mythologizing - the sofa abandoned in the street, piles of windswept rubbish, the satellite dish, cigarettes, tins of cheap lager, kids loitering in the street after dark. (Jensen, 2014, p.5)

Macdonald *et al* (2014) undertook research exploring this central claim of 'worklessness' in *Benefits Street* by conducting interviews with families in some of the most deprived localities in the UK. Patterns of worklessness were not found, leading the researchers to conclude that 'if [they] cannot be found in the extremely deprived neighbourhoods we studied, then they are unlikely to explain more general patterns of worklessness in the UK' (p.5). This suggests, then, that the discourse of 'worklessness' present in political rhetoric and general forms of MSM, including this new form of FWT, form one ideological figuration of welfare and poverty, which does not necessarily reflect patterns and experiences as they occur in society.

This stimulates questions as to the socio-political role of FWT. Benedictis *et al* (2017) propose that:

> [it] does not simply reflect the social world. Rather it constitutes it, intervening in the current conjecture of austerity in powerful ways by shaping public understandings of poverty and welfare (p.352)

The capacity for programmes like *Benefits Street* to contribute significantly to public discourses on welfare is highlighted further by the research of Patersen *et al,* who note that participants of their focus groups 'used the individuals in Benefits Street to work collaboratively to construct an overarchingly negative stereotype of those on benefits' (p.212). Similarly, van der Bom *et al* 's (2018) analysis of Twitter responses to *Benefits Street* 'found evidence of scrounger discourse, negative evaluations of individuals, generalisations about benefits claimants, questions of hygiene and morals, and contrasting positive evaluations which acted as the exception that proves a rule' (p. 39). This contributes to the suggestion that *Benefits Street* has negatively impacted viewers' opinions of welfare claimants. On 'poverty porn', Jensen (2014) notes that '[it] is not simply voyeurism, but performs an ideological function; it generates a new "commonsense" around an unquestionable need for welfare reform; it makes a neoliberal welfare "doxa" (p.3).

2.3 Women, Motherhood, Poverty and Welfare

The scapegoating of working-class mothers as the ones to blame for socio-economic problems is a well-established trope. Gillies (2006) describes the emergence over recent decades of narratives of a type of mother who is 'portrayed as irresponsible, immature, immoral, and a potential threat to the security and stability of society as a whole' (p.1). For example, Harkins and Lugo-Ocando (2017) note how, in 1991, during a period of recession in the UK, single mothers were 'targeted by politicians for being a burden on the state' (p.155), and Kelly (1996) notes similar use of this rhetoric in North America, where 'politicians [...] have used allusions to irresponsible teen mothers to whip up public support for cutbacks in welfare payments and social services' (p.444). Whilst poor and single mothers may have been conceived historically as victims and fundamentally 'good' (Tyler, 2011) today the prevailing configuration is that of the 'chav mum' who 'circulates within a

wide range of media' (Tyler, 2008, p.26), or 'pramface girl', a 'work-shy and feckless teen mother, a character who has purposefully squandered opportunities for social mobility in meritocratic Britain and has "chosen" a life of poverty, state dependence and redundancy for herself and her children' (Tyler, 2011, pp. 211/ 212).

Working-class mothers are pathologised through depictions of them as excessive (Skeggs, 1997 and 2008; Orgad and Benedictis, 2015), incapable (Skeggs, 2004), sexually promiscuous (Gillies, 2006), 'inappropriately fertile' (Tyler, 2011), and associated with 'poor outcomes for children' (Gillies, 2006, p. 2). These tropes are well-documented in various media forms, for example through aforementioned *Little Britain* character Vicky Pollard, or through the representation of celebrity Kerry Katona in RTV Show *Crazy in Love.* Katona is represented through the theme of 'irresponsible maternity'. She has 'too many children', smokes and drinks whilst pregnant, and is portrayed as 'infantile and demanding, brash, tasteless, outrageous and distraught' (Tyler and Bennett, 2010, p. 386). On the function of the 'chav mum' in such programmes, Tyler and Bennett suggest that 'we laugh at their faux pas and share our disgust at their shameless promiscuity, tasteless lifestyles, parental incompetence and bigotry' (p. 387). These narratives can be understood in opposition to narratives of middle-class mothers, with figures such as the 'yummy mummy': 'most references to her are not about disgust or the abject, but the opposite: desirability and sexual attractiveness'. (Littler, 2013, p.228).

With regards to welfare, there is a well-established trope castigating women who 'get pregnant to obtain state welfare' (Cohen, 2011, p.xxi), which can be linked to Jensen's (2015) 'benefits broods' figure. According to Tyler (2011), anxieties about the 'excessive' or 'inappropriate' reproductivity of working-class women are a symptom of a wider 'fertility anxiety; which haunts middle-class neo-liberal femininity' (p.220). In a society in which middle-class women experience pressure to 'have it all', and balance having children with a career, Tyler (2008) suggests that 'the figure of the chav mum not only mocks poor white

18

teenage mothers but also challenges middle-class women to face their "reproductive responsibilities"' (p.30).

Of the limited literature that addresses constructions of motherhood within the genre of FWT, the most notable is Allen *et al* 's (2014) study of *Benefits Street* (Channel 4) character White Dee. The study explores how she embodies many of these stereotypes. She is 'defined through her inadequacies and failings in relation to her abject maternity [and as] "out of step" both in terms of her non-participation in paid work within the labour market, and subsequent "dependency" on the state' (2.8). The researchers note a counter-framing of White Dee as 'caring matriarch', and as such describe her as 'a figure that is representative of unvalued forms of social reproduction' (5.2), locating this character as a 'figure of resistance' within its neoliberal context. Indeed, Tyler (2011) notes that 'the pramface is also castigated because she embodies anxiety about the time and place of motherhood in a society obsessed with paid work' (p.220). Contrasting this one neoliberal construction of motherhood, Orgad and Benedictis (2015) discuss the figure of the 'stay-at-home-mum', which 'separates and polarizes middle-class mothers, whose "choice" to opt out of the workforce is largely endorsed and commended, and their counterparts, working-class mothers, whose similar "choice" is criticized and derided' (p.431).

These demonising figurations of working-class womanhood and maternity can be understood through discourses of shame (Walkerdine, 2011) and value. For Skeggs (1997), working-class women are widely considered as holding limited positive value, and are socially required to 'become respectable', a narrative also found by Tyler (2011) within Reality TV show *Underage and Pregnant*, who notes that those characters pursuing education are 'able to acquire forms of value and capital, while those seen as "abandoning" education for motherhood are more harshly judged' (p.220). Skeggs argues that 'class is experienced by the women as exclusion' and, drawing on work by Willies (1977), notes that this is opposed to the experience of working-class men, who 'can use

class as a positive source of identity, a way of including themselves in a positively valorized social category' (Skeggs, 1997, p. 74). This is then linked to the subjugation of working-class women whose 'cultural capital is delegitimated'; the devaluing of working-class femininity means that 'the ability to capitalize on femininity is restricted' (p. 10). Working-class women are thus powerless, with symbolic as well as material consequences; 'the representational denigration of White working-class women blocks their capacity to convert their cultural capital into symbolic capital to gain other capitals and ensure material security' (Skeggs, 1997, p. 11).

