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# Attitudes towards family and marriage in time and context: using two British birth cohorts for comparison

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Polina Obolenskaya

PhD in Sociology

Department of Sociology, City University  
2012

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.  
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and list of references): **81,803**



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Polina Obolenskaya



## Abstract

With dramatic changes in family-related behaviours in the past 50 years, there has been an increasing awareness and acceptance of different family arrangements. Subsequently, measuring and studying people's attitudes towards issues such as commitment to marriage, acceptance of alternative family forms, parental separation and gender roles has gained a lot of attention among those working in the fields of sociology, social psychology and demography.

The majority of studies examining the relationship between family-related attitudes and behaviour have focused on either the selection or adaptation effects of attitudes, with fewer (particularly of those using British data) specifically addressing the possibility of both processes taking place. This study's main goal is to address the latter using the data of two British cohorts born 12 years apart: the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS) and the 1958 National Child Development Study (NCDS). The cohort's attitudes are measured by a scale consisting of three items which relate to: marriage being a lifelong commitment, a divorce being easily obtainable these days and the acceptability of parental separation. This work adopts the perspective of value orientation and life course position which implies a recursive nature of attitudes and behaviour whereby behaviour is influenced by people's values (the selection effect of attitudes) and these values, in turn, adjust following changes in people's circumstances (the adaptation effect of attitudes).

The availability of attitude statements at two time points for each cohort (at age 26 and 30 for BCS; at age 33 and 42 for NCDS) and rich partnership history data allows for such analyses to be carried out as the order of events can be established. Firstly, this research utilises bivariate and multivariate techniques to investigate the determinants of attitudes. Further, it implements regression analyses to explore the relationships between attitude scores and: a) transition to first marriage for non-cohabiting cohort members (BCS and NCDS); b) transition to first marriage of cohabiting cohort members (BCS) and c) dissolution of first marriage (NCDS).

The main findings show some evidence of both the selection and adaptation effects of attitudes in relation to marital transitions for both cohorts, indicating the importance of attitudes in shaping people's behaviour and at the same time showing the tendency of attitudes to change in line with an individual's personal circumstances.



## **CHAPTER 1: Introduction and Research Focus**

### **1.1 What is the value of family values?**

With changes in family-related behaviour, there has been an increased awareness in people's attitudes towards related issues. Amongst ongoing debates on whether attitudes are in fact directly related to behaviour there has been an interest in measuring and monitoring these attitudes along with the social, economic and demographic changes, lifestyle choices, expectations and experiences of the population, as they are often seen as indicative of societal character (Jowell and Park, 1996).

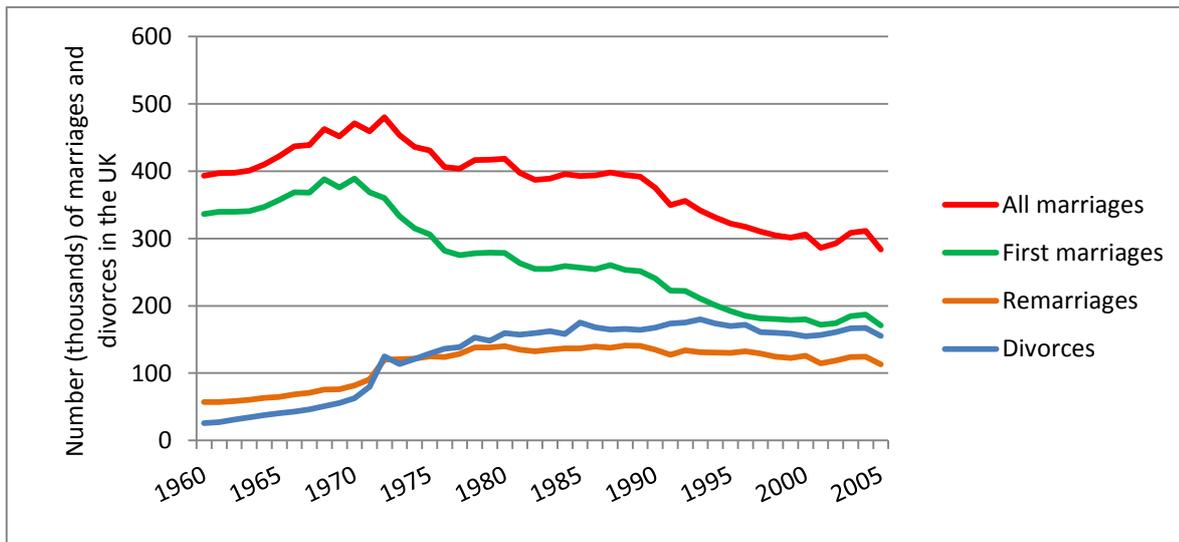
In this section I explore the family-related demographic changes which have taken place over the past few decades as well as the link between these and changes in family values. I discuss this among the reasons for studying values in general and family-related values in particular. This section sets the scene for the remaining two sections of this chapter, 1.2 and 1.3, which discuss the background to studying attitudes towards family and marriage and the focus of this research.

#### **1.1.1 Changing family**

Some dramatic changes in family formation and composition have occurred in Britain over the past few decades. Society witnessed a sharp rise in divorce rates, following the liberalisation of divorce laws in the 1970s, which reached its peak in 1993 (ONS, 2003). The introduction of 'no fault' divorces resulted in less stable marriages which in turn may, at least in part, be responsible for changes in people's behaviour within a marital union, whereby those who envisage a divorce may be less likely to have children.

At the same time, rates of first marriages fell and subsequent marriages became more acceptable with many using the term 'serial monogamy' to describe this phenomenon of multiple 'stable' relationships during one's life course (e.g. Ferri and Smith, 2003). Figure 1-1 below illustrates the changes in the number of marriages and divorces between 1960 and 2005 in the UK.

**Figure 1-1: Number of marriages, remarriages and divorces in the United Kingdom, 1960 to 2005**



Source: Office for National Statistics; General Register Office for Scotland; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (*Social Trends 38*, 2006)

In addition to the changes in the rates of marital formation and dissolution, there has been a dramatic change in the nature of marital and non-marital partnerships and their popularity. People tend to get married and have children later in life now. The age at which people are getting married for the first time has increased in the last 40 years by around 5 years for men (average age at first marriage in 2003: 31 years old) and 6 years for women (average age at first marriage in 2003<sup>1</sup>: 29 years old) (ONS, 2005a). Around the same time (2004) there was a 3.4 year rise, since 1971, in the average age of women at the birth of their first child, which reached 27.1 years. There has also been an increase in the level of childlessness at the end of the fertility phase for women, with one in five women (as opposed to one in ten in the 1940s) having no children at the end of their fertility period in 2004 (ONS, 2005b).

Although a traditional ‘nuclear’ family is still the most common type of family at the moment, there have been increases in lone-parent families, children born to unmarried couples living together and step-parent families (Ferri and Smith, 2003). So childbearing and child rearing are no longer exclusively for those in marriages; and non-marital cohabitation has become an acceptable living arrangement, being most popular

<sup>1</sup> Note from data source: Divorce data up to 1970 are for Great Britain only. Divorce became legal in Northern Ireland from 1969, includes annulments. First marriages: for both partners. Remarriages: for one or both partners.

among adults aged 25 to 34 (ONS, 2003). The number of cohabiting adults in England and Wales increased from 6% (of the population aged 16 or over) in 1992 to 10% in 2007 (Wilson, 2009). This increase in the popularity of cohabitation is not only an indication of the postponement of marriage but also of people choosing this living arrangement in its own right. This is shown by the finding that for many people cohabitation is not a step towards marriage (Seltzer, 2004).

Other relatively recent trends are solo living of young adults, especially men, and living with parents during adulthood (Berrington et al, 2009; Ferri and Smith, 2003). The former is linked with educational advancement and high occupational status (Ferri and Smith, 2003) and the latter is linked to poor education, economic dependence and unemployment (Berrington et al, 2009; Ferri and Smith, 2003).

One of the striking differences between the contemporary family and the families that existed a few decades ago lies in the proportion of children living in stepfamilies, particularly among cohabiting couples. National data for the UK in 2001 shows that among families with dependent children, 10% were stepfamilies (ONS, 2005). These family formations were more likely to happen within a cohabiting partnership than marital: only 4% of married families contained stepchildren compared to 17% of cohabiting families (ONS, 2007).

Changes in demographic trends such as people entering parenthood and partnerships later in their lives and more frequent breakdowns of relationships can be seen as part of the transformation of women's lives. Women are now achieving more advanced levels of education and entering better occupations (Ferri and Smith, 2003). Here, it is important to note that there is a polarisation in women's achievements: those at the top end of the educational scale have experienced an improvement in employment opportunities while those at the bottom of the scale have not (Bynner et al, 2003). The polarisation in life choices among women with different qualifications is also evident in their paths to adulthood in terms of family formation: women with lower educational qualifications were found to become parents at an earlier age than women with better qualifications, often without forming a partnership prior to it (Bynner et al, 2003). Findings from British cohort data show that women with no qualifications are more likely to enter partnerships earlier in life and have their first child (often unsupported) at

or before the age of 20 than those who graduated by the time they were 30 years old (Ferri and Smith, 2003).

In the light of changing family compositions, relationships are seen as a choice which is assumed to be personally fulfilling and not a mere social responsibility (Bynner et al, 2003). There is thus less pressure from society (Gillies, 2003; Thornton and Freedman, 1982) and family members (Thornton and Freedman, 1982) to get married. In fact, “social conditions [have] changed in the ways that supported being single” (Rouse, 2002: 45). Once married, women’s financial independence and desire for personal fulfilment make it easier for them to walk out on an unhappy marriage than it used to be in the past. And although there are gaps in the support available for unmarried individuals living as a couple in the UK, the Government is considering proposals to reform the law in order to give cohabiting couples marriage-like rights with regards to finances, especially in cases of a separation or death (The Law Commission, 2005). This would, in some way, affect the way cohabitation is viewed. Would it bring new “seriousness” into cohabiting relationships as they, by law, would resemble marital ones? Would it discourage people to cohabit as it becomes in the eyes of the law more and more like a marriage union? Would cohabitants prefer to get married or perhaps even live separately to avoid being bound by law? Changes in the way cohabitation is viewed in law would be of importance for those interested in forms of family formation and the reasons behind them.

Continuing on the topic of choice in family forms, one could not omit the fact that same-sex marriages (or ‘civil partnerships’) were legalised in England and Wales in 2005. These partnerships have similar legal rights to married partnerships, including the procedures for ‘divorce’ (or dissolution). It is reasonable to assume that the legalisation of gay relationships would have made an impact on how people view marriage as an institution and what they think the acceptable conditions for raising children are. The expansion towards this form of family structure can also be interpreted as an indication of the importance of choice in our society, where family arrangements are varied and suit all. The concept of choice and other theoretical explanations of changing family forms are discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.

### 1.1.2 Why are values important?

In this section, I reflect on the reasons for studying family values along with monitoring their changes. Firstly, it is to complement the knowledge about the demographic changes in family composition which were described in Section 1.1.1 above. Secondly, certain attitudes and values can be used to predict people's behaviour and how they shape their lives. Thirdly, attitudes and values can bring about changes to what is deemed normal in society and therefore help shape societal character.

The changes in the various aspects of family life described in Section 1.1.1 have implications on how people view family issues in general and in relation to their own lives. To understand the transformations in family life that have taken place in the last 40-50 years, there is a need to look not only at the facts of changing family forms in the light of social changes (such as educational and employment opportunities for women) but also at the changes and/or stability of family values in terms of their underlying attitudes towards specific spheres of family life. Have people moved away from appreciating the traditional family structure as a greater proportion of people choose not to form one? Does the majority think that raising children is no longer the sole responsibility of a mother as more women enter employment and delay childbearing? Answering these and other similar questions in the light of changing demographic and social trends allows for a deeper understanding of the meaning of family in contemporary society.

Aside from using attitudes and values to complement our knowledge about societal and demographic changes, some claim they are important for predicting certain related processes and behaviours. For example, attitudes to marriage were found to be useful in forecasting marital outcomes since a pessimistic view of marriage at its start or even before could be influential on a person's expectations and could therefore contribute to its break-up (Larsen and Olson, 1989). Others (e.g. Kalmijn, 2005) see the importance of attitudes (in this article, attitudes to sex-roles) in their immediate relevance to people's lives and how disagreements on them could lead to arguments at home and beyond (on domestic division of labour as well as work involvement). Similarly, attitudes to childbearing, traditional family forms and marriage are of great importance for relationships as they are at the very heart of them. Previous literature on the relationship between attitudes and behaviour is further explored in Chapter 2.

Attitudes also play an important part in shaping society in terms of its norms. Whilst norms are stable and deeply rooted beliefs of what is considered appropriate and inappropriate in society, Moors argues that “people with ‘strong’ and ‘atypical’ attitudes and values may row against the mainstream societal norms” (2003: 202). Moors gives an example from the work of Pagnini and Rindfuss (1993, cited in Moors, 2003: 202), which points out how defining having children outside of marriage as a ‘problem’ is an indicator of a normative position within society and an increase in the number of unmarried people having children results in more tolerance towards such behaviour. I therefore would argue that shifts in people’s attitudes and corresponding behaviour could drive the change of what are considered the norm in society.

## **1.2 Background to studying family-related attitudes**

Attitudes towards marriage, divorce and cohabitation have been studied extensively in the US and Australia (e.g. Amato, 1988; Amato and Booth, 2001; Axinn and Thornton, 1996, 2000; Coleman and Ganong, 1984; Cunningham and Thornton, 2005; Glenn, 1999; Moors, 2000; Sassler and Schoen, 1999; Thornton and Freedman, 1982; Thornton and Young-DeMarco, 2001; Trent and South, 1992; Whitehead and Popenoe, 1999; etc), with fewer studies undertaken using British data (e.g. Berrington et al, 2005; Buchanan and Flouri, 2001; Wiggins and Bynner, 1993, Buchanan and Ten Brinke, 1997). A large number of these studies began to emerge during and after a time of demographic change in the 1960s and 1970s, when divorce rates began to accelerate, and the rates of first marriages started to fall along with fertility, following a post-World War II ‘baby boom’ (Cherlin, 1992). At the same time, pre-marital cohabitation was becoming more widespread (Haskey, 2001; Bumpass and Lu, 2000) along with non-marital sexual relationships and childbearing (Kiernan, 1999; Bumpass and Lu, 2000), which in turn earned acceptability among a greater proportion of the population.

With the changing demographic profile of the population, there has been an increase in the desire and need to monitor these changes in the context of changing attitudes and values towards these transitions. Consequently, a vast amount of work carried out on determinants of attitudes and the relationship between attitudes and behaviour is based on the data of adults or teenagers living in the 1960-1980s, predominantly in the US. Because the transition towards more diverse family forms had only just begun to

emerge during that period, the instances where people held non-traditional views towards these issues were sparser than in the years to follow, but they too began to change. Although some dramatic changes took place in attitudes towards different family arrangements and the roles of husband and wife within a union, other attitudes remained relatively stable over time. Thornton and Young-DeMarco (2001) found a continuing increase in the tolerance of diverse family-related behaviours in their investigation of attitudes towards divorce, cohabitation, pre-marital sex, remaining unmarried and childless and more egalitarian sex-roles between the 1960s and the 1990s in the US. At the same time, marriage remained valued by the majority and people still deemed a good marriage to be extremely important to them, intended to get married one day (Thornton and Young-DeMarco, 2001), and thought that marriage was a lifelong commitment (Axinn and Thornton, 2000; Thornton and Young DeMarco, 2001). These studies were undertaken in the US using various data sources corresponding to those years. In Britain, a series of publications have been produced based on the annual British Social Attitudes survey, where attitudinal questions are asked on a range of topics, including (for some of the sweeps) family and marriage, to over 3,000 randomly selected adults. Although the survey is not longitudinal, the data collected is rich and informative and provides a cross-sectional overview of attitudes held by the British adult population at each point in time.

Thus, with an expanding range of family forms accompanied by an increase in the proportion of the population who are supportive of them, the way that these 'non-traditional' attitudes have affected people's behaviour might also have changed for the more recent cohorts. There is a hypothesis (e.g. in Lesthaeghe and Moors, 2002; Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 2004) that value orientation towards a certain life transition may act as a selection effect on the type of life path one embarks upon. At the same time, being part of a certain path has an adaptive effect on the values one holds towards this situation. This theory provides a dynamic picture of the processes that are involved in the changing nature of some values and is used in this study.

The majority of work on family-related attitudes and marital/partnership behaviours (such as getting married, divorced and entering a consensual union) has been undertaken using the assumptions of either selection effects of attitudes - that behaviour can be predicted by attitudes (e.g. in Sassler and Schoen, 1999; Bumpass, 2000), or adaptation - that attitudes may change following a transition (e.g. Cunningham and

Thornton, 2005). There has also been an increasing amount of work in which both the selection and adaptation effects of family-related attitudes were explored with the use of panel data (e.g. Barber and Axinn, 1998; Berrington et al, 2008; Lesthaeghe and Moors, 2002; Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 2004; Moors, 1997, 2000).

The measurement of family-related attitudes is varied and studies rarely use established measures (for example, 'Hill's Attitude Toward Marriage Scale' and the 'Hardy Divorce Scale' used by Coleman and Ganong, 1984; a measure of Traditional Family Values developed by Glezer (1984) used by Amato, 1988, etc). This is mainly due to the unavailability of such data. A large proportion of the most recent studies on family-related attitudes are concerned with gender-role attitudes rather than attitudes related to marriage. This is understandable given the dramatic changes in women's employment patterns. Those who do use more or less established measures of marital attitudes have mostly undertaken their own data collection and the results are therefore based on a small number of respondents, frequently high school students. Authors using large-scale national studies normally utilise either single attitude statements relating to these issues (e.g. Thornton and Freedman, 1982; Trent and South, 1992, etc.) or combine various statements into smaller sub-sets or scales (e.g. Bumpass, 2000; Moors and Bernhardt, 2009; Buchanan and Flouri, 2001). Thus no standard measures of family-related and/or marital attitudes exist between these numerous studies. Nonetheless, the results often confirm each other, despite the variety of instruments used.

This study is motivated by the lack of thorough investigation of attitudes towards family and marriage and marital and partnership behaviour, particularly for the more recent cohorts in Britain. Although studies that use British cohort data in their investigation of marital attitudes do exist (e.g. Wiggins and Bynner, 1993, Buchanan and Ten Brinke, 1997, Buchanan and Flouri, 2001), none of them specifically attempt to explore the relationship between attitudes to family and marriage and family-related behaviour. Additionally, these studies focus on the attitudes of the NCDS cohort only, specifically at age 33. There is one piece of work that has been carried out by Smith and colleagues (2007) using BHPS data that produced exciting and relevant results for this project.

### 1.3 Research focus

This project investigates the attitudes towards family and marriage among two British birth cohorts: the 1970 British Cohort Study and the 1958 National Child Development Study at two points in their adult lives. More specifically, its aims are to explore the determinants of attitudes as well as the relationship between attitudes and cohort members' marital and partnership behaviour. The objective of the latter is to investigate any evidence of selection effects and/or adaptation of these attitudes in relation to marital and partnership behaviour.

The focus of attitudes here is on commitment to marriage and to keeping a family intact when there are children present. The attitude statements used are summarised into a single scale that consists of three identical items (across cohort and time) relating to divorce, marriage, and parental separation. One of the additional aims of this study is to demonstrate how this scale was constructed. Attitudinal data is available at two points in the cohort members' lives (referred to here as 'time 1' and 'time 2'): for the BCS cohort these refer to age 26 (time 1) and 30 (time 2) and for the NCDS – age 33 (time 1) and 42 (time 2). This allows establishing the order of events and therefore allows for the investigation of attitudes at time 1 as determinants of marital transitions between time 1 and time 2 and a change in attitudes following these transitions.

The family-related demographic changes that have been taking place since the 1960s, described above, were accompanied by an increase in employment opportunities for women (Gallie, 2000), greater gender equality within both the workplace and the domestic environment and an increase in the proportion of people gaining higher educational qualifications to meet the demand for a more qualified workforce following a rapid spread of information technologies (Bynner, 2000). This means that the two cohorts were living in differently characterised social times when they were at comparable ages and thus the two cohorts would have been affected by these changes differently. Time and context are therefore important notions in explaining some of the differences between the two cohorts that cannot be accounted for purely by cohort characteristics. This is the stance that the life course approach to human development takes. The life course is defined by Giele and Elder as "...a sequence of socially defined events and roles that the individual enacts over time" (1998: 22). This approach takes into account both individual differences and the characteristics of the settings that these

individuals live in. Therefore, the shape of the life course is determined not only by human agency (or personal goal orientation), but also through the interaction of location, social integration (e.g. people growing up surrounded by different social networks would differ on certain outcomes) and timing (of both life events and location in time). Indeed, there is plenty of evidence that the BCS and NCDS cohorts experienced increasingly different social conditions and changes which affected them at different times of their lives and as a consequence the impact of these changes is not the same for the two cohorts (e.g. see Schoon, 2006 and Schoon, 2007). The life course approach and the differences in social conditions of the two cohorts are discussed further in Chapter 2, sections 2.1.4 and 2.2.1.3, respectively.

The underlying model for this investigation is based on the selection and adaptation effects of values on the life course transitions mentioned above. While the aim is to arrive at a complete model, a large part of this research is explorative in its nature. The next section of this chapter provides an outline of research questions and the following section briefly describes each chapter's aim and content.

## **1.4 Research questions**

The main interest of this thesis is related to attitudes as a characteristic of societal character. Do the attitudes of men and women towards marriage and family differ from each other? Do attitudes change with age? Are there differences in attitudes to family and marriage depending on people's marital/partnership and parenthood status? Do separations from previous partners have any effect on attitudes towards marriage and family? Is there a relationship between parental separation and cohort members' attitudes? Are the results different for the two cohorts under investigation? Answering these questions will help to picture family values in the context of the changing family environment discussed later on in the paper - less frequent first marriages, more frequent divorces, and increasing instances of cohabitation.

Below are the research questions which I address throughout Chapters 3 to 7.

1. Attitudes and family values:
  - a) How to measure "attitudes"?

- b) What are the attitudes towards marriage, divorce and parental separation among cohort members at each sweep? (i.e. at a cross-sectional level)
  - c) Are there differences in family values between the two cohorts at comparable chronological age and life course stages?
  - d) Are there changes in attitudes towards family and marriage among cohort members at a longitudinal level? (i.e. comparing attitudes of the same cohort members at different ages).
2. Do people in different marital and partnership situations view family and marriage differently? Is there a trend to be less traditional among those in 'non-traditional' partnerships, i.e. cohabitation, compared to those who are married?
  3. Can parental background characteristics (e.g. whether cohort members' parents were separated/divorced) predict attitudes to family and marriage of the grown up respondents?
  4. Can cohort members' own characteristics (e.g. gender, qualifications, employment) and life experiences (e.g. separation from a partner, parental status, etc.) predict attitudes to family and marriage?
  5. Are the associations between parental characteristics and cohort members' attitudes weakened once respondents' own experiences are taken into account?
  6. Does behaviour (i.e. partnership formation/dissolution) predict change in attitudes (adaptation effects of attitudes)?
  7. Do attitudes predict behaviour (selection effects of attitudes)?

Throughout the course of answering the above questions, the differences and similarities between the two cohorts will be assessed.

## 1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters altogether. The current chapter provides some background to the study and outlines its main research questions.

CHAPTER 2 consists of a review of relevant literature on the topic of attitudes. It offers different theoretical frameworks for the investigation of attitudes with specific reference to their relationship with behaviour. Additionally, the definitions of attitudes are discussed and their relationship to values and beliefs are considered.

CHAPTER 3 considers the methodological issues of this research, the data used and the sample selected. It describes how a scale measuring attitudes towards family and marriage was created and the ways it can be utilised in the following analyses. This chapter also begins to explore the differences in average attitude scores between the two cohorts at two time points.

The main aim of CHAPTER 4 is to begin to explore the relationship between attitudes towards family and marriage and the marital and partnership status of cohort members. All the analyses hereafter are completed for each cohort separately and although the results for these are not compared statistically, the dissimilarities in the patterns of the results provide a valuable indication of the different ways that attitudes shape or are shaped by the lives of the BCS and NCDS cohorts. The chapter goes on to examine the associations between changes in partnership and marital status and changes in attitudes, aiming to uncover signs of the adaptation effect of attitudes following marital/partnership formation and dissolution. Additionally, I explore cohort members' attitudes prior to these transitions taking place to uncover any evidence of the selection effect of attitudes into marital and cohabiting partnerships. These analyses do not take into account other characteristics of the cohort members (apart from gender) and are used as an initial step in the investigation of attitudes and behaviour which is further explored in Chapters 6 and 7.

CHAPTER 5 focuses on the exploration of factors which could potentially influence the attitudes of cohort members, have an effect on their marital/partnership behaviour or mediate the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. Relevant literature and previous work on related issues are also discussed.

In CHAPTER 6 I begin utilising multivariate techniques, namely linear regressions, to determine what predicts attitudes to family and marriage among the two British cohorts. This method allows me to control for possible influences on attitudes, examined in the preceding chapters, while evaluating relative associations of each factor with attitudes. The focus here is primarily on the relationship between attitudes and marital/partnership status, but other factors are also discussed.

CHAPTER 7 concludes the analysis part of this thesis by bringing together all the evidence of selection and adaptation effects of attitudes in relation to marital and partnership behaviour and utilising graphical representation of regression models to provide evidence of these effects for the BCS and NCDS cohorts. I investigate these using three subgroups of cohort members. Firstly, those who were *never married and who were not cohabiting* at time 1 and who either remained in that state, began a cohabiting relationship, or got married for the first time by time 2. Another subgroup of interest is those who were *married for the first time* and who either remained married by time 2, or got divorced without forming a new partnership (whether cohabiting or marital). Due to the limitation of the available data, only the NCDS cohort is used in the analyses of first time married respondents. The final subgroup under investigation is those *never married cohort members who were in a cohabiting partnership at time 1* and who either remained with the same partner by time 2 or got separated from their partner (but did not form another partnership). I use a series of regression models to investigate the predictors of attitudes to family and marriage at time 1, predictors of marital/partnership transition between time 1 and time 2 and predictors of attitudes at time 2 following the transition for each subgroup of interest; and then implement graphical representations of these models to illustrate the results in an ordered and accessible way.

The summary of the most interesting and important outcomes from the analyses undertaken in this research are presented in CHAPTER 8 along with the conclusions and discussions of these results and their implications for understanding how attitudes shape people's lives and how these might differ for the two cohorts under investigation. The results are discussed with reference to the theoretical perspectives outlined in Chapter 2, which attempt to explain the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, as well as with reference to previous work undertaken in the field of attitudes and behaviour. CHAPTER 8 concludes with the limitations of the project and suggestions

for possible future investigations of attitudes and marital/partnership behaviour which may improve both the accuracy of the results and the inferences about their implications.

## CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 made a case for studying family-related attitudes and associated behaviour, namely partnership formation and dissolution. It briefly introduced previous studies on the relationship between attitudes and behaviour and highlighted the ways in which the demographic profile of families has been changing in recent decades. In this chapter, I continue exploring previous literature on the links between family values and related behaviour. But first I describe some of the theories behind the changing nature of family and family relations as well as the theories that link family-related behaviour and attitudes.

### 2.2 Overview of the theoretical background

#### 2.2.1 Changing family: theoretical perspectives

##### Individualisation

It is common to discuss changes in family with reference to the expansion of available choices. These include greater accessibility to education and career prospects which are now available to women as well as men; in addition, scientific advancement that has made the choices of fertility, contraception, and general communication, easier. It is not uncommon to discuss changes in family in relation to the thesis of individualisation, which assumes people are less influenced by external constraints and family roots and are more driven by their own needs and choices (e.g. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Giddens, 1992). As Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) formulate:

“Individualisation means that men and women are released from the gender roles prescribed by industrial society for life in the nuclear family. At the same time, and this aggravates the situation, they find themselves forced, under pain of material disadvantage, to build up a *life of their own* by way of the labour market,

training and mobility, and if need be to pursue this life at the cost of their commitments to family, relations and friends.”

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995: 6

In his work on understanding changes in intimate relationships, such as marital instability, decline in fertility, increased frequency of divorce and changes to family composition, Giddens (1992) foresees the potential of the democratisation of personal life in the light of a radical transformation of intimacy. He refers positively to these changes as he sees them as welcoming to new forms of relationships. He talks about the democratisation of the private sphere, in which relationships exist as ‘free and equal’, characterised by free expression of diversity, respect, involvement in determining one’s own life, and expansion of economic opportunities (here, Giddens, 1992 draws on the work of David Held, 1986). What connects these, Giddens continues, is the reflective and self-determining nature of individuals, their ability to “judge and choose, and act upon different causes of actions” (1992: 185). These characterise the idea of autonomy and, as Giddens (1992) points out, would not be possible if traditional ties and regulations were still in place. Democratisation is thus seen by him as promoting difference and individuality and at the same time encouraging equality.

It is his ‘equality’ argument that appears to initiate a lot of opposition from other scholars (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Lewis, 1995; Jamieson, 1999 as well as feminist thinkers, e.g. Ehrenreich, 1983), who point towards persistent inequality within marriages and relationships in general due to constraints that are beyond the relationship itself, such as labour market opportunities as well as the reality of deeply-rooted gender roles, in which women are still the ones carrying out unpaid domestic work and are the ones left to be single parents with all its consequences. Although, for example, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) agree that a lot has changed in society in relation to gender equality, such as improved laws and educational opportunities for women, they point towards the lack of change in the actual behaviour of men and women especially in the job market, insurance and pensions and go even further to predict the situation will only get worse:

“There is a sharpening contradicting between women’s ambitions to live as equals with their mates and colleagues and the actual conditions confronting them, between male slogans on mutual responsibility and their unwillingness to alter their daily routine a jot [...] Women’s awareness is far ahead of the actual conditions [...] The prognosis is that we are in for a long and bitter battle; in the coming years there will be a war between men and women.”

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995: 14

Whilst Giddens (1992) talks about the positive nature of the changing family forms as he sees them promoting a democratization of personal life, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) refer to individualisation as driving men and women apart (as seen in their definition of individualisation at the beginning of this section). However, these authors also argue that in modern society, where the bond with God is weakened, relationships between neighbours are not as close, the range of people that one comes into contact with is widened but on a superficial level, there is a lot of room left for individual longing for intimacy and idealisation of love (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995: 33).

While modern society promotes choice by opening the door to many opportunities and possibilities, it also means that people have to make more decisions in order to make those choices and the seeming freedom may also be a source of constraints. When in a relationship, the two people involved are faced with making their own decisions and the more complex they are, the more likely they are to arrive at disagreements (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). And while dealing with their own plans and problems, is there room for a shared world? As Beck and Beck-Gernsheim put it: “To what extent is it possible to share one’s life if social circumstances compel one to concentrate on one’s own interests?” (1995: 53).

Additionally, the availability of choices not only means greater freedom but also imposes new constraints and new rules on how people’s lives operate. Having to deal with labour market regulations and demands means that personal availability to commit to a partner and their demands is limited by the demands imposed by the labour market. Whilst the increase in educational and therefore labour opportunities has given a large number of people the chance to experience things beyond the demands of everyday life and to escape the

struggles experienced by earlier generations, this has brought about its own constraints in the form of pressure to take responsibility for one's own successes and failures and has resulted in people questioning the meaning of life and the world which may have put people under stress and self-doubt (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995: 48-53). Thus individualisation is seen by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) as challenging family life by creating grounds for disagreements, uncertainties and interferences but at the same time promoting close personal relationships as one seeks to compensate for one's lonely life.

A more positive outlook on the family forms formulated by Giddens (1992) is criticised not only for ignoring persistent inequalities between men and women, but also for the absence of reference to the relevance of social class and other social circumstances such as the importance of childhood experiences based on child-parent relationships which are vital in the creation of a sense of self (Jamieson, 1999; Smart, 2007). "Individuals who inhabit his [Giddens'] landscapes seem remarkably well resourced and free from economic and/or social constraints" (Smart, 2007: 21). Smart (2007), on the other hand, suggests a framework in which concepts such as biography, memory, embeddedness, relationality and the imaginary are interconnected. Although she allows for the possibility of combining these concepts with more traditional ones such as, for example, class, gender and ethnicity, the emphasis remains on "what matters to people in everyday lives".

### Sociology of Personal Life

Although not entirely rejecting the works of Giddens (1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) on individualisation, Smart seeks to expand on it by adding "individually crafted biographies" to people's ability to decide and plan for their own lives (2004: 29). Smart (2007) sets out to develop a sociology of 'personal life' which takes into account not only the sociology of family and the sociology of kinship but also other related concepts such as friendships, same-sex partnerships, relationships across households, etc.

Smart (2007) argues that the field of personal life portrays the complexity of relationships more accurately than, for example, a restricted term such as 'a family', which assumes not only biological relatedness but also co-residence of its members, whereas many people

relate to each other meaningfully despite being unrelated or living apart. Attributing these relationships to more conventional terms such as “networks”, she argues, minimises their importance. Although she does not reject the term ‘family’, Smart (2007) suggests that it should be conceptualised within a broader notion of ‘personal life’ together with other related forms of relationships. This way, she argues, the focus is still on the individual but without making presumptions of “separateness, autonomy and the conceptual slide into individualisation” (Smart, 2007: 188).

Smart questions the notion of people becoming increasingly individualised and living separate lives in the light of considerations of “the social significance of memory in the cultural, historical and personal construction of the self” (2007: 187). She further contests the way the individualisation thesis points towards “fragmentation, differentiation, separation, and autonomy”, whereas her “connectedness thesis” is inclined towards “connection, relationship, reciprocal emotion, environment, memory, history, and so on” (2007: 89). However, although Smart (2007) does not fully support the work of Giddens (1992), she points out the more optimistic approach adopted by him on conceptualising the individualisation process compared to that of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995), as well the fact that it provides useful insights into new ways of thinking about families, not forgetting same-sex partnerships.

### Shift in morality

As I mentioned earlier in this section, the individualisation thesis has found many critics and although it is not completely disputed, the assumption of people being preoccupied with their own selves to the extent it suggests is often questioned. Lewis, for example, emphasises that although there is no doubt that the marriage system has undergone dramatic changes over the past decades, it is wrong to assume this is due to increased selfishness in pursuing one’s own goals, be it women entering employment or men leaving their families. It is more likely, she points out, to be due to a transformation of the mentalities and norms of what one ought to do within a family as their roles become less specified, as they increasingly more involved in the labour market and constrained by family laws. This, she claims, “opened space for negotiation in families”, that makes

families of today differ from those in the past who lived within much more straightforward economic and legal frameworks (Lewis, 2001: 5). She therefore argues that:

“...changes at the level of the family cannot be understood without considering the much broader social context, and that what might be termed the cultural variable plays a key mediating role. Particularly important has been the erosion of normative expectations associated with the prescriptive frameworks emanating from family law and the male breadwinner model family.”

Lewis, 2001: 5

Lewis refers to various studies which point towards historical accounts of the changes in marriage and divorce laws which resulted in a “transfer of many moral decisions from the law to people” (2001: 72). Such, for example, is the effect of the ‘no fault’ divorce. In referring to the work of Schneider (1985), Lewis highlights that this was due to a change to the overall moral and belief system whereby the emphasis was on the “increasing pluralism and tolerance for heterodox moralities; the ideology of liberal individualism; the legal tradition of non-interference in families; and the rise of ‘psychologic man’”, who lives by what works rather than what is right, is encouraged to exercise self-expression and if he is at ‘no fault’, therefore he is at ‘no guilt’ (Lewis, 2001: 72).

Lewis (2001) refers to the ‘male breadwinner model’, which advocates the role of a man as a wage earner and a woman as a homemaker for the stable family where the responsibilities of a husband and a wife are clear to both. While this model received widespread acceptance and created normative expectations among people and policy makers, “the model only ever accurately described the arrangements of a proportion of families – a relatively smaller one at the beginning and end of the century and a relatively larger one in the immediate post war decade” (Lewis, 2001: 45). Changes in the legal and economic positions of women were seen as a threat to the traditional family and Lewis (2001) finds evidence in both qualitative and quantitative literature that the ideal of the male breadwinner model has disappeared for the majority of families, no longer providing normative expectations to reinforce the model. Moreover, whilst women were more and more often found in

employment and the expectations of a family became more egalitarian and individualistic, little changed inside the home in terms of unpaid home work with the burden still lying mostly of the shoulders of women. This, as Lewis puts it “opened up a gap between expectations and reality that had to be negotiated” (2001: 46). Thus, she argues, “the male breadwinner family model [...] which was an ideal if not a reality for many women as well as men during the first half of the twentieth century, is now neither ideal nor a reality” (2001: 71).

### **2.2.2 Should we hold on to traditional family?**

The changes in family described in Chapter 1 can be viewed in different ways. Firstly, the traditionalist perspective is that the decline in popularity of traditional family structures leads to a “disintegration of moral frameworks” (Gillies, 2003). Secondly, there is a more optimistic view of these changes, adopted by liberal thinkers, who see the changes in family and social relationships as being more diverse and leading to the democratisation of personal relationships (cited in Gillies, 2003). So the traditionalist theorists would describe the changes in terms of family decline, while intimacy theorists would see positive gains from these changes in terms of personal relationships based on choice, equality and companionship.

“...not everything has changed in families and households, and not everything is harmful”.

