

Motherhood on ice? A media framing analysis of older mothers in the UK news

Short title: older mothers

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Abstract

Recent developments in IVF technology have created opportunities for women to give birth relatively late in life. However stigma, and misplaced fears about physical capacity, are often reported as sources of anxiety among older, and IVF-induced mothers. In this study we apply a specially adapted method for analyzing news media content to a week's selection of material in the British media following the dissemination of research at an international medical conference. Our findings suggest, despite some positive commentaries, that much negative discourse is circulated by the media about older mothers, from implied claims of selfishness (older mothers as 'delaying' conception) to violations of the 'natural order'. These latter claims reflect the long-standing ambivalence by the media generally towards scientific advancement, but they also reveal continuing resistance towards unorthodox lifestyles.

Key words: motherhood, IVF, ageing, parenting, media, discourse

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Introduction

Changing gender roles and increased sexual and economic freedom mean that women now have more control over their destinies than at any point in recent history. As a result, young women are no longer restricted to the traditional roles of wife and mother but are able to obtain an education, contribute to the workforce and become independent in their own right. Often these life goals outweigh the desire to become a mother and therefore frequently come first (McAllistair & Clarke, 1998). Consequently, many women are older, in their late twenties or early thirties, before they even begin to consider whether to have children. Nevertheless, dominant ideology promotes 'normative' development which means that older mothers go beyond our notion of the 'idealised' mother (Shelton & Johnson, 2006; Sevón, 2005). This paper explores one of the important cultural mechanisms by which representations are circulated about age and motherhood – the news media – and how research on older mothers is 'framed' in a way that contributes to beliefs and talk about older mothers in society.

Recent decades have seen a gradual rise in the age at which women give birth to their first child (Carolan, 2005; Wu & Macneill, 2002). In 2004, the fertility rate of women aged 30-34 overtook that of women aged 25-29 for the first time in the UK, and the average age of first-time mothers rose to over 27 (Office for National Statistics, 2005). In Spain, the average age of first-time mothers rose above 30 for the first time in the 1990s (Bosch, 1998). While improvements in health care and medical science, particularly IVF technology, could be held directly responsible for these developments, social and lifestyle

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factors are certainly important (Mirowsky & Ross, 2002). Prior to the Second World War there was nothing unusual about childbirth at ages beyond 40, and in some societies (albeit largely because of economic difficulties, and high infant mortality) women continued to have children well into their forties and beyond (Berryman, 1991).

There has been some concern within the scientific and medical communities about the potential health risks associated with giving birth at older ages, among others increased risk of breast cancer (Kroman et al., 1998), stress (Reece, 1995), Down syndrome (Crane & Morris, 2006), hypertension, prolonged labour, and perinatal mortality (Gosden & Rutherford, 1995). Medical advice literature and other popular literature have tended to advise against older motherhood on social grounds as much as health risks; for instance, one British Medical Association manual warned of “being taken for granny at the school gate” (Berryman, 1991, p. 109).

On the contrary, several studies that have been conducted on older mothers’ experiences of pregnancy and childbirth have produced positive findings. Compared to younger mothers, they tend to be better prepared (Carolan, 2005; Shelton & Johnson, 2006), more committed to the “parenting experience” (Ragozin et al., 1982), less likely to suffer from post-natal depression (Carolan, 2005), and, in the case of IVF mothers at least, much less likely to take childbirth for granted, even until after the birth itself (McMahon, Tennant, Ungerer & Saunders, 1999). As with the literature on health risk, however, some of these findings have been contested (e.g., Stowe & Nemeroff, 1995, found higher rates of postnatal depression in older mothers). Despite these potential advantages of having

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children later in life, older mothers must still face the stigma of unconventional motherhood – postmenopausal pregnancy in particular constitutes a threat to our notion of the ‘perfect mother’ (Letherby, 1999).