On RTV, Walkerdine (2011) links the notion of shameful working-class femininity to the popularity of 'makeover' storylines, relating them to 'already embodied and transmitted shame passed down generations' (p.227). Indeed, these narratives of 'transformation' and 'improvement' are well documented in media and beyond. In her longitudinal ethnographic study of working-class women, Skeggs (1997) notes that 'they wanted to and/or were involved in improving their appearance their bodies; their mind; their flats/houses; their relationships; their future', and describes how 'class was configured through the improvement discourse because in order to improve they had to differentiate themselves from those who did not or could not improve' (p.82). In media, Tyler notes how each episode of *Underage and Pregnant* follows a 'similar narrative arc' of crisis followed by resolution, and suggests that this format exists as a means of legitimising the entertainment garnered from highly selective and often intentionally "shaming"' footage of these young women's lives' (2011, p.217).

Many of these discourses can be understood within frameworks of contemporary neoliberalism and postfeminism, two related ideologies or sensibilities (Gill, 2007) which are important to explore given their prevalence during the 2010-2015 timeframe of this study. Firstly, these transformation/improvement narratives relate to a postfeminist

'requirement to self-survey and work on the self' (Gill, 2007, p.155). Given working-class women's designation as 'already dirt' (Walkerdine, 2011, p.227), this postfeminist doctrine for women to 'believe [...] that they or their life is lacking or flawed [and that] it is amenable to reinvention or transformation' (Gill, 2007, p.156) is particularly inescapable for them. Secondly, regarding narratives and representations of mothers in poverty and welfare contexts, Gill suggests how 'one aspect of this postfeminist sensibility in media culture is the almost total evacuation of notions of politics or cultural influence' (p.153). Tyler (2011) similarly notes how 'in neo-liberal Britain, poverty is not perceived or represented as a social problem but as an individual failing, and in the case of teen motherhood as a pathological subjectivity' (p.211). It can therefore be suggested that this postfeminist and neoliberal individualisation of social problems creates an ideal framework in which to scapegoat working-class mothers, as they can be blamed for their individual failings. This ability to scapegoat is facilitated further through the long history of denigrating working-class mothers on media and political platforms.

2.4 Research Questions

This literature review describes a 2010-2015 Britain marked by austerity and welfare reform, and increased poverty, with MSM coverage which is generally hostile to welfare claimants, and an emergence of FWT or 'poverty porn' within the RTV genre. This is combined with a historical tendency to scapegoat working-class mothers instead of addressing society's problems, particularly within welfare contexts. Given the limited research on representations and narratives of motherhood within this emerging genre of FWT, the research questions for this study are as follows:

- How is motherhood represented and constructed within the FWT programmes analysed?

- What discursive and narrative devices are employed in these constructions, and how so?

- How do these discourses of motherhood relate to their socio-political austerity-welfare context?

Chapter 3: Method

3.1 Introduction

Given that the primary research questions are concerned with representations and constructions, of social phenomena, textual analysis is the most appropriate research method for addressing them. Conceptions and representations of motherhood in media and society within this specific socio-political context are complex, multi-layered questions, which cannot be understood adequately or meaningfully through methods such as quantitative content analysis that reduce the questions to binaries such as 'are FWT representations of motherhood generally positive or negative?' That is not to say such research would be meaningless, but its explanatory power would be limited, as it would omit much of the depth, detail and context of such representations and constructions. Qualitative textual analysis, in comparison, has the capacity to explore phenomena in great depth, uncovering and deconstructing detail which could otherwise be missed, and generating findings and conclusions that deal with questions in their complexity without reduction.

As the research is also concerned with matters of domination and inequality, the theoretical approach to this analysis is that of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which 'aims to make transparent the discursive aspects of societal disparities and inequalities' (Meyer, 2009, p.30). This approach involves analysing language choice and usage to 'draw out the ideology' (Hansen and Machin, 2013, p.151) of a text, which is often 'implicit, hidden or otherwise not immediately obvious' (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 18). 'Ideology' here, and throughout this paper, refers to 'the way that the ideas and values that make up[…] views [about the world] reflect particular interests' (Hansen and Machin, 2013, p.151).

I have used a 'multimodal' application of Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) (cf. Machin and Mayr, 2012). An example of its application can be found in Erkisson's (2015) study which sought to examine 'the role of reality television in the ongoing transformation

of Swedish working-class discourse' (p.20), through 'analys[ing] linguistic elements of [the] text combined when appropriate with the analysis of visual elements' (p.26).

My analysis is from the perspective of socialist feminism, which is concerned with the 'mutual dependence of capitalism and patriarchy as they are presently practiced' (Eisenstein, Z., 1977, p 203), and aims for the dismantling of these inter-related social systems of domination.

In the section that follows I will critically examine the CDA approach, discuss it with relation to my research project, followed by an introduction to *Skint* (Channel 4), and a description of my methods as implemented.

3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis offers the promise of showing exactly what features of language, what language choices, have been used to accomplish particular kinds of communicative aims (Hansen and Machin, 2013, p.115)

Critical Discourse Analysis emerged in the 1970s (Wodak, 2009) from the field of linguistics, and is based on the notion that 'there is no neutral way to represent the world through language as all the words we use are motivated and are laden with certain kinds of meanings and values' (Hansen and Machin, 2013, p.117). CDA scholars suggest that 'it is through language that we constitute the social world' (*ibid*), and that social phenomena can't be understood outside of our interpretation of them (Cf. Furlong and Marsh, 2010). Wood (2000, p4) suggests that language should be considered 'not simply a tool for description and a medium of communication (the conventional view), but as social practice, as a way of doing things'. When language is considered constitutive rather than merely descriptive of the social world, close analysis of language becomes an important and revealing area of social research.

'Discourse' can be defined as 'ways of representing aspects of the world – the processes, relations and structures of the material world, the "mental world" of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world' (Fairclough, 2003, p.133). CDA is concerned with revealing such discourses, and the ideological positions which underpin them, which are hidden in texts. This entails a focus upon 'relations of power, dominance and inequality and the ways these are reproduced or resisted by social group members through text and talk' (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 18). The aim of CDA is therefore to study language usage within texts to reveal discourses which are not immediately apparent, and particularly 'to investigate critically social inequalities [as they are] expressed, signalled, constituted, legitimised and so on by language use (or in discourse)' (Meyer and Wodak 2009, p.2). To take one example, CDA can be used to analyse how individuals are referred to in a text; by name, occupation, or otherwise? As Hansen and Machin (2013, p. 124/125) note, the act of naming 'allow[s] us to place people in the social world, to highlight certain aspects we wish to draw attention to and to silence others'.

