

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: Oxford Brookes University
Unit of Assessment: 21 - Politics and International Studies
Title of case study: Gender, parenthood and public policy
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The impact described involves significant contributions to international and national policy development and practitioner/public engagement, emanating from the findings of longitudinal qualitative research on parenthood transitions, gender and caring. These findings have influenced international policy evidenced through advisory roles and policy development at the World Health Organisation and national policy through engagement with think tanks, public/practitioner bodies (e.g. National Childbirth Trust) and membership of a Labour party policy review panel on fatherhood. The research findings have promoted public engagement, led to media invitations, been cited as evidence in policy review, noted in Hansard and led to change in professional practise.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The research focuses on micro-level processes and policy contexts involved in individual and family transitions in relation to motherhood, fatherhood and parenting. Using qualitative longitudinal (QL) research two major consecutive and comparative studies have been undertaken by Professor Miller during the past 15 years. The first of these, <i>'Making Sense of Motherhood'</i> (1998 – 2005) has been foundational in mapping the gendered terrain of contemporary family lives and women's experiences of first-time motherhood, drawing on issues of reproductive health and socio-cultural factors which shape individual experiences and broader societal assumptions. This study provided the empirical foundation and design for the second major project <i>'Making Sense of Fatherhood'</i> (2006 – 2013) which has examined men's unfolding experiences of transition to first-time parenthood alongside caring and paid-work experiences and practices. These two QL studies have contributed to Miller's internationally recognised expertise on gender, policy and the ways in which micro-processes shape individual and socio-cultural understandings and family practices and the findings have been used in policy review, public debate and service development.</p> <p>Miller's first QL study on women's experiences of transition to first-time motherhood led to various publications including the best-selling, monograph <i>'Making Sense of Motherhood: A Narrative Approach'</i> published by Cambridge University Press in 2005 [1]. This research was predated by a study on antenatal service use by Bangladeshi women living in Oxford, which marks the beginning of Miller's research interests in gender, reproduction, socio-cultural factors and parenting [2, 5]. The data for the major QL motherhood study was collected in the late 1990's and focused on social and cultural dimensions of transition to motherhood experiences. The findings revealed the disjunctions between individual experiences at different points during transition and public/health discourses and practices and socio-cultural expectations. The gap between essentialist societal assumptions that women 'naturally' knew how to mother and women's own experiences that mothering skills had to be learned was a major finding subsequently influencing health visitor practice. The motherhood research has since been complimented by a major qualitative longitudinal study on men's experiences of transition to fatherhood leading to significant outputs in the post 2008 period. The key findings from this QL study were published in 2010 by Cambridge University Press in <i>'Making Sense of Fatherhood: Gender, Caring and Work'</i> [3], which has become a bestselling text. The findings from this research study have highlighted the differences and points of overlap, in men's and women's experiences of transition to parenthood. In particular it has illuminated in subtle and more overt ways how gender shapes expectations and practices in relation to individual experiences and societal assumptions. The findings show how men's capacities to develop and practice caring skills are similar to those of mothers, but that men have more choices available to them in regard to the roles they can adopt as fathers [4]. Across the studies the complexities of how gender operates to shape intentions and apparent 'choices' is laid bare and has provided evidence of why generic policies which appeal to 'parents' rather than individually identifying 'mothers' and 'fathers' have not been successful [6].</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>[1] Miller, T. (2005) <i>Making Sense of Motherhood: A Narrative Approach</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0521835725 <i>Translated into Turkish in 2010</i>.</p>

<http://changingturkey.com/2013/10/09/making-sense-of-motherhood-by-tina-miller-translated-into-turkish/>

This monograph is regularly listed in the CUP General Sociology bestselling top ten books.

[2] Miller, T. (1995) 'Shifting boundaries: Exploring the influence of cultural traditions and religious beliefs of Bangladeshi women on antenatal interactions' *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 18 (3): pp 299-309. DOI:10.1016/0277-5395(95)80074-Y Sole authored, peer-reviewed journal article.