McRae 1999: 26

There is more emphasis on the quality of relationships and their nature as being elective rather than entered into out of need or norms. Giddens refers to a ‘pure relationship’, which is “continued as far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfaction to each individual to stay within it” (1992: 58) and thus characterised by equality and intimacy through trust and mutual disclosure; a relationship that is entered into for no other reason but its own sake, where sex is separated from reproduction and which ends when it becomes unsatisfactory.

In his work, Giddens sees the right to initiate a divorce, particularly among women, as a good thing not only since it allows women to escape from abusive relationships but also because it ensures more equal communication and a sharing of the power between a husband and a wife within a marriage (1992: 190). Jamieson (1999), contesting the existence of equality between heterosexual couples, provides examples from empirical work which highlight these inequalities where men still hold more power than women in terms of opting out of childcare (Brannen and Moss, 1992, cited in Jamieson, 1999) and exercising more control over finances (Vogler, 1994 cited in Jamieson, 1999).

In her empirical work, Jacqueline Scott (1997), cautions the reader not to treat the changes in household composition as a sign of family decline. She used British panel data to find family events to be of greatest importance to people in the year prior to study at the beginning of the 1990s (Scott, 1997). She goes on to argue that the claims of some (e.g. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) that the individualistic nature of people nowadays has resulted in them replacing family values with their selfish pursuits) have not found support in the data, with family events mentioned as significant with greater frequency than other events (employment, education, consumption, etc.) by respondents of the representative British adult sample.

What is evident is that although family in a traditional sense is becoming less prevalent, talking about its 'decline' may well be too quick a judgement as it still means a lot to people and many strive to be in a long-lasting, quality relationship. Whether or not this longing translates into a successful partnership is doubted by some. It is undeniable that family compositions have changed and a return to the traditional nuclear family may be impossible, that is not to say that partnerships could not still thrive and remain desirable whilst being to some degree individualistic, yet not selfish. It is here when the relationship between family-related attitudes and behaviour becomes interesting: do people's attitudes conform to their behaviour? Or, does people's behaviour conform to their attitudes?

## 2.2.3 Partnership formation and dissolution: theory and evidence

### 2.2.3.1 Union formation

Becker's economic theory of the gains of marriage (or gender-role specialisation) lies in the advantage of marriage comparative to remaining unmarried and the mutual dependencies of a husband and wife (Becker, 1981). This theory highlights men's "specialty" in work and women's in domestic production. Such specialisation could potentially increase the gains of marriage through the division of labour at home in such a way as to maximise the family's coherence if the wages of the spouses differ (Weiss, 2000). Thus a woman in a low paid job might stay at home to look after the family while her spouse goes to work to earn enough money for them. What it means in relation to marital formation is that men who are unemployed, on a low income and in unskilled manual occupations are potentially less valuable as male companions, while economic independence and labour force participation among women might increase the risk of marital dissolution (various empirical studies cited in Berrington and Diamond, 1999). Wu and Hart (1999) claim that this theory can also be applied to cohabiting union transitions: "couples may be maximising their comparative advantage through cohabitation".

From a sociological perspective, the exchange theory (Oppenheimer, 2000) states that women's economic independence undermines the arrangements favourable to a marital union by reducing the mutual dependency of couples. The gains of marriage are therefore reduced and the risk of separation increases. This theory basically concludes with the same notion as Becker's gains of marriage perspective – that the most favourable conditions for a marriage are those where men specialise in employment outside the home and provide for their families and women specialise in home care. Additionally, Oppenheimer (1997) stresses that the impact of gender-role division on marital success is weaker for later cohorts.

Following the logic of these theories, it is therefore reasonable to suppose that women with higher levels of education, who are also more likely to be working, are less likely to hold traditional gender-role attitudes and most probably value their independence more. They may therefore be more likely to hold less traditional attitudes towards other family

arrangements such as cohabitation and dissolution of unsatisfactory marriages. However, the relationship between gender-role attitudes and marital values is not well-established.

However, research found some contradiction to of the theoretical speculations with regards to women's marital and partnership behaviours described above. For example, more educated women were found to be more likely to marry and less likely to cohabit (Bumpass and Lu, 2000). Others found that full-time employment and higher levels of education had a positive impact on both women's and men's transitions to a marital union (Oppenheimer, 1995; Sassler and Schoen, 1999; Wu and Hart, 1999). There is evidence that more educated individuals have a greater choice of marital partner and have better communication within the relationship – both of these factors could aid the sustainability of the marriage (Amato, 1996).

Furthermore, Oppenheimer (2000) argues that it is men's economic position that plays an important part in their propensity to marry, more so than women's. She provides a convincing analysis of trends in marital formation and shows that men's declining economic position in recent cohorts could be responsible, at least in part, for the increased trend of delayed marriages. I would therefore expect men's social class and employment status to be significant determinants of their transition to marital unions.

### **2.2.3.2 Union dissolution**

Until recently, pre-marital cohabitation had been consistently found to increase the risk of marital separation (e.g. Berrington and Diamond, 1999; Cunningham, 2007). However, in recent studies some inconsistencies in the association between living together prior to marriage and marital dissolution began to emerge. For example, in their study of an Australian national panel survey for the respondents who formed marriages between years 1945 and 2000, Hewitt and De Vaus (2009) found that the relationship between pre-marital cohabitation and marital stability almost disappeared and was even reversed when the duration of the partnership was taken into account, particularly for more recent cohorts. The authors also explored possible explanations for such results and presented a few convincing explanations as to why such trends are more likely to persist; in addition, they refer to work that also supports the notion of pre-marital cohabitation having no effect on the marital

stability of more recent cohorts (e.g. De Vaus et al, 2005 and Schoen, 1992). Firstly, Hewitt and De Vaus claim that as cohabitation becomes more widespread, it is easier to detect its stabilising effects on marriage, as theorised by Becker (1981), whereby cohabiting prior to marriage enables a better mate selection through partners getting to know each other and making more informed decisions to get married should the partnership be successful. Previous cohabitation with another partner has been consistently found to be associated with marital breakdown, whereby those who had experienced a cohabiting relationship breakdown had increased chances of separating from a spouse than those who had not (e.g. Berrington and Diamond, 1999; Hewitt and De Vaus, 2009).

Parental divorce has been found to have a lasting effect on the marital behaviour of their children, namely a greater risk of marital and non-marital union dissolution among those whose parents were divorced (e.g. Amato, 1996; Amato and de Boer, 2001; Berrington and Diamond, 1999; Kiernan and Cherin, 1999). It is also possible that parental separation has an indirect impact on children's behaviour through affecting their attitudes.

#### **2.2.4 Attitudes and behaviour: theoretical frameworks**

Just as there is no single widely-acknowledged definition of attitudes, there is no single theory on how attitudes can be used in conjunction with behaviour. However, a few theoretical perspectives in social psychology and sociology appear to offer some indication on how these might be operating. This section describes these theories and applies them to the current research project. More specifically, I explore theories and hypotheses that refer to the adapting nature of attitudes (i.e. attitude adjustment following certain behaviour) as well as the selecting nature of attitudes (i.e. that attitudes increase the likelihood of a person exhibiting certain behaviour in agreement with their attitudes), whether authors use these terms (adaptation and selection) or not.

Firstly, a theory put forward by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) is that of *Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour*, which states that attitudes are indicative of behaviour in that attitudes are predispositions to act favourably or unfavourably to the attitude subject. This theory additionally states that normative beliefs about the likelihood of others to exhibit such

behaviour act in conjunction with attitudes in predicting the behaviour. Given this theory, people who hold traditional attitudes towards family and marriage, including childbearing, are bound to act in favour towards them: i.e. get married, enjoy stable marriages and have children, etc. This theory therefore supports the claim that behaviour is predictive of attitudes and attitudes can therefore be said to act in *selecting* individuals into arrangements/events that they favour. Furthermore, Tucker (2000) argues that despite the fact that many still express a desire to get married (found in the work of Thornton (1980), for example), because there is less pressure from society to do so, trends in marriage decline are also observed. These trends, however, do not take into account contextual factors apart from the expectations of others and the weakness of this theory is precisely that it assumes actions operate mainly on an individual level. In reality, people do not act in isolation of their social, geographical and time contexts. These issues will be addressed later.

Having discussed a mechanism by which attitudes might be predictive of actions, their place as adaptive to behaviour is also addressed from various perspectives. For example, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) put forward a hypothesis that refers to the adjustment of attitudes following behaviour, explained through 'active participation' (that is - a person participating in a specific behaviour/event would be able to make a more informed judgement/opinion about the behaviour/event), and through 'persuasive communication' (i.e. persons in a new situation would come into contact with specific networks of people who may influence their attitudes via direct 'persuasive communication'). Thus, according to this theory, attitudes tend to adjust or *adapt* to the situation one finds oneself in. Earlier theories also provide reasoning as to why adaptation of attitudes might take place following behaviour. For example, Festinger's 'cognitive dissonance' theory (1957) refers to an individual's inner force to keep their 'cognitions' in harmony. In the example of attitudes and behaviour, it would be keeping attitudes in line with their behaviour so as to avoid 'cognitive dissonance' of feelings and actions. The theory assumes that a person whose actions and beliefs are not in harmony would take steps towards reducing the discomfort of such dissonance by changing their beliefs.

Another theory about the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, specifically in relation to demographic behaviour, is the theory of the Second Demographic Transition (SDT), or an ideation theory (Lesthaeghe, 1995), which is based on the assumption of the recursive nature of values and life course position. The argument follows that after the dramatic changes in the cultural ‘value climate’ of the 1960s in Western countries, changes in the demographic profile of people took place, indicating the *selection* effect of attitudes and values. The work that follows (e.g. Lesthaeghe and Moors, 2002; Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 2004) explores the ways that behaviour and value orientation are related, reaching the consensus that individuals self-select themselves into certain life course positions (e.g. living arrangements and household types) based on their value orientation. At the same time, these individuals are subject to an event-based adaptation of their values in a direction of agreement with their chosen position. This implies that the relationship between attitudes and behaviour is reciprocal (Moors, 2000) and they therefore change in response to each other.

Several empirical studies confirmed these theories, providing analyses of the relationship between various family attitudes and related behaviours. For example, in their study of women’s gender roles and labour force participation, Berrington and colleagues (2008) found support for both the selection effect of attitudes into the labour force and the adaptation effects of attitudes following a transition in or out of work. The evidence for adaptation effects was, however, stronger.

Perhaps the most comprehensive view on the inter-related effects of contextual and personal factors on people’s lives can be found in the life course approach of human development, which takes into account interlinked macro (e.g. characteristics of societal, historical and social circumstances) and micro (individual agency and social interactions) determinants of a person’s life (Giele and Elder, 1998). This approach is not in the scope of this study, but is valuable in interpreting the differences between the findings for the two cohorts who were growing up and living adult lives in different times with different social and historical conditions (Schoon, 2007).

What the above-described theories have in common is that attitudes and behaviours are interlinked and should be considered together in order to obtain a full picture of their relationship. I will therefore use the assumption of the presence of both selection and adaptation effects of attitudes throughout this research.

## **2.3 Literature Review**

In this section I discuss the work that has been undertaken to date on the measurement and utilisation of attitudes and values, referring to both theoretical perspectives and empirical work.

### **2.3.1 Attitudes and values: stability and change**

#### **2.3.1.1 Beliefs, attitudes and values**

Attitudes, values and beliefs are related concepts which are sometimes difficult to distinguish between and are often used implicitly in social research. This section discusses definitions of each and shows how they are related.

Schwartz (2007) suggested that, in studying attitudes, one needs to look at the underlying values which in turn motivate people's behaviour. Values tend to stay unchanged and result in different groupings of attitudes (Jowell and Park, 1996). Thus, religious affiliation, for example, should make some differentiation between religious and non-religious people's attitudes to family-related values and behaviour. Indeed, in their study, Buchanan and Flouri (2001) found that traditional attitudes to marriage were associated with religiosity.

Many found the measures for attitudes, values, and beliefs to overlap making it difficult to distinguish between them and concentrate on one type at a time (e.g. Jowell and Park, 1996; Alwin and Scott, 1996).

“...because survey attitude measures often assess elements of all three [values, beliefs and attitudes], it is often difficult to conceive of measuring attitudes apart from beliefs and values”.

A widely used definition of attitudes, which is also applied to this study, is that by Icek Ajzen:

“An attitude is an individual’s disposition to react with a certain degree of favourableness or unfavourableness to an object, behaviour, person, institution, or event – or to any other discriminable aspect of individual’s world”.

Ajzen 1993: 41

Taking this definition as a starting point, attitudes need to be distinguished from other related concepts. Various ways have been proposed to do so, such as to address their likelihood to change over time (Jowell and Park, 1996; Alwin and Scott, 1996) and to identify whether they are object and/or situation specific (Moors, 2000). Thus, beliefs, for example, can be described as deeply-rooted perceptions of what people recognise to be real. Values, a type of belief, are held just as firmly and represent what is desirable. Attitudes, on the other hand, are more prone to change due to certain major life events and changes in circumstances. As pointed out in the attitude definition above, attitudes are object-related (be that ‘object’ a behaviour, institution or anything else) and are situation-specific whereas values have a more general character. Furthermore, Moors (1997) suggested that the link between attitudes and values is direct, where values can be empirically established by assessing the pattern of various relevant attitude scales.

This study uses attitudes as indicators of values. I will be measuring attitudes by constructing scales and interpreting them in the light of either favourable or unfavourable family values.

### **2.3.1.2 Age, cohort and period effects on attitudes**

Different external and internal influences shape people’s lives, including their attitudes. Some attitudes could remain relatively stable over time due to their reflection of broad stable values such as religious affiliation. However, as younger cohorts replace older ones bringing, for example, less religious enthusiasm, greater emphasis on individualisation and relationship quality, the overall value shift emerges on a societal level. People born at the

same time may experience similar historical events during their youth, which is when many values, attitudes, and beliefs are formed (Alwin, 2002). These ‘cohort effects’ are observed in the differing attitudes between generations, whereby older cohorts are found to be more traditional in their family values compared to more recent cohorts. As family takes on different forms and the popularity of alternatives to a traditional family structure increases, I would expect an even greater value change in a less traditional direction as new cohorts replace the old.

Additionally, other external and internal influences during one’s life course could determine the change in people’s attitudes. For example, a shift in attitudes with time could also be due to the ‘age effect’, whereby people’s attitudes change as they get older, perhaps as they are re-evaluating their values and adjusting them to their experiences. Thus, changes in attitudes within a particular cohort may take place with age.

Birth cohorts could have different attitudes at the same chronological age either because they differ in their characteristics or because they grew up in different historical circumstances. The latter is referred to as a ‘period effect’ which accounts for changes due to certain cultural or historic events which could be related to the attitudes in question or to the value system as a whole when a re-evaluation of what is significant in life may come about. These events could be the introduction of a new law, a natural disaster, the arrival of a new government, a war, etc. So in a survey, societal characteristics at the time of data collection reflect period effects. Thus period factors vary for birth cohorts as they live through different historical periods. When the two cohorts’ lives overlap in time, they then may experience the same historical events but at different ages and different stages in their lives, resulting in differing ways in which these events may affect them. Therefore, the inter-relationship between period, age and cohort effects is important in determining the influences on cohorts’ lives in general and attitudes in particular.

A change in attitudes can also take place due to certain important events in people’s lives that are related to the subject of the attitudes or characteristics of the individuals. In the case of attitudes towards family, these could change when people get married or have children. These ‘intra-cohort effects’ can be studied by measuring attitudes before and after such an

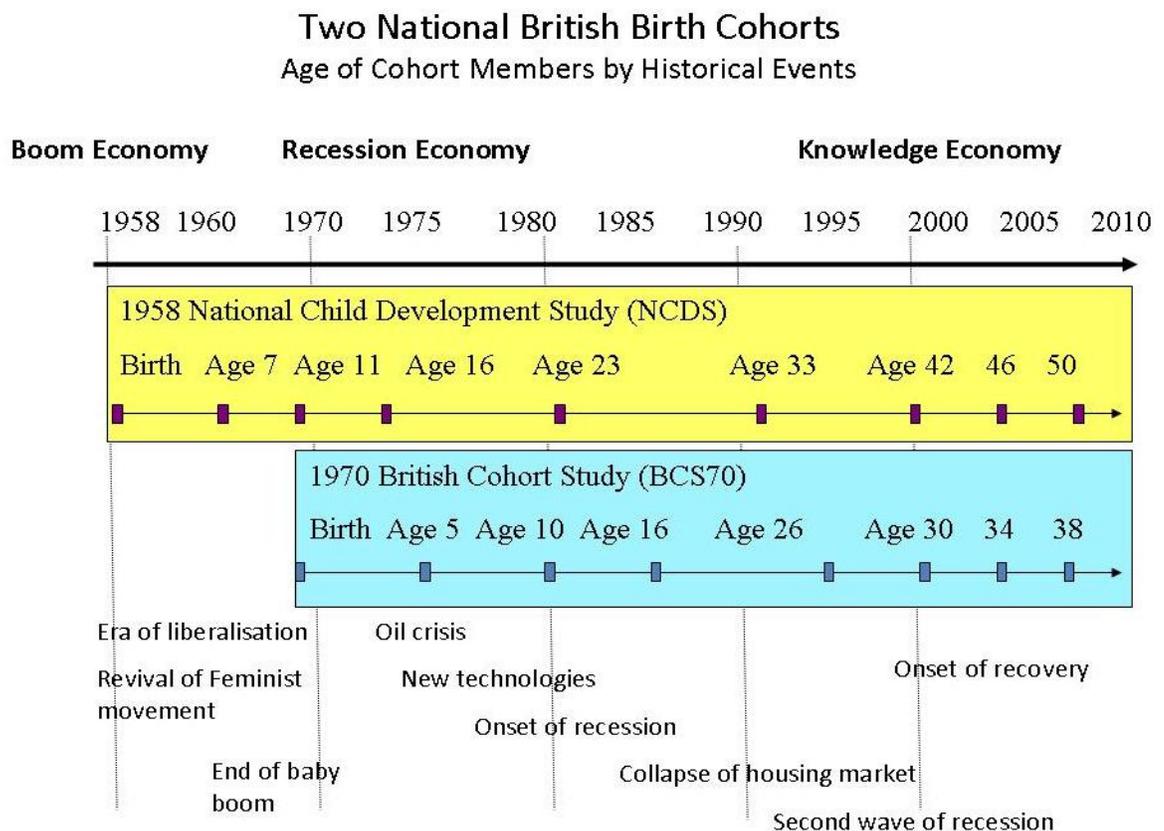
event or change in certain characteristics took place. The intra-cohort factors are also relevant in the period effects on people’s attitudes as these can result in differing influences of historic events depending on individual characteristics.

The next section explores the historic circumstances in which the two cohorts under investigation here lived. As I showed in this section, the timing and context of the cohorts’ lives are important in understanding attitude change within the cohorts as well as evaluating the difference in attitudes between them.

### 2.3.1.3 Social context: lives of the BCS and NCDS cohorts

To better understand the context in which the cohort members lived from birth to adult years, some important historical events and the ages at which cohort members experienced them are illustrated in Figure 2-1 below.

**Figure 2-1: Historical events during cohort members’ lives**



Source: Schoon (2006)

Figure 2-1 above shows that cohort members experienced many changes to the conditions in which they were living and, whilst their lives overlap, their experiences of the same historical events differ as they happen at different ages and different stages in life. The older NCDS cohort were born towards the end of the baby boom, and spent their first years during a time of economic growth, reaching adulthood and entering employment just before the recession. The BCS cohort members, on the other hand, were growing up during the difficult times of uncertainty that the recession brought and finished their education at the peak of the recession. At the same time, labour market conditions had changed dramatically: advances of new technologies resulted in a demand for more highly skilled workers and higher levels of education. So while many NCDS cohort members entered the labour market after completing compulsory school, more of the BCS cohort members continued with their education in order to compete for work, entering the labour market at an older age. The division between those with educational achievements and those without increased, with the latter experiencing difficulties in finding employment. Between 1978 and 1987 unemployment rose sharply, while the number of women who were entering the labour market increased during the same period.

The BCS respondents' birth also coincided with the time when a new reform of the divorce law came into power in England and Wales, whereby the 'no fault' divorce was possible. This allowed more people to get divorced should they wish to, and resulted in a steep increase in the number of divorces in the early 1970s, which continued thereafter.

### **2.3.2 Attitudes measurement**

Table 2-1 below shows a selection of previous work undertaken on attitudes towards marriage, divorce and family in general, sorted by authors' names. Although it is not a complete list of available studies on family-related attitudes, nonetheless it provides some important insights into the body of research on the topic. It is evident that no single measure of marital attitudes exists but some studies use similar attitude statements. Some use single items in their work; others combine them into a scale. Such a varied usage of attitude items in different studies makes comparison of their results difficult if not impossible. The number of articles in the table that are based on US data highlights the

amount of work on attitudes towards family and marriage undertaken in the US and the lack of it in the UK.

**Table 2-1: Attitudes towards marriage, divorce and family: previous studies**

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Attitudes measured (country of data source)</b>	<b>Items</b>
Amato	1988	Traditional Family Values (Australia), used as a scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All right to have children without being married</li> <li>• You need two parents to bring up a child</li> <li>• All right to live together without planning marriage</li> <li>• A husband provides protection for his wife</li> <li>• There are few happy marriages these days</li> <li>• Married people are happier</li> <li>• One's really important relationships are in the home</li> <li>• Marriage is for life</li> <li>• Divorce is too easy to get these days</li> <li>• A couple should be able to get a divorce if they want</li> <li>• I would not expect my partner to be faithful</li> <li>• My partner should not expect me to be always faithful</li> <li>• I would be frightened to be single at 40</li> <li>• Important decisions should be made by the husband</li> <li>• A woman is only fulfilled when she becomes a mother</li> <li>• Most important role of woman is mother</li> <li>• Wives who don't have to work should not do so</li> <li>• Wife should follow her husband for his job</li> <li>• Needs of spouse/children more important than own</li> <li>• Satisfying relationship without children possible</li> <li>• Important to teach children absolute obedience</li> </ul>
Axinn & Thornton	2000	Attitudes toward marriage, remaining single, and divorce (US), used as separate items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Married people are happier than those who go through life without getting married</li> <li>• Very likely would stay married</li> <li>• Marriage is for a lifetime</li> <li>• Parents should stay together even if they do not get along</li> </ul>
Axinn & Thornton	1996	Attitudes toward marriage (US), used as a scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's better for a person to get married than to go through life being single</li> <li>• Married people are usually happier than those who go through life without getting married</li> </ul>

		Attitudes toward divorce (US), used as a single item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When there are children in the family, parents should stay together even if they don't get along</li> </ul>
Coleman & Ganong	1984	Attitudes towards marriage (US), used as a scale	<u>7 items</u> related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• difficulty of marital adjustments</li> <li>• responsibilities of marriage</li> <li>• loss of personal freedom</li> <li>• sexual exclusiveness</li> <li>• doubts about marital success</li> <li>• predicted happiness in marriage</li> <li>• advisability of remaining single</li> </ul>
		Attitudes towards divorce (US), used as a scale	<u>12 items</u> related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• effects of divorce on children</li> <li>• degree of abuse of divorce</li> <li>• obligation to remain married</li> <li>• divorce as a solution to unhappy marriage</li> </ul>
Berrington et al	2005	Attitudes towards divorce (UK), used as a single item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is better to divorce than to continue an unhappy marriage</li> </ul>
Bumpass	2000	Conservative Family Attitudes (US), used as a scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alright for unmarried teens to have sex</li> <li>• Alright for unmarried couples to live together</li> <li>• Alright to have a child while unmarried</li> <li>• Whether marriage should be for a lifetime</li> <li>• Whether individuals should maintain independence in marriage</li> </ul>
Wiggins & Bynner	1993	Support for traditional marital values (UK), used as a scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All women should have the right to choose to have an abortion if they wish</li> <li>• Divorce is too easy to get these days</li> <li>• It is alright for people to have children without being married</li> <li>• Married people are generally happier than unmarried people</li> <li>• Marriage is for life</li> <li>• Couples who have children should not separate</li> </ul>

Flouri & Buchanan	2001	Support for traditional marital values (UK), used as a scale	The same items as in Bynner & Wiggins (1993) above
Moors	2000	Traditional family values (Germany), used as a scale	<p>28 items related to: children giving meaning to life (5 items); responsibility as a parent (6 items); importance of family life (5 items); household as a priority and duty of wife (5 items); subordination to the man (2 items); traditional opinion about marriage (5 items):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If one wants to start a family, one should get married</li> <li>• Through marriage the partnership becomes more solid and profound</li> <li>• Through marriage partners become more closely related</li> <li>• It is self-evident that one gets married once one has found a partner with whom one wishes to stay together</li> <li>• Marriage gives a sense of security</li> </ul>
Surkyn & Lesthaeghe	2004	Family and marriage values (Belgium, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Denmark), used as a scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marriage is an outdated institution. Children not necessary for life fulfilment</li> <li>• Parents should not sacrifice themselves for children</li> </ul> <p>Acceptable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• casual sex</li> <li>• adultery</li> <li>• divorce</li> <li>• abortion</li> <li>• single motherhood</li> </ul> <p>Important for marriage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tolerance and understanding</li> <li>• sharing chores</li> <li>• talking time together</li> <li>• happy sexual relations</li> </ul> <p>Not very important for the success of marriage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• faithfulness</li> <li>• children</li> </ul>

Thornton & Freedman	1982	Marital attitudes (US), used as separate items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are few good or happy marriages these days</li> <li>• There are more advantages to being single than to being married</li> <li>• It's better for a person to get married than to go through life being single</li> </ul>
Thornton & Young-DeMarco	2001	Attitudes toward marriage (US), used as separate items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Married people are happier</li> <li>• Few good marriages</li> <li>• Better to be married</li> <li>• Better to be single</li> <li>• Importance - good marriage</li> <li>• Choice about marriage</li> <li>• Ideal time to get married</li> </ul>
		Attitudes toward the durability of marriage (US), used as separate items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marriage is a lifetime relationship and should never be ended except under extreme circumstances</li> <li>• Divorce is usually the best solution when a couple can't seem to work out their marriage problems</li> </ul>
Trent & South	1992	Attitudes toward marriage, divorce and unmarried motherhood (US), used as separate items	<p>Approve or disapprove of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women who have a child without getting married</li> <li>• A couple with an unhappy marriage getting a divorce if their youngest child is under 5</li> <li>• It's better for a person to get married than to go through life being single</li> <li>• Marriage is a lifetime relationship and should never be ended except under extreme circumstances</li> <li>• Children have fewer problems with two natural parents than with one natural parent and one step-parent</li> </ul>
Thornton	1985	Attitudes towards divorce (US), used as separate items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When there are children in the family, parents should stay together even if they don't get along</li> <li>• Divorce is usually the best solution when a couple can't seem to work out their marriage problems</li> </ul>

### **2.3.3 Attitudes as characteristics of society: empirical evidence**

In this part of the study, findings on various dimensions of family values are reported, such as attitudes to marriage, remaining single, childbearing, gender roles, etc. in the context of some of the social changes observed in the last few decades: women's increased participation in education and employment, the availability of choice in parenting (contraception), divorce, postponed parenting, etc. I also talk about a changing societal character (in terms of the formation of different groupings of people with distinct life paths and views on various aspects of life) as a result of the transformations that have taken place in society. Whilst providing evidence for relationships between attitudes and various factors found in the literature, I outline some hypotheses about potential outcomes for the two cohorts under investigation in this research.

#### **2.3.3.1 Attitudes and partnerships**

Even though the rates of first marriages have been decreasing, divorce rates have increased steeply and non-marital childbearing together with cohabitation without marriage have become increasingly widespread since the Divorce Law Reform in the 1970s, many recent studies have found marriage to still be highly valued by the majority of people (both in the US<sup>2</sup> and Britain), with recent data showing that the majority of young people expect to get married and expect their marriages to last a lifetime (Thornton and Freedman, 1982; Wiggins and Bynner, 1993). Although people appear to still value marriage, many see little or no added value in it and a widespread acceptance of the diversity of choices means marriage is seen as a desirable lifestyle rather than the only one available, with cohabitation, remaining single and friendships being acceptable alternatives (Thornton and Freedman, 1982; Rouse, 2002).

Thus attitudes towards singlehood have been changing in both the UK and the US in the last half a century. In the late 1970s, US views on remaining single were found to be less

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<sup>2</sup> Some findings from the US are reported in this paper since their social context is similar to that of the UK and family researchers sometimes use British data to make inferences about US family processes (Cherin et al., 1991 cited in Seltzer, 2004: 921). This study uses some of the US findings due to a limited variety of results from the UK data, or to support the UK findings at the same time bearing in mind that we cannot make direct inferences about the UK from these findings due to substantial differences in some spheres such as greater racial diversity (Seltzer, 2004: 921). Some comparisons of the two countries in terms of attitudes etc. can be found in Scott, 1998.

negative than in the past (however, still not positive) by Thornton and Freedman (1982). This supports more recent findings using UK data (the National Child Development Study), which indicate that around half of 33 year olds have a positive attitude towards being single, where 48% agreed that “being single provides more time to experience life and find out about yourself” and 55% agreed that “being single provides fewer worries or responsibilities” (Wiggins and Bynner, 1993).

The US findings show that people have also become more permissive about cohabitation and pre-marital sex (Trent and South, 1992; Thornton and Young-De Marco, 2001). Scott (1998) also reports a continuing change of attitudes to pre-marital sex in Britain over the last few decades with the decrease of the generational divide, so the majority of people, including those over 60 years old, regard pre-marital sex as acceptable. At the same time, attitudes to extra-marital sex have hardly changed with most people still expressing intolerance towards it.

Attitudes towards traditional gender roles in Britain have become more egalitarian in that the majority support the idea of two-earner families (Burt and Scott, 2002). Women, more often than men, reject the idea of a husband earning money and a wife staying at home. This, as Burt and Scott suggest, is not surprising since it is women who are constrained by these traditional ideologies (2002).

As mentioned earlier, experience of some situations can influence an individual’s attitudes to that situation making them favour it. Thus, “attitudes toward a particular status [such as being married or being single] are largely influenced by whether one is a member of that status” (Trent and South, 1992: 429). If that is correct, I would expect married people to be more supportive of marriage than single people; those who have children outside of wedlock to be more accepting of non-married childbearing, and so on. These expectations are supported in the literature. For example, Thornton and Freedman (1982) have reported differences in attitudes to family issues between people who had experienced a divorce and those who did not. Their analyses, using data from the Study of American Families, showed that mothers who had experienced a divorce expressed less positive attitudes towards marriage, while they viewed single life as more advantageous in comparison to marriage

and few agreed that “it’s better for a person to get married than to go through life being single” (p. 302).

Thus, since family compositions have been changing, with the number of lone parents, step-families and unmarried couples with children increasing, the emergence of more positive attitudes towards these new structures amongst the general population are of no surprise.

“...what we need creates what we value”

McManus (1999)

So, although overall people still value marriage, at the same time their attitudes are permissive of other family arrangements such as remaining single and cohabiting. And as one embarks on a particular life path the attitudes one expresses seem to favour their choice. And as the range of possible family formation paths has expanded, there are notable discrepancies in attitudes depending on the path taken.

Married people were found to be more supportive of traditional marital values than those who were single, divorced or widowed (Wiggins and Bynner, 1993; Trent and South, 1992), while cohabitants expressed less traditional gender-role attitudes, were less likely to hold traditional family values, less willing to accept unsatisfactory marriages, and more accepting of sex before marriage than non-cohabitants (Axinn and Thornton, 1992; Rouse, 2002). Results from the British Household Panel Study also show that married couples express more traditional attitudes towards non-marital partnerships, which the authors mainly put down to a selection effect of attitudes on marital behaviour (Berrington et al, 2006). Nonetheless, there is evidence that even among those in less traditional family arrangements a traditional marital partnership is still a prevailing ideal. Coast (2009) found that 75% of cohabiting never-married people under the age of 35 were either planning to get married, or thought that they probably would get married eventually.

Given a large body of evidence pointing towards a strong relationship between marital circumstances and family/marital value orientation described in this section, I hypothesise that:

*HYPOTHESIS (1): Cohort members' marital/partnership status is a strong predictor of attitudes to family and marriage, controlling for all other factors.*

The hypothesis outlined above is addressed in Chapter 6. Further, I predict that married respondents are the most traditional in their attitudes towards family and marriage (compared to those who are single, separated/divorced and remarried), while the separated or divorced cohort members are the least traditional. I expect remarried respondents to be less traditional than those who are married for the first time but more traditional than those who are separated or divorced. This would, in a way, show some support for the theory of selection and adaptation effects of attitudes whereby marriage makes one more traditional, while a divorce, accompanied by the disappointment of partnership breakdown, makes one less supportive of traditional family values.

Empirical evidence from a study of the European Values Survey (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 2004) shows a clear relationship between value orientation (including marriage and family items) and various household compositions after controlling for age, gender, education, profession and urbanity. For example, they show that the adjustment effect of marriage is demonstrated by a shift of values towards the traditional end of the value spectrum whereas the adjustment effect of cohabitation after being single shifts the values towards the opposite, non-conventional, end. Also, a separation or divorce before any subsequent relationship is formed causes the values to shift towards a non-conformist direction. The most non-traditional group in their values was found to be cohabitants without children while the married individuals with children who had never cohabited were found to be the most conformist. Another important result was the lasting effect of cohabitation: married parents who had never cohabited were always more traditional in their values than married parents with cohabitation history (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 2004).

Following these findings, I formulate my next hypothesis that is to be addressed in Chapter 6, as follows:

*HYPOTHESIS (2): Cohort members' experience of any form of separation (either from a cohabiting partner or a spouse) has a strong negative effect on attitudes to family and marriage, controlling for all other factors. Additionally, I expect those who have separated from a spouse to be significantly less traditional than those who have separated from a cohabiting partner, regardless of their partnership/marital status at the time.*

To summarise the evidence on the relationship between marital/partnership position and attitudes, there is an apparent acceptance of the diversity of family types with attitudes to family and marriage becoming less traditional among people today reflecting the changes that have been taking place in family structures. This is not surprising since generally it is suggested that people's circumstances dictate their favourable attitudes towards these circumstances. The shift in attitudes is thus consistent with the changes in family structures that have been taking place, whereby the increased popularity of cohabitation, pre-marital sex, childbearing and childrearing outside marriage is accompanied by positive attitudes towards these non-traditional family arrangements.

### **2.3.3.2 Individual predictors of attitudes**

It is not just the changes that are of interest here, but also the continuity of some attitudes such as the value of marriage. As mentioned earlier, the majority still considers marriage to be a life-long commitment and many hope to marry one day (Thornton & Freedman, 1982; Wiggins and Bynner, 1993). Certain characteristics, such as age and marital status, are found to be among the strongest predictors of variations in these attitudes (Jarvis et al, 2000; Trent and South, 1994). This could explain the relative stability of attitudes to marriage found by many despite changing marital behaviours, as the majority of people still marry at some point in their lives. Although society is ageing, this process is far from being rapid and therefore cannot affect societal attitudes to marriage in a short period of time. I would, however, expect to see these changes over long periods as older people tend to express more traditional attitudes to family issues than younger people (Trent and South,

1992; Jarvis et al, 2000). However, there is evidence that even older people are developing more egalitarian views which the younger generation support (for example, attitudes towards pre-marital sex found in Scott, 1998). A brief overview of the findings on attitudes and their relationship with certain characteristics such as gender, age, and social class among others are presented below.

### Gender

On average, contemporary men were found to be more traditional in their views on family, gender roles and other related issues than women during both adolescent and adult years. During their young adulthood, at the age of 33, men in Britain were more supportive of traditional family values but at the same time more likely to favour the single lifestyle than women of the same age (Wiggins and Bynner, 1993). Similarly, findings from US data show that men are more likely to display traditional attitudes to family-related issues than women (Trent and South, 1992). Findings from the Young People's Social Attitudes Survey in the 1990s showed that even at a young age (12 to 19 years old) boys expressed more traditional attitudes to family issues than girls: 63% of boys and 77% of girls agreed that one parent is as good as two at bringing up a child (NatCen, 2004). The findings of women's and girls' less traditional views were also reported in their attitudes to gender roles using data from the British Household Panel Survey (Burt and Scott, 2002). That men are more likely than women to express traditional attitudes towards marital roles is also supported by some other findings (e.g. Buchanan and Flouri, 2001). Research in Canada also found that women were more open-minded about most of the questions asked related to family and marriage with the exception of the statement about having children prior to getting married, which more women than men found support for (Erfani and Beaujot, 2009). However, these findings are not universal as some findings suggest no differences between attitudes to marriage, divorce and even gender roles between men and women from the British Social Attitudes Survey in the 1990s (Jarvis et al, 2000). The implication of these conflicting findings is that perhaps attitudes to family issues are complex and are not simply an effect of the gender that people were born into but include a variety of other factors.

## Age

Many researchers have found age and marital status to be among the strongest predictors of attitudes to marriage (Jarvis et al, 2000; Trent and South, 1994). The differences in attitudes to family-related issues between people of different ages are widely reported. For example, the contemporary younger generation is found to be less traditional in their views on gender roles than their parents (Burt and Scott, 2002). Younger people in Britain were also found to be more likely to be self-centred and less likely to consider family events as important compared to older people (Scott, 1997).

Age is a difficult factor as not all people of the same age find themselves in similar 'life stages' – i.e. some people finish education later than others, have children at the end of their fertility age or, on the other hand, at the very beginning. It is therefore crucial that these stages are taken into consideration when attitude comparisons are made by age.