I would argue that one of the main advantages of CDA, and the reason it has been employed in this study, is its potential conduciveness to social change. As Skeggs (1997, p.11) notes, and the literature review explores, '[t]he media as an institution can produce symbolic violence against the working-classes'. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that ideologies that dominate media content must be examined to challenge elite power. Van Dijk (1995) observes that 'discourse control and access' is associated with 'social power' (p.20), and suggests that '[d]etailed contextual and textual analysis is necessary to pinpoint the sometimes subtle strategies of such forms of discursive dominance' (p. 21). Gill similarly notes that discursive work can 'examin[e] the ways in which relations of domination and subordination are reproduced and justified, and highlight [...] the flexibility of ideological practice' (1996, p. 156). Through CDA, then, the discourses generated by

dominant media platforms can be revealed and identified, and the unequal power relations that sustain them can be more easily challenged.

Another advantage of CDA, as a method rooted in interpretivist epistemology, is that it allows for a multiplicity of interpretations and readings, increasing the contextual specificity and therefore appropriacy, relevance and meaningfulness of the analysis. This subjectivity has been targeted by critics of CDA, who claim that it 'does not produce broad empirical generalizations of the sort that much traditional research sees as its goal' (Gill, 1996, p.155). However, as Gill notes, this form of analysis 'does not set out to identify any universal processes' *(ibid).* This analysis is undertaken on the basis that an objective 'reality' does not exist outside of our interpretation of it – that it is constructed through discourse in the Foucauldian sense that no 'form of thought could claim an absolute "truth" of this kind, outside the play of discourse' (Hall, 1997, p.48). Therefore, to seek an objective and external 'truth' on such social matters as those addressed in this study would be a misplaced aim. I would argue that this allowance for multiple readings of a given text is necessary given that 'there can be and are several different ways of knowing – and hence also of representing – the same '"object" of knowledge' (van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 94). This study makes no claim to objective, external truth, and I make explicit here that this is one of many possible readings. That is not to say, however, as McKee (2003, p.22) notes, that 'anybody can make any claim and they're all just as acceptable'. As she suggests (p.57):

> Doing textual analysis means making an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of a text. Our research can show us the limits of what might be likely.

My analysis is therefore grounded within a thorough understanding of the context in which the texts in question are situated, including detailed research of previous relevant works.

Critical Discourse Analysis and Reality Television

Blitvich and Lorenzo-Dus (2013a, p.14) argue for Reality Television to be considered as 'a discourse system, rather than a genre'. They argue that '[t]he representation and construction of a range of aspects of reality and identities in RTV is thus of manifest interest to scholars working within Critical Discourse Analysis frameworks. (p.28).

As explored in the literature review, some argue that the FWT sub-genre has played a significant role in the formation of discourses on matters of poverty, welfare and class in Austerity Britain. Indeed, Eriksson (2015, p.23) notes how '[o]n reality television, issues of class are not explicitly invoked. Instead, they are raised through how taste and appearance are treated in discourse'. I would therefore suggest that the formations and functions of these discourses merit critical analysis through CDA. Blitvich and Lorenzo-Dus (2013a, p.14) note that RTV involves the construction of public identities, and that it encompasses a 'blurring between public and private discourses', as it generally involves 'claims to give viewers unprecedented access to the "private realm" of participants' *(ibid)*, but within the public institution of broadcasting. This is an interesting perspective for studying constructions of motherhood within FWT programmes, and my analysis takes into consideration the functions of this public/ private blurring.

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA)

Although Critical Discourse Analysis is traditionally concerned with linguistic analysis, it has also been applied to 'other semiotic dimensions (pictures, film, sound, music, gestures, etc.) or communicative events' (Van Dijk, 1995, p.18). Machin and Ledin (2017, p.60) note that '[m]ulti-modality is becoming more common in CDA as scholars

begin to introduce visual, sound and material design alongside their analyses of texts',

which Lorenzo-Dus and Blitvich suggest has been 'triggered by the so-called digital era, in

which different communicative modes have technically merged at some representational

level' (2013, p. 29). Given that 'television medium is intrinsically multimodal' (*ibid*), an

MCDA approach is most appropriate for this study, within which 'camera work, background

music, screen graphics, language, paralanguage, and so forth are all treated as significant

meaning-making modes' *(ibid).*

MCDA is derived from social semiotics, and 'treats the actions and artefacts used in

communication as semiotic resources' (Eriksson, 2015, p.26). Semiotics is largely

associated with Ferdinand de Saussure who developed the linguistic concept that 'signs'

are made up of 'signifiers' and 'signifieds' (Cf. Hall, 1997, p.36), and Roland Barthes, who

was similarly concerned with 'layering of meaning':

> The first layer is the layer of denotation, of 'what, or who, is being depicted here?'. The second layer
> is the layer of connotation, of 'what ideas and values are expressed through what is represented,
> and through the way in which it is represented? (van Leeuwen, 2001, p.94)

In a similar vein to CDA, social semiotics is concerned with 'reversing or changing

dominant ideological assumptions through semiotic action' (Aiello, 2006, p. 92). The

MCDA framework 'was developed to highlight the importance of taking into account

semiotic modes other than language, such as image, music, gesture, and so on, with a

view to generating comprehensive and powerful analyses of discourse' (Lorenzo-Dus and

Blitvich, 2013, p. 29), and is largely associated with the work of Machin and Mayr (2012).

In this study, I employed an MCDA approach similar to that used by Eriksson's

(2015) study on the makings of class within Swedish reality television show *Ullared,* which

incorporated similar aims and themes to my own. His focus was on the device of 'ridicule'

in the recontextualisation of the working-class. In justifying the appropriateness of MCDA for this study, he notes that:

> [t]he strategies of ridicule on which I focus consist of diverse semiotic resources. They are made up of discourse devices (talk), editing techniques and audiovisual effects in complex combinations (p.21).

I applied a similar approach, using 'actions and artefacts used in communication as semiotic resources' (p.26). This multimodal application of CDA does not mean, however, that all semiotic resources are treated in the exact same way as language. For example, as Machin notes, 'images do not have such specific denotative meaning as language and therefore it is a less easy matter to pin down precisely what meanings they convey' 2013, p. 350). The nature of each type of semiotic resource, its functions, uses and limits have thus been considered as part of the analysis. As Eriksson (2015, p.35) notes, '[i]deological work is essentially multimodal which might make it harder to identify, but it is nevertheless a crucial task for Critical Discourse Studies to carry on doing so'.

3.3 Case Study Analysis: *Skint*

For my analysis of constructions of motherhood within the emerging FWT genre, I have undertaken a case study analysis of *Skint,* produced by KEO Films for Channel 4 (2013-2015). The programme follows the docu-soap format, with each of the three series introducing and following the 'real' lives of different characters. It is described on the Channel 4 website as portraying: '[i]ntimate stories of how people live with the devastating effects of long-term unemployment' (Channel 4, n.d.). At the time this study was carried out, the programme was available on the 'All 4 - On Demand' platform, which indicated its

popularity amongst British audiences, as well as its continued relevance and demand given that they were still available to watch. Data from the Broadcasters Audience Research Board (Broadcasters Audience Research Board, n.d.) reveals that when they were originally broadcast, each of the eleven episodes across three series had at least 1 million viewers, and placed within the top 20 programmes for viewing figures within that week for Channel 4. Series 1 was particularly popular, with Episode 1 viewed by 3.02 million, and placing top for Channel 4 viewing figures in the week it was first broadcast. This popularity and wide audience reach makes *Skint* a useful site for understanding FWT constructions of motherhood within MSM, as its power to shape discourses is bolstered by its large platform.