While several studies have identified positive aspects of older motherhood, most have tended to find high levels of anxiety. This is not surprising in cases of IVF-assisted pregnancies, where McMahon et al. (1999) found that women often braced themselves for possible failure and subsequent disappointment, although much of the anxiety found in other studies can be attributed to concerns about the social appropriateness of adopting the motherhood identity. Berryman & Windridge (1991, cited in Berryman, 1991) reported that older mothers experienced much community prejudice, including shock and disgust, even from family and friends. Health professionals can also contribute to high anxiety by treating older mothers as “special cases”, and labelling them as “difficult” and “needy” (Carolan, 2005, p. 765). Specific anxieties reported in older mothers include concerns about “selfishness” (Shelton & Johnson, 2006), worries about energy levels and coping ability (Dobrzykowski & Stern, 2003), and, to a lesser extent, fears about mortality and missing out on seeing their children grow up (Carolan, 2005).

One potential source of social anxiety around older motherhood is the representation of older mothers in the media. Some authors have argued that motherhood *per se* tends to be idealised in the media and in much of the psychological literature (Choi, Henshaw, Baker & Tree, 2005; Shelton & Johnson, 2006). These authors call for a broader range of representations of motherhood to be available, that reflects the diversity of maternal

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experience, particularly the ambivalence of mothers towards the parenting role, thereby lessening the pressure felt by so many to be “good mothers” that contributes to anxiety particularly among older mothers.

There has been increasing interest in the influence of the media on health beliefs and behaviour in recent years. Researchers have explored the role that media play in helping to shape public opinion about health through news broadcasts and print media (Thorson, 2006), television documentary (Hight & Colebourne, 2006), advertising (Cherrington, Chamberlain & Grixti, 2006), soap opera (Howe, Owen-Smith & Richardson, 2002; Verma, Adams & White, 2007), and magazines (Lyons, Dalton & Hoy, 2006). These studies have drawn on a variety of theoretical perspectives and used different research methods; it is perhaps timely to introduce a systematic means of exploring media representations derived from communication theory.

In this paper we present the results of a study carried out using a methodology known as media framing analysis, developed by the authors and discussed in more detail in another paper (Giles & Shaw, under review). In summary, media framing analysis is an adaptation of existing methods used in communication and other social sciences to study the way in which media “frame” topics in ways that direct the audience’s attention to certain features of the stories, or certain interpretations, and away from other, alternative interpretations. While media framing has been applied for many years in communication research, there is still some disagreement over its application as a research tool, and it still lacks a coherent methodology (Scheufeler, 2004).

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Our procedure for studying media framing draws on a number of existing analytic techniques, including narrative analysis (Murray, 2003; Crossley, 2000) and membership categorisation analysis (Baker, 2004), organised into five discrete stages which examine the framing process from a number of different angles. The data consisted of news reports and feature articles that were collected at the end of a week in which age and motherhood had featured widely in the UK news media following an international conference on reproductive medicine.

Method

Materials

News articles for the week 23-27 October 2006 were obtained from the LexisNexis database of UK media. Several sets of search terms (e.g., mothers, older) were entered and we identified 23 articles that were relevant to the broad topic. Since the conference was held in the United States, we expected to find relevant coverage in the US media, but a search of the online archives of the two leading national dailies (the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*) was unsuccessful; we also checked some leading European newspapers with similar results. Finally we searched the online news archives of UK television channels; only two articles could be identified from these, both from bbc.co.uk.

The full set of 25 articles can be summarised thematically across the week as following:

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Monday 23 October

Eight news stories reporting the findings of a study (henceforth referred to as study #1), presented at the annual conference of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), exploring the physical and mental health of women who had given birth at 50 or later.

Tuesday 24 October

Five articles following from Monday's reports, either commentary pieces or features (for example, the *Daily Express* tracked down a woman named Patti Farrant, variously described as "Britain's oldest mother", who had had a child earlier in the year at the age of 62 and whose case had been widely reported in the UK media).

Wednesday 25 October

13 articles; two features following from Monday's reports and 11 news stories reporting a second study (study #2) from the ASRM conference that found a negative correlation between mothers' age at conception and their daughters' chances of successful fertility treatment.

Thursday 26 October

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One commentary, a summary of previous reports.