[3] Miller, T. (2011) *Making Sense of Fatherhood: Gender, Caring and Work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0521519427. *This monograph is regularly listed in the CUP General Sociology bestselling top ten books. Copy of monograph submitted to REF2014, Oxford Brookes University, UoA21-Politics and International Studies, REF2, TA Miller, Output identifier 6038.*

[4] Miller, T. (2011) Falling back into gender? :Men's narratives and practices around first-time fatherhood. *Sociology* Vol. 45 (6): 1094-1109. DOI: 10.1177/0038038511419180. Sole authored, peer-reviewed journal article. Submitted to REF2014, Oxford Brookes University, UoA21-Politics and International Studies, REF2, TA Miller, Output identifier 6443.

[5] Vieira C, Portela A, Miller T, Coast E, Leone T, et al. (2012) Increasing the Use of Skilled Health Personnel Where Traditional Birth Attendants Were Providers of Childbirth Care: A Systematic Review. *PLoS ONE* 7(10). DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0047946. Peer-reviewed open access journal article.

[6] Miller, T. (2013) Shifting out of neutral on parental leave: Making fathers' involvement explicit Public Policy Research. Volume 19 (4), pp258-262. DOI: 10.1111/j.1744-540X.2013.00718.x <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1744-540X.2013.00718.x/abstract>

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Impact arising from the research undertaken is evidenced across three substantive and interlinked areas outlined below. While impacts of user engagement, service provision and policy development are demonstrated during the REF period, they emanate from Miller's longer term engagement with national/international bodies and publics.

1.Public policy, parenting and gender

The findings from the fatherhood research led in 2012 to an appointment to serve as a member of a Labour party policy review panel on fatherhood chaired by the Rt Hon David Lammy MP. The report and policy recommendations have recently been published [7]. Other advisory invitations following from the Fatherhood research have included a DfE funded project '4Children' involving discussions on parenting with officials from No. 10, the Cabinet Office and DfE (July 2011). The policy implications of the fatherhood research findings also led to an invitation to write a commentary for IPPR on coalition changes to parental leave policy [6] and in June 2013 the research was highlighted in a parliamentary debate on young fathers and family engagement and Miller and her research were noted in Hansard [8].

2.Socio-cultural dimensions of reproduction, gender and international policy

As a direct result of the publication of her 2005 monograph '*Making sense of Motherhood*' which included analysis of childbearing in the UK, Bangladesh and the Solomon Islands, Miller was engaged as a technical advisor by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to report and advise on the socio-cultural contexts and challenges relating to the global introduction of the Human Papillomavirus vaccine. Initially this involved a presentation on sociocultural issues and reproductive health at the WHO/UNFPA meeting on '*Preparing for the introduction of HPV vaccines: policy and programme guidance*' held in Switzerland in 2006. Key points from Miller's presentation on socio-cultural issues were included in the final implementation document and policy guidance in 2007 [9]. Miller was also invited to contribute to a subsequent WHO (Europe)

meeting (*'Role of health professionals working with adolescents in the introduction of HPV vaccines'*) in Copenhagen, 2007 to present her research findings on gender and reproductive health to policy makers and programme managers rolling out the HPV vaccine across Europe. In the period since 2008 the implementation of international HPV guidelines resulting from these meetings and the roll out of vaccine coverage has had global reach and significance. Following these appointments, Miller's research findings from her studies on motherhood and fatherhood transitions have led to further appointments with WHO including a sabbatical spent in the Department of Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health in 2011 as a member of an expert international team who undertook a systematic review of global changes in providers of childbirth care [5]. Miller is currently an advisor to another WHO international systematic review team examining the influence of sociocultural issues on childbirth service use. This review results from a concept paper (*'Interventions to address cultural barriers to the use of maternal and newborn health services: An overview and concept paper'*) which WHO commissioned Miller to write in 2007.