I undertook a case study analysis as opposed to a comparative analysis, to provide the scope to follow, analyse and contextualise narratives as they develop across episodes. On the function of narrative analysis, Hansen and Machin (2013) note that:

> Discourses allow different kinds of narratives to be composed. We can therefore analyse the sequences of activity to reveal the discourse building blocks and we can think of these sequences as discourse schemas'. (p. 161)

I also wanted to provide a close reading to reveal and understand the most 'hidden' discourses. Gill (1996, p.142) suggests that 'even the most apparently straightforward, neutral-sounding utterance can be involved in a whole range of different activities, depending on the interpretative context', indicating the usefulness of looking very closely at texts. It is for this reason that I chose to undertake a close analysis of a small sample of these episodes. The analysis focusses on the four episodes of Series One of *Skint* – the series which most heavily features storylines of motherhood – rather than taking samples from each series, to allow for the detailed contextualisation of discourses within narratives, and for an analysis of the development of these narratives. Indeed, Mckee (2003, p.73)

suggests that '[i]f you want to understand likely interpretations of a television programme, a book in a series, or an issue of a magazine, you must familiarize yourself with several episodes, books or issues'.

3.4 Implementation of Methods

Having reviewed the literature (and therefore equipped with contextual knowledge), and critically watched a variety of related television programmes, and selected *Skint* for analysis, I proceeded with my analysis by watching each episode and making notes. I approached this with Gill's suggestion that: '[a]t the preliminary stage, all instances that seem only vaguely relevant and all borderline cases should be included' (1996, p.145). I continued by watching each episode multiple times, coding as I went along and zooming in on semiotic resources and themes which emerged as relevant according to their context, a process otherwise known as 'theoretical sampling' (Meyers, 2009, p.24). Through multiple 'watchings' I became very familiar with the texts, noticing more depth and adding to my analyses each time I watched them. Indeed, as Lindlof (2011, p. 266) notes: '[t]hrough coding and categorization, researchers become familiar with the data at the micro level and begin to build a macro structure that interconnects they key parts of the data'.

I analysed a range of communication devices as 'semiotic resources' (Cf. Machin and Mayr, 2012), drawing largely on the methodology of Eriksson's (2015) study which who noted of Swedish docu-soap *Ullared* that:

at the linguistic level viewers are introduced to character and situation, but much evaluation and realization of discourses that delegitimize the working-classes are done visually, through selection of scenes, shots and also through editing and music' (p.35)

I therefore paid close attention to all elements of sound, visuals and uses of language as well as narrative structures, and other 'actions and artefacts used in communication' (*ibid*, p.26). It was necessary to ensure these analyses were contextualised, as '[a] text is part of the process of discourse and it is pointless to study it in isolation' (Talbot, 2007, p.10). I therefore continuously referred to the literature, and considered the background of the programme, its production, and the period in which it was filmed amongst other factors.

As this study does not involve human participants, ethical implications are reduced. However, as this study is concerned with matters of power and inequality, it is necessary to acknowledge my own researcher influence, as I hold that there is a responsibility not to contribute towards the denigration and domination of the underprivileged through research. Having had, in my own life, experiences of financial hardship and of reliance on the welfare state within my own immediate family (and consequently a level of empathy and understanding), I however currently occupy a position of class privilege relative to those examined and considered within this study. As is archetypal for CDA, I approach this study:

> in opposition against those groups and institutions who abuse their power, and in solidarity with dominated groups, [...] by discovering and denouncing discursive dominance, and by cooperating in the empowerment of the dominated' (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 24).

A critique of my own worldview is therefore included in the analysis, as is a recognition of the limitations of this study's perspective. Indeed, this is always a necessary part of this form of study, as Gill notes that 'doing discourse analysis involves you in the interrogation of your own assumptions and the ways in which you make sense of things' (1996, p.145).

Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This section presents an analysis of overarching thematic and semiotic formations found within constructions and representations of motherhood in *Skint* Series 1 (Channel 4, 2013). The series' representational strategies can be summarised as broadly conforming to representations outlined in the literature review. I will first briefly outline some of the series' overarching practices of narration and visualisation which underpin these representations and constructions. I will then discuss themes of fertility, inadequacy, care and devotion, transformation and improvement, and finally will position constructions of motherhood in relation to those found of men and masculinity.

The narration, by Ralph Ineson who speaks with a Northern accent, refers in the opening credits to Scunthorpe, the location in which the series is set, as 'Scunny' (all further uncited quotations are taken from *Skint* Series 1 (Channel 4, 2013)). This informal, colloquial name connotes affection, nostalgia and proximity, positioning the narrator as part of the community. This colloquialism, along with the local-sounding accent, suggests that the narrator is giving us access 'from within', imbuing the commentary with authority and legitimacy. This practice of using colloquial terms is continued throughout: he describes one character as having purchased a television 'on the never never', meaning a long-term loan, and introduces another by stating that 'there's a lass who's just turned 21 and has five kids already' (Scunthorpe Episode 2). Indeed, Biressi and Nunn note this well-established practice of the 'authoritative voiceover and symbolic use of ordinary working-class accents to signify and underline authenticity' (2005, p.35).

The opening credits feature panoramic shots of vast open spaces, wide post-industrial landscapes and empty grasslands, which positions the camera in the perspective of a 'middle-class gaze' (Lyle, 2008) that observes the action from above. Indeed, this 'focus of pre-credit and opening sequence on housing estates, and other "working-class

landscapes", metaphorically establishes a 'high ground' from which the viewer can pass judgement', as Tyler notes in her analysis of BBC Reality TV show *Underage and Pregnant* (2011, p. 216). These wide landscape panoramic shots within *Skint*'s opening credits also imply the perspective of an 'omniscient narrator', suggesting that the viewer is accessing the entire area, and is getting a 'full picture' of what occurs within this location and community.