Analytic procedure

Media framing analysis progressed in five stages, as detailed in Giles & Shaw (under review). These can be summarized here as:

1. Identifying the story

This began with a search for the ‘news peg’, or triggering event (Cooper & Yukimura, 2002), which enabled us to identify the source of the set of articles concerning age and motherhood. In most of Monday’s and Wednesday’s news reports the source was clearly detailed as the ASRM conference, although the feature articles on Tuesday and Wednesday were more likely to refer in general terms to ‘research published this week’ or ‘latest research’. Also, a secondary news peg could be identified in many of the Monday articles. This related to a statement by Lord Harries, chairman of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (variously referred to as “the government’s fertility watchdog”) criticising the NHS ‘ceiling’ of 39 as the maximum age for fertility treatment.

2. Identifying character

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This stage requires taking a narrative analytic approach by identifying key ‘dramatis personae’ in the story or stories and using this to establish agency (literally, who is doing what to whom?) (Entman, 1991). In the present study, this process mainly concerned key ‘witnesses’ cited as evidence for the author’s argument: typically, statements by academics and other fertility experts, or case studies – particularly in feature articles – of older mothers.

3. Narrative form and reader identification

Once the characters and sources have been identified, the next stage involved analysis of the narrative forms used to present the story to the audience. One of the tasks at this stage is to suggest which characters in the story the audience is invited to identify with. This can be done by examining framing devices such as accompanying headlines, pictures and captions, or by authors’ choice of supporting material. For example, in the *Daily Express* study of Patti Farrant’s home town of Lewes, the article features a number of quotations from various local residents expressing mild disapproval of their neighbour: here the audience is clearly expected to be on their side.

4. Analysis of language categories

This stage involves a detailed examination of the language used to describe key characters and events in the story. It can draw on content analysis by counting instances

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of specific terms, or, in our case, membership categorisation analysis (MCA), which we used to identify the ‘central categories’ that define the structure of the text (Baker, 2004), thus informing the debates around age and motherhood.

5. Generalisation

The final stage of the analysis attempts to place the story in a wider social and cultural context by examining references to broader debates, long-standing stories and previous media coverage. For example, many of the articles in our dataset referred to the “trend” towards older motherhood, and – particularly in relation to study #2 – speculated about the possible future outcome of increasing numbers of older mothers (e.g., “we could see”, “we are likely to see”), often using highly emotive language (“frightening”, etc).

Results & Discussion

Overview

Our analysis identified a variety of frames created for the topic of age and motherhood in this particular week’s news output. We attempted to classify each story as either positive (in relation to older mothers generally) or negative by examining each of the different aspects of framing: for example, the role of ‘experts’ and case studies, the wording of headlines, the language categorisation and the broader generalisation. Overall this

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produced a slight predominance of negative stories (12, compared to nine positive and six neutral ones). However, even some of the positive stories carried a negative subtext: for example, a *Times* feature that consisted of a broadly positive first-person account of older motherhood was full of caveats (e.g., “my goodness, though, it was tough”), as if to ward off any thoughts readers might have of trying it out for themselves. Appendix 1 contains a table of the complete set of articles along with our evaluation of the position, or stance, of each story towards older mothers.

In the remainder of this section we have chosen to focus on a number of dominant themes, which we believe to be central to the framing of age and motherhood in our dataset.

“Motherhood on ice”

A large number of articles, particularly news reports, referred to older mothers as “delaying” or “postponing” motherhood, even putting it “on ice”. This construction carries two implications. The first is that motherhood is inevitable or even obligatory for women – it is not simply a matter of *if*, only *when*. The second is that there is an ‘optimum age’ for motherhood, a belief that potentially marginalises younger as well as older mothers (Phoenix, 1991). This was articulated in one article by a fertility expert as “[choosing] not to have children at the peak of reproductive life” (*Times*, Wed)

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The use of “delay” was mostly casual, but consistent with other arguments put forward by fertility experts and feature writers who invoked irresponsibility and selfishness as characteristics of older mothers. This was particularly pertinent in relation to study #2, where the reader was often invited to identify, not with the mother, but with the projected future daughter (whom the older mother was, ostensibly, putting at risk of infertility). This inference could be gleaned from the headline alone, e.g. “Girls of older mums face infertility risk” (*Daily Express*, Wed), or from more judgemental statements, such as “condemning their daughters to infertility” (*Daily Mail*, Wed).