## Income and socio-economic status

Previous research found that the lower the household income the more likely people were to express traditional attitudes to family issues (Jarvis et al, 2000). Economic disadvantage was linked to divorce, while divorce was also linked to economic disadvantage (McRae, 1999). This could have implications for attitudes, especially those towards divorce.

With changes in family structures and the changes in the labour market which promoted women's employment, there are polarisations of life paths and attitudes. There appears to be an increasing polarisation between the life chances of people in contemporary society. Results from the three British Cohort Studies showed that disparities occurred mainly due to employment, educational qualifications, and family background differences resulting in quite distinct family formation processes between people at opposite ends of the educational scale (Bynner et al, 2003). Thus, women with low qualifications were found to be more likely to experience a "fast route to adulthood": they followed the traditional route of becoming a mother instead of having a career first (Bynner et al, 2003: 300). It is therefore no surprise that as individuals become greatly influenced by employment and

educational factors in the choices and chances they take in their lives, while family factors are left in the background, the weakening predictive nature of family characteristics is especially evident for the later cohorts (Bynner et al, 2003). This has important implications for studying the attitudes and behaviour of the younger BCS cohort in this study.

### Parenthood

Having children is perhaps one of the most powerful life-changing events, especially in the lives of women. It is therefore not surprising that some studies found parenthood to be the factor most strongly associated with a positive change in attitudes, especially when accompanied by marital formation. For example, findings from the European Values Survey of 1999 suggest that having children is typically associated with more conformist value readjustment (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 2004), indicating a shift towards more traditional attitudes once people have children. Another study found that women with children were more likely than those without children to agree that “watching children grow is life’s greatest joy” (Jarvis et al, 2000).

Although becoming a parent may be followed by a change in attitudes, particularly those related to having children, it is possible that it is not parenthood itself but other accompanying events that are associated with the shift in attitudes. For example, Berrington and colleagues (2008) used data from the British Household Panel Survey to show that women who had their first child and reduced their work hours or left work to care for their families became more traditional in their gender-role attitudes compared to those who also had a child but carried on working the same or increased hours during the same time period. The authors conclude that it is perhaps not becoming a mother itself but rather the change in working patterns associated with it that results in women’s shift in attitudes to gender roles.

### Family antecedents: parental divorce

Previous studies found some support for the effects of parental separation on their children’s attitudes towards family issues (e.g. Amato, 1988; Axinn and Thornton, 1996;

Thornton and Freedman, 1982). There is an indication of some consistency between negative attitudes to marriage (Coleman and Ganong, 1984; Tasker and Richards, 1994; Thornton and Freedman, 1982), more permissive attitudes towards divorce (Coleman and Ganong, 1984) and certain circumstances of parental divorce. Thornton and Freedman (1982) put forward some suggestions on how the experience of divorce (whether direct or as a child of divorced parents) could be influential. Firstly, such experiences, they suggest, could make people less prone to commit to marriage as a result of being overly careful and questioning the value of marriage, resulting in more negative attitudes towards it. On the other hand, the authors suggest that experience of divorce could result in a more relaxed view of a committed marriage – a divorce might be seen as a completely acceptable outcome of an unhappy marriage. Similarly, Thornton (1985, 1991) suggested that those parents who experienced a divorce may transmit their more tolerant attitudes towards divorce or less favourable attitudes towards marriage to their children.

However, other studies (e.g. Robson, 1983; Trent and South, 1992) found no relationship, or only a very weak relationship, between family structure at childhood and adult attitudes towards marriage in adulthood. Although findings of the effects of the experience of divorce on later family life seem to be extensive and at times contradictory, what is crucial to bear in mind is that perhaps it is not divorce itself but its *nature* that influences people's subsequent attitudes and behaviour (as found in Neale et al, 2003). Another important issue when considering using divorce as an influential variable is that, as with many other processes in life, divorce should not be looked at as a one-off event which defines the future of people who have experienced it in one way or another. It is more plausible to view it as part of continuing lifetime events with many other processes involved (Neale et al, 2003). Although valuable, it is not in the scope of this study to consider all the possible mechanisms of parental divorce on cohort members' later lives and parental divorce in this thesis is used as a proxy for a range of characteristics associated with it.

Given the vast amount of literature supporting the negative association between parental separation and adults' marital attitudes, I hypothesise that:

*HYPOTHESIS (3): Parental separation/divorce has a lasting negative effect on cohort members' attitudes, even after taking cohort members' own experiences of separation into account.*

I address this hypothesis in Chapter 6.

### **2.3.3.3 Intergenerational transmission of attitudes and behaviour**

Many findings (some were mentioned above) show that parental life and therefore the life they offer their offspring affects children's futures in many ways (e.g. Axinn and Thornton, 1996; Thornton and Camburn, 1987; Thornton and Freedman, 1982; Starrels and Holm, 2000). Although some findings showed that older cohorts were less influenced by family characteristics than younger cohorts, others discovered that family influenced children's expectations and behaviour more accurately than non-familial circumstances (Starrels, 1992, cited in Starrels and Holm, 2000). For example, Trent and South (1992) used US data to show that parental attitudes, especially those of mothers, had an effect on the attitudes to marriage of their children. But poor contact and relationships with family members could result in children gaining experiences from other sources, such as friends, school, etc. and not just from family life.

“The systems in which the individual is most intimately involved seem to have the greatest impact on development.”

Starrels and Holm 2000: 426

Growing instability in marriage and cohabitation as well as successive cohorts' increasing dissatisfaction with their partnerships was recorded by Ferri and Smith using the National Child Development Study and the British Cohort Study data (2003). Thornton and Camburn (1987) found some reflection of both parental attitudes and behaviour in their children's, with the latter being more permissive in both. Other studies also found an intergenerational transmission of attitudes to family-related issues as well as non-traditional behaviour (Amato, 1996; Barber and Axinn, 1998). And as family structures are changing and becoming more permissive of variations (lone-parent families, re-marriages, same sex unions, etc.), this inevitably has an effect on successive generations, who often follow the

pattern of their parents or find it confusing to follow a pattern that seems to have no strict rules or clear direction, resulting in an even more relaxed and prone-to-variations structure.

“Family disruption has made it more difficult for today’s youth to observe successful, long-term relationships...”

Martin et al, 2003: 6

Some claim that the influence of parental behaviour on children is weaker than that of their expectations and values (Starrels and Holm, 2000). Others, for example Axinn and Thornton (1999), found parental behaviour to be an important influence on children’s attitudes. In their study of attitudes of children and their mothers they discovered that children become more accepting towards divorce and non-marital cohabitation following a separation of their parents (even if it was due to death of the father). Although a large proportion of this influence was found to be due to changes in mothers’ own attitudes, substantial direct effects of mothers’ separations still remained (Axinn and Thornton, 1999).

As mentioned earlier, it is probably just as important to have an understanding of the way some events occur as addressing the events themselves, so the circumstances surrounding the time and timing of parental divorce or re-marriage may well be of significance to the way these influence children. Other factors that may have an effect on the transmission of behaviour and attitudes from parents to children are the quality of the relationship between children and parents with parental effects being perhaps somewhat stronger in a close parent-child relationship (Axinn and Thornton, 1996). Also, parental verbal communication with their children could be of greater influence than their behaviour.

“...Verbal communication of parents’ desires and expectations for children is a more clear and direct form of socialization than is behaviour that occurred more than years previously”.

Starrels and Holm, 2000: 426

Thus, a study of 33 year olds from the National Child Development Study found no association between traditional marital attitudes and family background (Buchanan and Flouri, 2001).

The intergenerational transmission of values and behaviour seems even more questionable when considering the fact that people's own experiences may have a stronger effect on attitudes than those formed following certain experiences with parents (e.g. Tasker and Richards, 1994: here, in the context of parental divorce on children's marital attitudes). But, as mentioned before, considering each event in the lives of people to be a part of a continuous experience helps us to understand that these events do not occur in isolation and that one emerges from another and is then followed by a different phase. We would therefore expect parental effects to be replaced by own life experiences, having to some extent affected children at least initially.

### **2.3.4 Attitudes and behaviour: empirical evidence**

Having discussed the theoretical explanations for the ways behaviour may be affecting attitudes and the way attitudes may be influencing behaviour in section 2.1.4, in this section I turn to the evidence of such relationships within the empirical work. In talking about the former, I refer to the selection effect of attitudes, whereby family-related attitudes are predicted to facilitate marital and partnership behaviour. In discussing the latter, I refer to the adaptation effect of attitudes, whereby attitudes change to reflect behaviour.

#### **2.3.4.1 Attitudes as predictors of behaviour (selection effect of attitudes)**

Selection effects of attitudes on marital formation are well documented in the literature. Studies found that positive attitudes about marriage significantly increase the likelihood of marriage (Sassler and Schoen, 1999; Axinn & Thornton, 1992; Clarkberg et al, 1995). Clarkberg et al (1995) found no difference between men and women in the way their attitudes were associated with marital transitions, while Sassler and Schoen (1999) found a significant relationship between attitudes and the likelihood of getting married among women but not men. In their study, Sassler and Schoen (1999) reveal that men who agreed that married life was better than being single were not more likely to marry than men who

did not agree with it, while there was a significant difference in the likelihood of marriage among women who positively assessed marriage compared to women who did not think that being married was better than being single. The findings by Moors (2000) also showed evidence of selection effects of traditional family values on transition to marriage among women, whereby those who were more traditional were more likely to get married. Smith and colleagues (2007) have also found evidence of the selection effects of attitudes and marital formation but in the context of attitudes towards cohabitation.

Following the evidence presented above, I put forward the following hypotheses (to be tested in Chapter 7):

*HYPOTHESIS (4): I expect unpartnered, never married respondents who were more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage to be more likely to enter a marital partnership than remain unpartnered compared to those who were less traditional (selection effect).*

*HYPOTHESIS (5): I expect unpartnered single, never married respondents who were more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage to be more likely to enter a marital partnership than a cohabiting one (selection effect).*

Some attitudes were also found to act as selectors into marital separation. For example, attitudes were suggested to have a direct effect on the risk of marital breakdown by Clarke and Berrington (1999), whilst mediating the effects of socio-demographic characteristics on divorce. The results of the empirical investigation of the risk of marital separation among respondents to the “Study of Marriage Over the Life Course” (Booth et al, 1993 cited in Amato, 1996) show that pro-divorce attitudes significantly increase the odds of marital dissolution. Moors and Bernhardt (2009) found significant independent effects of family-related attitudes on cohabiting people’s transitions into marriage and separation, net of intentions and other control variables.

The impact of attitudes on marital separation was not uniformly supported in the literature. For example, Smith et al (2007) failed to uncover any selection effect of attitudes on

marital breakdown, despite using attitudes towards divorce, which are closely related to the behaviour under investigation. However, given the evidence from other studies, I formulate the following hypothesis for the analysis of Chapter 7:

*HYPOTHESIS (6): I expect the cohort members who were less traditional whilst married for the first time to be more likely to get divorced or separated than those who were more traditional.*

It has been recognised that attitudes *alone* cannot predict behaviour (e.g. Wicker, 1969 cited in Ajzen, 1993):

“..it is considerably more likely that attitudes will be unrelated or only slightly related to overt behaviours than that attitudes will be closely related to actions”.

Wicker, 1969: 65, quoted in Ajzen, 1993: 45

However, attitudes are regarded to be valuable indicators of people’s predisposed responses (Scott et al, 1996) with certain variables interacting with attitudes to result in a subsequent behaviour (e.g. references in Ajzen, 1993). Put in the context of family-related attitudes, this means that although, for example, positive attitudes to marriage might indicate people’s possible marital predisposition, they cannot predict a marriage taking place. There might be a number of mediating factors that could influence the transition from these positive attitudes to getting married, such as finances, availability of partner, and so on.

“...the extent to which evaluative dispositions is reflected in overt action is subject to various contingencies”.

Ajzen, 1993: 45

The number of these mediating variables, however, could be very large. They are said to be of differing nature: those that characterise personality traits, circumstances surrounding behaviour, minor characteristics of attitudes and the nature of the behaviour that is assumed to correspond to the attitude (references in Ajzen, 1993). Management of these factors in the production of a coherent output is very difficult if at all possible, making this approach in linking attitudes and behaviour questionable (Ajzen, 1993).

One should not, however, neglect the influence of attitudes, even if it is indirect, as one can only find a meaningful interpretation of some behaviour by carefully examining the “belief system which surrounds [it]” (Tucker, 2000: 166).

“Attitudes and feelings set parameters for what an individual thinks is possible, how an individual interprets and reacts to others’ behaviour, and what an individual wants in a relationship”.

Miller et al, 1992, cited in Larson et al, 1998: 754

Axinn and Thornton (2000) also support the idea of there being a close relationship between beliefs and behaviour and claim that “widespread changes in people’s beliefs about marriage may be responsible, at least in part, for the long-term changes in marital behaviours” (p.149). Thus, for example, as previously stated, the legal changes that occurred within and outside marriage – the new divorce law in the late 1970s, the legalisation of same-sex partnerships and the promotion of marriage-like rights for cohabitantes – may well have made some differences in what is believed to represent a marriage, which in turn has resulted in a diversity of behaviours. As a consequence of these numerous acceptable family arrangements, a certain flexible notion of what constitutes a family has emerged.

If supported by certain experiences, Martin et al (2003) claim attitudes are translated into specific behaviour. Thus, absence of these experiences results in a mismatch between behaviour and attitudes. For instance, even though some children of divorced parents might believe marriage to be a lifelong commitment they may not have the necessary skills to see their own marriages through as they had not experienced family stability (Martin et al, 2003). Marriage-related attitudes and entry into marriage seem to be exempt from a straightforward relationship. Getting married not only involves a person’s positive view of this act and appropriate past experiences, but also a desire to marry and an ability to find a mate. Dixon’s theory (1971 cited in Tucker, 2000: 168) concerning variations in marital entry, takes the above factors into account, resulting in a rather straightforward-looking formula of marriage entry. She proposes that the availability of mates, the feasibility and desirability of marriage result in actual marriage. So, using this approach of prediction to

wed, regardless of the attitudes one might hold toward marriage, if there are no available mates or marriage itself is not feasible, one would not get married (Tucker, 2000). However, this approach ignores any values or beliefs the person under investigation holds for marital- and family-related issues just as many other approaches ignore the factors of this model (Tucker, 2000: 168). On the more pragmatic side, this approach is also difficult to implement and is outside the scope of this study.

#### **2.3.4.2 Behaviour as a predictor of attitudes (adaptation effect of attitudes)**

As discussed in the previous section, it is not always agreed that attitudes translate easily into behaviour; however behaviour is generally recognised to reflect attitudes. There is a suggestion that an individual's experiences, such as those of family life, shape their values and beliefs on related issues (Axinn and Thornton, 2000; Schoon and Hentschel, 2001). More precisely, experience of a situation or condition influences an individual's attitudes to that situation in a favourable direction (Axinn and Thornton, 2000; Trent and South, 1994). This could be explained by the fact that "people learn to value characteristics that are appropriate to their conditions of life" (Kohn, 1977). A good example to support this point is shown by the findings from the 1958 cohort data (the National Child Development Study), whereby those who had children, particularly those with three or more children, were much more likely to agree with the statement "People who never have children are missing an important part of life" (Ferri and Smith, 2003).

Evidence of marital behaviour predicting family-related attitudes is also found in the empirical findings of past literature, however, not to the same extent as for attitudes predicting behaviour. Cunningham and Thornton (2005), for example, showed that young people became more traditional in their attitudes towards non-marital cohabitation once they entered a stable marriage. Similarly, Moors (2000) found that following a marriage, women became significantly more traditional in their family-related attitudes. These findings support the next hypothesis, relevant to the investigation in Chapter 7:

*HYPOTHESIS (7): I expect cohort members who formed their first marital partnership to become more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage than those who remained unpartnered (adaptation effect). Further, I do not expect those who formed a*

*cohabiting relationship to become significantly more traditional in their attitudes than those who remained unpartnered.*

It is not only marital formation that was found to promote adjustment of attitudes but also dissolution of marriage. For example, in their study, Smith et al (2007) found support for adaptation of attitudes towards divorce following a breakdown of a first marriage, especially among those who began a cohabiting relationship following a divorce. Furthermore, they found persistent gender differences whereby women were more likely to favour divorce than men. Similar findings were produced by Thornton (1985), who found evidence of the adaptation effect of attitudes towards divorce ('parents should not stay together for the sake of their children') following marital dissolution. I therefore propose the final hypothesis to be tested in Chapter 7:

*HYPOTHESIS (8): I expect cohort members who experienced a marital breakdown to become less traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage compared to those who remain married (adaptation effect).*

It is evident that certain experiences could potentially have an effect on the way people think about these experiences/behaviours. So experiencing a breakdown of a marriage could result in an individual's attitudes towards issues surrounding it changing in a less favourable direction, going beyond individual characteristics which, normally, would be associated with more favourable attitudes. However a number of studies found that not all attitudes are reflected in behaviour. For example, the mutual involvement of couples in household tasks would be expected more often than is reported given the positive attitudes to sharing found in the British Social Attitudes Survey, however, the proportion of people who actually practise sharing is relatively low (Kiernan, 1992).

Using attitudes to predict behaviour or behaviour to predict attitudes does not therefore always result in consistent findings. It appears that there are mediating characteristics, experiences, opportunities and circumstances on the path connecting the two. In this study I try to identify the mediating variables when connecting behaviour to attitudes.

## CHAPTER 3: Methodology and Scale Construction

### 3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 indicated that attitudes to family-related issues are a broad concept and no standard instrument for their measurement exists. Some studies use single items, usually measured on a 5-point Likert Scale, to capture certain aspects of family-related attitudes. For example, Thornton and Freedman (1982) used three separate statements related to marriage to capture marital attitudes: “there are few good or happy marriages these days”; “there are more advantages to being single than to being married” and “it’s better for a person to get married than to go through life being single”. Similarly, Dench (2009) measured attitudes towards family life by looking at responses on single items related to family life.

Although using single statements to explore people’s opinions and attitudes is useful for exploratory analyses, there are objections against such an approach. There is a risk of unreliability when using a single statement, due to wording or contextual reasons, as well as a failure to capture the multi-dimensional nature of attitudes (Wiggins and Bynner, 1993). Ideally, it is desirable to address all the relevant dimensions in order to accurately measure attitudes. Oppenheim (1992) assesses attitudes towards marriage to be more complex than ‘questions of fact’: “they have to do with states of mind, rather than with behaviour in the outside world, and are therefore difficult to measure and to validate” (Oppenheim, 1992 cited in Wiggins and Bynner, 1993: 163).

Therefore, in most studies of family-related attitudes, authors combine attitude items into scales. Moors (2000), for example, used several attitudinal statements to measure each of the six domains of ‘traditional family values’. In their paper, Axinn and Thornton (1996) used responses to two statements to measure attitudes towards marriage while Coleman and Ganong (1984) used six items to measure marital attitudes and a 12-item instrument to measure attitudes towards divorce. Wiggins and Bynner (1993) and Buchanan and Flouri (2001) measured support for traditional marital values among the NCDS cohort at age 33 also using six attitude statements combined into a scale.

Using datasets from the latter two studies, this chapter addresses the methodological issues around attitude measurement using data from two cohorts in a consistent and comparable way, describing the use of both individual attitude statements and items combined into scales.

This chapter is split into two sections. Firstly, I present the data used for the analyses, an outline of missing data in the studies and an analytical strategy. Secondly, I present descriptive analyses of the attitude scores at different times of the cohort members' lives, setting the scene for the subsequent chapters.

## **3.2 Methodology**

### **3.2.1 Data description**

This study uses data collected from the 1958 National Child Development Study (NCDS) and 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS). NCDS was launched as a perinatal mortality study of almost 17,500 births during one particular week in March 1958 in England, Scotland and Wales. The follow-up sweeps took place when the cohort members were 7, 11, 16, 23, 33, 41/42 and 46/47 years old. One of the later follow-up sweeps, in 1999/2000 (when NCDS participants were 42 years old) was combined with the 1970 British Cohort Study. The British Cohort Study was also launched as a birth survey of just under 17,200 children born during one specific week in April 1970 in England, Scotland and Wales. The follow-up sweeps for BCS took place when the cohort members were 5, 10, 16, 26, 29/30 and 34/35 years of age. Initially each study focused on outcomes of birth. However, at later stages, the scope of interest in the cohort members' lives had broadened to include other themes relevant to their lives such as education, health, employment, partnerships, parenting, and social development of the participants.

The reference populations are all people in Great Britain who were born in these two specific weeks in March 1958 (NCDS) and April 1970 (BCS). I therefore can roughly generalise it to the population born in the late 1950s and in the 1970s.

All the supporting documentation for these studies is readily available from the UK Data Archive (UKDA) based in the University of Essex, Colchester. The quality of data is usually judged by the availability, the amount and the nature of the supporting documentation of the study, and the reputation of the data source. All of these criteria are satisfied for the NCDS and BCS data by the availability of detailed documentation (e.g. on piloting procedures, people involved in survey design and conduct, interview schedules, technical reports, information on the ways cohort members were traced, etc.) and the good reputation of the Centre for Longitudinal Studies which houses both studies (NCDS since 1985 and BCS since 1991).

There are several advantages of using the datasets described above. Firstly, these are longitudinal studies. This means that information on the same individuals was collected over a period of many years. This enables a construction of their lifetime events (histories) and characteristics at certain points in time without the interference of memory errors which are frequent in many retrospective surveys. I would therefore be able to use reliable information on each cohort member at several points in time to detect any differences as the respondents get older (*age effects*).

Secondly, the two studies involve respondents who were born 12 years apart. This period is long enough to detect some differences in the upbringing and childhood experiences of the respondents as members of society, characteristics of which are rapidly changing in relation to family. I would therefore expect to find interesting differences between the two cohorts. These are *cohort effects* – they show the differences between individuals of the same age but born at different times.

And finally, *period effects* of the responses can be investigated using two longitudinal datasets. This is the effect that is caused by the historical circumstances and changes which people live through, and the information that is collected. Some dissimilarities between NCDS and BCS participants are expected to be found since the times during which they grew up were defined by different economic and social conditions, and they have experience of different historical events.

### 3.2.2 Sample description

The analysis of this study is based on the sample of BCS and NCDS cohort members with complete data on the same attitude statements related to family and marriage at two time points: National Child Development Study at the age of 33 (in 1991) and 41/42<sup>3</sup> (in 1999/2000) and the 1970 British Cohort study at the age of 26 (in 1996) and at 29/30<sup>4</sup> (in 1999/2000). These data were chosen at these particular ages mainly due to the availability of identical family-related attitude statements in the questionnaires which allow for the analysis of change in attitudes for both cohorts as they get older in a comparable way.

The age range covered by the two cohorts (26 to 42) is of particular interest to this project since many instances of relevant life stages, such as partnership formations, marriages and some remarriages are covered in the years between adulthood and young middle age. In the literature (e.g. Lesthaeghe and Moors, 2002: 22) the 20s (roughly the age of the BCS cohort used here at both times) were also identified as the age which captures many important life transitions along with the “formation and consolidation of value orientations”.

When the attitude questions were asked, NCDS cohort members were 33 years old (1991), which falls between the average age at first marriage (27.5 for men and 25.5 for women) and average age at divorce (38.6 for men and 36.0 for women) in England and Wales at that time (ONS, 2003). The 1991 sweep should therefore capture a variety of marital histories. In 1997, a year after the 1996 BCS sweep, the average age at first marriage was 29 years old for men and 27 years old for women (ONS, 2000: 38), making the BCS cohort, aged 26 at that point, slightly younger than the average age at first marriage. Around the time when BCS respondents were aged 26 to 30, the age group most frequently cohabiting in Great Britain was between 25 and 29 among women and between 30 and 34 among men (ONS, 2000:40). Based on national statistics estimates, it may be expected that

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<sup>3</sup> The follow up took place over a few months, with cohort members being contacted at different times, resulting in some of them having already turned 42, while others, contacted earlier, were still 41. For simplicity reasons, I will refer to “NCDS at age 42” when describing that period of time for NCDS respondents.

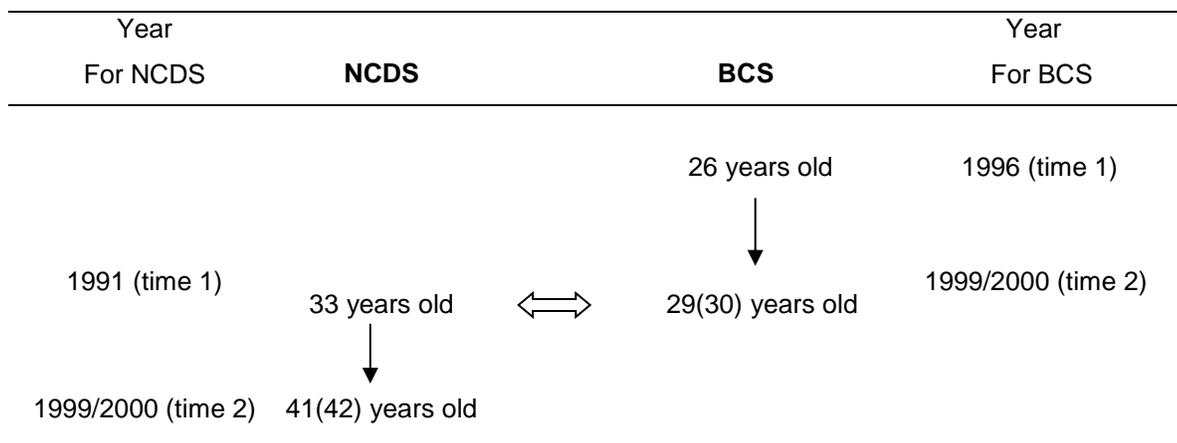
<sup>4</sup> Similarly to NCDS respondents, BCS cohort members were contacted at various points in time in 1999 and 2000, resulting in varying ages: some were already 30 while others were still 29. Again, I will use the upper age (age 30) when referring to BCS at 29/30.

substantial proportions of the BCS cohort would therefore be married or cohabiting and we would expect to see strong gender differences.

In 2000, the 42 year old NCDS respondents were already older than the average age at first marriage and average age at first motherhood. In 2000, in England and Wales, the average age at first marriage was 30.5 and 28.3 years for men and women respectively. The average age at the birth of their first child for women was 27.1 years (ONS, 2003). According to ONS, in the same year the average age of men and women at divorce was 41.3 and 38.8 years respectively (ONS 2003), which puts NCDS cohort members, aged 42 in 2000, just above the average age at divorce. So many NCDS respondents would have therefore experienced a first marriage and some, perhaps, a marital breakdown by the time they were 42. The younger BCS cohort was age 30 in 2000 corresponding to the UK average age at first marriage. The vast amount of data for various years and stages of cohort members' lives is therefore useful in analysing life changes as well as cohort changes in relation to attitudes.

Table 3-1 below provides an illustration of the two cohorts and how their age at each sweep considered here corresponds with the point in time (year) and time point (time 1 or time 2) used in this study to describe the order of events and measurements taken. The table represents the interest of this study - the two cohorts across two time points. It also illustrates how the responses from the two cohort studies can be compared – the results from the analyses for the BCS cohort at age 30 can be compared with NCDS cohort at age 33. This enables the comparison of individuals at approximately the same age but at different times – there is approximately a 9 year gap between the two points of data collection.

**Table 3-1: Framework of within and between cohort comparisons**



Burton (2000) suggests the consideration of a few issues such as response rates, sampling, documentation, methods of data collection and research originators when deciding on the use of a particular dataset. I now move on to outline some of these concerns with reference to the extent and impact of missing data.

### 3.2.3 Missing Data

As is often the case in longitudinal data collection, a sizeable number of people drop out with each subsequent wave of the cohort studies. The response rates (RR) for NCDS and BCS studies during the follow-ups varied, generally being higher in the early years than when cohort members were older. Compared to the response rates which the Office for Population Censuses and Surveys aims to achieve, 83-85% (Burton, 2000: 353), NCDS and BCS *longitudinal response rates* for the early years (birth to 16 years old) were quite adequate: between 87% and 98% for NCDS and between 80% and 93% for BCS, declining only slightly with age (Plewis et al, 2004). However, the follow-up sweeps during young adulthood and adulthood were less successful in terms of response rates. Although they remained above 70% (apart from sweep 4, BCS: RR=60%), some discrepancy between the studies was found where BCS response rates were generally lower than NCDS, especially noticeable at sweeps 1, 3 and 4 (Plewis et al, 2004: 34). NCDS and BCS *cross-sectional response rates* were above 80%, gradually decreasing with each additional sweep, accounting for between 72% and 78% of initial respondents in adulthood (again, with the exception of sweep 4, BCS age 26, RR=60%).

## Attrition bias

Although attrition is expected in any longitudinal study, reduced response rates with each additional wave of data collection impose a risk of significant response bias. Attrition is defined as “the unintended and permanent loss of cohort members from the longitudinal target sample as the cohort ages” (Hawkes and Plewis, 2004). This section describes the work previously undertaken into attrition in the BCS and NCDS cohorts when they were 26 and 33 years old respectively. These ages are used as time 1 in my analysis of attitudes.

Investigating the impact of attrition bias on NCDS data at age 33, using information from preceding waves, Hawkes and Plewis (2004), found that those who were lost from the study were most likely to be men, have a low reading test score at age 16, have less stable employment patterns by age 23, have behaviour problems at age 16 and be living in more disadvantaged circumstances, more likely to be still living with a parent at the age of 23, and have answered fewer questions at age 23. Even after a thorough exploration of the type of variable to be included in their models, the authors note that the difference between predicted probabilities of being a respondent and non-respondent using these models is quite small.

Having fitted a number of models to predict responses to each wave of data collection, Hawkes and Plewis (2004) found a systematic difference between those who responded and those who did not at each sweep of the NCDS study, whereby the non-respondents were most likely to be men, have lower educational attainment, be experiencing unstable employment and be living in disadvantaged circumstances.

The work of Ketende et al (2010) describes how attrition affected the sample of the BCS cohort at age 26. The authors note that the BCS cohort does not follow a common response rate pattern from the consecutive waves, whereby the largest drop in responses is expected after the first wave and the remaining waves see larger response rates thereafter. The BCS cohort sees the largest drop in responses at age 26 (based on the achieved sample, which is a proportion of the cohort members from the target sample who responded to the study). This, as the authors point out, occurs because of multiple reasons, such as: the change of

respondent from parent to child (whereby in panel studies the respondent remains the same throughout), the use of a postal survey at age 26 and not a face to face interview, and long gaps between contacts due to funding difficulties.

The authors carry out analysis of attrition for age 26 using a logistic regression model, modelling the presence of cohort members in the study at age 26 on a number of variables observed at cohort members' birth. All these variables, with the exception of mother's and father's age at completion of school, were significant predictors of response at age 26. The predictors in this model account for 47% of the variation in the response rate. So the cohort members who did not respond were more likely to be male, have a mother who gave birth to them at an earlier age (under 25) and had given birth to more than one child, have fathers of lower social class, have lower birth weight, have a mother who did not attempt to breastfeed them and who lived in London. The non-respondents are also more likely not to have participated in the 22 months sub-sample study.

Both investigations described above, by Hawkes and Plewis (2004) and Ketende et al (2010), emphasise the importance of carefully handling the time at which the cohort members become the respondents: at age 23 among NCDS and 26 among BCS cohort members. The issue of the dramatic loss of responses at this pivotal time is particularly relevant to the BCS cohort. Ketende et al (2010) suggest that the substantial drop in response rates at the time BCS cohort members were 26 years old could have been helped by investing in a face to face method of data collection instead of a postal questionnaire, and making contact with cohort members sooner after the last sweep when their parent was the respondent. Indeed, when BCS respondents were 30 years old, face to face interviews were administered together with the Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing questionnaires. The number of respondents during that sweep increased greatly compared to the age 26 sweep.

#### Cross-sectional and longitudinal response rates to attitude statements

Table 3-2 shows the response rates for all three attitude items as a proportion of the total cross-sectional number of people in each study. It also provides figures for the proportion of cohort members who have data on all three attitude items at both time points. Cross-sectionally, between 93% and 99% of cohort members who took part in each wave

responded to all three attitude questions. Longitudinally, over 84% of the BCS and 86% of the NCDS cohorts answered all three items at the second time point.

**Table 3-2: BCS and NCDS response rates to all three attitude statements**

	BCS		NCDS	
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2
	age 26	age 30	age 33	age 42
Cross-sectional achieved total sample	9,003	11,261	11,407	11,419
Cross-sectional response to all 3 attitude items (a)	8,736 (97.0%)	11,099 (98.6%)	10,646 (93.3%)	11,267 (98.7%)
Longitudinal response to all 3 attitude items (b) <sup>5</sup>	8,736	7,356 (84.2%)	10,646	9,238 (86.8%)

(a) Proportions as a % of the cross-sectional achieved total sample

(b) Proportions as a % of the total achieved cross-sectional response to all 3 items at Time 1

### 3.2.4 Overview of Primary Measures

This section provides a brief overview of the main measures used in the study. Tables 3-3 to 3-5 below provide a list of variables and their properties used in the analyses. Some additional information on the measures of attitudes, and marital and partnership status is also provided in this section. A more comprehensive description of each measure, including information on their derivation and distribution of responses, is detailed in Chapters 4 and 5.

#### Family of origin measures

Family of origin factors assessed at birth of cohort members (CM) include: father's social class and mother's education. Family of origin factors measured at age 5 among BCS and at age 7 among NCDS are the presence of younger sibling(s) at cohort member's home and mother's employment status.

<sup>5</sup> Since there are only two time points considered in this analysis, numbers of responses to all three items

An indicator of parental separation was derived using maternal data when cohort children were age 5, 10 and 16 (BCS) and age 7, 11 and 16 (NCDS). An indicator of a cohort member spending time outside of parental care or care of a relative is measured by maternal accounts of a cohort child being in care “now” or “in the past”, recorded at age 5 and 10 (BCS) and age 7 and 11 (NCDS).

**Table 3-3: Measures of cohort members’ family of origin characteristics used in this study**

		BCS	NCDS
<b>Parents separated/divorced</b> (CM birth to 16)	1 Parents separated/divorced	19.7%	12.2%
	2 Parents not separated/divorced	80.3%	87.8%
	Total observations	12,262	13,643
<b>CM's father's social class at birth of CM</b> (when missing - mother's), Registrar General's Social Class (RGSC)	1 Professional/Managerial (I & II)	17.0%	17.6%
	2 Skilled manual/non-manual (III)	59.2%	60.3%
	4 Partly skilled (IV)	17.1%	12.2%
	5 Unskilled (V)	6.7%	9.9%
	Total observations	16,800	16,912
<b>Mother's level of education at CM's birth</b>	Mother left school after minimum		
	1 age	34.9%	25.0%
	2 Mother left school at minimum age	65.1%	75.0%
Total observations	16,955	17,358	
<b>Presence of younger siblings at CM's home</b> (NCDS age 7; BCS age 5)	1 CM has younger siblings	44.6%	58.5%
	2 CM has no younger siblings	55.4%	41.5%
	Total observations	13,121	14,569
<b>Maternal employment (full/part time)</b> (NCDS age 7; BCS age 5)	1 Mother in employment	41.9%	44.7%
	2 Mother not in employment	58.1%	55.3%
	Total observations	12,996	14,329
<b>CM ever in care in early childhood</b> (NCDS: birth to 11, BCS: birth to 10)	1 Ever in care	5.0%	4.7%
	2 Never in care	95.1%	95.3%
	Total observations	9,230	12,426

Cohort member - related measures

Measures assessed during cohort members’ adult years include: attitudes (Table 3-4), level of education, employment status, socio-economic status, legal marital status, partnership status, history of cohabiting or marital separations, and presence of children at home and children’s age (Table 3-5).

**Table 3-4: Cohort members’ attitudes (mean values and standard deviations in brackets)**

		BCS		NCDS	
		age 26	age 30	age 33	age 42
<b>Attitudes to family and marriage items</b>	1 Marriage is for life	3.92 (1.04)	3.93 (1.04)	3.58 (1.13)	2.69 (0.91)
	Total observations	8,833	11,110	10,713	11,273
	2 Divorce is too easy to get these days	3.42 (0.99)	3.52 (1.00)	3.26 (1.05)	3.48 (1.03)
	Total observations	8,849	11,109	10,756	11,275
	3 Couples who have children should not separate	2.54 (0.93)	2.68 (0.92)	2.47 (0.90)	3.616 (1.10)
	Total observations	8,896	11,106	10,715	11,270
<b>Attitudes to family and marriage scale</b>	Consists of a summative score of the three items above (min 1, max 5)	3.29 (0.74)	3.37 (0.73)	3.1 (0.77)	3.26 (0.77)
	Total observations	8,736	11,099	10,646	11,267

In both the BCS and NCDS, cohort members’ social class was coded according to a standard classification of the Registrar General’s Social Class using cohort members’ responses to what their occupation was. Inevitably this means that only those who stated what their job was at the time were included in the social class variable. This resulted in smaller sample sizes in the social class variables in both cohorts than the number of cohort members who actually participated in the BCS age 26 and NCDS age 33 waves (see Table 3-5 below). At the same time, other variables, such as highest level of educational qualifications, benefit from a larger sample size due to everyone being included in its responses. For this research I used a complete case analysis which has the drawback of

excluding a large number of people who have missing information on such variables as, for example, social class. In the analyses described in Chapter 6 (Section 6.5.4) and Chapter 7 (Section 7.10), the implications of restricting the sample to non-missing information on all the variables is discussed with reference to using dummies for missing values.