4.2 'Excessive' and 'Inappropriate' Fertlity

'Excessive' or 'inappropriate' fertility of women is one of the overarching themes of the series. On the function of the fertility narrative in an austerity-welfare context, Hill suggests that 'economic crisis is projected onto working-class bodies'. He argues that:

> The supposed irresponsible sexual activity of working-class people – promiscuity, for
> example, but especially sex without contraception – represents a cost to national resources
> insofar as the National Health Service might be required for the treatment of sexually
> transmitted infections or state support in the form of benefits might be needed for the low- or
> no-income families formed (2015, p.574)

This narrative is largely played out through Claire, who is pregnant with her seventh child, to whom she gives birth during the series. During the Episode 1 scene in which Claire and her husband (and father of the baby) Dean return from the hospital with their new baby, the narrator explains: 'It's the wee small hours, and Dean and the missus are just back from the hospital. She's dropped her seventh, a beautiful baby boy'. The phrase 'dropped her seventh' connotes casualness, particularly considering the experience it is describing – giving birth, which is likely to have been exhausting, painful and even traumatic. This is juxtaposed with a later scene in which Dean, having had a vasectomy, shows his testicles to the camera, and is seen to be in a great deal of pain: Dean's

34

suffering is documented, whereas Claire is presented as having suddenly and miraculously 'dropped' a baby, again signalling casualness. The narration is accompanied by a sequence in which the parents arrive home with the baby and enter the kitchen, where their teenage children are standing around playing on their phones, whilst Claire sits around and has a cup of tea and mainly maintains a casual expression. Combined, this framing presents the scene as a familiar ritual to which the family is accustomed, nothing is out of the ordinary, giving the impression of Claire having had an excessive number of children.

Although this is also Dean's baby, the focus of excessive fertility is on Claire, especially as five of her seven children belong to different men from previous relationships, to which there are multiple references. In Episode 3 she appears to briefly forget one of their names, signalling a moral failure, and to which she exclaims, 'I've got that many kids!' Towards the end of Episode 1, Claire and Dean have a 'pregnancy scare'; that this is included in the same episode as her having given birth again flags excessive fertility. An off-camera reporter asks the couple, 'you're quite fertile, aren't you?', to which Dean responds 'Claire is, fucking Jesus. All I'd have to do is spunk in a hanky and the flies'd do the rest'. This explicitly portrays Claire as the 'fertile' one, which Dean expresses frustration about through swearing and complaining that 'every time we fuck we end up with a kid'. He says this whilst opening a bottled beer with his teeth, appearing macho and jovial; he is presenting himself as powerful, but abdicates responsibility for his part in conceiving a baby, and Claire alone is blamed for her excessive fertility.

Visual imagery which depicts crowdedness is used throughout the series to connote excessive fertility. During Episode 1, there is a brief shot in-between scenes, of a row of five young women sitting on a wall. The closest two women are holding babies, which are in the centre of the shot, giving the visual impression that they are all holding babies. The camera angle emphasises the foreground of the shot in which the young women are

situated, making the remainder of the long wall appear shorter, which gives the sense of crowding. The remainder of the shot is a grey wall, barren grassy area, cars and houses in the background; this backdrop of an empty estate gives the sense that it is dominated by teenage mothers, and is consequently 'overcrowded'. This is a fleeting image between scenes, which is not contextualised - the viewer is therefore likely to see this quickly, but not interrogate it, providing a subliminal effect.

A similar effect is created during the opening credits, in which the narrator introduces 'Dean and Claire and their soon-to-be-7-kids', alongside a shot of the family standing outside their house accompanied by several others, a mixture children and adults, who are perhaps extended family. The shot is from below, and the perspective spreads outwards, which gives impression of crowdedness. The children are in the front and centre of this brief shot, and it is taken at their height; at a glance this appears as a very large and 'excessive' number of children in the family. The inclusion of this image in the opening credits, which frames the episode, and is therefore repeated across the series, marks it as a significant visual cue; the viewer is encouraged to see this programme about families who are '*skint'* and associate the term with very large families. Harkins and Lugo-Ocando (2017, p.17) note that: '[t]he large families described in many of the tabloid stories are [...] very rare'. And yet, this 'large' family forms one of the central storylines, suggesting that the situation can be generalised, particularly as the narration in the opening credits says: 'for Dean, his wife and their soon-to-be seven kids, and families just like them round the country, *this* is what it means to be skint'. This contributes to the discourse of the 'benefits brood' (Jensen and Tyler 2015), which here is played out through the excessive fertility of women specifically. As Tyler notes: '[t]here is a repeated emphasis within news media and internet forums on the sluttish behaviour and multiple pregnancies of the female chav' (Tyler, 2008, p. 26).

Teenage pregnancy is another prominent theme. This is a particular focus of Episode 2, in which the narrator introduces the topic with the statement, 'it has to be said, some girls seem to be starting younger and younger these days'. This claim comes against a sequence of shots of different young women pushing prams around the housing estate, their anonymity connoting the generalisability of this phenomenon, to this locality and others like it 'round the country'. There is a short scene in which three young people are interviewed in the street, and asked by an off-screen reporter, 'why do people have kids so young?' One young woman, Vicky, immediately responds: 'some people do it for the money and some people don't', whilst the other two simultaneously suggest 'benefits' and 'slags'. The fact that other members of the same community suggest a direct connection between teenage pregnancies and welfare misuse adds legitimacy to this claim. I would suggest that these young people are perhaps conscious of this dominant discourse, have read the subtext of the question, and are aware of what the reporter would like for them to say; they immediately went straight to discussing benefits, despite this not having formed part of the question.

Young pregnancy is presented as an inevitable cycle for the women of the Westcliff estate, passed from one generation to the next. During a street interview, having been asked by an off-screen reporter, 'why do people have kids so young?', minor character Casey suggests, 'I don't know maybe they have a shit time at home with their mums or whatever. They just wanna get out of there and love someone because they don't feel loved'. This indicates a cycle, and places the blame on inadequate mothers. Concerns are expressed through the narration and family conversations about whether Claire's 15-year-old daughter Danni will 'follow in her footsteps', herself having had her first child aged nineteen. Episode 2 ends with Danni resolving not to have a boyfriend for the time being, with the narrator describing the children of this family as 'happy, for now at least, just to be kids' - alongside a shot of 15-year-old Danni applying make-up in her bedroom mirror. The

37

emphasis on the word 'now' - suggests fluidity and instability, and gives the impression that Danni is susceptible to easily fall into the cycle and follow the trajectory of becoming a teen mother.

4.3 Inadequacy

Gillies (2006) notes how: '[w]orking class mothering practices are held up as the antithesis of good parenting, largely through their association with poor outcomes for children' (p. 2). Indeed, the inadequacy of the mothers portrayed in *Skint* Series 1 is a prominent theme, through a variety of tropes. One aspect of this is the trope of irresponsibility. For example, there is a brief sequence in-between scenes, in Episode 4, which involves a shot of two young boys, who appear to be approximately six years old, scooting along on children's scooters, in what appears to be a high street. The shop shutters are down in the background, which looks notably empty, and there are no adults present. There is a sense that these children are unattended, uncared for and unsupervised. One has their hood up, and the impression is that they are 'up to no good'. Another scene displaying maternal irresponsibility occurs in Episode 1. Claire is heavily pregnant and is bouncing on a trampoline with her daughter, and exclaims 'it ([the baby]) might just fall out!', whilst giggling, suggesting irresponsible behaviour whilst pregnant. This shot is interspersed with Dean talking about the night they met, and that they were both very drunk, again connoting irresponsible behaviour and linking it with her pregnancy through editing.