It seems clear that much of the disapproval surrounding delayed motherhood stems from the associated concern that modern women are “choosing” to pursue education and develop a career *instead* of having children at the optimum age (typically, the twenties). This was illustrated by various references to older mothers as “self-indulgent and rather vain” (*Guardian*, Wed), “wrong and selfish” (*Sun*¹, Tue), and to modern women as wishing “to have it all” (several sources).

The issue of ‘optimum age’ is brought up by various fertility experts in the news stories, notably a British academic, Professor Bill Ledger, who is quoted on bbc.co.uk (Wed) as recommending the peak age for fertility for women as “between 20 and 35 years”.

¹ For the sake of brevity, in most cases we have cited the newspapers as *sources* of quotes rather than directly responsible for them. It might surprise the reader to learn that the *Guardian* quote in this sentence was articulated by the journalist herself, while the *Sun* quote comes from an interviewee in a very balanced article on the pros and cons of older motherhood.

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Ironically, the decline in daughters' fertility reported in study #2 is related to mothering ages between 26 and 29, leaving only six years as optimum. The choice of the BBC to highlight the Ledger quote is consistent with the website's construction of a highly negative frame for this story; indeed the headline 'Older eggs pass on fertility risk' manages to erase even the mother herself from the story.

On the other side of the debate, a small number of articles took an individualistic standpoint and focused on the fertility decision as a "right": "the decision to seek treatment is one [older mothers] alone can take" (*Independent*, Wed). *The Guardian* (Tue) alone adopted a gendered perspective, citing the apparently positive portrayal of late fatherhood (albeit with celebrities as examples) in order to defend older mothers from criticism.

Older mothers as "unnatural"

One of the most consistent themes in the dataset concerns an invocation of the "natural" and associated positive attributes. The idea of "the natural order" was introduced by a number of authors who took a negative stance on older mothers, gently chiding attempts to "cheat time" (in one case, by indulging in such 'unnatural' activities as taking "country walks" and "eating muesli"). These authors spoke of "physical destiny", "bald biological facts", and "biological clocks" lying in wait to take their revenge on people foolish enough to try and "bend nature to their will" (*Daily Telegraph*, Wed).

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Even where nature was not explicitly mentioned, a number of articles managed to construct older motherhood – and older parenting in general – as freakish. This was most evident in the Tuesday *Express* feature on Patti Farrant, who had been the subject of extensive media coverage earlier in the year after giving birth at the age of 62. The reporter visited Lewes, the Farrants’ home town, and – evidently unable to secure an interview with Farrant herself – interviewed a selection of local residents, including the owner of a gift shop and a waitress in an organic café that the Farrants were said to frequent. The waitress described the couple as “incredibly old” (at 62 and 60) and that Farrant breastfeeding her son was “a sight I’ll never forget”. Throughout the article, pejorative statements were balanced with grudgingly encouraging ones (“of course, I wish them all the best, but...”).

While the *Express* was the only paper to focus specifically on Patti Farrant (referred to in many articles by her previous married name – and professional identity – Patricia Rashbrook), numerous papers carried her photograph to accompany Monday’s reports of study #1, and in almost all of these articles she was referred to as “Britain’s Oldest Mother”. One article referred to a previous holder of this particular title, while another featured the World’s Oldest Mother, effectively reducing the practice of late motherhood to a global contest.

Even where articles were taking a more gently sceptical approach to the subject, the concerns about older mothers were often expressed in a normative context: fertility expert

Bill Ledger is again quoted as claiming that their children would fail to “have a good

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quality of life if its parents are older than its friend's grandparents" (*Times*, Mon). Three of the articles conjured up the same illustration (also cited by Berryman, 1991) of the older mother being "mistaken for granny at the school gate", suggesting how pervasive a specific image can be on public consciousness.

Motherhood: Drudgery or fun?