**Table 3-5: Cohort members' own characteristics**

		BCS		NCDS		
		age 26	age 30	age 33	age 42	
<b>Highest level of education</b>	1	No qualifications	5.8%	12.6%		
	2	NVQ1/2, equivalent to end of compulsory education level	58.4%	46.6%		
	3	NVQ 3/4, equivalent to A Level/other university entrance level	15.1%	28.2%		
	4	NVQ 5/6, equivalent to a degree level or higher	20.7%	12.6%		
		Total observations	8,399	11,142		
<b>Employment status</b>	1	Full-time employee/self-employed	73.72%	62.2%		
	2	Part-time employee/self-employed	7.96%	16.7%		
	3	Unemployed/temp/disabled/sick	5.96%	5.54%		
	4	Full-time education/other/home care	12.36%	15.5%		
		Total observations	8,777	11,267		
<b>Current socio-economic status, Registrar General's Social Class</b>	1	Professional/managerial (I and II)	39.7%	42.9%		
	2	Skilled non-manual (III nm)	26.9%	21.3%		
	3	Skilled manual (III m)	17.2%	20.2%		
	4	Partly skilled/unskilled (IV and V)	16.2%	15.6%		
		Total observations	6,792	9,590		
<b>Current legal marital status (widowed excluded)</b>	1	Single (never married)	66.2%	50.0%	17.9%	12.5%
	2	Married 1st time	29.8%	41.6%	63.7%	60.1%
	3	Remarried	0.5%	1.7%	7.1%	11.0%
	4	Legally separated/divorced	3.6%	6.8%	11.4%	16.4%
		Total observations	8,702	10,973	10,785	11,070
<b>Current legal partnership status</b>	1	Single (unmarried)	30.4%	43.5%	71.0%	71.3%
	2	Cohabiting	44.3%	31.8%	19.0%	17.9%
	3	Married (first time or remarried)	25.3%	24.8%	10.0%	10.8%
		Total observations	8,665	10,912	10,737	11,045

		BCS		NCDS		
		age 26	age 30	age 33	age 42	
<b>Separation from marital/cohabiting partner in the past</b>	1	Never separated in the past	82.2%	69.5%	72.9%	57.2%
	2	Separated from cohabiting relationship(s) only	13.1%	22.0%	8.7%	10.8%
	3	Separated from marital relationship(s)	4.8%	8.4%	18.5%	32.0%
		Total observations	7,442	10,960	10,785	10,389
<b>Marital status trajectories</b> (Change in marital status between time 1 and time 2)	1	Single->married		17.70%		4.80%
	2	Married->separated/divorced		3.60%		8.60%
	3	Separated/divorced -> remarried		0.80%		3.80%
	4	Remarried -> separated/divorced				1.50%
	5	Single		48.10%		12.30%
	6	Married		27.20%		57.30%
	7	Separated/divorced		2.60%		6.50%
	8	Remarried				5.10%
		Total observations		7,305		9,121
<b>Presence of any children in the household</b>	1	No children in the household	72.4%	48.7%	25.3%	18.3%
	2	Children (own/step/adopted/foster)	27.6%	51.4%	74.7%	81.7%
		Total observations	8,026	9,905	10,468	10,440
<b>Presence of children in the household</b>	1	No children living in household	72.4%	48.7%	25.3%	18.3%
	2	Own children only	25.6%	46.9%	70.2%	75.9%
	3	Own and "other"/"other" only children*	2.0%	4.5%	4.5%	5.8%
		Total observations	8,026	9,905	10,468	10,440
<b>Age of youngest child in the family</b>	1	No children living in household	72.8%	48.7%	25.3%	18.3%
	2	Pre-school (under 5)	23.3%	39.4%	47.1%	13.2%
	3	School age (5 years old+)	3.9%	12.0%	27.6%	68.5%
		Total observations	7,978	9,905	10,465	10,439

\*"other" refers to step, adopted and foster children

Shaded areas =no cases recorded

### Attitude statements for two cohorts at two time points

I used a combination of three attitude items that were answered by both cohorts at two time points to measure their attitudes to family and marriage. The first item, “Marriage is for life” reflects attitudes towards marriage being a lifelong commitment. The second one reads “Divorce is too easy to get these days” and indicates people’s feelings towards divorce. The third item, “Couples who have children should not separate” refers to attitudes towards parental separation. Responses are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, they range from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and are coded so a higher score indicates greater support for traditional family values (i.e. *strongly disagree* has a score of 1 and *strongly agree* has a score of 5 for each item). The psychometric properties suggest that the items measure the same underlying concept and these are therefore grouped together for all the analyses. The details of these procedures are described further in Section 3.3 of this chapter.

### Current legal marital status

The marital status measure was taken directly from the questionnaires and represents the legal marital status at the time of each study distinguishing between single (never married), married, remarried, legally separated, divorced and widowed individuals. I cross-checked the cohort members’ marital status data with respondents’ accounts of a spouse or a partner living in the same household (found in the household grid questions). Although the numbers of those who claimed to be married but not living with the spouse were marginal, I excluded these respondents from the analysis sample to obtain a more accurate measure of marital and partnership status.

Since the sample under investigation is of a young age, the numbers of widowed cohort members are very small. Among the BCS cohort there were two and nine widow(er)s at 26 and at 30 years old respectively and among the NCDS cohort, there were 25 and 72 widow(er)s when they were aged 33 and 42 respectively. I excluded such respondents when creating partnership variables, subsequently excluding them from the analyses.

### Current partnership status

The partnership status variables were derived from the legal marital status, mentioned above, and the answers to household grid questions which included information on whether a partner lived in the same household as the cohort member at the time of each study. This variable is particularly valuable as it allows me to distinguish between unmarried individuals who are unpartnered and those who are cohabiting.

### **3.2.5 Data Analysis Strategy**

This study uses a series of descriptive analyses to explore the nature of attitudes among the two cohorts at two points in their lives: the BCS cohort at age 26 and at 30 and the NCDS cohort at age 33 and 42. These analyses include exploration of the relationship between attitudes and a number of factors which are hypothesised to be associated with attitudes and/or marital and partnership behaviour. Bivariate analyses (t-tests and chi-squared tests) are used to detect patterns in attitudes that emerge among the respondents with different characteristics/life experiences (Chapters 4 and 5). Additionally, ANOVA tests are implemented in Chapter 4 to test the differences of average attitude scores among several groupings of cohort members. The results from these analyses set the scene for further, more comprehensive investigations in Chapters 6 and 7.

A series of multiple regressions follow the preliminary explorations to investigate the predictors of attitudes towards family and marriage, controlling for other potentially influential factors related to personal life circumstances described in this chapter. The final analysis chapter (Chapter 7) explores the effect of attitudes to family and marriage on marital/partnership formation and dissolution as well as the effect of these behaviours on subsequent attitudes. I use a mixture of multiple linear regression models and binary or multinomial logistic regression to explore the reciprocal relationship between attitudes and marital/partnership behaviour, controlling for cohort members' parental and own characteristics. I then summarise the results using graphical representation of regression models to aid interpretation. Each analysis (Chapters 4 to 7) contains more details about the statistical methods implemented.

### 3.3 Family values scale construction and description

#### 3.3.1 Attitude statements and the underlying concept

As previously mentioned, I used three attitude items which are related to family and marriage and that appear in both the NCDS and BCS datasets twice during their adult years. The wording of these items is shown below.

Item 1: Divorce is too easy to get these days (related to *divorce*)

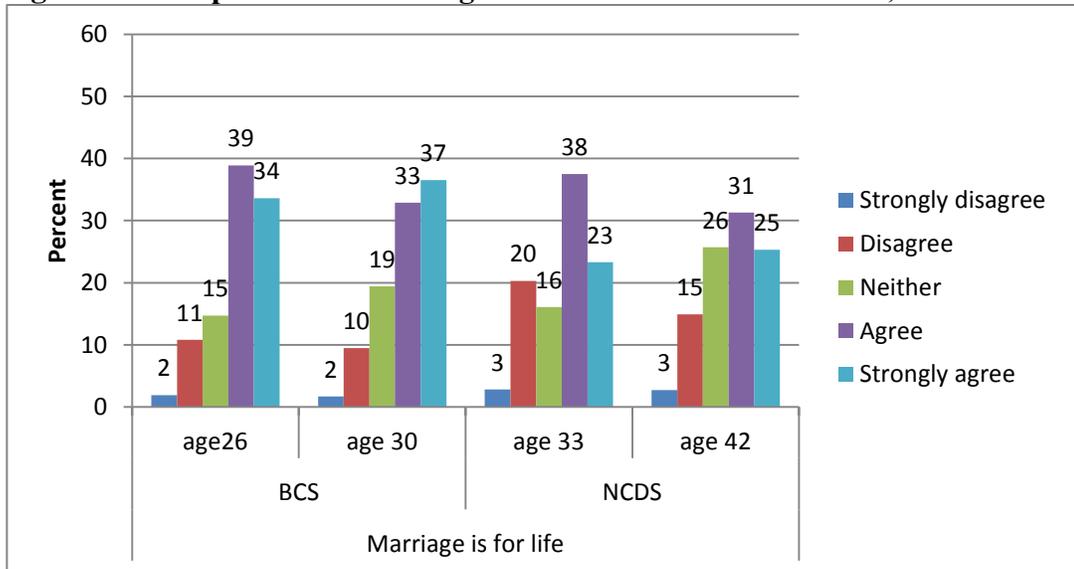
Item 2: Marriage is for life (related to *marriage*)

Item 3: Couples who have children should not separate (related to *parental separation*)

The two cohorts have similar patterns in the proportion of positive and negative replies to the three attitude items at both time points. However, NCDS respondents at the age of 33 showed the least traditional attitudes towards all of the items compared to NCDS respondents at a later age as well as BCS at both ages. Table A1 in Appendix 1 shows the proportion of cohort members in each category of responses to the attitude statements for both cohorts at two time points and Figures 3-1 to 3-3 show these proportions graphically.

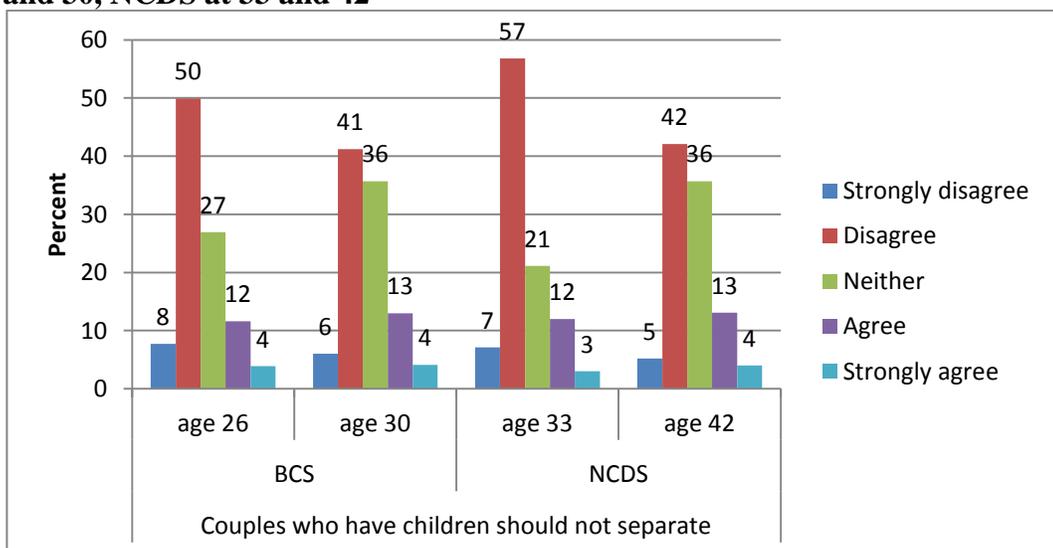
The majority of cohort members in each study at both time points agreed or strongly agreed that marriage is a lifelong commitment. This statement received the strongest views from both cohorts compared to the other two items, with over 33% of BCS and over 23% of NCDS respondents strongly agreeing with the statement, indicating a rather traditional view of marriage and its duration.

**Figure 3-1: Responses to “Marriage is for life”: BCS at 26 and 30, NCDS at 33 and 42**



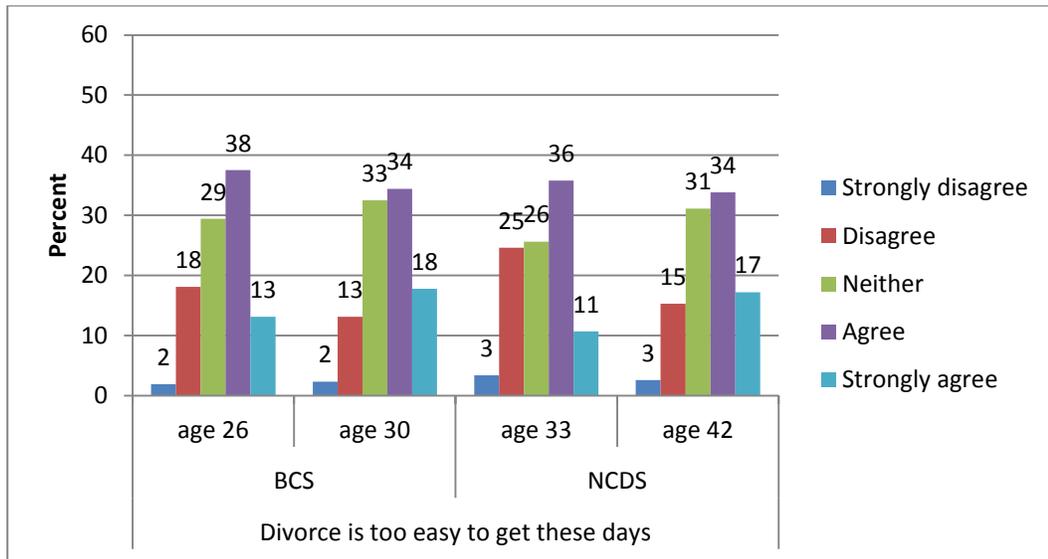
However, when it came to the item “Couples who have children should not separate”, the views of the respondents were more permissive of separation. Among BCS respondents at age 26 and 30, 57.5% and 47.2% of respondents disagreed (or strongly disagreed) with the statement, while among the NCDS cohort at 33 and 42, 63.9% and 47.3% disagreed (or strongly disagreed) with the statement. So even though the majority thinks that marriage should last for a life time, they do not rule out a separation as a possibility.

**Figure 3-2: Responses to “Couples who have children should not separate”: BCS at 26 and 30, NCDS at 33 and 42**



The responses to “Divorce is too easy to get these days” were more evenly spread than the responses to the other two statements but they still reflected around half of cohort members’ agreement with this statement in each study.

**Figure 3-3: Responses to “Divorce is too easy to get these days”: BCS at 26 and 30, NCDS at 33 and 42**



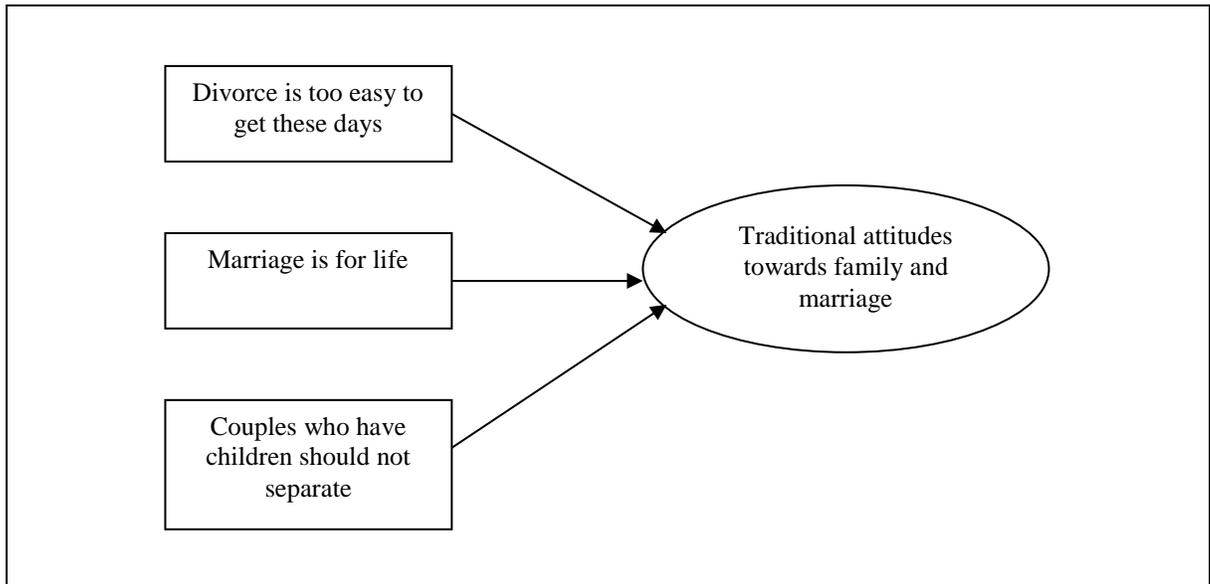
Another way of investigating the answers to these statements is to obtain each item’s average value across cohort members since they are measured on a 5-point Likert scale (the higher the score the more traditional attitudes are). These items could then be treated as having continuous scores. The average score on each item shown at the bottom of Table A1 in Appendix 1 strengthens the observations made earlier about the NCDS cohort at 33 being the least traditional in their attitudes on all the items with their average score being the lowest for all the statements. The most traditional group appears to be the younger BCS cohort at the age of 30 with the highest average score on all items.

The attitude statement “Marriage is for life” received the highest score and “Couples who have children should not separate” received the lowest score for both cohorts at both time points, indicating relative consistency in the views of the respondents with age.

Figure 3-4 below illustrates how these attitude items in combination are assumed to measure underlying family-related attitudes or values. Ideally, more items should be used

to construct a scale, especially since there are numerous other attitude items that are available in both studies. However, as previously mentioned, these are the only three items that appear in both cohorts at both ages of interest.

**Figure 3-4: Attitude statements and the underlying concept**



### 3.3.2 Principal Component and Reliability Analyses

It has been argued that single attitude statements are not appropriate measures of attitudes (Oppenheim, 1992), especially of such complex topics as marriage and family. Instead, scales that consist of a number of single statements should be used.

Factor (or Principal) Component Analysis is a statistical technique used to organise a single set of variables into relatively independent subsets - factors or components<sup>6</sup> - each subset consisting of variables that are correlated with one another. The main aim of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is to group variables in a few sets/dimensions whilst retaining as much variation in the data as possible. This should be done with caution as it is important to take into consideration not only the technical side of the procedure, but also theoretical explanations behind decisions on the final number of sets (Tabachnick and

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<sup>6</sup> Terms 'component' and 'factor' in this study are used in place of one another and hold the same meaning – a component in a Principal Component Analysis

Fidell, 2001). This technique is particularly useful as the reduced number of variables can then be used in other analyses such as the development of scales, which is done here. Previously, Wiggins and Bynner (1993) used PCA on 17 attitude statements from the BCS data, collected when cohort members were 26, to find five underlying components. One of these components was named “Support for Traditional Marital Values” and consisted of the items proposed for use in this study. In their investigation, all items showed good factor loadings (0.65 or over) and an acceptable reliability coefficient (Alpha=0.61).

To check if a one-factor solution emerges using all the data in this study (i.e. BCS at 26 and 30, NCDS at 33 and 42), Principal Component followed by Reliability analyses were carried out. Ideally, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (with Maximum Likelihood Extraction) would have been preferred. However, having only three items for one common factor resulted in zero degrees of freedom for the Chi-square test in the Maximum Likelihood Extraction method and the test was therefore not executed (a positive number of degrees of freedom is required). However, three variables per factor is a minimum acceptable criteria in PCA (Velicer and Fava, 1998), which still enables me to employ this technique on the three items mentioned above.

A single component was specified and the analyses were run for men and women separately as well as for the whole sample at each age for both cohorts. The main results are shown below and include both the factor loadings and the reliability of scale coefficients (see Table 3-6). Similar results from both PCA and Reliability analyses obtained for both BCS and NCDS, indicated the possibility of using a single scale which consists of the three items for all the data. The loadings on the component in all the data are excellent as all are close to, or in excess of, 0.71 which is often seen as a recommended cut off point (e.g. Comrey and Lee, 1992). A total variance of the three items explained by a single component is between 53% and 57% for all the data and anything over 50% is often considered to be acceptable (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

**Table 3-6: Factor loadings and Reliability coefficients for attitude items, BCS and NCDS**

BCS at 26						
	Factor Loadings		Cronbach's Alpha		Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha
	Men	Women	Men	Women	ALL	
Divorce	.759	.772	.611	.613	.766	.606
Marriage	.758	.770			.766	
Parental separation	.733	.771			.711	
Total variance explained: All (55.925%); Men (56.267%); Women (56.468%)						
BCS at 29(30)						
	Factor Loadings		Cronbach's Alpha		Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha
Divorce	.725	.750	.574	.582	.736	.573
Marriage	.764	.766			.766	
Parental separation	.713	.697			.607	
Total variance explained: All (53.924%); Men (53.980%); Women (54.541%)						
NCDS at 33						
	Factor Loadings		Cronbach's Alpha		Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha
Divorce	.728	.742	.601	.587	.733	.595
Marriage	.763	.763			.765	
Parental separation	.748	.724			.736	
Total variance explained: All (55.485%); Men (55.722%); Women (55.256%)						
NCDS at 41(42)						
	Factor Loadings		Cronbach's Alpha		Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha
Divorce	.733	.725	.622	.614	.729	.620
Marriage	.779	.794			.787	
Parental separation	.753	.739			.747	
Total variance explained: All (56.980%); Men (57.061%); Women (56.751%)						

According to Blunch (2008), good summated scales should consist of items with large variances and mean values close to the middle of their distribution. These items should also be correlated with each other (at similar strength) as well as with the sum of the rest (Blunch, 2008). Following these guidelines, Tables A2 to A10 in Appendix 1 provide some evidence to support the suitability of the attitude statements that I chose to summarise. Furthermore, attitudes that are internally consistent show a high correlation across their measurements at different time points, i.e. consistent items tend to be stable over time.

Alpha coefficients help to advance the above measures of internal consistency among individual items in the scale. As Table 3-6 shows, the coefficients in these analyses range between 0.574 and 0.622, depending on the study and data sweep used. These are relatively low. General advice is that the values of the coefficients should be between 0.6 and 0.8. Although the alpha coefficients obtained here are at the lower end of this range, the issue to consider is that these scales consist of very few items and the alpha coefficients might not necessarily be reflecting a poor consistency of the statements but their small number. Thus, according to Carmines and Zeller (1979), increasing the number of items by adding similarly correlated ones would significantly increase the reliability of the scale.

There are two ways to use the above scale in the future analyses. The first way is to estimate a summative index (i.e. add up all the scores for each individual on each item of the scale). This assumes equal importance of each item for the factor. The second way is to use Principal Component (PC) scores generated during PCA above. The problem with the latter is that analysis outputs would have a less obvious interpretation than the former method. However, since the correlations between the summative indexes and corresponding PC scores are very high (0.999 and 0.999 BCS age 26 and 30; 1.000 and 1.000 NCDS age 33 and 42), either of the methods of using the scores of the scale is appropriate.

Since summative scores are easier to interpret, and I have no reason to believe either of the items are more important than others (the factor loadings of all the items are very similar and vary only slightly across samples selected), I will further explore the suitability of the attitude items for summation.

### 3.3.3 Limitations and assumptions of attitude measurement

“[One]...should not accept the existence of attitudes too easily”

Saris (1993: 202)

Certain limitations of attitude measurement and using summated scales in general are highlighted in the critical literature. These include the assumption of equality in attitude items. Although the attitude statements chosen for this study are not perfectly similar, the PCA results showed very comparable factor loadings of each item on the overall scale, which makes them strong candidates for measuring underlying attitudes in a similar way.

Additionally, Blunch (2008) discusses the complexity of assuming that the same total scores on the scale between individuals are identical when the respondents score differently on individual items. This is a very valid point and is a limitation of the attitude measurement method. It is difficult to justify two people as having identical attitudes towards family and marriage if one of them feels very positively (with a score of 5) about one of the attitude domains (e.g. marriage) and rather negatively about others (divorce and parental separation, scoring 2 on each), while the other person with the same score of 9 has obtained high scores on the divorce and separation items (4 and 4) and scored only 1 on the marriage item.

To overcome this, one could simply explore responses to each individual item. This, however, yields difficulties of a different type: the measure would no longer be multifaceted and would not take into account the complexity of attitudes. This study therefore assumes that those with the same total attitude scores have *similar* attitudes towards family and marriage, particularly given that the focus of this research is on general family and marital attitudes, and not on differentiating between feelings towards individual statements. This is reinforced by the previous results that show these items measure the same construct in a similar way.

To overcome some of the other problems that could potentially undermine the measurement's validity, the possible ways of solving them or reassuring their absence are discussed below.

### Validity of the attitude scale

“...in order to be valid, a measurement must be reliable”

Blunch, 2008: 41

Having acquired some proof for satisfactory reliability of the scale discussed in the previous section, verifying a scale's validity is less straightforward as most of the methods require empirical comparisons to other similar concepts supported by strong theoretical justifications.

*Content validity*, which is theoretically based, entails the presence of as many aspects of the concept as possible in the question to widely describe it. The attitude scale I used here consists of items relating to marriage, divorce and parental separation, which cover different aspects of family/marriage-related domains.

*Criterion validity*, based solely on empirical findings, refers to a validation strategy which compares the measurement in question with some sort of other variable (i.e. a criterion) which should correlate or be predicted by the measurement instrument. Having established that the attitude items for this study mostly relate to partnership dissolution, the attitude scale should therefore be strongly correlated with the partnership breakdown experience of the cohort member. There is an abundance of evidence in the following chapters to suggest a very strong relationship between these attitude scales and the cohort members' experience of break ups.

Finally, having found such extremely strong correlations between all the summation scores and the Principal Component scores gives an insight into the validity of the attitudes to marriage and family scale: both types of scores correlate well and thus act as validation for each other. Having been reasonably satisfied with the reliability and the validity of the attitude scales, given their satisfactory characteristics across various areas of attitude scale

construction discussed above, I proceed to summarise the responses to the three items across cohort members and explore these summated scales by looking at some descriptive statistics in the next section.

### 3.3.4 Exploration of family values: descriptive statistics of summary scales

When summarising the scores on each attitude item across cohort members of the same age, I excluded those respondents who did not express their opinion on all three statements (see Appendix 1, Tables A2 to A5 for exact numbers of these samples). The compromise of excluding some of the respondents from the analysis sample is not a point of concern as the vast majority who responded to one attitude item out of three, responded to all three (approximately 99% or more). The exception is the BCS cohort at 26: 92% of respondents who gave their opinion to at least one of the attitude items, responded to all three statements. Table 3-7 below shows the average summated score and shows that BCS respondents are on average more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage than NCDS cohort members at all the ages considered. For both cohorts, older age equates to more traditional attitudes.

**Table 3-7: Average scores on attitudes to family and marriage scale: BCS age 26 and 30, and NCDS age 33 and 42**

Cohort and age	Observations	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Variance
BCS age 26	8,736	3.29	3.33	0.738	0.547
BCS age 30	11,099	3.37	3.33	0.726	0.527
NCDS age 33	10,646	3.10	3.00	0.767	0.589
NCDS age 42	11,267	3.26	3.33	0.764	0.584

The results from the independent samples t-test for each age group show that men are significantly more traditional in their attitudes than women for both cohorts at both time points (see Table 3-8 below). This is consistent with other findings on men and women's family-related attitudes (e.g. Erfani and Beaujot, 2009; Trent and South, 1992).

**Table 3-8: Average attitude score by gender: BCS age 26 and 30, NCDS age 33 and 42**

	Age of CM	Average attitude score		Average score difference <sup>7</sup>
		Men	Women	
BCS	age 26	3.32	3.27	0.05*
	age 30	3.42	3.34	0.08**
NCDS	age 33	3.19	3.02	0.18**
	age 42	3.35	3.17	0.17**

\*p<.05; \*\* p<.01

### 3.3.5 Exploration of family values scale: attitude change with age

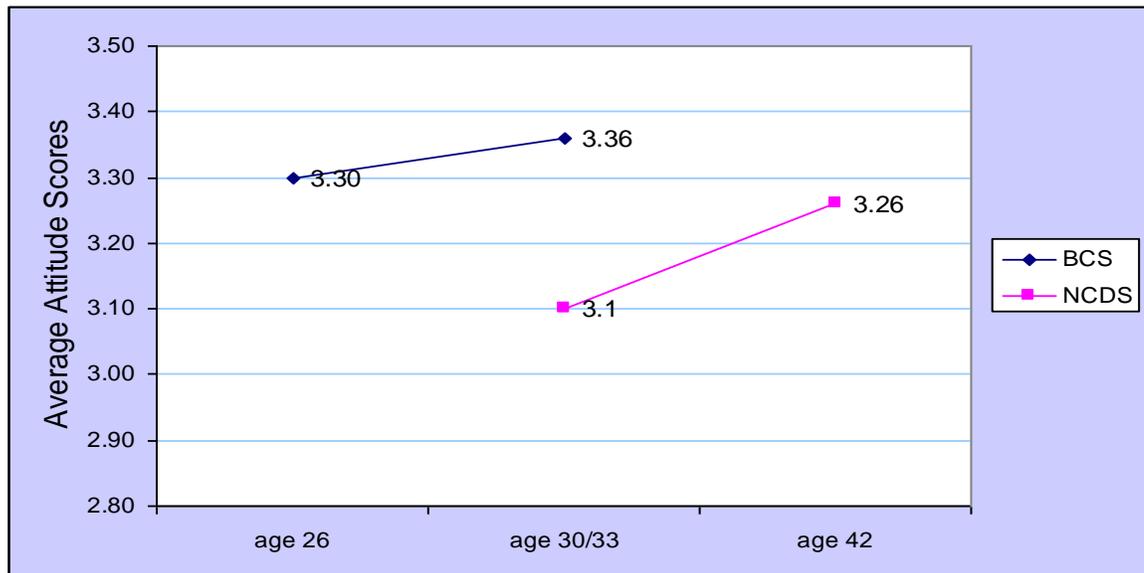
There is a noticeable increase (a movement in a more traditional direction) in scores on the attitudes to family and marriage scale for both cohorts as they got older. Two paired-sample t-tests were conducted to evaluate whether these changes are in fact statistically significant. The results show significant differences in scores for both cohorts. BCS respondents expressed significant increase in attitude scores between age 26 ( $M^8=3.30$ ;  $SD^9=.74$ ) and age 30 ( $M=3.36$ ;  $SD=.72$ ),  $t(7,355)=-6.812$ ,  $p<0.001$ . Among the NCDS respondents there is a significant increase in scores between the age of 33 ( $M=3.10$ ;  $SD=.76$ ) and the age of 42 ( $M=3.26$ ;  $SD=.76$ ),  $t(9,237)=-19.697$ ,  $p<0.001$ . Figure 3-5 below illustrates these changes graphically with the steeper slope of the older cohort signifying a relatively bigger change in attitudes between the two time points.

<sup>7</sup> Note: the “average score differences” are derived from the precise average scores and are rounded to two decimal places. Therefore these do not represent the difference between the rounded off average scores.

<sup>8</sup> M=mean

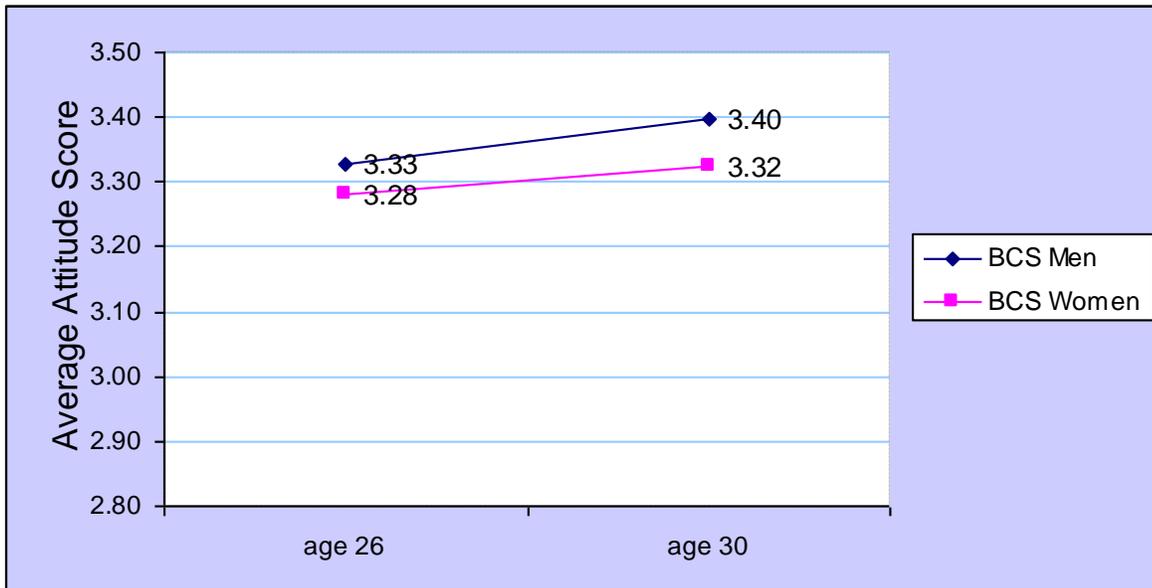
<sup>9</sup> SD=standard deviation

**Figure 3-5: Average scores on Attitudes to Marriage and Family, BCS at 26 and 30 and NCDS at 33 and 42 years of age**



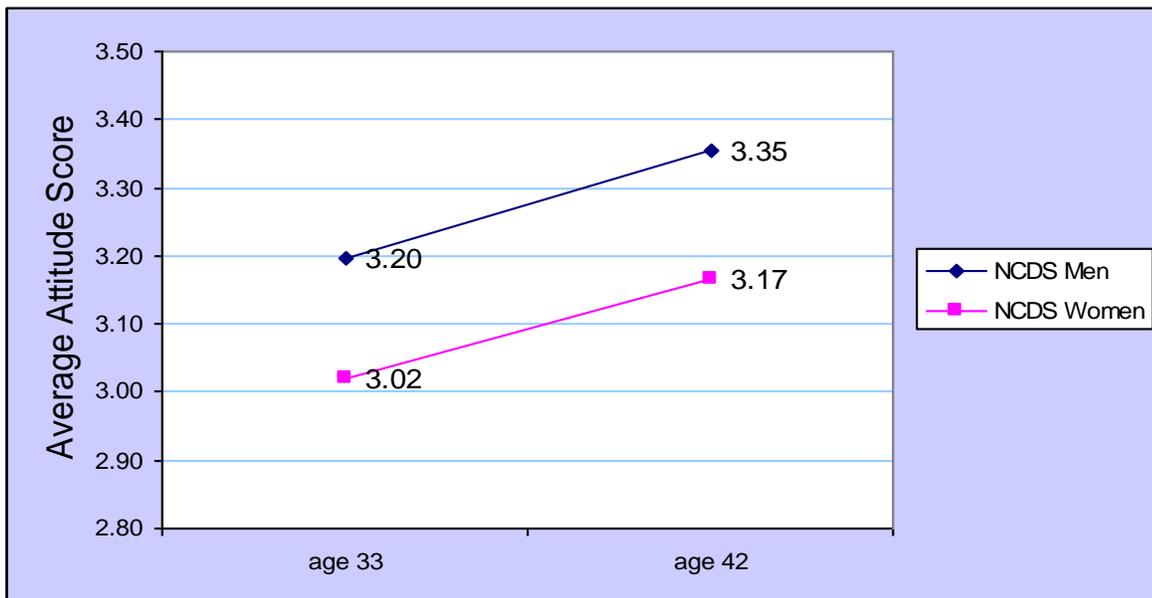
Gender differences in attitudes in the cross-sectional samples are also present across the years under investigation. A paired-sample t-test for each gender revealed that changes in attitudes between ages 26 and 30 were statistically significant for both men and women of the BCS cohort (men: at 26 (mean=3.329; SD=0.742) and 30 (mean=3.398; SD=0.723),  $t(3,273)=-5.730$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; women: at 26 (mean=3.280; SD=0.728) and 30 (mean=3.324; SD=0.722),  $t=-3.992$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). There was, however, a greater increase in attitude scores towards more traditional opinions among BCS men than BCS women (men: mean attitude difference=0.069; women: mean attitude difference=0.043), which is illustrated in Figure 3-6 below by a slightly steeper line representing attitude change for men.

**Figure 3-6: Change in attitudes with time among men and women, BCS**



There is a greater difference between the attitudes of men and women in the NCDS cohort compared to the BCS cohort. NCDS men on average scored 0.18 higher on the attitude scale than women at both ages 33 and 42, while the difference between men and women in the attitude scores of the BCS cohort are 0.05 at age 26, increasing slightly to 0.08 at age 30. The changes in attitude of NCDS men and women are shown in Figure 3-7 below.