Within the theme of inadequacy, there is a thread of mothers portrayed as unable to control their children. This is largely seen through the character of Connor, the teenage son of Jordan. A scene in Series 1 involves a close-up interview in which Jordan discusses how she cannot physically get Connor up and make him go to school; her hair is frayed and she appears exhausted, suggesting a lack of personal care as well as her perceived

inability to look after her son. A later scene depicts a physical altercation between Jordan and Connor outside their house, as he refuses to go to school. Jordan is physically dominated by her son - perhaps signalling the absence of Connor's father and Jordan's failures as a single mother - she cannot control him, and appears powerless and 'useless'. Walkerdine (2011) links the portrayal of working-class mothers failing to discipline their children, to liberal modernity, noting that:

> While class is still an issue, it often becomes glossed over as an individual responsibility as the pathologised subject fails to discipline and manage themselves in the correct way. This results in pathological child-rearing, a dirty kitchen, fat children, eating unhealthy food, and lack of aspiration and motivation to change and succeed. (p.226)

Gillies notes the trope that 'unregulated, poor parents spawned damaged, anti-social children destined to live a life of poverty and crime' (2006, p. 8). In keeping with this notion, Connor is portrayed as unruly and disobedient, signalling Jordan's failure to raise a well-behaved citizen. He is introduced by the narrator in Episode 1: 'They're not all bad, but young Connor is definitely one to keep your eye on'. He appears in the middle of the shot, wearing a tracksuit, looking surly, and swears at the camera with his finger. Throughout the series, he appears to constantly 'misbehave' through swearing, smashing a window, smashing a glass on his bedroom floor in anger, regularly shouting 'fuck the police!' and refusing to go to school for many months. In one scene in Episode 1, Connor shouts to his mum 'chuck me a fag?' from his bed, and a later scene depicts him lighting a cigarette on a gas hob in their kitchen, in his mother's presence. That Jordan seemingly allows and facilitates her 15-year-old son smoking cigarettes, despite the health risks and the fact that it is illegal for children to smoke, signals irresponsible parenting and is likely to elicit objection and disgust from a middle-class viewer.

The 'unruly child' trope is also present through the representation of teenage girl Sky, who is depicted as having anger problems following the drug-related death of her stepfather several years beforehand. In Episode 4, Sky is seen standing outside the gates of a park, shouting 'fucking Polish bastards' at two men who are inside the park. Her mother Gail then joins in, shouting 'well fuck off back to your own country and make the mess there then, where you fucking come from'. This is one of the only instances of Gail and Sky joining forces, as they are usually shouting at one another. A rare moment of mother-daughter bonding is shared through the xenophobic verbal abuse of strangers; that Gail joins in with Sky's behaviour suggests that 'this is where Sky has learnt it from', and elicits contempt from a viewer who is of course appalled by this racist behaviour, again signalling poor parenting. When watched in today's political context, it also suggests that middle-class 'remainers' should be blaming 'uneducated' and therefore xenophobic working-class families for 'ruining it for everyone' by voting for Brexit, leading to even more class division. Indeed, this is supported by Gillies' suggestion that:

Racism is constructed as a working-class problem perpetuated by 'ignorant' poor whites, effectively deflecting attention from the disproportionate and grievous inequality suffered by ethnic minorities in white middle-class institutions'. (2006, p. 31)

Disputing this well-documented, demonising characterisation of working-class mothers, Gillies notes based on her research involving in-depth interviews with working-class mothers that:

The caricature of the lazy, indifferent 'pramface' impassively letting her children run wild could not be further from the truth. Discipline and good behaviour were highly valued traits, and the mothers were acutely aware of the dangers, bad influences and temptations surrounding their children'. (*ibid* p.153)

This suggests, therefore, that this discourse constructed in *Skint* is not truly reflective or generally representative of working-class motherhood practices and values.

Another narrative theme depicting the inadequacy of *Skint's* mothers is that of children being removed by authorities. Tracy is depicted as a drug-addict, shoplifter and sex worker whose life is out of control, and it emerges in Episode 4 that she had had children who were removed by social services. She constantly appears intoxicated and 'out of control', and is framed by sordid imagery. For example, there is a scene in Episode 4 of her preparing heroin on a coffee table in dimly lit living room, with carrier bags next to her on the sofa and dirty mugs on the side. In the same episode, there is a scene of close-up shots of her applying makeup and zipping up her knee-high leather boots whilst getting ready for a night 'on the streets'. Discussing the loss of her children, she explains: 'It does say clearly that I'm not a bad mum. It's just the lifestyle and the shoplifting and the drugs'. The overall framing of her behaviour, however, encourages the viewer to believe that she is indeed a 'bad mum'.

This narrative is also present in the representation of the character of 16-year-old Jamelia whose daughter was removed by social services at birth. Her life is similarly depicted as chaotic; she lives with housemates who use heroin in communal areas, her living environment is cluttered and messy, the kitchen cupboards are shown to be bare, and her boyfriend Liam (and father of their baby) is portrayed as disinterested, feckless, apathetic and irresponsible. In Episode 2, there is a scene in which Jamelia is shouting and screaming at him, followed by a slammed door, which is interspersed with shots of Liam sitting stroking a dog, appearing disinterested. Their lives appear chaotic; he is an irresponsible father, and she is volatile and emotional. She appears desperate to get her daughter back, but these depictions of chaos and instability again suggest that she is incapable and undeserving of this.

The suggestion that 'failed' motherhood indicates failure as a woman is also present under the theme of inadequacy. For example, Emma, who is faced with the prospect of losing custody of her son Ty, exclaims to the camera: 'If I can't even succeed as a mother, what is the point of me?' This theme is also present for Tracy, who is almost always depicted alone, wandering, appearing lost and aimless; having lost custody of her children, she is now a 'loner'. She describes herself: 'Since I've lost my kids, I don't care anymore. What else have I got to lose? Apart from my head?' There is a sense that Tracy's life is worthless now that she no longer has her children. This relates to Gillies' (2006) suggestions that 'all women are to some extent defined by their relation to motherhood' (p.10) and that 'becoming a mother is often depicted as a destined developmental stage, constituting a primary identity for women' (p31).

Overall, there are few, if any, storylines signalling successful parenting by these mothers, whose incapability is marked by inadequacy, through irresponsible parenting, a failure to control their unruly and badly-behaved children, and in multiple cases the inability to keep custody of their children who are taken away by social services. That these are the main narratives represented in a reality television series about families living with unemployment and low incomes, draws a direct link between poverty and incapable mothers in wider society, for viewers who are encouraged to view this as representative of 'real life'. This relates to a wider dominant discourse, as Chauhan and Foster note of the news coverage analysed in their study:

'[i]n the domestic context, the plight of poor children was linked to household poverty caused by parental laziness and drug addiction. The media clearly presented such parents as deficient and undeserving of welfare. (2015, p.398)

4.4 Care and Devotion

Seemingly as a counter-narrative to these more demonising depictions of mothers in *Skint,* mothers are also occasionally represented as caring and devoted. However, these instances are almost exclusively framed within broader narratives of either inadequacy or transformation. This can be seen for example through the way that Jordan is depicted as extremely concerned about her son Connor. In Episode 1 she explains how 'You always want the best for your children don't you. Try and give them a better life than you had yourself. I feel like I've failed'. She is therefore depicted as genuinely caring about the welfare of her son, perhaps suggesting a positive quality to her motherhood. However, this is simultaneously framed negatively as her having 'failed' to provide this life for him.