Allied to the notion of older mothers as selfish, a number of the more negative articles referred to older motherhood as "fun", "enjoyment", and so on. "Right now Patricia Rushbrook...is probably having a lovely time" playing with her son, claimed the *Daily Telegraph* (Wed). In keeping with the idea of egg-freezing as a "lifestyle choice" (*Daily Mail*, Mon), and older mothers as "self-indulgent" (*Guardian*, Wed), this construction likens the experience of motherhood to a leisure activity or home entertainment, rather like acquiring a new pet or electronic gadget.

This is a stark contrast to many of the warnings issued about motherhood in other parts of the dataset: "a life of nappy-changing and night after sleepless night" (*Daily Express*, Tue), "the broken nights, the struggles with the pushchair" (*Guardian*, Tue), "tiring and relentless...labour intensive" (*Sun*, Tue). To some extent, the fact that these conflicting accounts sit side by side, even within the same articles, reflects an ambivalent attitude towards motherhood itself; as Shelton and Johnson (2006) argue, the dominant cultural image of the "good mother" creates unnecessary pressure, and more ambivalent representations are needed to reflect lived experience. On the other hand, this

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ambivalence is used rhetorically by the authors of these pieces, dwelling on the positive aspects of motherhood in order to chastise existing older mothers, and on the negative aspects in the hope of scaring off potential older mothers.

Another rhetorical effect, in keeping with the theme of older mothers as unnatural, is to construct motherhood as a chore when it occurs at the “optimum age” and a pleasure when it comes as a result of cheating time and perverting the natural order. This ties together the previous two themes in our analysis, in presenting older motherhood as a luxury and a privilege, in contrast to “optimum age” motherhood, which is more like a duty. This is most evident in the *Sun* article (Tue), which is unusual in the dataset because of its use of working-class case studies, thereby adding another dimension to the idea of late motherhood as a middle-class option (even broadsheets like *The Times* emphasise the middle-class aspects of their older mother case studies).

Ambivalence towards science

Just as motherhood is constructed differently in order to better serve the author’s rhetorical intentions, science too is used for rhetorical ends. However it is important to distinguish articles by designated science writers – here, typically news stories – from those written by non-specialists, such as editorials and features. Most of the news stories in our dataset were written by the science editor, health editor, or medical editor of their respective newspapers, and we might expect such individuals to have a largely positive attitude towards science, privileging scientists’ views above lay accounts.

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Scientists are quoted extensively as the authors of research (of studies #1 and #2), and also as expert commentators (such as Professor Bill Ledger). Nevertheless, there is at the same time, in the majority of articles, an implicit critique of science in its broader sense. Fertility treatment, with its egg-freezing, time-cheating tricks, is cast in a Frankenstein role, particularly with regard to the future: even the study authors are presented as doom-mongers, describing findings in terms such as “frightening” and “alarming”, predicting an expected “surge” of older mothers in years to come (several articles), and even making sinister comments about “subtle things going on” (Bill Ledger, quoted on www.bbc.co.uk, Wed).

The reverse of the Frankenstein position, however, casts science in a heroic light, as salvation. This is particularly true in a case study presented in the *Daily Mail* (Wed) of Pat Matlay, who gave birth through IVF in her Fifties. (On this occasion, her case is warranted – as far as the author is concerned – because she had conceived a daughter at the “optimum age” who subsequently died.) In this story, fertility treatment is presented as a knight in shining armour: the narrative is structured like a folk tale or fairy story, with a tragic early event, a specific lowpoint (“that rainy night when the police were standing on my doorstep”) and a turning point (reading a magazine article that “was to change her life”), followed by archetypal happy ending (“in August...baby Stephanie...weighing...as soon as I held her in my arms”, and so on). As with many IVF accounts (see McMahon et al., 1999), a sense of good fortune prevails; despite the broadly positive tone of the article, the subtext is that Matlay is essentially lucky.

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Science writers have been criticised by health professionals for sensationalizing stories and not presenting a more rounded perspective (Entwistle, 1995). This may be true in certain cases, but there was enormous variation in the positions of science writers in our dataset. In terms of sheer coverage, the articles in our dataset varied widely in the amount of space devoted to the stories (mean length in words = 665.2, $SD = 423.6$) and in the selection of experts consulted. Some of the information was repeated in almost all the stories, suggesting that this material was taken directly from a press release, but there were slight, though notable, variations in some of the expert quotes. For example, Peter Nagy, author of study #2, was quoted in a strongly negative report in the *Times* (Wed) as saying “we are likely to see more fertility problems”, while in a more balanced article in the *Guardian* (Wed) the quote was toned down to “we *might* see more fertility problems” (our italics).