**Figure 3-7: Change in attitude with time among men and women, NCDS**

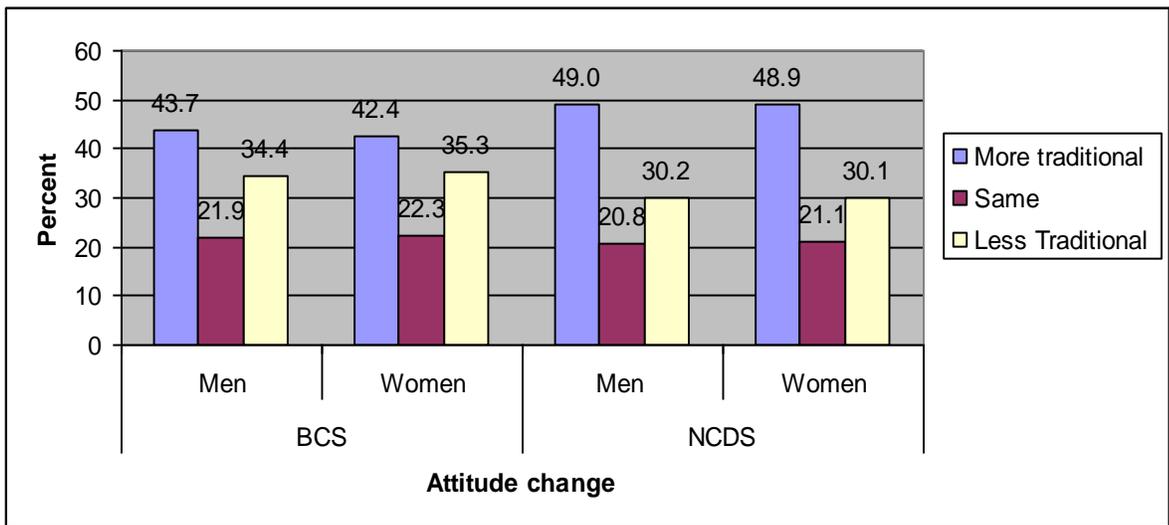


Interpreting average scores on a scale where the scores change only slightly can at times be difficult. Another way of illustrating the average attitude change is to record whether the attitude score for each respondent increased (and therefore moved in a more traditional direction) or decreased (and therefore became less traditional than before) or remained unchanged. This was done by subtracting individual total average scores on a scale at a younger age from the scores at an older age. Negative outcomes were coded as decreases in attitude scores, positive were coded as an increase and zero as unchanged.

This analysis revealed that the majority of respondents became more traditional in attitudes as they aged with a slight difference between the younger and older cohorts. The Chi-square test showed significant difference (Chi-square=63.331, df=2,  $p<0.01$ ) between the two cohorts in the proportions of people in each response category (“more traditional”, “same” and “less traditional”). Almost half of the NCDS and over 40% of BCS respondents became more traditional in their attitudes to marriage and family at an older age. Similar proportions of respondents from both cohorts expressed unchanged attitudes (just over 20%). A greater proportion of the BCS cohort than the NCDS cohort became less traditional in their attitudes towards family and marriage (35% vs 30% respectively).

When the attitude change was considered among men and women separately, no significant difference between the genders was revealed for the two cohorts (Figure 3-8), indicating similar trends in attitude change and stability among men and women.

**Figure 3-8: Change in attitudes by gender: BCS between 26 and 30; NCDS between 33 and 42**



BCS: N=7,353; NCDS: N=9,236

### 3.4 Summary and discussion

Attitudes in this study are measured by an aggregated score on three attitude statements measured on a 5-point Likert scale related to divorce, marriage and parental separation. Assessment of the scale for different age groups and cohorts showed reasonable signs of its reliability and validity. A brief overview of the data-analytic strategy for the remaining chapters was provided in Section 3.2.5, with a more detailed description of the methods used to follow in the corresponding chapters.

Initial exploration of the average attitude scores of cohort members showed that the BCS cohort was more traditional than the NCDS cohort at both points in time. The change in attitudes to family and marriage among the BCS cohort with age was less substantial than the change in attitudes among the NCDS respondents.

Advancing age may have influenced the extent of the difference in attitude change between cohorts. According to Vesser and Krosnick’s (1998) investigation into different views on how attitudes vary during a life course, the ‘lifelong openness hypothesis’ suggests that people’s attitudes can change at least to some extent throughout their lives. This contradicts a few other theories which are more inclined to state that people’s attitudes are

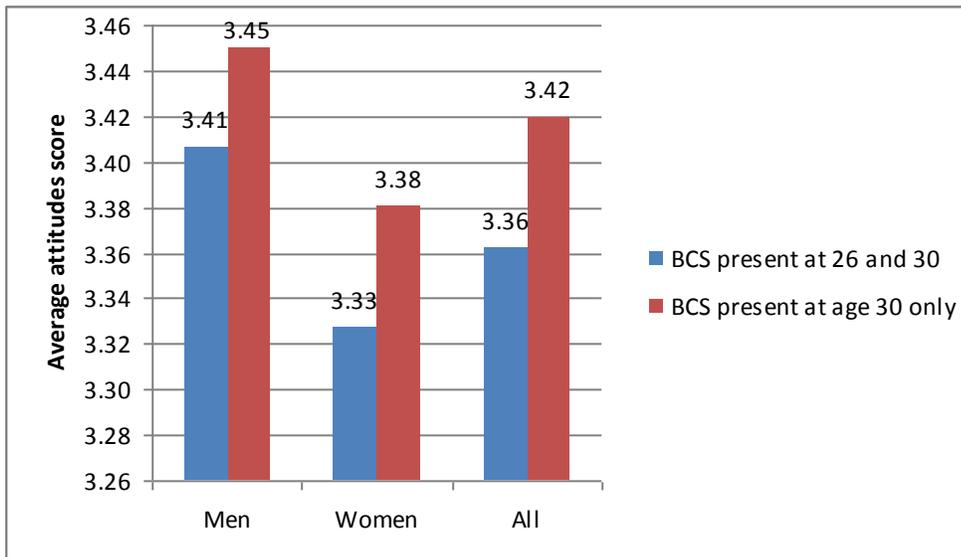
fixed either partially or entirely during young adulthood and remain relatively unchanged throughout the remaining years of their lives (e.g. Glenn, 1974, 1980; Mannheim, 1952; and Ryder, 1965 cited in Vesser and Krosnick, 1998). My research shows that at least in the case of attitudes related to family and marriage, people's views change just as much or even more so during adulthood (between 33 and 42, NCDS) as they do during the early years of adulthood (between 26 and 30, BCS). However, the apparent greater change in attitudes among the NCDS cohort could also be attributed to a longer time period between data collection in the two studies allowing for greater chance of change. NCDS respondents' attitudes were measured approximately eight years apart while BCS attitudes were measured only three years apart.

Additionally, a greater increase in the attitudes of the NCDS cohort could be due to the life transitions associated with these ages. Such events are entry/exit into/from marriage, becoming a parent or having more children, change in employment status (for example, for women, going from full-time employment to full-time childcare), etc. Although overall the younger cohort seems to be somewhat more traditional in their family values than the older cohort, perhaps more life course events that are associated with the change of attitudes in a more traditional direction had occurred between the ages of 33 and 42 among the respondents of the NCDS cohort.

And finally, one of the reasons for the surprisingly more traditional attitudes of the BCS cohort and less substantial change in attitudes could, at least partially, be attributed to some of the problems associated with the age 26 achieved sample, described in Section 3.2.3 of this chapter. As I explained, a large number of missing cohort members from the achieved sample at age 26 is probably due to a number of reasons, such as the change of main respondent from parent to cohort member as well as the fact that postal questionnaires were the chosen method of data collection for that wave, which is known for its inferior results in achieving responses in comparison to face to face interviews. The attitudes of those who were missing at age 26 for these reasons may well have been different to those respondents who were present at both waves; this could result in the bias of the results.

Investigating the difference in attitudes between the achieved longitudinal sample of the BCS cohort members in this research (those present at both age 26 and age 30 waves) and those who were only present at age 30 wave, illuminates some of the differences between the respondents and non-respondents at age 26 (see Figure 3-9 below). Those who were missing from the age 26 wave but were present at the age of 30, had on average significantly more traditional attitudes at age 30 than those who took part in both waves of data collection. This indicates that if they were included in the analyses, the difference between BCS and NCDS cohorts at comparable ages (30 for BCS and 33 for NCDS) may have been even greater. It is possible that BCS respondents who were missing at 26 were also more traditional in their attitudes at that age than those who were present, based on the results from the wave age 30 outlined here. However, it is also possible that due to a larger proportion of BCS cohort members getting married (and as I hypothesised earlier, I expect attitudes to adjust following getting married to become more traditional), we may have seen a larger average increase in attitude scores than shown in Figure 3-5 had their sample been different.

**Figure 3-9: BCS respondents at age 30 wave compared to respondents at both waves: Average attitudes scores at age 30**



Exploration of the average attitude scores by gender for each cohort at each point in time revealed that men from both cohorts are more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage than women, based on their average scores on the scale. Furthermore, this

difference appears to be greater among the older NCDS cohort than the younger BCS cohort. It is possible that the gap between men and women's attitudes expands with age (note the slight increase in the attitude difference between BCS men and women at 30 compared to age 26). However, it is more likely that the greater attitude difference between men and women from the NCDS cohort is a manifest of the cohort effect. It is possible that men and women from more recent cohorts are becoming increasingly more alike in the way they feel about family and marriage compared to men and women from older cohorts. This possibly results from the more integrated role women play in society in terms of education and employment, echoing in their roles as parents and partners.

Chapter 4 considers the circumstances described in this conclusion by exploring the relationship between cohort members' life course position in terms of their marital and partnership status as well as showing how these differ for men and women.

## CHAPTER 4: Attitudes and Partnerships

### 4.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I showed that the BCS cohort expressed more traditional attitudes towards family and marriage than the NCDS cohort at both points in time. Traditional attitudes are those that view marriage as a stable commitment; liberal or non-traditional attitudes are those that view marriage as a more transient state. One of the reasons for this difference could be due to their life stages. It is possible that the BCS respondents (at age 26 and 30) were at the stage of their lives where the majority were not ‘disappointed’ or ‘heartbroken’ in relation to marriage and the family as few would have experienced marriage or a marital breakdown.

However, both cohorts became more traditional with age, despite the increasing proportions of separated/divorced people amongst them, and this change was greater among NCDS respondents than BCS. This means that NCDS cohort on average became more traditional between 33 and 42 and this change is greater than for the BCS cohort between 26 and 30 years. I speculated that one of the possible reasons for this greater change could be due to their life stage as well as life changes that are typical to their chronological age - early 30s to early 40s - such as possibly having children and getting remarried.

In this chapter I begin to investigate the relationship between marital status and family-related attitudes for the cohort members at different ages, which I hypothesise to be at least partly due to the adaptation effects of attitudes, whereby those who experience more “traditional” changes in their marital/partnership status (i.e. getting married) would become more traditional in their attitudes towards family and marriage while those whose status changes to a less traditional arrangement (e.g. getting divorced) would become less traditional. Additionally, I explore the possibility that it is those who are initially more traditional in their family attitudes that would be more likely to embark on these more traditional partnership/marital trajectories, such as getting married instead of starting to cohabit (selection effects of attitudes). But firstly, I consider how average attitude scores vary between cohort members depending on their marital and partnership status at the time of interview.

## 4.2 Method: One-way and Two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)

To establish whether the differences between attitudes of cohort members depending on their marital/partnership status and between attitudes for those who embark on different marital/partnership transitions between two data collection points are significant, I utilise one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

ANOVA is based on the analysis of variance used to establish whether the group means come from the same sampling distribution of means (for example Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). If this is the case, then the variance between the sample means is lower than the variance within the samples. This is assessed using an F-ratio statistic, which represents the ratio of between the means variance to the variance within the groups. If the ratio is low, it implies that the null hypothesis should be accepted (Null hypothesis: the groups were drawn from the same population or that the population means are equal). If, on the other hand, the ratio is high, the null hypothesis can be rejected and I would conclude that the samples were drawn from different populations. Using this method, I aim to show that marital status has a strong relationship with the way respondents feel about family and marriage.

To further explore the relationship between attitudes and marital status, I undertake post-hoc tests using Tukey honestly significant difference tests (referred hereafter to as Tukey HSD) that are appropriate for simple pairwise comparisons to examine the individual mean differences. This test is particularly useful for my analyses as the sample sizes of marital/partnership groups are very different and they therefore threaten to inflate Type I error whereby the null hypothesis is rejected (Garson, 2009). The Tukey HSD test is based on the Q-statistic (the studentised range distribution) and it is the most conservative of the post-hoc tests as it is most likely to accept the null hypothesis (i.e. no group differences). I consider the difference in average attitudes within each pair of marital/partnership groups to be significant if p-level is under 95%, that is  $p < 0.05$ .

The F-statistic and its significance level is provided in the main body of this chapter, tables for multiple group comparisons and the Tukey HSD tests are included in the appendix.

These one-way ANOVA analyses were undertaken using SPSS. To further analyse the effects of gender on the relationship between attitudes and marital/partnership status I implement a two-way analysis of variance. A two-way ANOVA is an extension of one-way ANOVA described above in that it incorporates two predictors (as well as interaction if specified) instead of just one (Acock, 2008). In these analyses I test for the main effect of marital/partnership status as well as gender and I also test for an interaction between marital/partnership status and gender on attitudes. Similarly to the one-way ANOVA, I present F-statistics for each of the main effects and the interaction. I undertook analyses of two-way ANOVA using STATA.

### **4.3 Current marital/partnership status and attitudes to family and marriage**

As mentioned earlier, there is plenty of evidence indicating a strong association between life course position and value orientations in relation to family-related values and marital/partnership status (e.g. Berrington et al, 2005; Cunningham and Thornton, 2005; Lesthaeghe and Moors, 2002). Berrington et al (2005), for example, found that previously married individuals are generally more accepting of divorce, particularly if they were cohabiting at the time, compared to those who were currently married or never married. A study by Cunningham and Thornton (2005) found that young people became more traditional in their attitudes towards non-marital cohabitation once they entered a stable marriage. Since the attitudes investigated here are related to marriage, divorce and partnership dissolution, respondents' marital status is expected to be an important part of attitude formation. I therefore compare legally married with never married individuals and, similarly, divorced with never divorced cohort members. I expect those who were either divorced or legally separated to hold less traditional attitudes towards family and marriage compared to the first time married and never married individuals.

Cohort members were asked to state their legal marital status at each time point. After cross-checking the responses to these questions with respondents' reports on whether they were living as a couple, on their own or in some other arrangement, it appeared that some married and remarried cohort members were not living with their spouse at the time they

claimed to be married. These were only few but to avoid ambiguity I excluded them from the sample when deriving the marital and partnership status measures described below.

### 4.3.1 Current legal marital status

This section describes the differences between the BCS and NCDS cohorts in terms of their marital status at both time points to understand the life course position that these cohorts are at during the two time points studied in this research. To allow for a more insightful comparison, I draw on marital status data from the younger sweep of the NCDS cohort at the age of 23. This allows for a comparison of life course position at a similar available age among the BCS cohort, at 26, and NCDS at 23. Unfortunately, no data on marital attitudes were collected for NCDS at age 23.

The largest marital status group among the data for the younger BCS cohort at age 26 and 30 was single<sup>10</sup> whilst the largest proportion amongst NCDS at age 23 and 30 was married for the first time. While the differences in the proportions of cohort members in each marital group can be attributed to an age effect when comparing BCS at 26 and NCDS at 33, differences in marital status between the respondents of the BCS cohort at 30 and NCDS at 33 imply potential cohort effects. Thus, at a similar age (BCS age 30 and NCDS age 33), 50% of BCS respondents were never married compared to only 18% of NCDS respondents, indicating a younger average age at marriage for the older cohort. It is unlikely that such a dramatic catch-up effect in marital rates could occur between age 30 and 33 for the BCS. This is not surprising given that age at first marriage has been increasing in Britain in the last 40 years (ONS, 2005). While only a small proportion of BCS respondents at both time points were remarried (0.5% at age 26 and 1.5% at age 30), there were sizable proportions of remarried respondents among the older NCDS cohort at both ages (7.1% at age 33 and 10.7% at age 42). Among both cohorts at both time points only a fraction of respondents were widowed (1% or less).

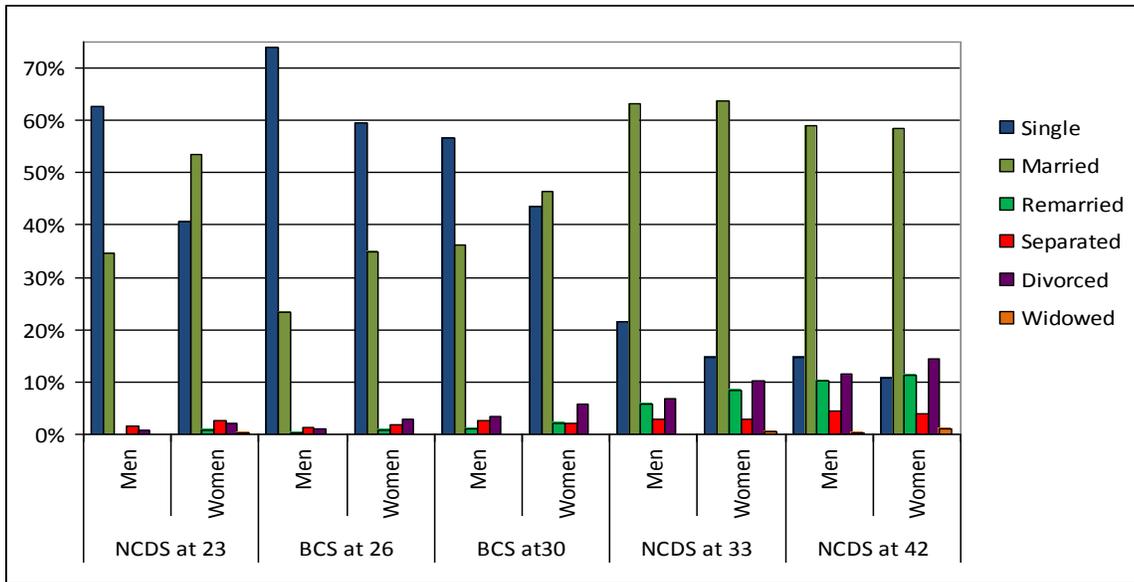
Gender differences in marital status at each age among both cohorts are apparent and they vary between the cohorts (Figure 4-1). While greater proportions of women than men from

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<sup>10</sup> The term 'single' in this section refers to single (never married) cohort members who might or might not be cohabiting at the time.

the BCS cohort at both time points (age 26 and 30) and NCDS cohort age 23 reported being married, similar proportions of NCDS men and women at older age (both 33 and 42) were married for the first time. Within each cohort at each age displayed, a greater proportion of men than women reported being single (never married), while a greater proportion of women than men were remarried at each point in time.

**Figure 4-1: Current legal marital status, BCS age 26 and 30, NCDS age 23, 33 and 42**



**NCDS at 23:** n(men)=6,263, n(women)=6,270; **BCS at 26:** n(men)=4,026, n(women)=4,816; **BCS at 30:** n(men)=5,445, n(women)=5,769; **NCDS at 33:** n(men)=5,363, n(women)=5,628; **NCDS at 42:** n(men)=5,608; n(women)=5,773

Despite being younger, greater proportions of men and women among the NCDS cohort at 23 were married compared to men and women from the BCS cohort at 26. This indicates a much earlier age at marriage of the older NCDS cohort. Divorces and separations among cohort members become more frequent with age. Among both the BCS cohort age 26 and NCDS at 23, 2% of men and 5% of women were separated or divorced. These proportions rise to 6% for men and 8% for women among the BCS cohort at 30 and 10% of men and 13% of women among the NCDS cohort age 33.

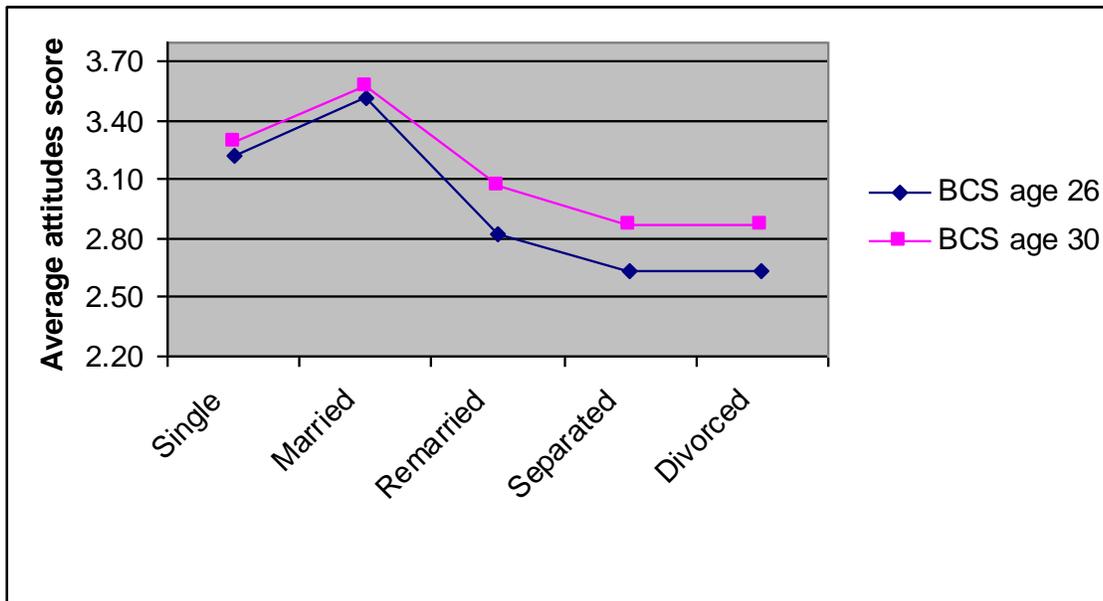
The differences in marital status indicate both cohort and age effects. Although data for BCS cohort at age 30 and NCDS at age 33 provides relatively comparable ages, late 20s-early 30s is an ‘eventful’ period and many important life course transitions take place in these years. And even though smaller proportions of BCS men and women were married at

the age of 30 compared to NCDS at 33, more would be married by the time they reached 33. Subsequent data for the BCS cohort at age 34 shows that a partial catch-up effect occurred; at 34, approximately 52% of BCS respondents were married (compared to 41% at 30 and 63% among NCDS age 33), 35% were single (compared to 50% at 30 and 18% among NCDS age 33). Nevertheless, a cohort effect remains and the BCS respondents demonstrate different marital 'decisions' with a greater proportion of them remaining unmarried and fewer getting married in their 20s and early 30s and, subsequently, fewer getting divorced at a comparable age. Whether this represents a postponement effect or a permanent avoidance of marriage in favour of cohabitation or singleness cannot be deducted from these findings. However, this can have implications for respondents' marital attitudes.

#### **4.3.1.1 Marital status and average attitude scores**

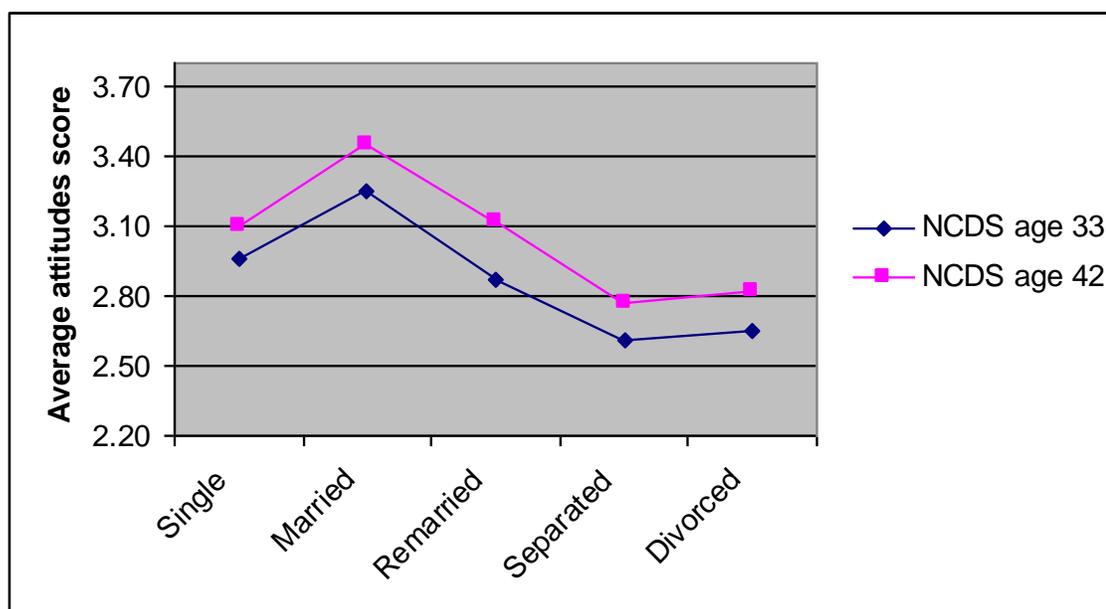
BCS data shows that average attitude scores by marital status groups are similar at age 26 and age 30; single, married and widowed cohort members expressed more traditional attitudes than divorced, remarried and separated at both time points (see Figure 4-2 below). Results from one-way ANOVA analysis showed that this difference in attitudes between marital groups is significant (BCS age 26:  $F(4, 8591)=147.83$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; BCS age 30:  $F(4, 11084)=227.54$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). This is confirmed through post-hoc Tukey's HSD tests (Appendix 2, Tables A11 and A12) that show that married individuals' average score was significantly higher than any other marital groups'. Single respondents also scored higher than all (except married) cohort members at both age 26 and 30. The post-hoc tests did not show any evidence of the attitudes among separated, divorced and remarried cohort members to differ significantly from each other when respondents were 26, but remarried cohort members at the age of 30 were significantly more traditional than those who were divorced and those who were legally separated at the time. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of separated and divorced BCS cohort members at either 26 or 30.

**Figure 4-2: Average attitudes score by marital status group, BCS age 26 and 30**



A similar pattern is observed among the NCDS cohort at age 33 and 42: married respondents have a higher average score on the attitude scale, and are therefore more traditional, than remarried, separated and divorced respondents (Figure 4-3) and this is a statistically significant effect (NCDS age 33:  $F(4, 10463)=217.252, p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 42:  $F(4, 11188)=172.665, p<0.001$ ). Tukey's HSD test (Appendix 2, Tables A13 and A14), indicates significant differences in scores between all marital groups except between those who were separated and those who were divorced, as well as those who were remarried and separated/divorced in the direction observed in Figure 4-3. Thus married NCDS respondents at both stages are significantly more traditional than others.

**Figure 4-3: Average attitudes score by marital status group, NCDS age 33 and 42**



The only difference that is observed between the NCDS cohort at a younger and at an older age is that single persons at 33 were significantly more traditional than remarried persons, but single persons at age 42 did not differ significantly from those who were remarried at 42. This is an important result, as it suggests that single people among the NCDS sample at the age of 42 differ from single individuals among NCDS cohort at 33 and BCS cohort at both ages. At the oldest and youngest ages (NCDS at 42 and BCS at 26) remarried cohort members were no different in their attitudes to divorced/separated, while at comparable ages (BCS at 30 and NCDS at 33) remarried cohort members were significantly more traditional than those who were separated or divorced.

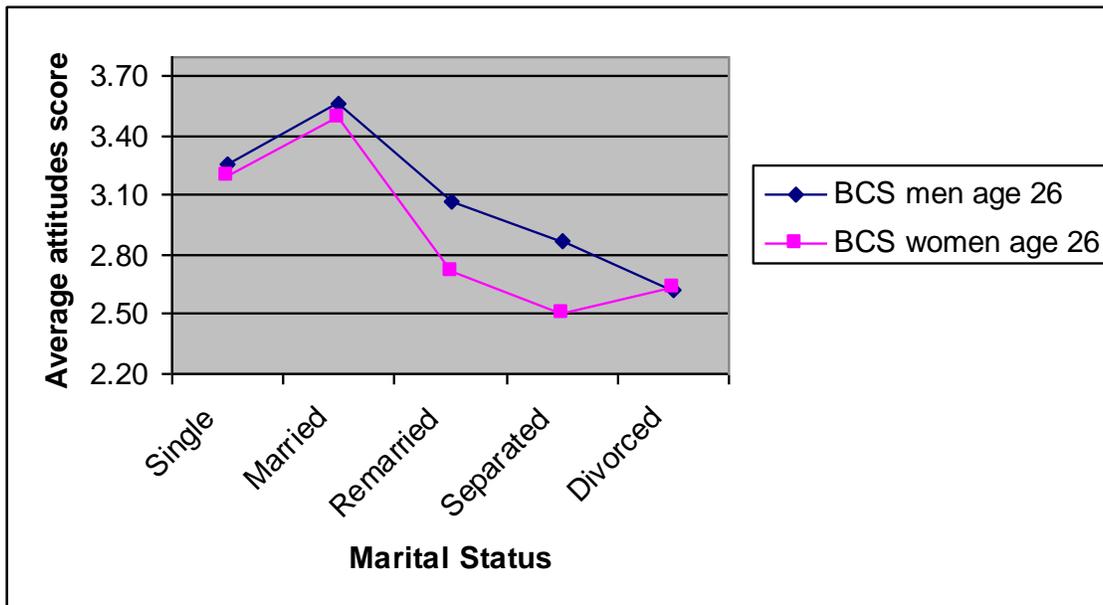
#### **4.3.1.2 Marital status and average attitude scores: men and women**

A two-way ANOVA was utilised to investigate the effects of gender and legal marital status on cohort members' attitudes as well as an interaction effect of gender and marital status (full results in Appendix 2, Tables A15 and A16). The results indicate a significant main effect of gender for both cohorts at both time points (BCS age 26:  $F(1, 8447)=7.360$ ,  $p<0.01$ ; BCS age 30:  $F(1, 10844)=41.980$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; NCDS at 33:  $F(1, 10368)=64.030$ ; NCDS at 42:  $F(1, 11067)=126.400$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), which showed that men are more traditional

than women. A main effect of marital status for both cohorts remained significant at each age even after controlling for gender (BCS age 26:  $F(4, 8447)=124.060$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; BCS age 30:  $F(4, 10844)=215.650$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 33:  $F(4, 10368)=201.170$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 42:  $F(4, 10067)=315.640$ ).

Additionally, a significant interaction between legal marital status and gender among the BCS at age 30 and NCDS at age 42 was uncovered, showing that men and women’s attitudes vary differently by marital status at these ages (BCS age 30:  $F(4, 10844)=5.380$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 42:  $F(4, 11067)=6.390$ ). Figures 4-4 to 4-7 graphically illustrate these findings. Women’s attitude scores are on average lower than men’s for the same marital groups in both cohorts at both time points (apart from divorced BCS men and women at the age of 26).

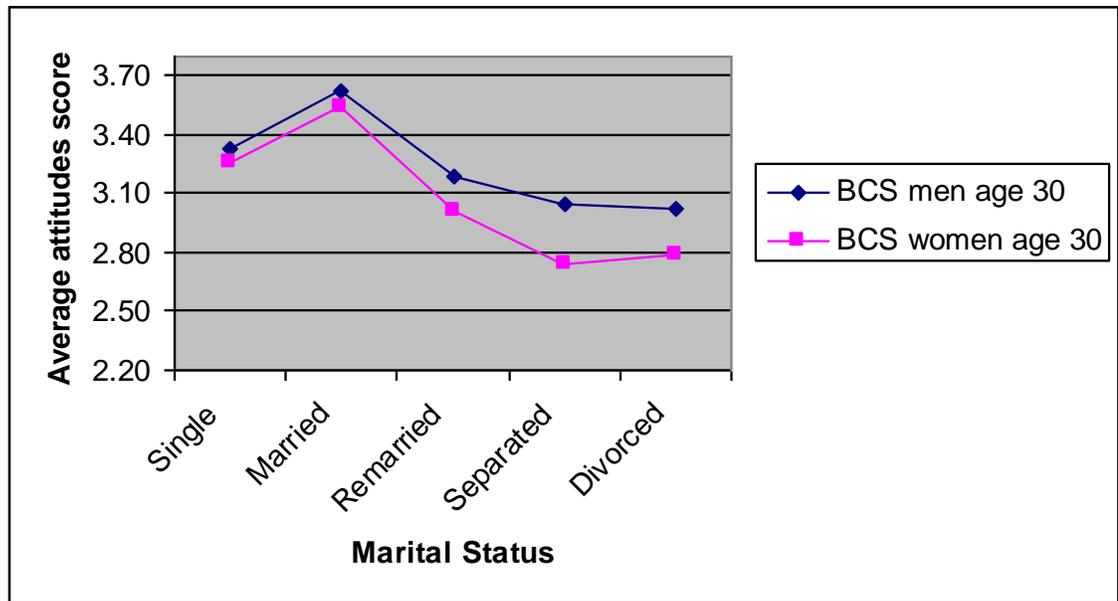
**Figure 4-4: Average attitudes score by marital status group: men and women, BCS age 26**



This pattern is repeated at an older age among the BCS cohort with the exception of the divorced men and women, where gender is significant (Figure 4-5). As mentioned above, two-way ANOVA results confirmed that men and women’s attitudes vary differently depending on marital status at the age of 30. Thus, although BCS men and women at 30 seem to be following similar patterns in attitudes by marital status (i.e. those who are

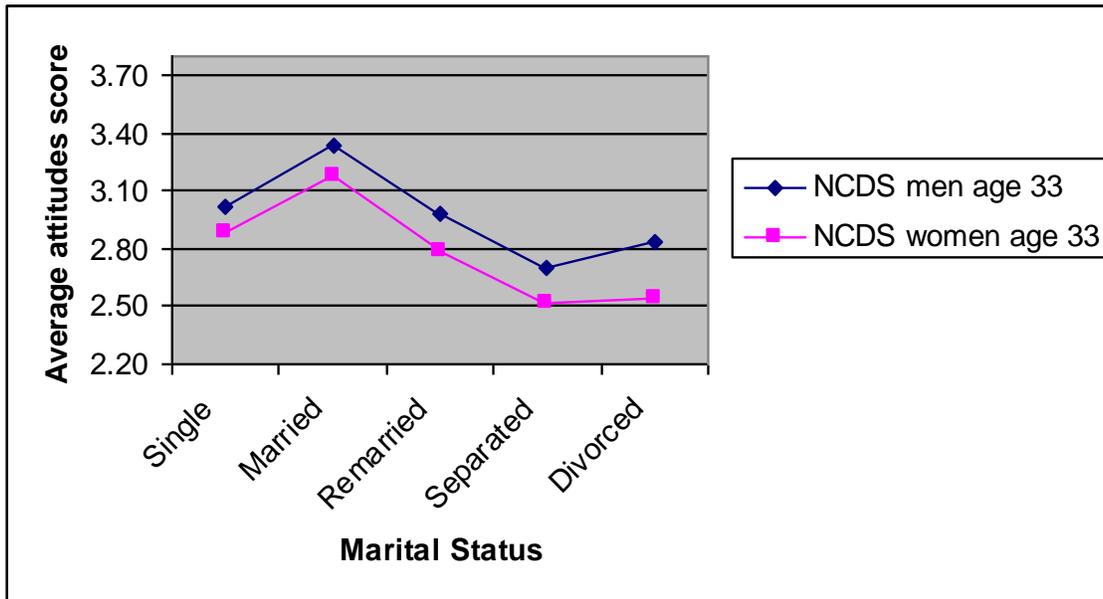
married and single are the most traditional while those who are remarried, separated or divorced are less traditional), the difference in average attitude scores, particularly between married and remarried as well as married and separated individuals is larger for women than for men.

**Figure 4-5: Average attitudes score by marital status group: men and women, BCS age 30**

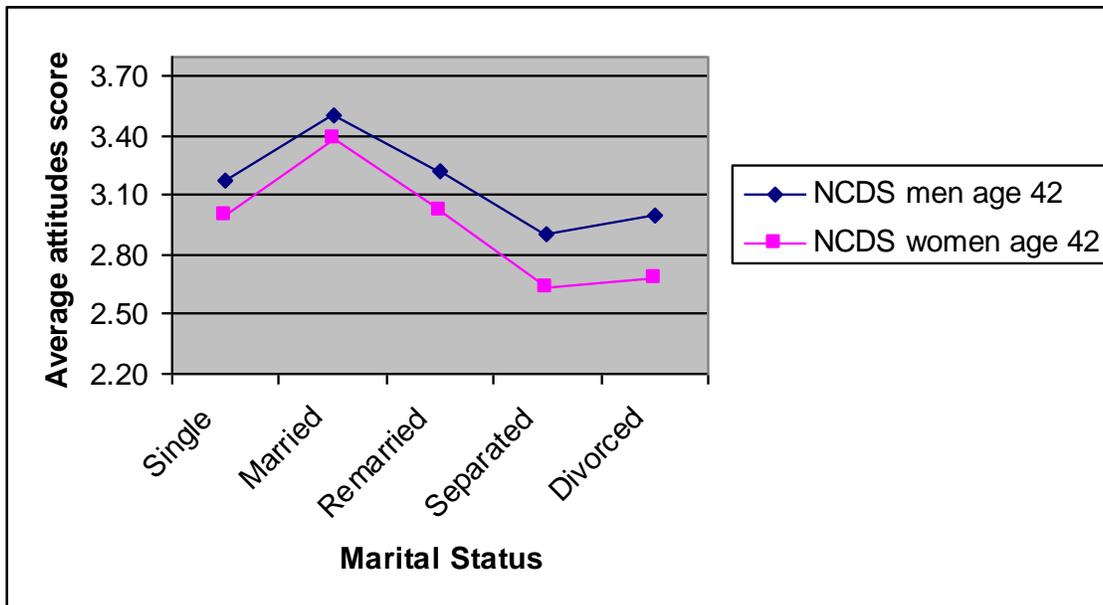


Figures 4-6 and 4-7 below illustrate that NCDS women also express less traditional attitudes than NCDS men at both age 33 and age 42. Among the NCDS cohort, there is a widening gap between the attitudes of men and women for the divorced respondents with age. This is particularly evident for the cohort members at the age of 42 (Figure 4-7), both for separated and divorced respondents and the two-way ANOVA results confirmed that there is a significant interaction between gender and marital status for the NCDS respondents at age 42.