Emma's love for her son Ty is demonstrated through how she addresses him. For example, in Episode 4, she lies down in bed with him and turns off the light, and says: 'Sweet dreams, baby. How much does mummy love you? A million times more than all the stars in the world'. She is therefore portrayed as a caring and loving mother. However, as will be discussed in the next section, this is framed within the more cynical narrative of transformation and improvement, as she is portrayed as having been a poor mother through drug misuse and neglect of her son, and their relationship is characterized by her battle to turn her life around and keep custody of him.

4.5 Transformation and Improvement

Many of the mothers in *Skint* are seen to be 'improving' themselves, and their storylines are those of transformation. This is particularly the case for the character Jamelia, the sixteen-year-old who is fighting to regain custody of her daughter. Jamelia appears extremely dedicated and focused on improving her life – which is characterised by chaos and instability, describing in Episode 2, for example, her wish 'to settle into a home,

one where I'm gonna be there, get it all decorated looking nice, get my daughter'. In a scene in the same Episode, she is getting herself ready to appear in court for a hearing regarding the custody of her daughter. She is filmed applying makeup whilst sitting on the sofa, using a cracked mirror and surrounded by her possessions, appearing cluttered and disorganised. Once ready, she stands up and explains that she has made an effort with her outfit in the hope that it will reflect well on her ability as a mother. She is usually filmed wearing hoodies, tracksuits, faux leather jackets, her hair tied back, sometimes appearing unwashed and not brushed. On this occasion she is proudly wearing black heeled boots, loose black trousers, a vest top and sleeveless cardigan, which a middle-class viewer still might not consider especially formal for a court hearing, perhaps eliciting ridicule. She asks the off-screen reporter: 'Do you think I look nice?' to which there is no response shown. The inclusion of this clip of Jamelia asking the camera whether she looks nice makes the question rhetorical, the reporter's silence inviting the audience to respond. Here, the viewer is invited to cast their judgment on Jamelia – explicitly on her clothing choice and implicitly on her suitability for motherhood. The position of the audience thus mirrors that of the court in her custody case. Jamelia is therefore simultaneously presented as improving herself, imperative for the working-class woman whose body 'is always presented as ready and ripe for transformation' (Walkerdine 2011, p.225) but still inadequate and not quite respectable.

This narrative is also assigned to Emma, who is fighting to keep custody of her son Ty after her and her partner's battle with drug addiction. With the help of Paul, a charity support worker, who explains to her, 'we can help you plan, strategize, look forward and get you looking in that right direction', she is seen to be striving to make changes in her life, including applying to move to a new area for a 'fresh start'. Her storyline ends at the end of Episode 4 with her walking through a park with her son, on a sunny day with blue

sky, talking about the changes she wants to make, against a musical soundtrack which sounds positive and hopeful. As for Gail, she moves into a new home at the end of Episode 4, which she shows the camera around, and which she describes as 'like a palace', juxtaposed with her previous home depicted as cramped, with smashed windows, clutter, a squawking budgerigar and constant shouting. Similarly, Danni, resolves not to have a relationship for a long time after apparent concerns that she would become a teenage mother, and indicates the desire to go to university, to which the narrator responds, 'sounds like Danni's got her head screwed on' (Episode 2). Finally, Tracy's transformation is depicted through her not receiving a jail sentence, as had been expected, with the narrator in Episode 4 explaining that 'she was given a drug rehabilitation order, and is hoping to turn things around'. Tracy herself laments: 'I regret the prostitution, and not fighting a bit harder for my kids', connoting a reformed character.

The recurrence of this narrative for a high number of the mothers depicted in *Skint* Series 1 contributes to the association of working-class femininity with shame (Walkerdine, 2011) and the imperative that they must strive for respectability (Skeggs, 1997). These are well-established tropes, as Skeggs (*ibid*) notes that the working-class women in her longitudinal ethnographic study were 'never able to feel comfortable with themselves, always convinced that others will find something about them wanting and undesirable'. In addition to this denigration, the narrative of personal transformation serves a function of individualising social problems and assigning personal responsibility to the individual. Indeed, Negra and Tasker note that 'recessionary media culture implies that management of the self can effect positive change' and Hamad describes how this 'focus on personal responsibility [...] denies the impact on the individual of systemic and institutionalized inequity' (2014, p. 224. In this context of poverty and welfare, this could be seen to encourage viewers to think of working-class mothers who don't appear to conform to

middle-class notions of respectability and ambition as therefore 'undeserving' of sympathy and indeed state support.

4.6 Fatherhood, Men and Masculinities

It is also useful to consider representations and constructions of motherhood in relation to those of fatherhood, men and masculinities in *Skint.* Whilst, as noted, women in the programme tend to be positioned in the context of their motherhood, the stories of men focus more often on them as individuals in their own right, even if they are parents themselves. The blurb of Series 1 Episode 3 is described on the Channel 4 website (n.d.) as:

The local pub - The Desert Rat - is re-opening. Unemployment is running high on the estate and just outside the pub is "The Wall" where people congregate, often when they have nothing better to do.

This Episode mainly focuses on individual men and their problems. This includes Kieran who is unemployed, homeless and battling drug addiction, Claire's oldest son James who is leaving school and applying for the army, amidst his family's concerns that he will become unemployed and Shane who is unemployed and consequently experiencing depression, and is cage-fighting as a hobby. (As a side note, women are not generally seen to have hobbies or interests in this series; a possible exception to this is when Claire goes on a trip to Skegness. However, the main storyline here is that she sees a fortune teller who suggests she is going to fall pregnant again, ensuing panic and commotion for Claire and for Dean when she gets home, positioning her once again in relation to fertility and motherhood). The fact that the episode focussing on unemployment revolves around male characters suggests that employment is a 'male problem', meanwhile assigning the role of motherhood to women. This can be seen as

46

disempowering for the female characters, and might suggest to an audience that the individuals featured have an inferior or traditional (i.e. uneducated) understanding of gender roles compared to their middle-class British counterparts.