Interestingly, the length of the report was unrelated to the position of the author ($\chi^2(2) = 1.39, p = .5$). Some of the shortest reports used cautious language; for example, Wednesday’s *Daily Telegraph* reports that Peter Nagy “speculated” about the genetic transmission of infertility, and its 200 words contained the quote “this study involved women having fertility treatment, but it’s probably the same for the general population. It is frightening.” Likewise, some reports of study #1 carried caveats from its authors, such as “it is limited and of small size” (*Independent*, Mon). Again, these disclaimers were used even in supportive pieces, providing some evidence that science reporters are aiming, where possible, for objectivity.

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Historical specificity: the “indulgent generation”

Our final theme concerns the way that many authors generalised the story in historical terms, specifically as a quirk of a particular generation. There has been a suggestion in the UK (and other, particularly French) media in recent years that Western society is now “paying the price” for 1960s “liberalism” – notably in areas such as promiscuity and civil rights discourse. Previously, radical feminists had argued that women’s ability to bear children was the cause of their oppression and that women who dwelt on their desire to have children – or indeed defied the natural order by having children late – were being self-indulgent (Firestone, 1971 cited by Letherby, 1994). These long-standing issues are implicitly raised again in much of the pejorative coverage of age and motherhood. Specifically, older mothers are repeatedly constructed as the feckless representatives of “a generation of women determined to bend nature to their will” (*Daily Telegraph*, Wed), who “want to have it all” (*Daily Mail*, Wed), even being described by fertility expert Lord Winston as “a social problem” (*Daily Mail*, Wed).

The idea that the trend towards later birth is generation-specific goes against the “fertility time bomb” predictions of experts who see it as a continual process driven by technology rather than ideology. But the use of headlines and other devices to encourage identification with future generations carries the message that it is the mothers themselves who should be held responsible for any general decline in fertility. The unborn daughter, it implies, will (in accordance with nature’s plan) want to have children at the optimum

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age and will be denied, as the *Guardian* (Wed) puts it, “simply because” her mother was too old.

In this way, discourse around “the indulgent generation” links up with that of “the natural order”, suggesting that the 1960s generation, for defying the laws of nature with family planning and scientific trickery, will ultimately be judged and condemned by its offspring.

Conclusion

It may appear that our analysis of this media material is biased towards the negative. As stated earlier, over half of the articles took a negative, or cautiously neutral, position towards older mothers, but there was a sizeable minority of positive positions, and some papers clearly took the trouble to achieve a fair balance. The *Sun* (Tue) presented the case from both sides of the argument; The *Independent* (Thur) framed the topic as a debate, weighing up pros and cons in a summary largely derived from previous media reports. Other articles presented the older mother’s perspective, if sometimes grudgingly (“after all, it’s their decision”), even describing study #2 as a “blow” (*Independent*, Wed) – science impeding, rather than dictating, social progress.

However, our focus has been on negative framing here because we were interested in the media’s potential contribution to anxiety in expectant older mothers, and their circulation of negative discourses around the topic. We found these in abundance, often with

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surprising force. The repeated pervasive images, particularly the older mother waiting at the school gates, and being shunned by younger “yummy mummies” reflect the fears of many older mothers as articulated in the research literature. The speed with which Monday’s reports on positive aspects of older mothering turned into doom-laden commentaries on the following days about an “indulgent” generation suggests that there are plenty of columnists and leader writers waiting for any excuse to launch an attack on what they see as 1960s values. At the same time, there are encouraging signs that science writers in particular are taking the trouble to include as many study details as space permits.