**Figure 4-6: Average attitudes score by marital status group: men and women, NCDS age 33**



**Figure 4-7: Average attitudes score by marital status group: men and women, NCDS age 42**



The above findings describe the variation in attitudes among people in different marital groups. It is consistently confirmed that respondents who were first married for the first time were the most traditional in their attitudes towards family and marriage, while

divorced and separated individuals were the least traditional. For the NCDS cohort, the remarried respondents had more similar attitudes to those who were single (never married) while the remarried BCS cohort members were significantly less traditional than those who were single (never married).

The single (never married) and married cohort member differ from divorced, separated and remarried in that they had not experienced a marital breakdown. They could have, however, experienced a partnership breakdown. The smaller attitude difference between single (never married) and remarried cohort members among NCDS cohort at the age of 42 compared to BCS at both ages and NCDS at 33 suggests that these unmarried groups differ in some of their characteristics across cohorts and age groups. An explanatory factor could be their partnership status at the time or their previous partnership histories. This is explored and discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

### **4.3.2 Current marital/partnership status**

The 1960s and 1970s have been associated with changes in almost every demographic characteristic of the population, not least in marriage, divorce and cohabitation (Haskey, 2001). As mentioned in Chapter 2, the rates of first marriages saw a decline, while divorces were on the increase from the 1970s, and cohabitation was more frequent, not only among those who were divorced or separated from a marital partner, but also among those who had never been married before; it was particularly common among adults aged 25 to 34 (Haskey, 2001).

#### **4.3.2.1 Focus on cohabitation**

Childbearing within cohabiting relationships has increased, and cohabiting childbearing (not lone parenthood) is almost entirely responsible for the childbearing outside marriage among two US cohorts between the early 80s and the early 90s (Bumpass and Lu, 2000). In the UK, childbearing within cohabitation has also seen an increase in popularity during the same time, and by 2002 almost two-thirds of births outside of wedlock in England and Wales were registered by cohabiting parents (ONS, 2004). And whilst there was an 8% increase in the number of lone parent families in the ten years between 1996 and 2006 in

the UK, the number of cohabiting couple families increased by a substantial 65% during the same time (ONS 2007).

Cohabiting relationships therefore carry wide socio-economic implications for a large proportion of children. Although the risk of partnership dissolution has increased over time, both for married and cohabiting couples (Bumpass and Lu, 2000), cohabiting relationships are generally found to be less stable than marital relationships (e.g. Bumpass and Lu, 2000; Kiernan, 2002). These partnerships are also less 'defined' in the eyes of the law. Subsequently, children born into cohabiting partnerships often experience disruption in their living arrangements and have less support from the society in defining their families. Some found that these childhood arrangements could play a negative role in children's lives. For example, Brown (2004) found that children who were growing up with both biological parents who were cohabiting exhibited more behavioural and emotional problems and poorer school engagement in adolescence than those who were living with married biological parents, regardless of the levels of parental and economic resources in these families. Another study, by Manning and Lamb (2003), also showed that teenagers were more likely to have behavioural problems (in this case, delinquency) if they were living in a cohabiting step-parent family compared to married step-parent families, controlling for a range of background variables.

Poorer economic outcomes of children who grow up in cohabiting families are also well-documented (e.g. Lerman 2002). In his study, Lerman (2002) found that mothers who move into a married partnership experience a rise in their living standards by about 20 per cent compared to those who are in cohabitating partnerships. Although a marriage in itself cannot guarantee a happy and fulfilling family life, and many children grow up in cohabiting families without any experience of disadvantage, some research indicates that children of cohabiting relationships are more likely to experience adversity. Since the numbers of children born outside marriage are so large, these families are of importance. Additionally, not all studies showed a negative impact of growing up with parents who are not married.

Although for many people cohabiting relationships do not precede marriage (Seltzer, 2004), research shows that some of these relationships could be marriage-like or might be viewed as a prelude to a marriage (King and Scott, 2005; Coast, 2009), particularly by younger cohabiters (King and Scott, 2005). Moreover, US data shows that there has been an increase in the proportion of partnerships that break down within the first 10 years of the union formation, despite the stable divorce rates over the same period of time, due to the fact that fewer people marry their cohabiting partners (Bumpass and Lu, 2000).

#### **4.3.2.2 Changes in cohabitation over time**

A vast amount of research on the effects of premarital cohabitation on marital stability has been based on data collected from couples who were cohabiting in the 1970s and the 1980s (De Vaus et al, 2005). This, the authors point out, might be limiting in making inferences to the modern population as cohabiting relationships have become more common since then and cohabitation thus has a different impact on their marital stability, which De Vaus et al (2005) showed in the example of the 2001 Australian marriage sample, who did not exhibit any additional risk to their marriage stability with premarital cohabitation.

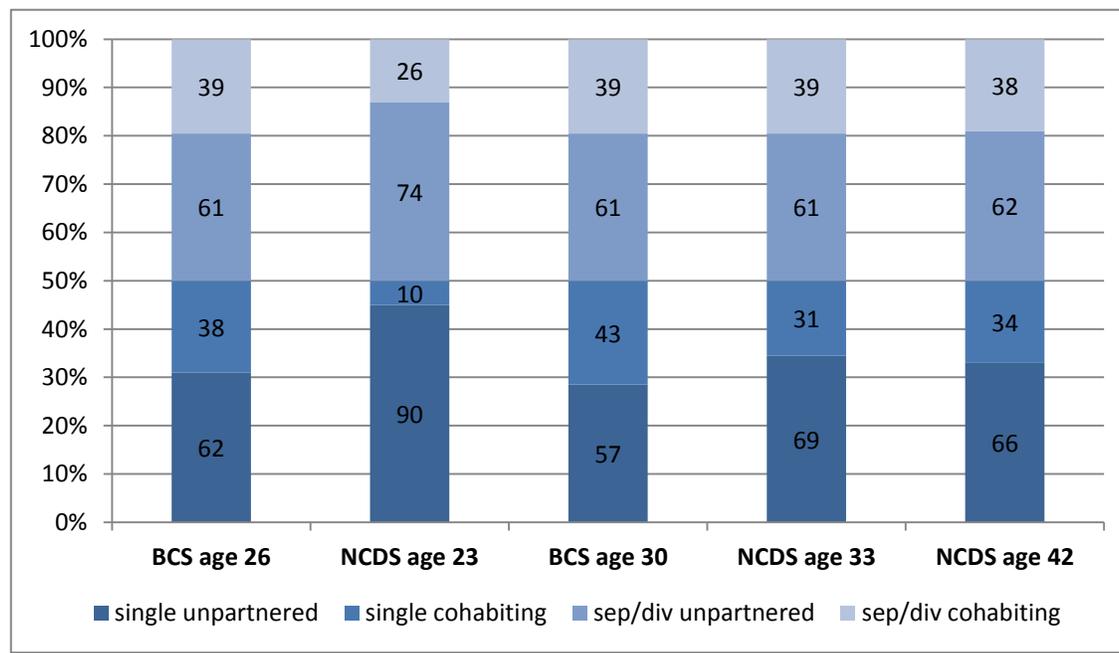
Subsequently, modern cohabiting couples might hold different family-related values and intentions than couples cohabiting during the times when cohabitation was not as widespread. Generally, it is found that cohabiters are less likely to hold traditional family values in terms of marriage and fertility, and are less likely to accept unsatisfactory marriages than non-cohabiters (Rouse, 2002; Axinn and Thornton, 1992; DeMaris and McDonald, 1993). Furthermore, people may change in the way they view cohabitation with time (Kiernan, 2001), which in turn could alter their view on marriage and the family. Using data from the British Household Panel Survey, Coast (2009) found that those who were involved in cohabiting relationships for a longer period of time were less likely to view it as a step towards marriage and had no intention of getting married to their cohabiting partner. She suggests that this could be due to selection into cohabiting relationships whereby those who have just begun cohabitation might be doing so because they decided to get married, while those who have been cohabiting for some time are less likely to have intentions of getting married. Given the evidence outlined, it is likely that unmarried currently cohabiting respondents from the BCS and NCDS cohorts are less

traditional in their attitudes towards marriage, divorce and parental separation than unmarried currently non-cohabiting respondents, particularly if they have never been married.

#### 4.3.2.3 Cohabitation and attitudes: results

Figure 4-8 below shows the proportions of cohabiting and unpartnered cohort members as a proportion of all unmarried respondents at each age. Since the attitude scores of those who were separated and divorced were similar to each other (by their cohabitation status), those who were separated or divorced and cohabiting were grouped together into one category, as well as those who were separated or divorced and unpartnered.

**Figure 4-8: Proportion of cohabiting and non-cohabiting respondents among single (never married) and divorced/separated cohort members, BCS and NCDS**



At a similar age, BCS (age 30) and NCDS (age 33), equivalent proportions of separated/divorced cohort members were cohabiting: approximately 40%, while larger proportions of never married BCS respondents (at 26 and 30) were cohabiting compared to NCDS (at 23 and 33).

Among both cohorts for both ages one-way ANOVA results indicate significant effect of marital/partnership status on cohort members' attitudes towards family and marriage (BCS

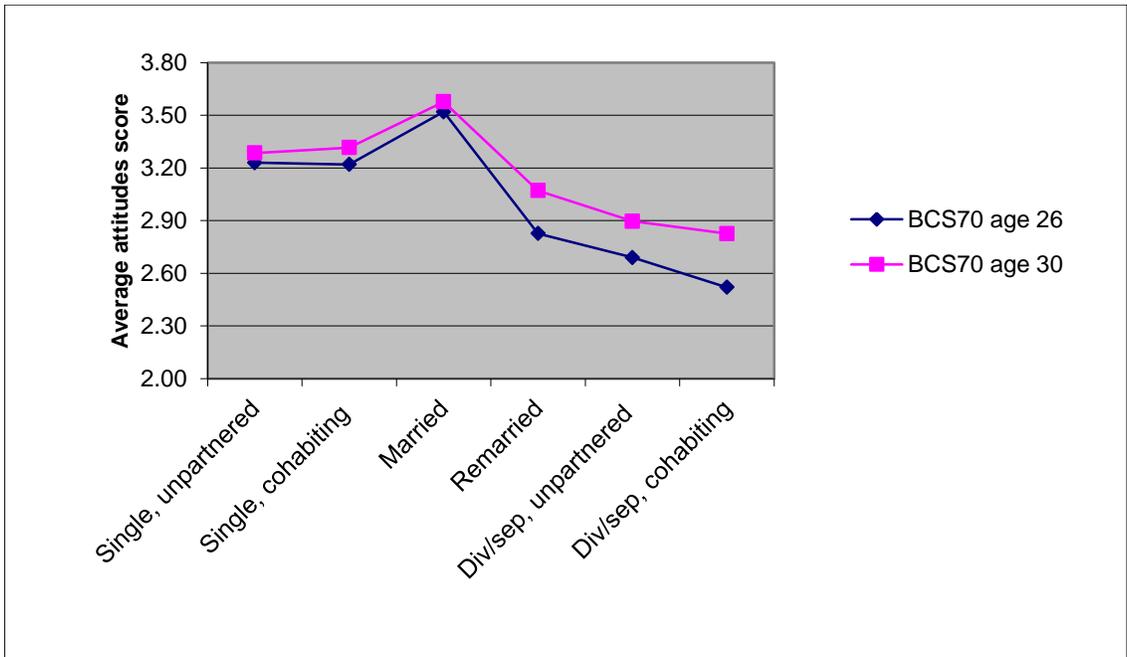
age 26:  $F(5, 8477)=118.229, p<0.001$ ; BCS age 30:  $F(5, 11083)=183.12, p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 33:  $F(5, 10416)=187.127, p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 42:  $F(5, 11187)=269.728, p<0.001$ ). The patterns of association are shown in Figures 4-9 and 4-10 below. These patterns indicate that partnership status appears to have a bigger effect on the attitudes of the never married individuals among the older cohort than the younger. The never married respondents who lived alone or who cohabited at the time of the survey scored similarly on the attitude scale at both ages among the BCS cohort, while never married NCDS respondents at both ages differed in their average scores depending on whether they had a partner living with them or not).

ANOVA's post-hoc Tukey's HSD tests show that there is no significant difference in average scores of never married individuals who lived alone and those who cohabited among the BCS cohort at both time points, but that these are significantly different among NCDS cohabiting and non-cohabiting never married respondents at both ages (see Appendix 2, Tables A17 to A20 for all the multiple comparisons tests).

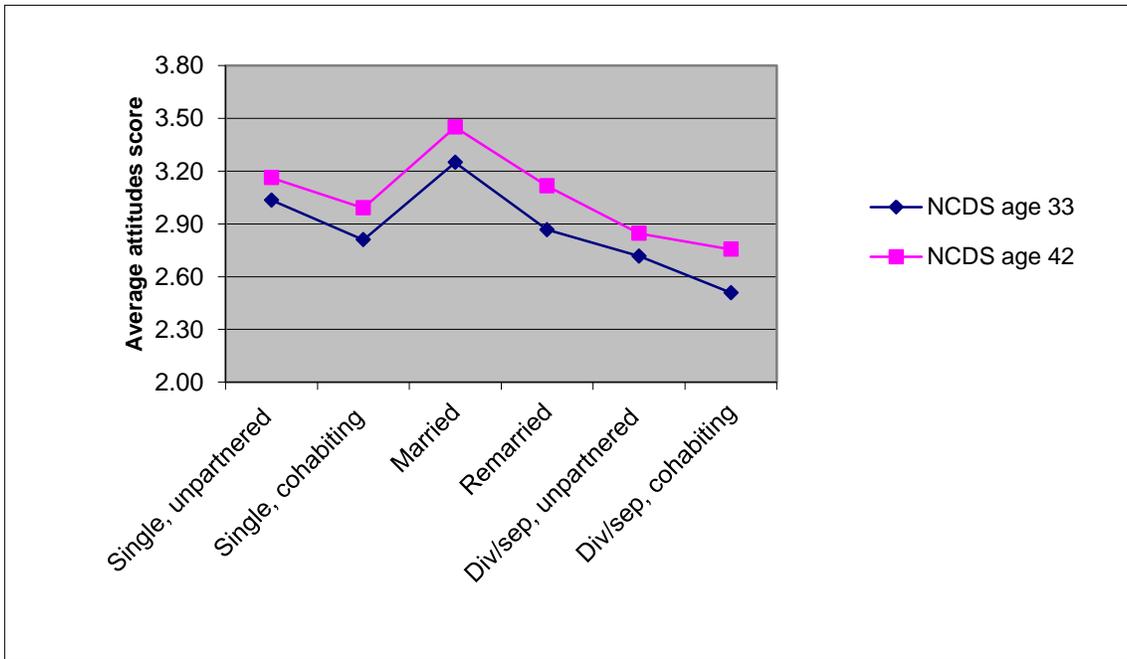
Despite the apparent difference between average attitudes of separated/divorced cohort members depending on their cohabiting status among the BCS cohort at both ages and NCDS at 42, Tukey's HSD tests (Appendix 2, Tables A17, A18 and A20) show that separated/divorced and cohabiting cohort members did not differ significantly in their attitudes from those who were not in a cohabiting partnership. On the other hand, separated/divorced cohabiting respondents at 33 (NCDS) were significantly less traditional than separated/divorced non-cohabitees (Appendix 2, Table A19).

Among BCS at the age of 26, remarried respondents were no different in their attitudes to family and marriage than either cohabiting or non-cohabiting separated/divorced respondents, but aged 30 remarried cohort members were significantly more traditional than separated/divorced cohabiting individuals (Appendix 2, Tables A17 and A18). Remarried NCDS cohort members were significantly more traditional than separated/divorced respondents regardless of their partnership status (Appendix 2, Tables A19 and A20).

**Figure 4-9: Attitudes to Marriage and Family and marital/partnership status, BCS**



**Figure 4-10: Attitudes to Marriage and Family and marital/partnership Status, NCDS**



### 4.3.3 Summary

The evidence from this section shows that:

- The lowest average scores on attitude to family and marriage among the respondents categorised by their marital status belong to the legally separated and divorced respondents who were cohabiting at the time. Divorced respondents in both cohorts at both time points did not differ in their attitudes to family and marriage from those who were legally separated. I therefore combined the two categories into one for all the further analyses.
- First time married respondents in both cohorts were significantly more traditional than any other marital group.
- Remarried BCS respondents at 26 were no different in their attitudes to those who were separated or divorced at the same age, but at a later age (age 30) and among the NCDS cohort at both ages, remarried respondents were significantly more traditional than those who were either divorced or separated. These are initial signs of potential adaptation effects of attitudes following a remarriage, whereby positive experience of marital re-partnership could bring about changes to cohort members' attitudes in a more positive and traditional direction.
- Furthermore, single never married respondents were the next most traditional marital group among BCS age 26 and 30 and NCDS age 33. Single NCDS respondents at 42 did not differ significantly from those who were remarried at 42. This is an important result, as it suggests that single never married people among the NCDS sample at the age of 42 differ in comparison to other marital groups from the NCDS cohort at 33 and the BCS cohort in their attitudes at both ages.

The reason for such a distinct pattern of attitudes of the NCDS never married respondents at 42 could be at least in part, explained by the age and cohort effects. Remaining unmarried at an older age could indicate both the selection of the certain groups of people

into such arrangements (such as less traditional attitudes to marriage and more favourable towards cohabiting or remaining un-partnered) as well as adaptation to such an arrangement whereby attitudes become less traditional as the hopes and intentions to marry become more rare among these individuals. In addition, many of the unmarried respondents are living in cohabiting partnerships (this is particularly evident for the younger cohort), which can also affect the way they view marriage and the family.

Investigation of the average attitude scores of single never married cohort members who were cohabiting revealed that NCDS never married respondents were significantly less traditional if they were in cohabiting partnerships compared to those who were not, while the BCS cohort did not show the same pattern. This is an interesting finding – although smaller proportions of NCDS never married respondents were cohabiting at each age compared to BCS respondents, it had a greater effect on their attitudes. King and Scott (2005) found that older and younger cohabitees viewed their relationships differently in terms of the “quality, meaning, and purpose” of the cohabiting relationship. While older cohabiting couples seemed to be happier in their relationships and described higher levels of relationship quality than the younger cohabitees, it was the younger cohabiting couples who more often saw their relationship as a step towards marriage. It is therefore reasonable to hypothesise that older cohabitees are more likely to be more content and therefore less likely to be planning to marry and less likely to be supporting traditional marital values than the younger cohabitees.

- I also found some indication of the gender and age effects on the relationship between marital status and attitudes to family and marriage. Women in each cohort and in each marital group are consistently expressing less traditional attitudes than men at both time points, this is particularly profound among the NCDS cohort when cohabitation status of unmarried respondents was taken into account.

The next section of this chapter continues to explore experiences of partnership dissolution and cohort member’s attitudes. But do breakdowns from cohabiting partnerships have similar effects on respondents’ attitudes as marital dissolution has? While this section showed that those who experienced a marital breakdown (i.e. separated/divorced or

remarried) were less traditional than those who had not (i.e. single never married and first time married cohort members), exploration of cohabiting partnership dissolutions will help to further uncover the differences in attitudes between never married respondents among the BCS and NCDS cohorts.

#### **4.4 Partnership breakdown(s) and attitudes to family and marriage**

Berrington and Daimond (1999) found that married people who had at least one separation from a cohabiting partner in the past were at a higher risk of subsequent marital dissolution, which they and others (e.g. Booth and Johnson, 1988; Axinn and Thornton, 1992) suggest could be due to the selection effects: those who had a cohabiting relationship would have less traditional attitudes towards marriage as well as differing demographic characteristics. I therefore expect those who had experienced a breakdown of at least one cohabiting union to have less traditional attitudes than those who had not. I also predict that despite its effect on attitudes, a separation from a cohabiting partner is not as strongly related to less traditional attitudes as a separation from a marital partner. This section of the chapter investigates the difference that previous cohabiting relationship breakdowns make to attitudes that people hold towards family and marriage, using one-way and two-way analyses of variance.

##### **4.4.1 Partnership breakdown(s): measurement**

Measures indicating whether respondents had experienced a separation in the past were derived using the information on the dates of previous relationship(s) ending, as indicated by the respondents retrospectively.

To derive a separation indicator for the BCS cohort at 26 (for any separations between the ages of 16 and 26), partnership histories collected at the age of 30 were used. At that age, BCS respondents were asked about ex-partners they had lived with for one month or more since the age of 16, along with the year they separated and whether they were married to that ex-partner. Therefore those who indicated the presence of an ex-partner from whom they separated before the year of the age 26 wave, were coded as ‘separated by 26’.

Additionally, it was possible to distinguish the separation as from a marital or non-marital partner by referring to the question of whether the cohort member married an ex-partner. Therefore a variable which indicated whether cohort members had ever experienced a cohabiting or marital relationship breakdown was derived. Ideally, I would have preferred to use partnership histories at 26 for recollection of previous relationships up to that age, but no such detailed information was collected at the age of 26. One of the major drawbacks of using information from age 30 for histories for ages 16 to 26 is the potential for a recall error due to a long time passing between some partnership breakdowns and the time of their recollection at the age of 30. To validate the information about partnerships that ended prior to age 26 provided by cohort members at age 30, I used available data on current marital status at 26 to cross-check the resulting separation variable. If a respondent indicated being separated, divorced or remarried in their answers to a current marital status question at age 26, I used this information as a default in the cases where no marital separation was reported in the separation histories at age 30. Unfortunately, no such checks are possible for the unmarried respondents who might have had cohabiting relationship breakdown(s) but who had not reported the dates of them ending. In a similar manner, I derived a variable for separations among the BCS cohort between the ages of 16 and 30, using information at age 30 about the dissolutions of ex-partnerships, cross-checking these with cohort members' marital status at the corresponding age.

I used a similar algorithm to derive separation indicators prior to age 33 and age 42 for the NCDS cohort. The partnership history questions were included in the age 33 wave and I therefore based the derivation of the separations between age 16 and 33 on these data. I also used cohort members' reports on their current marital status at 33 to validate the newly derived separations variable. I constructed the separations prior to age 42 variable for NCDS in a similar way, using partnership histories collected at the age of 42. To boost the sample size and the accuracy of the separations between age 16 and 42, I utilised information on separations derived from age 33 data and used these data where it was missing in the variable derived from the age 42 data. Similarly to BCS respondents, NCDS cohort members were asked whether they were married to an ex-partner allowing the distinction between marital and cohabiting separations.

Figure 4-11 below shows the proportions of cohort members in each group according to separation experiences at each age, where ‘separated from cohabitation’ refers to ever experiencing at least one cohabiting relationship breakdown (but never marital) prior to the age indicated, ‘separated from marriage’ indicates that cohort members experienced at least one marital breakdown<sup>11</sup> and ‘never separated’ refers to those who never experienced either a cohabiting or marital partnership dissolution. It is evident that at an older age both cohorts are more likely to have experienced some type of relationship breakdown. NCDS cohort members are more likely to have experienced a marital breakdown than BCS at both ages.

**Figure 4-11: Proportion of cohort members who experience partnership breakdown(s), BCS and NCDS**

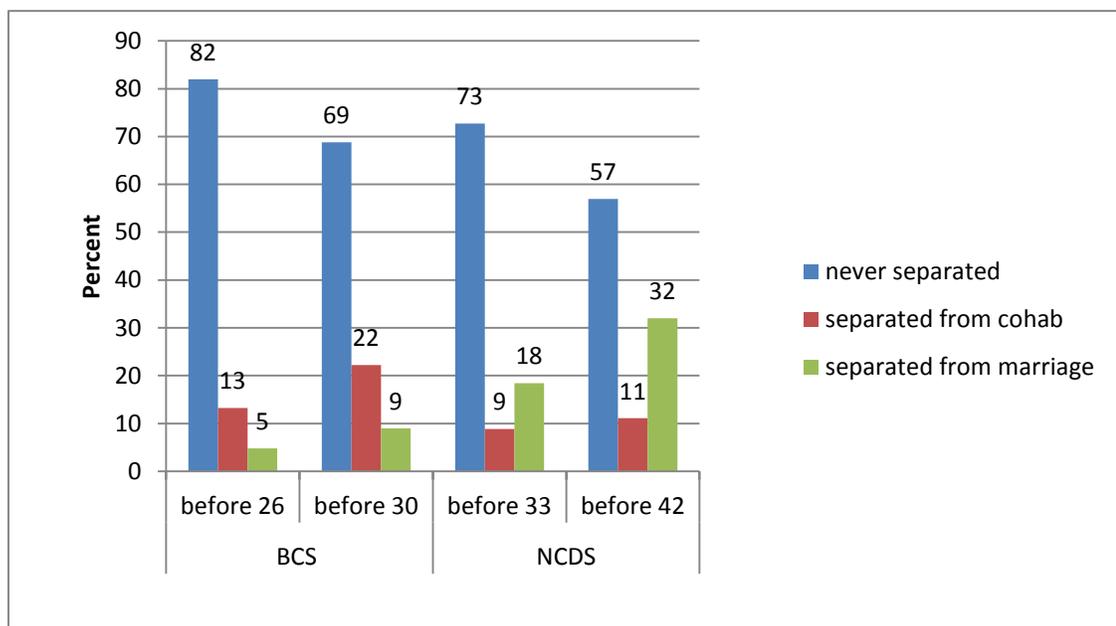
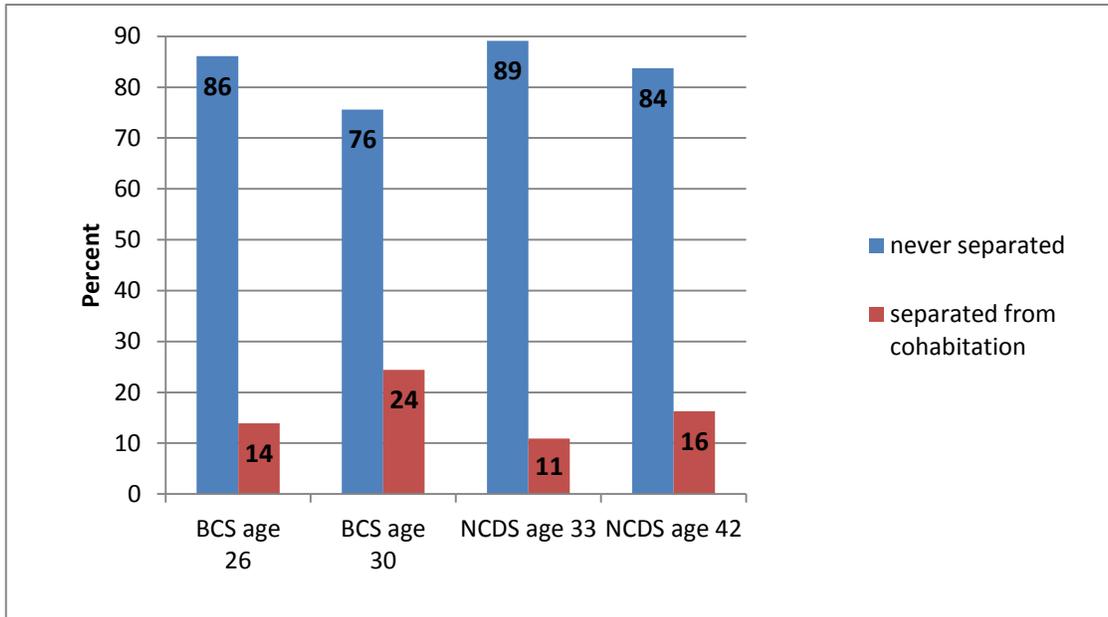


Figure 4-12 below shows the proportions of cohort members who never experienced a marital dissolution grouped by their cohabitation breakdown histories. A larger proportion of the BCS cohort at age 30 compared to NCDS at age 33 experienced at least one breakdown of a cohabiting union. While 24% of these BCS respondents at the age of 30 experienced a breakdown of a cohabiting relationship, only 11% of the NCDS respondents

<sup>11</sup> Those who have separated from a marital relationship could have also experienced a cohabiting separation in the past. Here I take a marital breakdown to be a dominant relationship dissolution and I do not account for any additional cohabiting partnership breakdowns for these individuals

did at approximately the same age (at 33); this highlights the differences between the cohabiting partnership histories of cohort members in the two studies at a similar age.

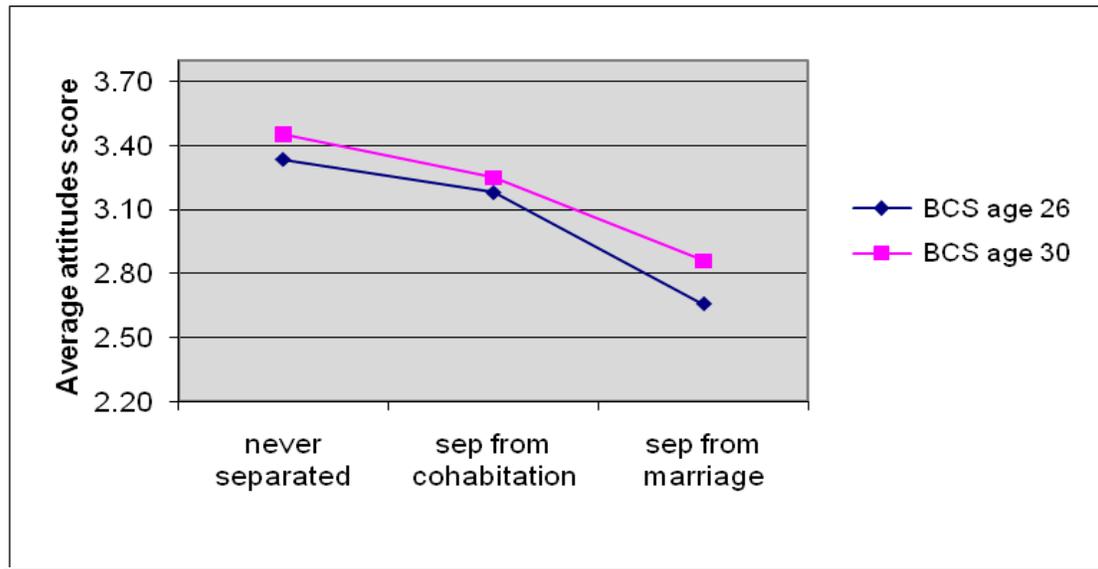
**Figure 4-12: Proportion of cohort members without experience of marital breakdown and their experience of partnership breakdown(s), BCS and NCDS**



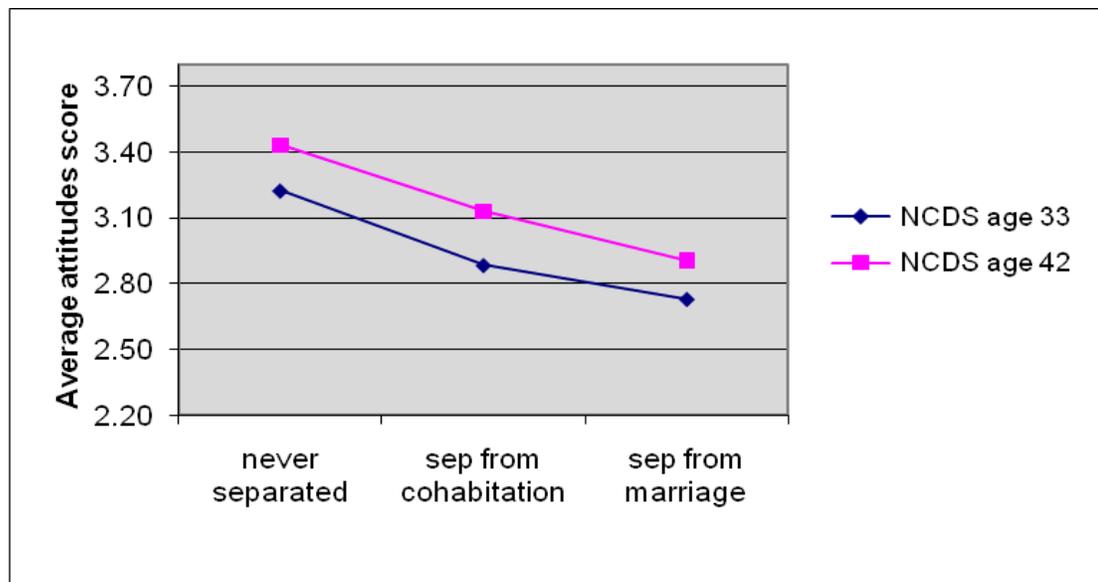
#### 4.4.2 Partnership breakdown(s) and attitudes to family and marriage

Looking at the average attitude scores at each time point by respondents' experience of relationship breakdown prior to that time point (see Figures 4-13 and 4-14 below), it is evident that those who had not reported any relationship breakdown were more traditional than those who had separated from at least one cohabiting partner or those who had separated from a marital partner. One-way ANOVA analyses (full results in Appendix 2, Tables A21 and A22) confirm the significant effect of separation histories on attitudes to family and marriage for both cohorts at each age (BCS age 26:  $F(2, 7341)=173.87$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; BCS age 30:  $F(2, 11073)=328.00$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 33:  $F(2, 10388)=387.99$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 42:  $F(2, 9901)=508.48$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) while Tukey's HSD tests confirm significant difference in attitude means between each pair of partnership breakdown groups (see Appendix 2, Tables A23 to A26).

**Figure 4-13: Average attitudes scores and experience of partnership breakdown(s) in the past, BCS age 26 and 30**



**Figure 4-14: Average attitudes scores and experience of partnership breakdown(s) in the past, NCDS age 33 and 42**



In the previous section, I showed that divorced/legally separated and remarried cohort members were significantly less traditional than married and never married respondents (with the exception of NCDS age 42: remarried respondents were no different in their attitudes from the never married respondents at that age). What these respondents had in

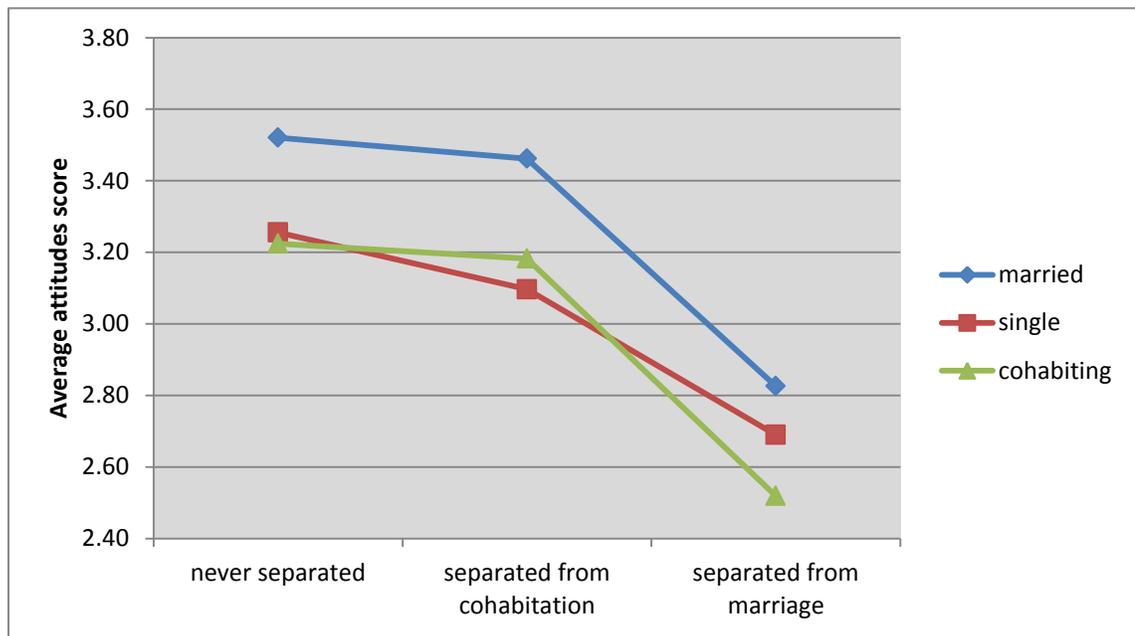
common is the experience of a marital breakdown. I also found that never married cohabiting NCDS respondents were significantly less traditional than those who were not in a cohabiting partnership. However, this was not the case among the BCS respondents. I hypothesised that the difference could lie in the age and life course differences between the cohorts. NCDS at 42, particularly, may have remained in cohabiting relationships as opposed to getting married or remaining single because they ‘chose’ this arrangement. They are most probably less traditional than those who end up in marital relationships or those who remain single while ‘waiting’ to form a more traditional form of partnership. Alternatively, their attitudes might be more affected by the previous cohabiting partnership dissolution(s) whereby their ‘faith’ in marriage lasting a lifetime, and views on divorce being easy to get and parents remaining together for the sake of their children might have been altered.

To test the latter, I undertook a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to explore the effects of previous separations on the relationship between attitudes and legal partnership status. An indicator of a legal status of the current partnership distinguishes between those who are unmarried and unpartnered (whether never married or separated/divorced) – referred to as “single” in the remaining part of this section; those who are married (whether married for the first time or remarried); and those who are cohabiting (regardless of their previous marital status).