3) Contemporary parenting and professional/public engagement

In the UK the findings from Miller's research relating to aspects of parenting have led to professional and public engagement activities e.g. talks to practitioner audiences and groups providing antenatal services to men (e.g. the National Childbirth Trust, Oxford Mental Health services) as well as invited commentary pieces in Midwifery practitioner journals (e.g. 'Maternal spheres: what are we doing with men?' *The Practising Midwife*, January 2013). Her research monographs [1 and 3] are recommended as 'key texts' by the National Childbirth Trust (NCT) [10], the largest parenting charity in the UK and both are used in preparation classes for prospective parents and used as training materials in professional development by NCT practitioners. Miller's research has also been used in the design of a current national NCT survey on Transition to Parenthood (2013) and her appointment as an advisor to the project [11]. She has also contributed as an invited expert to a *Guardian* roundtable discussion on how to involve men more effectively in childbirth, leading to a newspaper article in 2012 [12]. Her research findings are also used by the think tank, the Fatherhood Institute reaching a wide public via their online presence [13].

Miller's research has successfully combined academic rigour with a focus on micro-level processes in family lives through periods of transition and the resulting findings have resonance in policy, health and public spheres and resulting from this Miller has been invited to engage a wide range of audiences. In the post 2008 period her research findings have received national/international media recognition including personal invitations to discuss aspects of the research on BBC Breakfast TV (July and September, 2013) and the Australian Morning Television Show (April 2011). BBC Radio 4 'Woman's Hour' have also carried three programmes related to the research findings between 2008 and 2013 on topics of maternal ambivalence, father-baby bonding and fathers experiences of birth [14]. The research findings regularly receive 'popular' media attention (e.g. *The Sunday Times*, February 2011) and have also been used in an award winning play 'Mum's The Word' [15]. Popular dissemination of her research recently led to her selection for the inaugural BBC female expert scheme (2013) [16] and on-going meetings with a production company who want to produce a programme based on her research monograph *'Making Sense of Fatherhood'*. Other invitations have included Miller presenting her research findings on fatherhood to the Labour Policy Review group at the House of Commons (February 2013) and giving the opening keynote lecture at the Museum of Motherhood in New York (May 2013).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[7] 'Doing Family: Encouraging Active Fatherhood' Panel Report'

http://www.davidlammy.co.uk/Doing_Family_Encouraging_Active_Fatherhood

Corroborating statement author 1. Email confirming details of Miller's participation in the policy process from chair of panel (Rt Hon David Lammy MP) available from Oxford Brookes University Research Support Office on request.

[8] Reference to Professor Miller's research in Hansard

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130705/debtext/130705->

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[0003.htm#130705-0003.htm_spnew19](#)

- [9] 'Preparing for the introduction of HPV vaccines: policy and programme guidance for countries' (2006) http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/672_filename_hpv_note.pdf and Details of presentation made at WHO meeting in Copenhagen, 'Strengthening cervical cancer prevention in Europe' May, 2007 http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/168858/E90992.pdf
- [10] NCT Bookshops were Motherhood and Fatherhood books are recommended as 'key texts' for practitioners and parents-to-be <http://www.nctshop.co.uk/Antenatal-Key-Texts/products/169/0/4>
- [11] Corroborating statement author 2. Invitation letter and statement about significance of Miller's research from Head of Research and Information at the National Childbirth Trust available from Oxford Brookes University Research Support Office on request.
- [12] Newspaper article resulting from Guardian roundtable expert discussion: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/healthcare-network/2012/mar/28/fathers-bigger-role-pregnancy-childbirth>
- [13] Miller's research on motherhood and fatherhood transitions are used by the Fatherhood Institute <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/2011/fi-research-summary-fathers-mothers-work-and-family/>
- [14] Links to BBC Woman's Hour programmes featuring Tina Miller talking about her research on motherhood and fatherhood:
Maternal ambivalence (February 2008) http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/02/2008_09_tue.shtml
Broody men (February 2011) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00f8nyd>
Early Fatherhood (January 2013) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p014dfli>
- [15] Award winning play 'Mum's The Word' (<http://amdram.co.uk/articles/2012-daw-one-act-playwriting-competition-results/>) (Corroborating statement author 3. Further details about this available from Oxford Brookes University Research Support Office on request).
- [16] Professor Miller selected for inaugural BBC Female Expert scheme <http://hss.brookes.ac.uk/news/2013/01/23/bbc-female-expert-day/>