In this episode, there is a brief interview with four men, accompanied by a shot of them sitting on a wall, reminiscent of the sequence previously explored of women sitting on a wall with babies on their knees, who in a different edit of that shot had been asked a question relating to mothering. The men are asked by the reporter: 'Is there work in Scunthorpe?', to which one of the anonymous men responds: 'Nah you can just be a druggy, smoke weed, smoke crack, take a bit of gear, drink beer. And you're good, all good'. Whilst still a denigrating portrayal, perhaps eliciting anger from a middle-class audience that these men are apparently happy to evade work for drink and drugs, the fact that these men are asked about employment, whereas the women in a comparable shot are asked about motherhood, again frames unemployment as a male problem, versus motherhood as most important to women. Negra and Tasker (2014, p.2) note the function that this framing serves in an austerity-welfare context:

> Underpinning the compelling rhetoric of masculine crisis is not only the suggestion that men are the primary victims of recession- a thread within the reporting of unemployment figures- but also that equality is a concern to be reserved for times of plenty.

In relation to this theme of male unemployment, there are regular references by the narrator and characters to the steelworks, Scunthorpe's previously successful industry and source of employment. In the opening credits, the narrator states: 'Scunny's perhaps best know for't steelworks', evoking nostalgia for this bygone 'golden era'. In Series 4, the narrator introduces a new scene with: 'And then there's Dean, stuck living on benefits, in the town he was born in. Go back a few years, and Scunthorpe was booming'. This again connotes nostalgia. Dean states: 'I think it was the steelworks that made Scunny, weren't

it'. This is followed later by: 'It's not manned nowhere near to what it used to be where everyone was biking in. There was thousands of blokes coming through this gate. Only thing now is there's thousands of blokes lost their jobs. They've worked all their life and now they get kicked in the teeth'. These nostalgic references by the narrator and portrayals of Dean and the post-industrial town entail a fetishization of working-class masculinity, contrasted with the consistent degradation of working-class femininity and its positioning in relation to motherhood.

In terms of fatherhood, Dean is the main recurring 'father' character. He is positioned as a 'provider', shown buying meat on the black market and buying shoplifted toiletry products for his children, and regularly stating that 'I would do anything for my kids'. His wife Claire is often present in the background of the frame, usually having a cup of tea or a cigarette, not engaging in any action. By contrast, Dean is usually energetic, talking to the camera and engaging in activities. There is a scene in Episode 1 in which he is surrounded by children, not all of whom are his own, who are playing and hitting him. The scene cuts between two perspectives, and is framed in a montage style, set to a background of nostalgic music. This framing of Dean as an active provider who is 'swarmed' by Claire's many children, whilst she is usually seen as passive, conveys the notion of him having to 'hold down the fort' and take responsibility for Claire's excessive fertility, which she is not seen to do herself. This sense is also created in Episode 1, in which Claire has given birth, and has since had another 'pregnancy scare'. The narrator announces: 'After their pregnancy scare, there's no doubt in Dean's mind, five stepchildren and two of his own is quite enough! So he's taken himself off to the doctor for the snip'. The reflexive construction emphasises 'he' is the active one. After a description of so many children, most of whom aren't his own, this suggests that he's having to take control and take matters into his own hands to prevent his wife's excessive fertility, who is otherwise 'uncontrollably fertile'.

As well as a father figure to his own family, Dean is depicted as such to other families in the housing estate, and consequently is positioned as a paternal figure for the whole community. He is seen supporting Shane during preparations for his cage-fight, who, in Episode 4 describes Dean as 'like a step-dad to me'. In Episode 1, Jordan's house windows have been smashed, and Dean is shown round at her house fixing them, whilst she meanwhile stands around wearing sunglasses, holding a cigarette and looking apathetic, again portraying Dean as active and powerful, against a woman (a mother) appearing passive and 'useless'. There is a sense that the community of single mothers would simply not function without this paternal provider, who is there to 'save' these women. There is no mention of payment and there is the sense of a close community in which Dean is a provider, particularly for this single mother who doesn't appear to have a male partner or father figure for her son. This once again connotes nostalgia and fetishization of traditional nuclear families, and of the working class, such as Allen *et al* note of their analysis of *Benefits Street* (Channel 5), in which 'the relationships between the residents [...] generates [...] desires for a 'time past', characterised by working-class solidarity, care and more communal forms of living' (2014, 2.4). This framing of Dean, in addition to his family being positioned as at the 'centre' of the much of the action, tying storylines together at various points, relates to Gillies' suggestion about stepfamilies (apart from the fact that Dean does not work). She notes how:

> If stepfamilies are closely modelled on the conventional nuclear family with a working father, re-partnering for lone mothers is interpreted as an attempt to provide a more 'secure' environment in which to raise a child. Thus step-parents who conform to nuclear family conventions may be constructed within the margins of normativity. (2006 p.56)

In and amongst storylines of inadequate, single mothers, drug addiction and 'chaos', this family is positioned within the narratives as a stable source of constancy for other, unstable characters and storylines, indeed positioning them as 'within the margins of normativity' *(ibid)*, and highlighting the marginality and failings of single mothers who have not successfully re-partnered.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The analysis of *Skint* Series 1 reveals discourses which generally demonise the mothers, who are represented as excessively and inappropriately fertile, inadequate providers of care and in many cases consequently unable to retain custody of their children, and largely seen as in pursuit of improving themselves through transforming their lives, with motherhood represented as the pinnacle of most of these women's lives. This is juxtaposed against representations of men, which revolve largely around issues of unemployment, the notion of fathers as 'providers', and fetishizations of working- class masculinity. These discourses were found to be formed through a variety of semiotic devices, including camera angles, visual imagery, editing, usage of sound including music, uses of language and classification of social actors, as well as narrative devices and structures.

These can be considered as broadly in line with dominant neoliberal discourses of motherhood in welfare contexts within this genre and other media forms, as explored in the literature review. Since 2013, during which the series was released, there have been further Welfare Reforms under the Conservative government in 2015, which Beatty and Fothergill (2016) estimate will amount to a reduction in welfare spending by £10.71bn per year by 2020/21, 83 per cent of which will be from families with dependent children (p.3). Representations linking 'abject' motherhood to poverty and welfare, such as those found in this study, only serve to legitimise these reforms (Jensen and Tyler 2015). Representations of working-class women such as these, which Skeggs (1997, pp. 160/161) suggests 'are more likely to be products of fear, desire and projection than of knowledge and understanding' also participate within and contribute towards their vilification and degradation, maintaining a status quo in which working-class women continue to hold limited power.

This study contributes to a growing literature on the emerging genre of Factual Welfare Television with an analysis of how it represents and constructs motherhood, through a case study analysis of a popular programme considered typical of the genre. It also contributes to a body of research employing a relatively recent 'multimodal' application of Critical Discourse Analysis (cf. Machin and Mayr, 2012), and puts forth the merits of this methodological approach for the researching questions of power and inequality within (Reality) Television.

Of the limitations already discussed relating to my own worldview, I consider the most notable to be the absence of first-hand perspectives of these media representations by working-class mothers themselves. This could not be realised within this study due to various constraints, however the absence of such perspectives marks further exclusion to that created through the discourses found. This is directly in opposition to the guiding principles of this study, which stands in solidarity with working-class mothers in the UK and beyond. I would therefore suggest that this merits incorporation into future research.

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