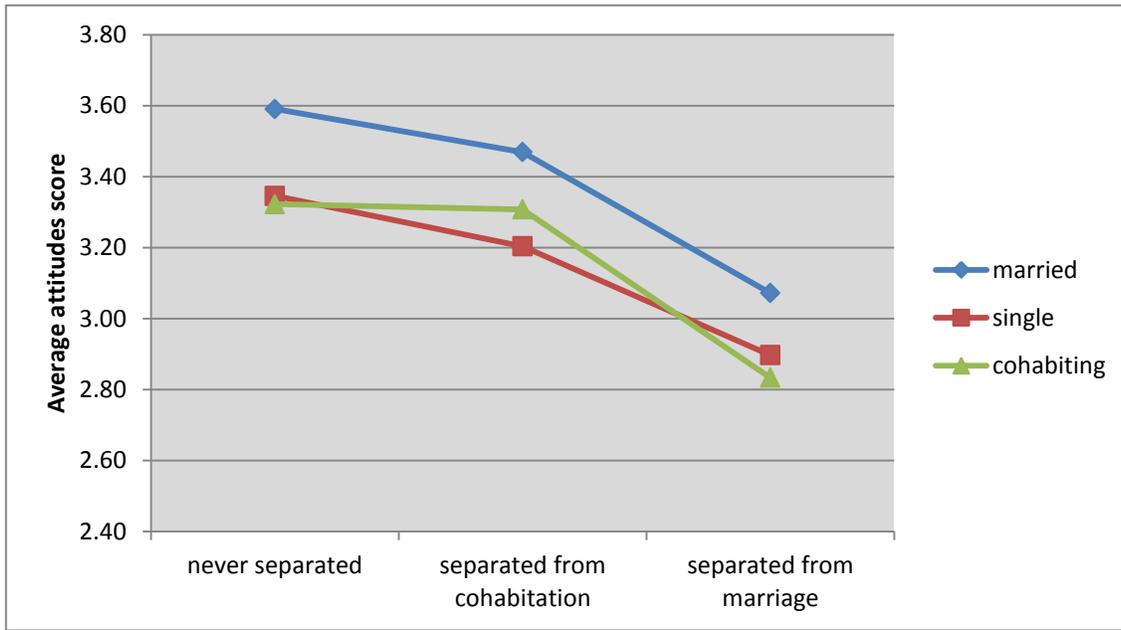
It is clear that there is a difference in the patterns of attitudes between the two cohorts depending on their separation histories and current legal partnership status (Figures 4-15 to 4-18). Results from ANOVA analyses show that attitudes of cohort members vary significantly depending on their separation histories, controlling for their current legal partnership status (BCS age 26:  $F(2, 7308)=111.030$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; BCS age 30:  $F(2, 10908)=188.910$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 33:  $F(2, 10341)= 140.990$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 42:  $F(2, 9744)=121.150$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), indicating a lasting effect of separation on cohort members’ attitudes with the least traditional attitudes associated with those who were separated from marriage and the most traditional with those without any separations in the past (see Appendix 2, Tables A27 and A28 for the full details of the results).

Additionally, there is a significant interaction effect of previous separations and current legal partnership status for the BCS cohort at both ages but not for the NCDS cohort (BCS age 26:  $F(4, 7308)=2.420, p<0.05$ ; BCS age 30:  $F(4, 10908)=2.690, p<0.05$ ; NCDS age 33:  $F(4, 10341)=0.380, p>0.05$ ; NCDS age 42:  $F(4, 9744)=0.870, p>0.05$ ). This suggests that separation histories are associated with attitudes of the BCS cohort differently than for the NCDS cohort. Figures 4-15 and 4-16 below show that previous breakdown(s) of cohabiting partnerships is not associated with attitudes of single respondents in the same way that it is associated with married and cohabiting cohort member for the BCS. This trend is similar at both age 26 and age 30, whereby the experience of cohabiting relationship breakdown is associated with less traditional attitudes among single respondents than among those who were married or cohabiting at the time, indicating possible adaptation effects of attitudes following a re-partnership, especially that cohabiting cohort members with cohabitation breakdown scored higher on the attitude scale than single respondents with experience of at least one cohabitation breakdown.

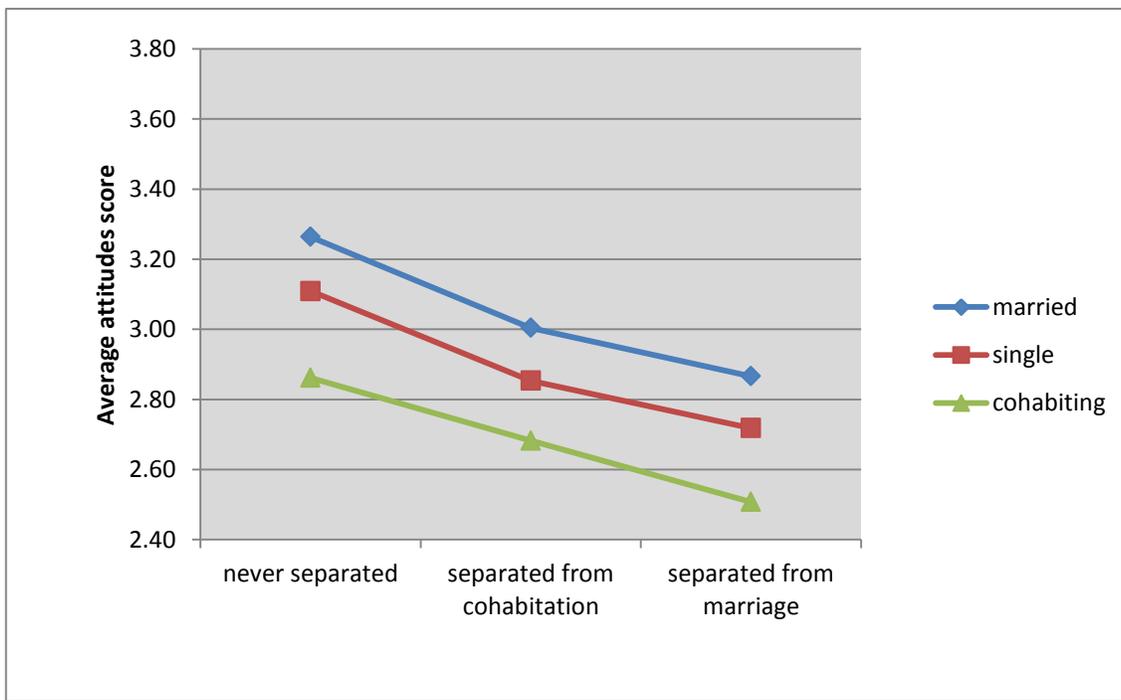
**Figure 4-15: Average attitudes scores and experience of partnership breakdown(s) by legal partnership status, BCS at 26**



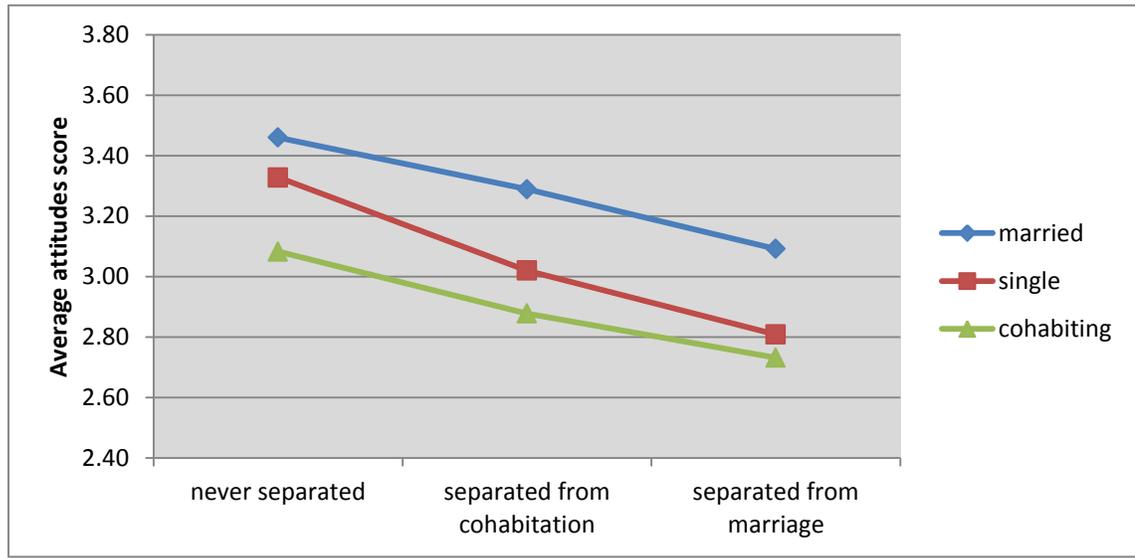
**Figure 4-16: Average attitudes scores and experience of partnership breakdown(s) by legal partnership status, BCS at 30**



**Figure 4-17: Average attitudes scores and experience of partnership breakdown(s) by legal partnership status, NCDS age 33**



**Figure 4-18: Average attitudes scores and experience of partnership breakdown(s) by legal partnership status, NCDS at 42**



#### 4.4.3 Summary

- While the experience of marital breakdown is more common among the NCDS cohort at age 33, cohabitation breakdowns are more common among the never BCS respondents at age 30.
- The relationship between the experience of partnership breakdown and attitudes is very strong whereby those who experienced a marital breakdown are the least traditional, followed by those who experienced cohabiting relationship dissolution.
- Among the NCDS cohort, there is no difference in attitudes within each marital group depending on whether they had a cohabiting relationship breakdown, but there is a difference in attitudes among the BCS respondents within marital groups depending on their history of cohabiting partnership dissolutions.

## 4.5 Marital/partnership trajectories and attitudes to family and marriage

Previous sections of this chapter demonstrate a strong relationship between various measures of marital and partnership status and attitudes to family and marriage among respondents of both cohorts. The results point at potential adaptation effects of attitudes among re-partnered cohort members: those who were separated/divorced had the least traditional attitudes of all marital groups, while remarried cohort members, particularly among the older respondents, were significantly more traditional than those who were separated or divorced, but less traditional than first time married cohort members. Additionally, among the BCS cohort, attitudes appear to adapt not only to marital status, but also to cohabiting: those who were cohabiting following at least one previous cohabiting partnership breakdown were significantly more traditional than those who were not cohabiting but also had a history of at least one cohabiting relationship dissolution.

In this section I begin to explore the changes in attitudes that take place following cohort members' marital and partnership status change. Some of the questions to be addressed include:

- Do those who marry between time 1 and time 2 become significantly more traditional in their attitudes than they were prior to marriage?
- Do those who get divorced become less traditional?
- Is there a similar pattern among those who form or end cohabiting partnerships?

I also explore the signs of selection effects of attitudes into marital behaviour: did those who “chose” more traditional marital arrangements initially express more traditional attitudes than those who embarked upon a less traditional path?

## **4.5.1 Marital trajectories and attitudes to family and marriage: adaptation effect of attitudes?**

### **4.5.1.1 Most common marital trajectories: measure**

To derive marital trajectories variables I combined the marital status groups for each person at two points in time (BCS at 26 and 30; NCDS at 33 and 42). For example, if a BCS respondent was single (never married) at the age of 26 and married for the first time at 30, this respondent is allocated into the marital trajectory called “single -> married”, which indicates that this respondent’s marital trajectory was getting married between 26 and 30. When the marital status of a respondent remains the same at both time points, for example remarried, this respondent is allocated to the trajectory “remarried”, etc. The following analysis is explorative and does not aim to establish a precise effect of partnership change on change in attitudes. For example, even though a person might remain in the same marital group (such as single, never married), this is not to say that they did not experience relationship breakdown(s) between the two time points. It is therefore not possible to precisely establish the direction of the effect of their marital trajectories and attitudes. However, investigating the attitudes of cohort members with the marital trajectories described above provides a good foundation for more thorough analyses in Chapter 7, which explores the adaptation effects of attitudes following a specific marital transition, controlling for the background characteristics of cohort members.

Tables 4-1 and 4-2 show the numbers of respondents among the cohorts in each marital trajectory. These categories capture over 90% of the available data on marital status at two time points for each cohort. Not all data is used here due to either small numbers in some categories (e.g. only a handful of respondents were married for the first time at 26 and remarried by 30 among the BCS cohort, etc.) or due to invalid responses in other categories (e.g. some NCDS respondents reported being divorced at 33 and then “single, never married” at 42). Thus, only the most common and accurately reported trajectories are presented here and are used in further analyses in this section.

Another issue with creating these trajectory variables concerns the difference in the age between the cohorts and, potentially, a cohort effect on marital transitions. These

differences are reflected in the marital trajectories variables through different categories created for each cohort, depending on the amount of available data. Thus, for example, the largest “trajectory” among the BCS cohort between ages 26 and 30 was remaining single (never married) - 48% - and the largest proportion of NCDS respondents remained married for the first time - 51%<sup>12</sup>. These derived trajectory variables include a category for those who were remarried at time 1 and legally separated or divorced at time 2 for the NCDS cohort but not for BCS due to the unavailability of data which resulted from the difference in age and, perhaps, period of life of the latter cohort. Effectively, this means that I will not be able to assess the way the younger cohort’s attitudes change following a separation or divorce from a second (or more) marriage.

The three largest marital trajectory groups among the BCS cohort are: single (never married) respondents at 26 who remained single at 30 (48.1%); married respondents who remained married (27.2%); and single at 26 who got married by the age of 30 (17.7%). Only a small proportion of BCS respondents got separated or divorced from their first marriage (3.6%), remained divorced or separated at both time points (2.6%) or got remarried by the age of 29/30 after saying they were divorced or separated at 26 (0.8%). The marital trajectories that BCS cohort members embarked upon differed by gender and are reflected in Table 4-1 below. A greater proportion of men than women remained single (55.3% and 42.2%, respectively), but a greater proportion of women than men remained married (31.6% and 21.7%, respectively) as well as divorced or separated (3.5% among women and 1.4% among men).

**Table 4-1: Most common marital trajectories between 26 and 30, BCS men and women**

	Men	Women	Total
single	55.3%	42.2%	48.1%
married	21.7%	31.6%	27.2%
single->married	18.2%	17.3%	17.7%
married->separated/divorced	2.8%	4.3%	3.6%
separated/divorced	1.4%	3.5%	2.6%
separated /divorced -> remarried	0.6%	1.1%	0.8%
Total	100%	100%	100%
	3266	4039	7305

Men and women:  $\chi^2(5)=177.756$ ,  $p<0.001$

<sup>12</sup> These figures represent a proportion from the sample included in the final trajectory variables in Tables 4-1 and 4-2

The largest marital trajectory group among the NCDS cohort is that of continuously married for the first time respondents (57.3%), followed by those who remained single (12.3%). The largest proportion of respondents with a change in marital status between the ages of 33 and 42 were those married at time 1 and separated or divorced by time 2 (8.6%). Only small proportions of the NCDS cohort got married (4.3%) and remarried (3.5%) between age 33 and 42. Among this cohort, the same proportion of men and women remained married (57.3%) and similar proportions divorced or separated between the ages of 33 and 42 (8.3% of women and 8.8% of men). Slightly larger proportions of NCDS men than women remained single (14.0% vs 10.7%) and got married for the first time (6.2% of men and 3.6% of women). A larger proportion of women than men remained remarried (5.9% of women and 4.3% of men) and divorced or separated (7.9% of women and 5.0%).

**Table 4-2: Most common marital trajectories between 33 and 42, NCDS men and women**

	Men	Women	Total
Married	57.3%	57.3%	57.3%
Single	14.0%	10.7%	12.3%
married -> separated/divorced	8.3%	8.8%	8.6%
separated/divorced	5.0%	7.9%	6.5%
Remarried	4.3%	5.9%	5.1%
single -> married	6.2%	3.6%	4.8%
sep/div -> remarried	3.5%	4.1%	3.8%
remarried -> separated/divorced	1.3%	1.7%	1.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%
	4,382	4,739	9,121

Men and women:  $\chi^2(7)=98.334$ ,  $p<0.001$

It is evident from the figures shown above that the majority of the respondents from both cohorts remained in the same marital status at both time points (78% of BCS respondents and 81% of NCDS), but the characteristics of their unchanged marital situation are dramatically different. For example, while over half of the NCDS respondents remained married between the two time points under investigation, approximately half of the BCS cohort remained single (never married).

The changes in marital status that are of particular interest to this study are those associated with getting married for the first time as well as getting separated/divorced from both first and later marriages. Since previous studies found people to become more supportive of traditional marital values once they got married (e.g. Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 2004; Moors, 2000), I hypothesise that cohort members who were single at time 1 and married by time 2 will express more traditional attitudes towards marriage following the transition. Those who were married initially and got divorced at a later stage would be more likely to become less traditional in their attitudes (e.g. Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 2004; Berrington et al, 2005). Remarriage might also result in a change in cohort members' attitudes in a more traditional direction. The next part of the study examines precisely that: attitude change associated with marital trajectories.

#### **4.5.1.2 Marital trajectories and change in attitudes**

To begin the exploration of attitude change between the two time points for each cohort, individual attitude score at time 1 was subtracted from a score at time 2. A positive result of the subtraction indicates an increase in attitude score (therefore, a movement of attitudes in a more traditional direction) and a negative result indicates that the score at time 2 was lower than that at time 1 (indicating a movement of attitudes in a less traditional direction). A zero change in an individual's score implies unchanged attitudes.

Table 4-3 below that, as hypothesised in the preceding part of this chapter, a very large proportion of those who got divorced following a first marriage between the two time points became less traditional in their attitudes towards family and marriage after the divorce. This is particularly evident for the younger cohort, whereby 70.8% of the BCS respondents and 54.2% of NCDS who got divorced or separated between the two time points expressed less traditional attitudes to marriage and the family than they did when they were still married.

**Table 4-3: Marital trajectories and change in attitudes, BCS between age 26 and 30, NCDS between age 33 and 42**

Marital/partnership trajectories	BCS attitudes at 30 compared to 26				NCDS attitudes at 42 compared to 33			
	More	Same	Less	Total 100%	More	Same	Less	Total 100%
single->married	<b>48.2%</b>	23.1%	28.7%	1,262	<b>58.5%</b>	21.9%	19.6%	424
married->sep/divorced	15.8%	13.5%	<b>70.8%</b>	260	29.5%	16.3%	<b>54.2%</b>	749
sep/divorced -> remarried	<b>62.3%</b>	23.0%	14.8%	61	<b>66.3%</b>	14.5%	19.3%	332
remarried -> sep/divorced	Not measured				38.2%	14.5%	<b>47.3%</b>	131
Total	42.1	19.9	38.1	100	48.1	16.8	35.1	100
	687	341	555	1,583	739	282	615	1,636

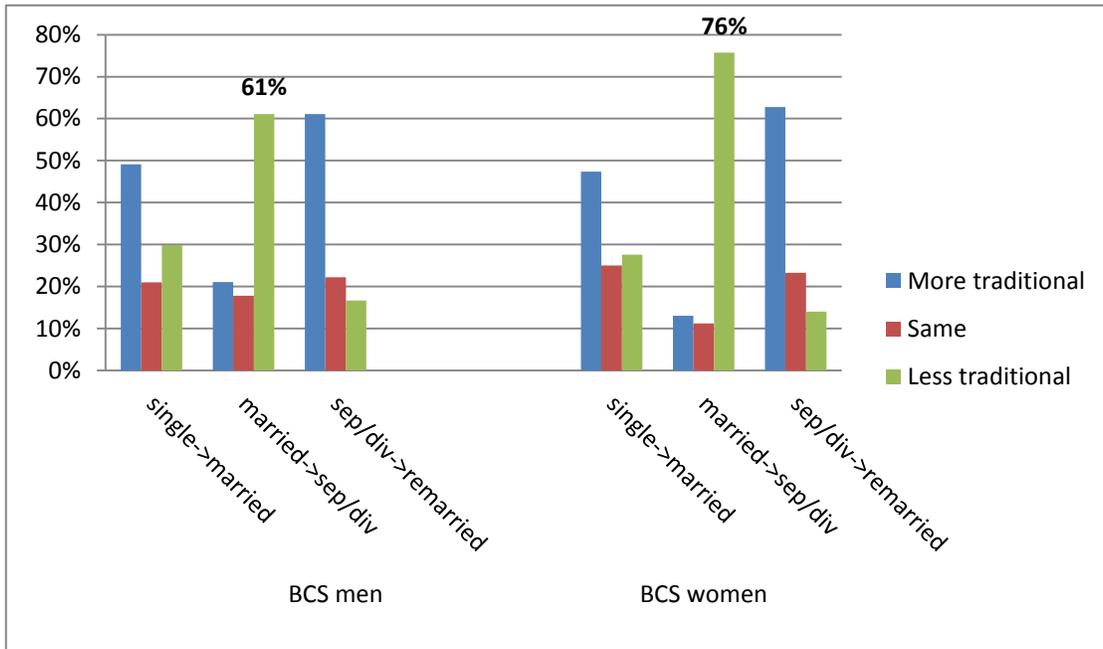
Note: More=more traditional than at time 1; Same=not more or less traditional than at time 1; Less=less traditional than at time 1.

Cohort members who *got married for the first time* between the two time points expressed more traditional attitudes following their marriage: 48.2% among the BCS cohort and 58.5% among NCDS. The change in a more traditional direction is even more evident among those who remarried between the two time points: 62.3% of the BCS cohort members who got *remarried* became more traditional in their attitudes and 66.6% of the NCDS respondents. Among the NCDS cohort members who were married for the second (or more) time at 33 but were either legally separated or divorced at 42, almost a half became less traditional in their attitudes following the separation (47.3%). At the same time, a sizeable proportion of them became more traditional (38.2%), making this marital trajectory group's attitude change differ from those who separated from a first marriage.

#### Marital trajectories and change in attitudes: men and women

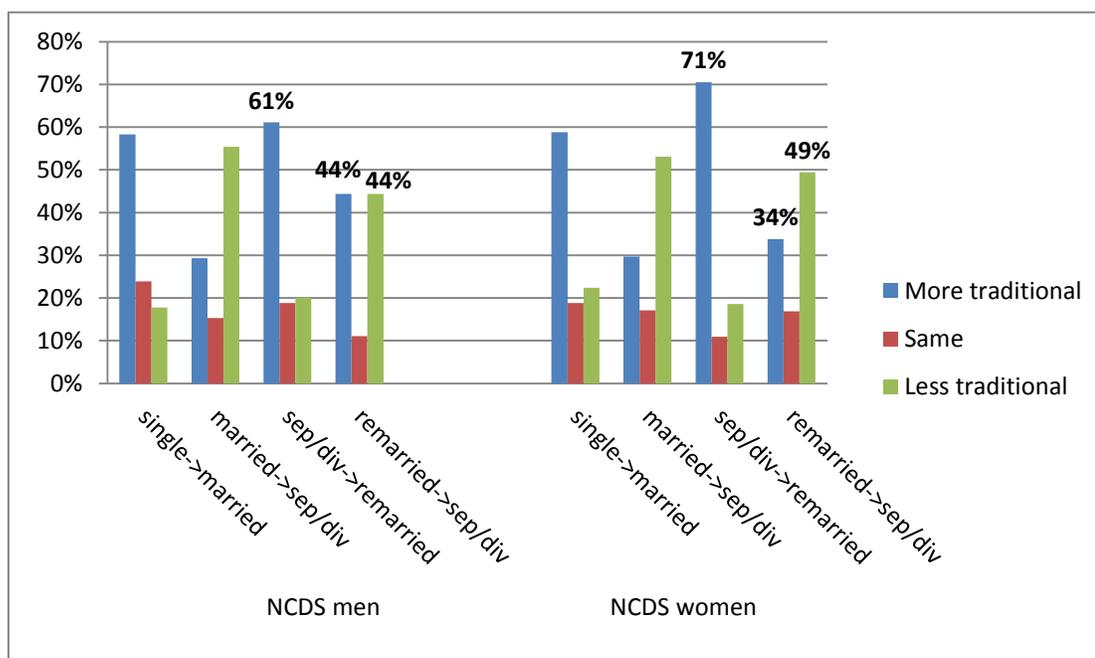
The only substantial difference in attitude change between BCS men and women depending on marital trajectories that took place between age 26 and 30 lies in a greater proportion of separated/divorced women than men becoming less traditional in attitudes than they were when they were married (76% among women and 61% among men) - see Figure 4-19. Other proportions of attitude change among BCS men and women in the same marital trajectories are very similar.

**Figure 4-19: Attitude change and marital trajectories between age 26 and 30, BCS men and women**



NCDS women’s attitudes changed more compared to men’s following a remarriage: 71% of women who were remarried at 42 expressed more traditional attitudes compared to when they were separated or divorced at 33 compared to 61% of men (see Figure 4-20). Another striking difference between NCDS men and women lies in the change in attitudes of those who separated or divorced following a remarriage. While similar proportions of men became more and less traditional after they separated from their second (or more) wife (44%), a larger proportion of women became less traditional than more traditional after separating from their second (or more) husband (49% and 34%, respectively), indicating that a separation/divorce from a remarriage might have a stronger effect on attitude change in a less traditional direction for NCDS women than men.

**Figure 4-20: Attitude change and marital trajectories between age 33 and 42, NCDS men and women**



#### 4.5.1.3 No change in marital status and change in attitudes

Interestingly, a greater proportion of cohort members who did not experience any change in marital status between the two time points became more traditional (than less traditional or scored the same) in their attitudes, particularly among the NCDS cohort. Table 4-4 below illustrates changes in attitudes for those whose marital status remained unchanged for the two time points. The “unchanged” marital status is not however indicative of unchanged circumstances (with the exception of first time married cohort members) as I did not limit the sample at this stage to those with no partnership breakdowns or only one partnership formation between the two points of data collection.

**Table 4-4: No change in marital status and attitude change, BCS between age 26 and 30, NCDS between age 33 and 42**

	BCS attitudes at 30 compared to 26				NCDS attitudes at 42 compared to 33			
	More	Same	Less	Total (100%)	More	Same	Less	Total (100%)
single	45.6%	21.4%	33.0%	3,385	50.2%	24.3%	25.5%	1,049
married	38.7%	24.5%	36.8%	1,924	49.3%	22.2%	28.5%	5,030
separated/divorced	48.3%	21.3%	30.3%	178	49.6%	17.5%	32.9%	565
remarried	Not measured				57.7%	17.8%	24.5%	449
Total	44.2	22.4	33.4	100	51.7	20.5	27.9	100
	2,374	1,233	1,880	5,487	3,547	1,550	1,996	7,093

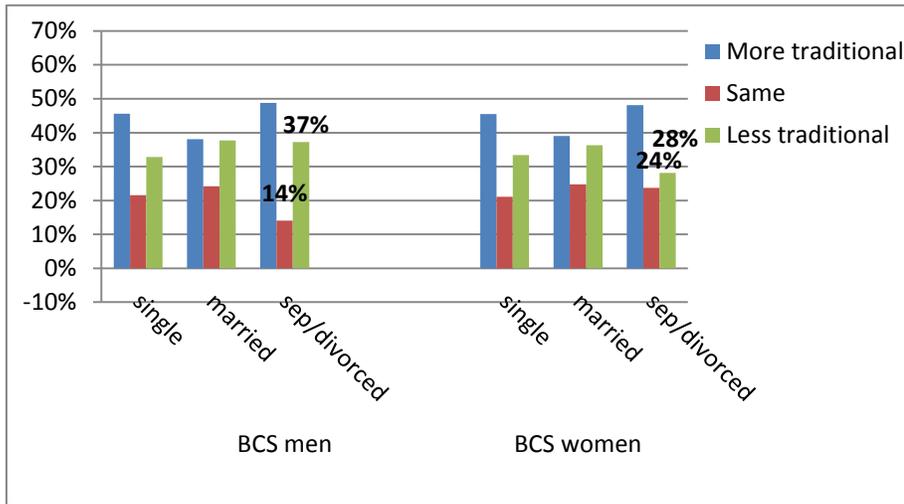
Note: More=more traditional than at time 1; Same=not more or less traditional than at time 1; Less=less traditional than at time 1.

Around 58% of NCDS respondents who were remarried at the age of 33 and stayed remarried up to age 42 became more traditional in their attitudes. Half of NCDS cohort members who were single, married, or separated/divorced at both ages became more traditional in their attitudes. Although similar trends are observed among the BCS respondents whose marital status remained unchanged at both time points, the extent is not as dramatic as for the NCDS cohort with only a slightly larger proportion of them becoming more traditional than less traditional. Perhaps the most interesting changes in attitudes observed are among the first time married BCS cohort: they were just as likely to become less traditional as they were to become more traditional in their attitudes if they remained married between 26 and 30.

No change in marital status and change in attitudes: men and women

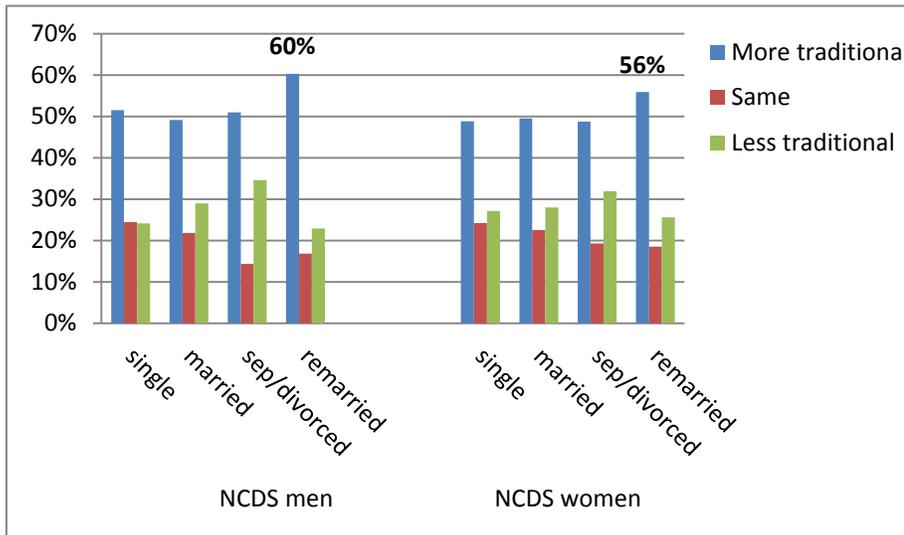
I found very little difference in the way attitudes of men and women change when they do not experience a marital transition. Generally, as shown for the whole sample of BCS and particularly the NCDS sample, greater proportions of both men and women become more traditional in their attitudes with time (as opposed to becoming less traditional and remaining the same). The only substantial difference in attitude change between men and women is recorded for those who remained divorced or separated, whereby a larger proportion of men than women in the BCS cohort became more traditional between age 26 and 30 (37% of men and 28% of women).

**Figure 4-21: No change in marital status and attitude change, BCS men and women between age 26 and 30**



Among the NCDS cohort, a slight gender difference in attitude change was found for those who remained remarried between the ages of 33 and 42, whereby a larger proportion of men than women became more traditional (60% and 56%, respectively).

**Figure 4-22: No change in marital status and attitude change, NCDS men and women between age 33 and 42**



## 4.5.2 Marital/partnership trajectories and changes in attitudes to family and marriage

In the previous part of this chapter, I showed that getting married and especially getting remarried is associated with the largest proportion of positive attitude change among the cohort members, particularly among the NCDS respondents. Larger proportions of those who were married at time 1 and divorced or separated by time 2 became less traditional (rather than becoming more traditional or remaining the same), particularly among the BCS cohort. Separation from a second marriage is not, however, associated with as large a proportion of cohort members becoming less traditional as observed from the first marriage dissolution (NCDS only data). So it appears that there is a strong relationship between attitude change and the gain and loss of marital partner, measured by current marital status. But do cohabiting relationship breakdowns and formations have a similar association with attitude changes to marital ones?

Lesthaeghe and Surkyn (2004), for example, showed that single people who form cohabiting partnerships adjust their attitudes towards the less traditional spectrum of the marriage and family scale. My initial exploration of average attitude scores shows that single cohabiting cohort members are indeed significantly less traditional in their marital attitudes, but only among the NCDS cohort. This section explores the relationship between cohabiting partnership changes that took place between two time points and the changes in attitudes associated with them.

I derived a combined marital/partnership trajectory variable for each cohort, which allows for a closer investigation of respondents' attitude changes with changes in their partnership situations. Similarly to the marital trajectories described above, marital/partnership trajectory variables are limited by the amount of data available for each cohort, which results from their age difference and life stage. Thus, I report attitude change for the NCDS cohort who were separated/divorced at 33 with varying marital /partnership destinations at 42, accounting for whether they were unpartnered or cohabiting. This is not possible for the BCS cohort due to the very small numbers of respondents in such trajectories.

It appears that partnership status of the unmarried respondents in both cohorts does not have a strong effect on attitude change when the paths into similar marital status are considered between cohabiting and lone respondents (see Table 4-5 below). Thus similar changes in attitudes occurred among single respondents who were unpartnered and those who were cohabiting at both time points in both cohorts. Similarly, there is only a small difference in the proportion of respondents with attitude change in a more traditional direction between those who were married at time 2 and were single, unpartnered or cohabiting at time 1 in each cohort study. Similar patterns of attitude change are also found for the NCDS respondents who were separated/divorced cohabiting and those who were separated/divorced unpartnered at age 33 and remarried by 42. Comparable proportions of cohort members who were married at time 1 and separated/divorced unpartnered or separated/divorced cohabiting expressed less traditional attitudes in each cohort.

**Table 4-5: Marital/partnership trajectories and change in attitudes, BCS between age 26 and 30, NCDS between age 33 and 42**

Marital/partnership trajectories	BCS attitudes at 30 compared to 26				NCDS attitudes at 42 compared to 33			
	More	Same	Less	Total 100%	More	Same	Less	Total 100%
single, unpartnered	45%	21%	34%	1,581	49%	24%	26%	606
single, unpartnered-> single, cohabiting	<b>47%</b>	23%	30%	721	<b>47%</b>	26%	27%	161
single, unpartnered -> married	<b>46%</b>	25%	29%	508	<b>59%</b>	23%	18%	229
single, cohabiting	45%	22%	33%	716	56%	23%	21%	214
single, cohabiting -> single, unpartnered	44%	19%	<b>38%</b>	303	49%	23%	<b>28%</b>	57
single, cohabiting -> married	<b>49%</b>	23%	28%	738	<b>59%</b>	20%	20%	191
married -> sep/div, unpartnered	15%	14%	<b>71%</b>	160	32%	15%	<b>53%</b>	499
married -> sep/div, cohabiting	17%	13%	<b>70%</b>	100	25%	19%	<b>56%</b>	250
sep/div, unpartnered					49%	15%	36%	259
sep/div, unpartnered-> sep/div, cohabiting					46%	16%	38%	118
sep/div, unpartnered-> remarried					<b>66%</b>	15%	19%	166
sep/div, cohabiting					51%	25%	24%	120
sep/div, cohabiting -> sep/div, unpartnered					55%	18%	27%	60
sep/div, cohabiting -> remarried					<b>67%</b>	14%	20%	159
Total	39%	20%	42%	4,827	51%	22%	28%	3,089

Shaded area=not measured here due to low frequencies

Comparing the attitude change of those who were single cohabiting and those who were married at time 1 and then separated from their cohabiting/marital partner by time 2 reveals a substantial difference in the way their attitudes changed. In the BCS cohort, of those who were single cohabiting at 26 then single unpartnered by 30 only 38% became less traditional in their attitudes, whereas of the respondents who were married at 26 and separated/divorced unpartnered by 30, 71% became less traditional. A similarly large difference in the way NCDS respondents' attitudes changed among cohort members in these trajectories is observed: 28% of those who were single cohabiting at 33 and single

unpartnered at 42 became less traditional, while 53% of those who were married at 33 and separated/divorced unpartnered at 42 did so. This indicates a substantially larger effect of legal marital status change than partnership status change on cohort members' attitude change in the case of relationship breakdown.

Getting married is associated with a larger proportion of respondents becoming more traditional compared to those who formed cohabiting unions among the NCDS cohort, but not among the BCS. Just under 50% of BCS respondents who were single unpartnered at 26 and were either married or single cohabiting by 30 became more traditional in their attitudes. Among NCDS, 47% of those who were single unpartnered at 33 then single cohabiting by 42 became more traditional while almost 60% of those who were single unpartnered at 33 then married for the first time by 42 became more traditional. Among NCDS, a larger proportion of single unpartnered respondents' attitudes became more traditional if they were remarried by 42 than if they were cohabiting by 42.

#### **4.5.3 Marital/partnership trajectories and initial attitudes to family and marriage: a selection effect of attitudes?**

Previously, I evidenced signs of adaptation effects of marital and family attitudes following a marital trajectory for both cohorts. The direction of these changes are as expected: the majority of those who experienced a breakdown of a marital union between the two time points became less traditional while the majority of those who experienced a marital formation became more traditional in their attitudes. But were those who embarked on more traditional paths from the outset more traditional than those who did not?