This analysis of the media framing of older mothers has revealed that notions of ‘normative’ development and the ‘perfect mother’ continue to structure cultural constructions of motherhood. Feminist research on motherhood has empowered women by raising awareness that mothering is not always the wonderful idyll it was portrayed to be in the 1950s, and maternal ambivalence is now a widely accepted concept (Parker, 1995). Nevertheless, it has yet to address the issue of the unconventional mother (Letherby, 1999). It seems that our communications systems – our popular culture – are not always successful in capturing the diversity of contemporary society. Or perhaps our analysis reveals a nostalgia for old fashioned ideas which contradict the advances of science. It will be interesting to observe whether representations of ageing motherhood will change in the future as technology enables more and more women to have children later in life.

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Appendix

Table 1: “Master table” of articles in dataset

| <i>ID</i> | <i>Day</i> | <i>Paper</i> | <i>Article</i> (<i>page;</i> <i>words</i>) | <i>Position</i> |
|-----------|------------|--------------|--|---|
| 1 | Mon | Guardian | News (1; 583) | Neutral but slightly +ve (pic of PR “success”) + |
| 2 | Mon | Express | News (23; 331) | Neutral but slightly –ve (‘controversy’, ‘surge’) (pic of PR) – |
| 3 | Mon | Mail | News (19; 726) | Broadly +ve; some mild skepticism (pics of PR and ‘supporter’ GL) + |
| 4 | Tue | Times | Feature (2/6; 1087) | Case study using actress interview – cagily +ve but with underlying –ve subtext ? |
| 5 | Tue | Guardian | Leader (34; 425) | Very +ve, focus on sexism/ethics of IVF + |
| 6 | Tue | Express | News long (16; 1380) | Strongly –ve case study to try to counteract findings – more about PR/PF’s community setting than her own experience - |

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| | | | | | |
|----|------|-------------|--------------------|--|---|
| 7 | Wed | Times | News (23; 508) | Strongly –ve report of OMs’ daughters’ infertility risk | - |
| 8 | Wed | Sun | News (X; 84) | Cursory report of study #2 | - |
| 9 | Wed | Guardian | News (15; 757) | In-depth report of study #2, somewhat –ve, but cautious | - |
| 10 | Wed | Telegraph | Features (21; 770) | Strongly –ve rant against “indulgent generation” | - |
| 11 | Mon | Independent | Politics (18; 706) | Broadly +ve report, detailed but loosely structured | + |
| 12 | Tue | Guardian | Features (9; 970) | Broadly –ve column, warning against OM, preoccupied with physical decay | - |
| 13 | Wed | Guardian | Comment (33; 633) | Vaguely –ve; rather cynical, ducks issue of study #1 to attack “mainstream media”. | - |
| 14 | Thur | Independent | Opinion (34; 1052) | Summary of other articles; drearily MOR | |
| 15 | Tue | Sun | Woman (X; 699/?) | Very balanced article, giving both sides of argument equal voice | |
| 16 | Wed | Independent | News (4; 444) | Rather –ve report of #2 | – |

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| | | | | | |
|----|-----|-----------|-----------------|---|---|
| 17 | Wed | Guardian | News (7; 250) | Rather –ve report of #2 | - |
| 18 | Wed | Express | News (19; 349) | Ditto | - |
| 19 | Wed | Telegraph | News (1; 200) | Straight report, so straight that gives first hint that PN's warnings might be speculative and that he's generalizing from sample to population | - |
| 20 | Mon | bbc.co.uk | | As newspaper reports | - |
| 21 | Wed | bbc.co.uk | | BL quoted on OMs, deviating somewhat from study #2 findings (also suggests that OFs can be blamed too) | - |
| 22 | Mon | Times | News (1; 855) | Positive, in-depth front page coverage | + |
| 23 | Mon | Telegraph | News (2; 442) | Generally positive news feature | + |
| 24 | Mon | Mirror | News (27; 115) | Brief news item | + |
| 25 | Wed | Mail | News (35; 1974) | Extensive current affairs feature, with case study | + |

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| | | | | | |
|----|-----|-------------|----------------------|---|---|
| 26 | Wed | Independent | Opinion (36; 264) | Positive editorial column | + |
| 27 | Wed | Mail | News (8; 775) | Strongly negative coverage of study #2 | - |

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