Tables 4-6 and 4-7 show the average attitude scores of the cohort members at time 1 and time 2 as well the corresponding marital trajectories. Investigating the average difference between attitudes at time 1 and attitudes at time 2 for respondents in each trajectory group would illuminate potential adaptation effects of attitudes as a change in attitudes following a marital trajectory (a paired sample t-test for each sub-group is reported in Tables 4-6 and 4-7). Investigating the difference in average attitude scores at time 1 between pairs of trajectories groups would indicate towards potential selection effects of attitudes as a

difference between initial attitudes of respondents who started in the same marital/partnership status at time 1 can be assessed (one-way ANOVA tests are performed for each group of trajectories and the tests of differences between initial attitudes of respondents in each trajectory category within each group are reported in Appendix 2, Tables A29 and A30). The results for both cohorts are shown in groups of trajectories. So the first group is that of cohort members who started off as single and not cohabiting at time 1 and either remained single unpartnered, began a cohabiting partnership by time 2, or got married. The second group includes those who were single never married and cohabiting at time 1, whose trajectories include remaining in the same marital/partnership status, getting married or remaining unmarried but no longer cohabiting. Finally, the last trajectories group that is presented here for both cohorts is that of respondents who were married for the first time and who either remained married, or got divorced/separated by time 2 with differing cohabiting arrangements. For the NCDS cohort, who have a larger number of divorced or separated respondents by the first data collection used in this study (age 33), I also present average attitude scores for those who started off separated/divorced and either remained in this marital status or remarried. In addition to that, attitudes of NCDS cohort members who were remarried at 33 and followed different partnership/marital trajectories by 42 are also considered.

**Table 4-6: Attitude change between ages of 26 and 30, depending on marital/partnership trajectory that took place, BCS**

	Trajectory groups	Obs.	Attitudes age 26 (1)	Attitudes age 30 (2)	Mean Difference (2)-(1)
single, unpartnered		1,581	3.18	3.27	0.09**
single, unpartnered-> single cohabiting	1	721	3.21	3.35	0.14**
single, unpartnered-> married		508	3.47	3.60	0.13**
single, cohabiting		716	3.13	3.23	0.09**
single, cohabiting -> married	2	738	3.36	3.52	0.16**
single, cohabiting -> single, unpartnered		303	3.09	3.14	0.05
married		1,924	3.55	3.55	0.00
married -> sep/div, unpartnered	3	160	3.43	2.79	-0.64**
married -> sep/div, cohabiting		100	3.34	2.76	-0.58**

\*sig at p<.01 and \*\*sig at p<.001

**Table 4-7: Attitude change between ages of 33 and 42 depending on the marital/partnership trajectory that took place, NCDS**

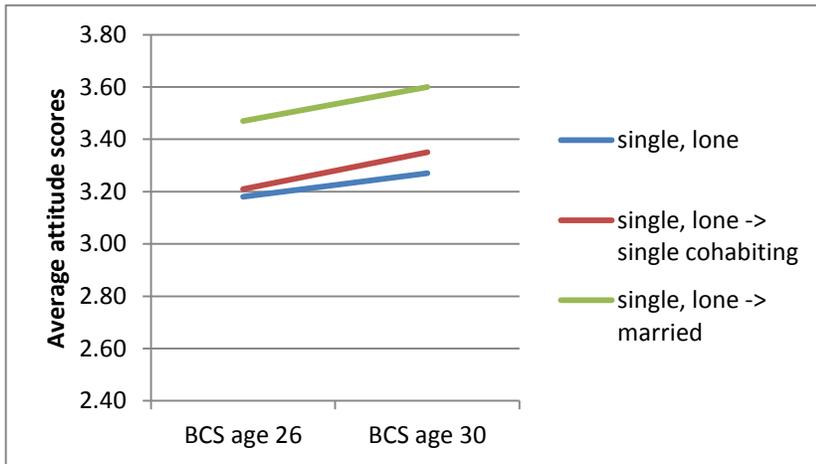
	Trajectory groups	Obs.	Attitudes age 33 (1)	Attitudes age 42 (2)	Mean Difference (2) – (1)
single, unpartnered		606	3.03	3.19	0.16**
single, unpartnered-> single, cohabiting	1	161	2.84	3.02	0.18*
single, unpartnered-> married		229	3.11	3.48	0.37**
single, cohabiting		214	2.68	2.96	0.28**
single, cohabiting -> married	2	191	2.94	3.30	0.36**
single, cohabiting -> single, unpartnered		57	2.59	2.79	0.20
Married		5,030	3.28	3.45	0.17**
married -> sep/div, unpartnered	3	499	3.09	2.82	-0.26**
married -> sep/div, cohabiting		250	2.99	2.64	-0.35**
married -> remarried		155	3.10	3.05	-0.05
sep/div, unpartnered		259	2.75	2.82	0.07
sep/div, unpartnered-> sep/div, cohabiting	4	118	2.67	2.80	0.13
sep/div, unpartnered-> remarried		166	2.66	3.11	0.45**
sep/div, cohabiting		120	2.49	2.75	0.26**
sep/div, cohabiting -> remarried	5	159	2.46	2.96	0.50**
sep/div, cohabiting -> sep/div, unpartnered		60	2.46	2.59	0.13
Remarried		449	2.86	3.14	0.28**
remarried -> sep/div, unpartnered	6	74	2.91	2.78	-0.13
remarried -> sep/div, cohab		57	2.73	2.70	-0.03

\*sig at p<.01 and \*\*sig at p<.001

Initially single (unpartnered) respondents' attitudes (BCS and NCDS)

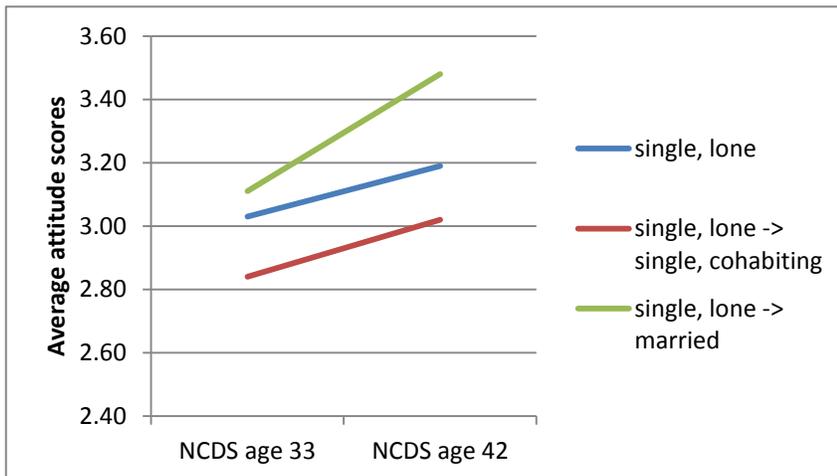
Examining differences in average attitude scores of those who were single (unpartnered) at time 1, it is evident that in both cohorts each group of respondents on average became significantly more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage, despite varying trajectories that took place (see Figure 4-23 and 4-24 below and full test results in Appendix 2, Tables A17 to A20). Examining their initial attitudes shows that single (unpartnered) BCS respondents who married by time 2 were significantly more traditional from the outset than those who either remained living on their own or started a cohabiting relationship, indicating that there is a potential selection effect of attitudes into marriage.

**Figure 4-23: Average attitude scores of initially single non-cohabiting cohort members with different marital/partnership trajectories, BCS**



NCDS respondents who were single (unpartnered) at 33 and married by the time they were 42 had significantly more traditional attitudes from the outset than those who started a cohabiting relationship between age 33 and 42. However, those who remained single (not cohabiting) did not differ in their average attitude scores from those who got married.

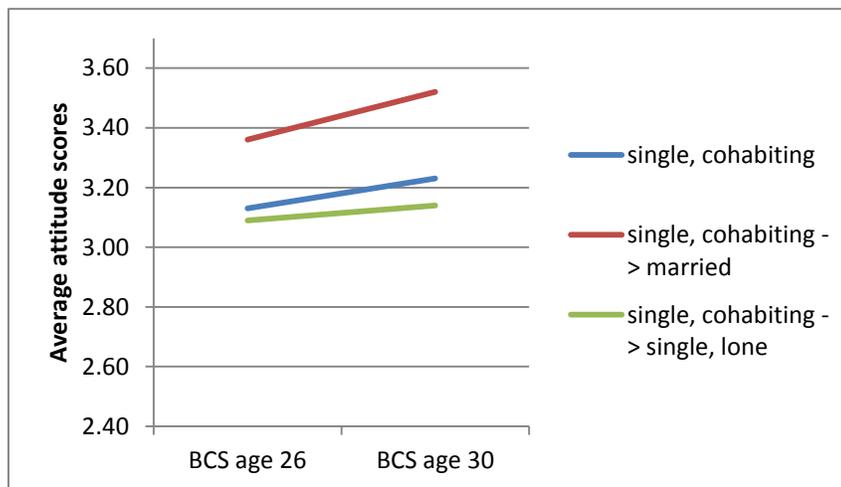
**Figure 4-24: Average attitude scores of initially single non-cohabiting cohort members with different marital/partnership trajectories, NCDS**



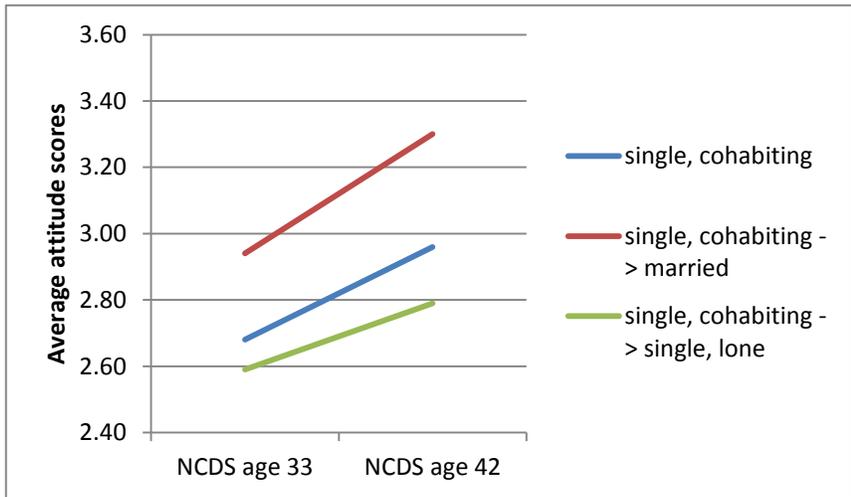
Initially single (cohabiting) respondents' attitudes (BCS and NCDS)

Investigating initial attitude scores among those who were never married but cohabiting at time 1 once again reveals differing patterns for the two cohorts between those who remained unmarried and cohabiting and those who got married (see Figures 4-25 and 4-26 below and full test results in Appendix 2 Tables A17 and A18). While the BCS respondents who were single (cohabiting) at both time points were significantly less traditional from the outset than those who eventually got married, this was not observed in the NCDS cohort. However, among both BCS and NCDS, respondents who separated from their cohabiting partners and were not in any other partnership were significantly less traditional to start with than those who were cohabiting at both time points.

**Figure 4-25: Average attitude scores of initially single cohabiting cohort members with different marital/partnership trajectories, BCS**



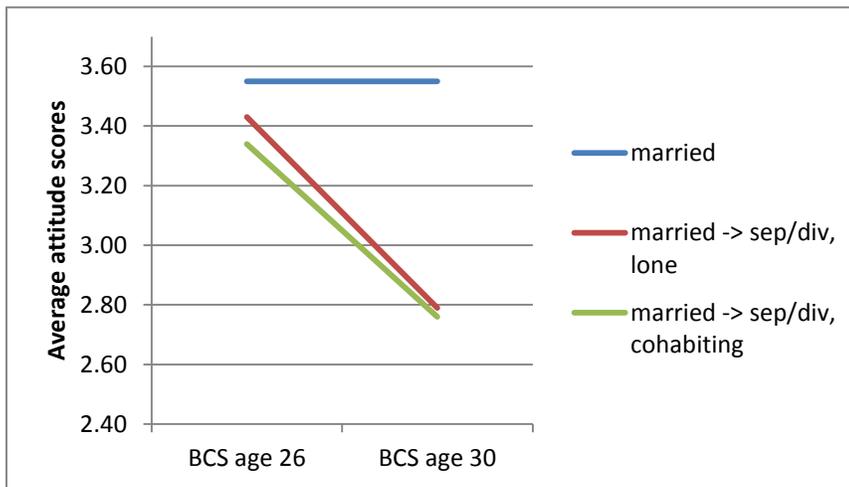
**Figure 4-26: Average attitude scores of initially single cohabiting cohort members with different marital/partnership trajectories, NCDS**



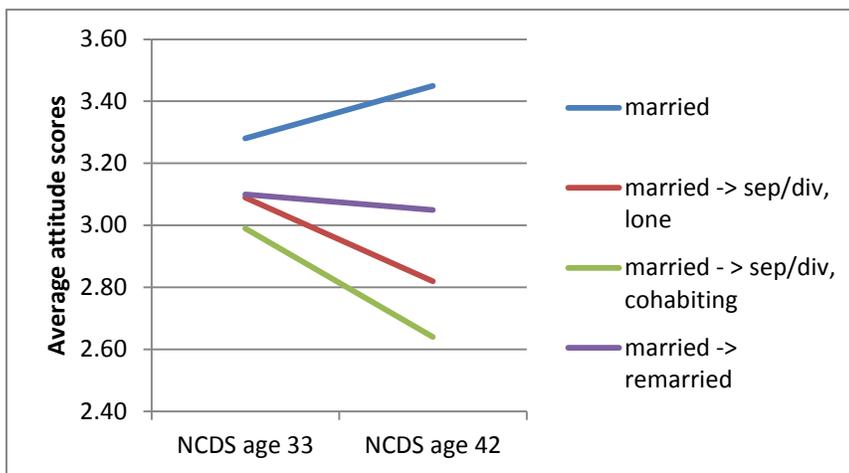
Initially married respondents’ attitudes (BCS and NCDS)

An indication of the selection effect of attitudes into marital trajectories is again found when the initial attitudes of those in the third trajectory group are explored. Among both cohorts, respondents who were married at both time points had significantly more traditional initial attitudes compared to the married cohort members who were divorced and cohabiting by the second time point (see Figures 4-27 and 4-28 and full test results in Appendix 2, Tables A19 and A20). Only members of the BCS cohort who were separated/divorced but not cohabiting at time 2 had significantly lower initial average attitude scores than those who stayed continuously married. Among the NCDS cohort enough data is available on the attitudes of those who started off as first time married and were remarried by 42, those who were remarried from the outset had significantly less traditional attitudes to family and marriage than those who were continuously married between age 33 and 42

**Figure 4-27: Average attitude scores of initially first time married cohort members with different marital/partnership trajectories, BCS**



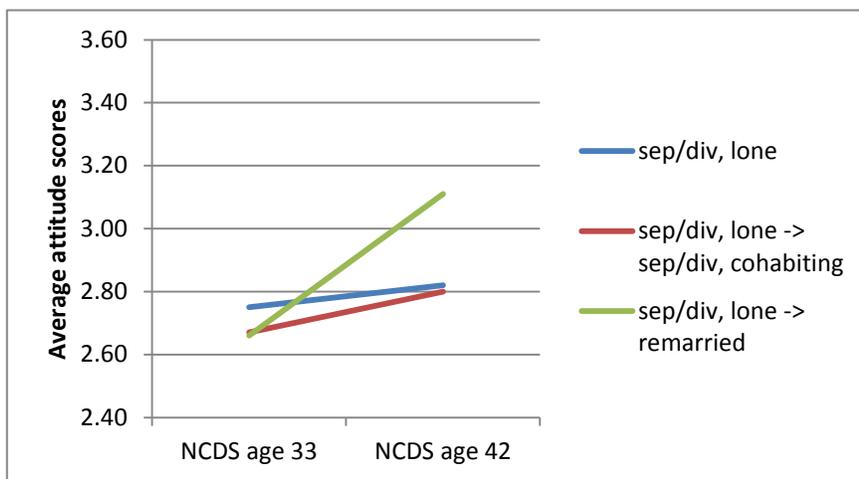
**Figure 4-28: Average attitude scores of initially single first time married cohort members with different marital/partnership trajectories, NCDS**



### Initially separated or divorced respondents' attitudes (NCDS)

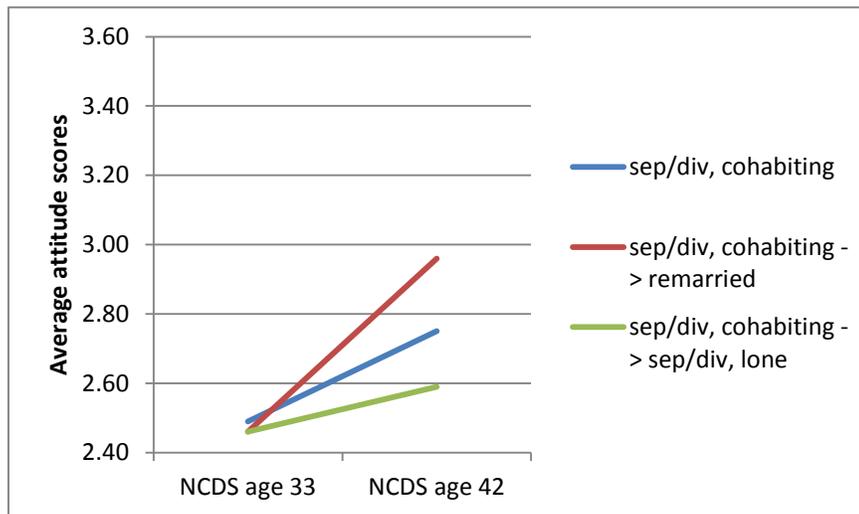
There is no significant difference in the initial average attitude scores among NCDS cohort members who were separated/divorced and living on their own at both time points and those who began a cohabiting partnership or remarried by the time they were age 42. Similarly, no difference in the initial attitudes was recorded for those who were separated/divorced and cohabiting at 33 with varying marital/partnership trajectories between 33 and 42 (Figure 4-29 below).

**Figure 4-29: Average attitude scores of initially separated/divorced non-cohabiting cohort members with different marital/partnership trajectories, NCDS**



Similarly, no significant difference in the initial average attitude scores is observed among NCDS respondents who were separated/divorced and cohabiting at both time points and those who were remarried or those who split up from their cohabiting partner by age 42 (Figure 4-30).

**Figure 4-30: Average attitude scores of initially separated/divorced cohabiting cohort members with different marital/partnership trajectories, NCDS**



#### 4.5.4 Summary

Part 3 of this chapter explored the relationship between attitude change and changes in marital and partnership status at the two time points for each cohort, which suggests presence of adaptation effects of attitudes to reflect behaviour. Furthermore, I tested for the signs of selection effects of attitudes into marital behaviour, i.e. whether those who were more traditional to start off with were more likely to embark on a more traditional marital path such as getting married as opposed to remaining single or forming a cohabiting partnership. The results are briefly summarised below.

##### Signs of adaptation effects of attitudes following marital /partnership trajectories

- Getting remarried is associated with the largest proportion of positive attitude change for both cohorts with over 60% of those who were divorced/separated at time 1 and remarried by the 2nd time point becoming more traditional in their attitudes.
- Where there were divorces/separations between the two time points, the largest proportions of respondents in both cohorts expressed less traditional attitudes compared to when they were married. These proportions were especially large

among the BCS cohort, which could be due to the shorter time period between the data collection.

- Among both cohorts, the most obvious differences in attitude change between men and women is observed if they got separated/divorced between the two time points. Additionally, there was a sizeable difference in attitude change found between men and women of the NCDS cohort who got remarried between age 33 and 42. Other gender differences in changes of attitudes depending on their marital trajectory are very small.
- I also showed that the cohabiting status of the unmarried respondents in both cohorts does not have a strong effect on attitude change when the paths into similar marital statuses are considered for cohabiting and unpartnered respondents. For example, similar proportions of single unpartnered and single cohabiting respondents at the time became more traditional if they were married by the second time point. There are, however, large differences in the way attitudes change among those who form marital and cohabiting partnerships but only among the NCDS cohort. Among both cohorts, a greater proportion of those who separated from a marital partner became less traditional than among those separating from a cohabiting partnership.
- Additionally, an investigation of differences between average attitude scores at time 1 and time 2 for each group of people in the same marital/partnership trajectory confirmed the above findings (see Table 4-8 below for the summary of these results, where the upwards pointing arrows indicate an increase in average score and the downwards pointing arrows a decrease). Although within most trajectories respondents, on average, became more traditional, this is particularly evident among those who got married (BCS and NCDS) and those who remarried (NCDS). Interestingly, cohort members who were continuously cohabiting, particularly among NCDS, became significantly more traditional in their attitudes.

**Table 4-8: Significant average attitude changes between time 1 and time 2 for each marital/partnership trajectory group, BCS and NCDS (↑ - increase; ↓ - decrease)**

	Trajectory groups	BCS	NCDS
single, unpartnered		↑	↑
single, unpartnered -> single cohabiting	1	↑	↑
single, unpartnered-> married		↑	↑
single, cohabiting		↑	↑
single, cohabiting -> married	2	↑	↑
single, cohabiting -> single, unpartnered			
married			↑
married -> sep/div, unpartnered	3	↓	↓
married -> sep/div, cohabiting		↓	↓
married -> remarried			
sep/div, unpartnered			
sep/div, unpartnered -> sep/div, cohabiting	4		
sep/div, unpartnered -> remarried			↑
sep/div, cohabiting			↑
sep/div, cohabiting -> remarried	5		↑
sep/div, cohabiting -> sep/div, unpartnered			
Remarried			
remarried -> sep/div, unpartnered	6		
remarried -> sep/div, cohabiting			

Note: Shaded area=not measured here due to low frequencies

Signs of selection effects of attitudes into marital /partnership trajectories

Selection effects of attitudes into certain marital/partnership behaviours are also observed in both cohorts (summary of the results are in Table 4-9). For example, both BCS and NCDS cohort members who were married at both time points were significantly more traditional to start off with than those who eventually got divorced. Similarly, respondents who got married for the first time were significantly more traditional at time 1 compared to those who remained unmarried. So the signs of selection effects of attitude are observed for trajectories of those subgroups who were married before with the exception of those who got remarried (NCDS).

**Table 4-9: Significant differences in the initial attitude scores between respondents in trajectory subgroups, marked with a √ (groups in bold are reference to the subgroups below them), BCS and NCDS**

	Trajectory groups	BCS	NCDS
<b>single, unpartnered -&gt; married</b>	1		
single, unpartnered		√	
single, unpartnered -> single cohabiting		√	√
<b>single, cohabiting -&gt; married</b>	2		
single, cohabiting		√	
single, cohabiting -> single, unpartnered		√	√
<b>Married</b>	3		
married -> sep/div, unpartnered		√	√
married -> sep/div, cohabiting		√	√
married -> remarried			√
<b>sep/div, lone -&gt; sep/div, cohabiting</b>			
sep/div, unpartnered	4		
sep/div, unpartnered -> remarried			
<b>sep/div, cohabiting -&gt; remarried</b>			
sep/div, cohabiting	5		
sep/div, cohabiting -> sep/div, unpartnered			

Note: Shaded area=not measured here due to low frequencies

## **CHAPTER 5: Predictors of attitudes to family and marriage**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Previous chapters showed that the gender of cohort members, current marital and partnership status as well as previous experience of relationship breakdown significantly differentiate attitudes to family and marriage. This chapter explores other potential predictors of attitudes found in the literature, concentrating on factors that are found to be associated with marital and partnership behaviours. It is necessary to examine these predictors in order to develop a set of controls for the models constructed in Chapters 6 and 7. Factors such as parental social class and education are often found to have a substantial influence on the life course of individuals.

Characteristics of family life in childhood can have a significant impact later on in adolescence and adulthood, long after children leave the parental home, and can have lasting effects on children's cognitive and physical development, mental health, life choices and life course transitions. More specifically, parental background factors may have a strong effect on a child's family-related attitudes and family-related behaviour (Thornton et al, 1983), although some of these effects disappear once the child's grown up characteristics and experiences are taken into account. Factors such as parental separation, parents' educational attainment and social class are among many influences on the child's later life outcomes.

This chapter explores the relationships between family background factors and cohort members' attitudes to family and marriage. Additionally, I explore how attitudes to family and marriage differ depending on certain adult characteristics, such as presence of children at home, cohort members' educational attainment and social class. This will help to establish the bivariate relationships between family-background related characteristics, adult factors, and attitudes, and represents a building block for further analyses in Chapters 6 and 7.

I chose to investigate the relationship between attitudes and the following family-background related factors: father's social class, mother's education, mother's age, mother's employment status, presence for cohort member of younger siblings, parental separation during childhood of cohort member and an indicator of the respondent spending any time out of their parents' care during early childhood. I predict that these factors could influence cohort members' attitudes either directly or indirectly via marital behaviour.

Cohort members own characteristics and their associations with attitudes that are explored in this chapter are: presence of cohort member's children at home; cohort member's level of educational qualifications, social class and employment status.

This chapter uses a combination of correlation, t-tests and one-way ANOVA tests to establish significant differences in attitudes. The sample size for each investigation is thus going to differ depending on the available data and the results of these analyses are to be used for explorative purposes only.

## **5.2 Family background factors and attitudes to family and marriage**

### **5.2.1 Mother's age at birth of cohort member**

In this study, I use mother's age at birth of cohort member as an indicator of mother's age. Depending on the age of a mother one is born to, whether or not she has had any other children previously, one is set up on a particular life path, in terms of health, achievement, time spent with parents, etc. Being born to an older mother may result in a more mature relationship between a child and a parent which in turn may influence child's life path and future relationships. Previous research indicates that children born to younger mothers are more likely to leave parental home earlier and begin family formation at an earlier age than those who were born to older mothers (Kneale, 2009). Additionally, it was found that younger age of a mother at birth of a BCS cohort member is associated with poorer health and behaviour outcomes, with lower educational achievement and a younger age at first childbearing among cohort members (e.g Pevalin, 2003). In the further analysis (Chapters 6 and 7) I also control for the presence of younger siblings in the family, which, together with

mother's age at cohort member's birth, would serve as a proxy for age at first childbearing of the mother.

BCS respondents were born to, on average, younger mothers than NCDS respondents. Half of BCS mothers were 25 years of age or younger and 76% were under 30; among NCDS, 41% of mothers were 25 years old or younger and 67% were under 30. Mother's age does not correlate strongly with cohort member's attitudes among both cohorts. The direction of this weak correlation differs for men and women. NCDS men's attitudes at both ages and BCS men's attitudes at the age of 26 have a weak negative correlation with their mother's age, while NCDS women's attitudes at the age of 42 and BCS women's attitudes at both ages have a weak positive correlation with their mother's age (see Table 5-1 below).

**Table 5-1: Correlation coefficients for relationship between mother's age at birth of cohort child and cohort members' attitudes during adulthood**

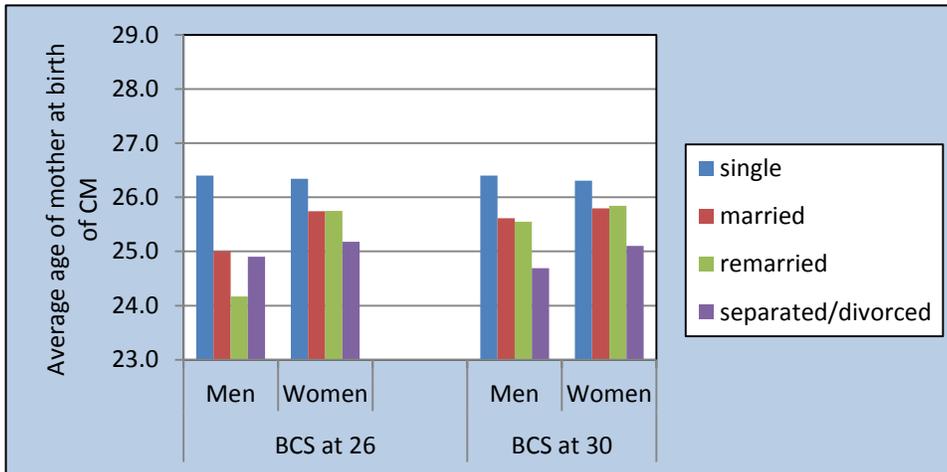
	Attitudes			
	BCS at 26	BCS at 30	NCDS at 33	NCDS at 42
mother's age (men)	-0.015 (3,559)	0.001 (4,851)	-0.004 (4,885)	-0.003 (5,196)
mother's age (women)	0.017 (4,348)	0.008 (5,214)	-0.004 (5,153)	0.016 (5,373)

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

Despite the above findings of a seemingly weak relationship between mother's age and cohort members' attitudes, mother's age could nevertheless have an indirect impact on respondents' attitudes by affecting their marital behaviour. For example, Berrington and Diamond (1999) found that among men, mother's early age at family formation was associated with increased risk of divorce, although this association became non-significant once cohort members' own characteristics were taken into account (such as education, economic activity and marital factors). Potentially, mother's younger age at birth of cohort member could have an impact on the cohort member's early partnership, which, in turn, puts them at a higher risk of marital dissolution.

Figures 5-1 and 5-2 below show the average age of cohort members' mothers at the birth of the respondents. It is evident that single (never married) BCS cohort members were born to the eldest mothers (average age: 26.4 years old), while the separated/divorced cohort members were generally born to the youngest mothers (average age: 25 years old).

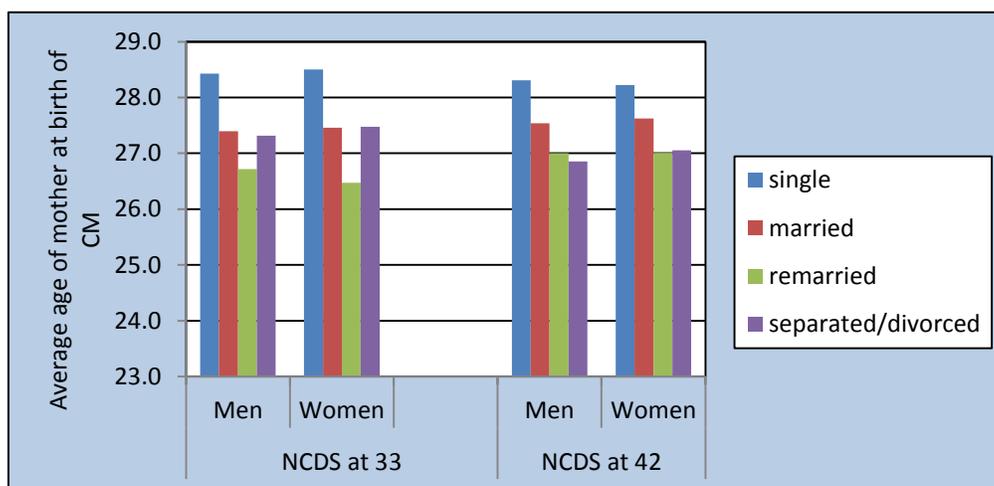
**Figure 5-1: Mother's age at birth of cohort member and cohort members' marital status, BCS**



At 26: N(men)=3,595; N(women)=4,391; At 30: N(men)=4,870; N(women)= 5,203

The NCDS cohort shows a slightly different pattern. While single (never married) NCDS respondents at both time points were born to the eldest mothers (similar pattern to BCS), marital separation of cohort members, whether or not followed by a remarriage, is associated with the youngest average maternal age for NCDS women while remarriage is associated with the youngest average maternal age among NCDS men.

**Figure 5-2: Mother’s age at birth of cohort member and cohort members’ marital status, NCDS**



At 33: N(men)=5,015; N(women)=5,241; At 42: N(men)=5,192; N(women)=5,302

Despite some slight differences, those who experienced a marital breakdown were likely to have been born to younger mothers, particularly compared to those who never married. Mother’s older age is therefore associated with delayed marital formation of cohort members, which, in turn, could have an impact on their more traditional attitudes compared to those who experienced a marital breakdown as shown in Chapter 4.

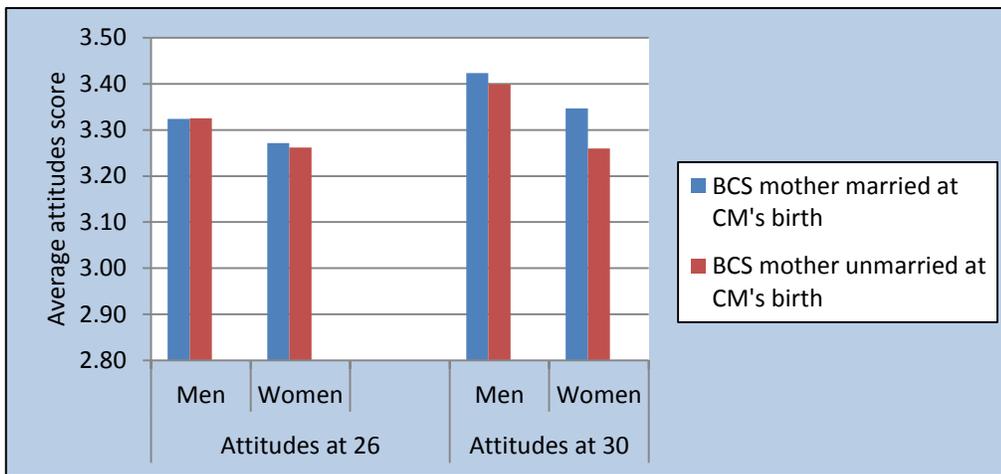
### 5.2.2 Mother’s marital status

Among the BCS cohort, 93% were born to married mothers, 5.5% were born to single (never married) mothers, fewer than 2% to separated or divorced mothers and 0.1% to widowed mothers. A greater proportion of the NCDS than the BCS cohort babies were born to married mothers: 96% of respondents were born to married or remarried mothers while less than 3% were born to never married mothers and approximately 1% were born to separated, divorced or widowed mothers. Such low proportions of unmarried mothers who gave birth in the late 50s and early 70s are remarkably different to contemporary births. In the late 70s, less than 10% of all live births in the UK were to unmarried parents; this started to rise sharply and by 2008 unmarried parents accounted for almost 40% of live births (ONS, 2008 Population Trends n.134).

Analysis of average attitude scores for both cohorts at each time point did not reveal significant differences between the attitudes of those respondents who were born to married

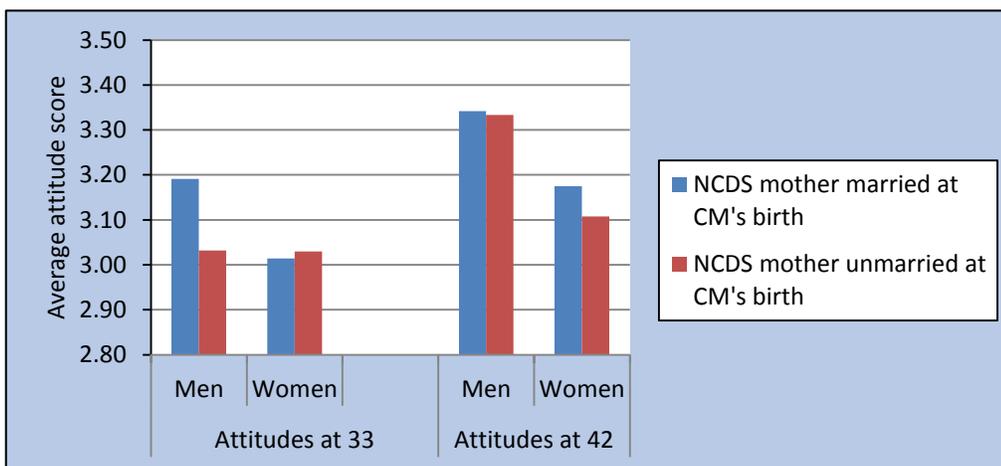
mothers and those who were born to unmarried mothers. However, results for men and women separately show that BCS women who were born to unmarried mothers were significantly less traditional at the age of 30 than women who were born to married mothers ( $t=2.015$ ;  $df=5,226$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $n=5,228$ ). Among NCDS men and women, it is only men who were born to unmarried mothers who scored significantly lower on the attitude scale at the age of 33 compared to men born to married mothers ( $t=2.473$ ,  $df=4885$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $n=4887$ ). These relationships are illustrated in Figures 5-3 and 5-4 below.

**Figure 5-3: Mother’s marital status at birth of cohort member and cohort members’ attitudes, BCS**



At 26: N(men)=3,582; N(women)=4,355; At 30: N(men)=4,881; N(women)=5,228

**Figure 5-4: Mother’s marital status at birth of cohort member and cohort members’ attitudes, NCDS**



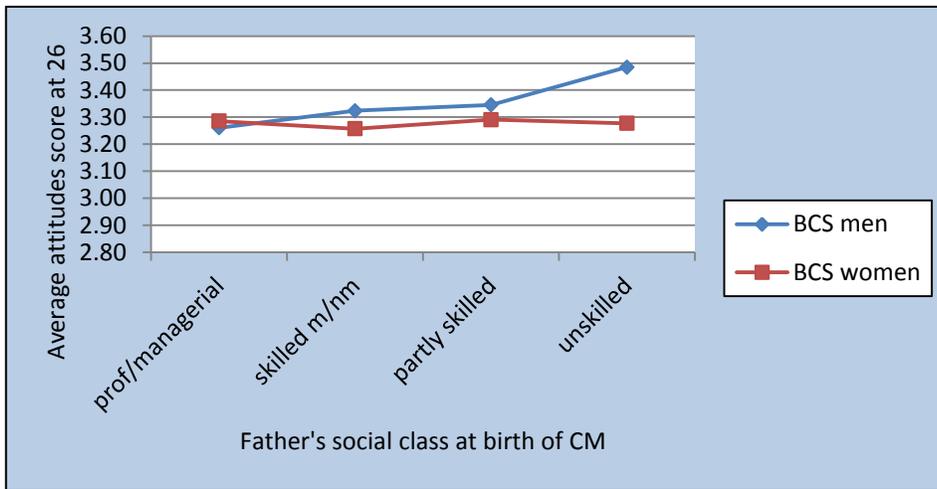
At 33: N(men)=4,887; N(women)=5,153; At 42: N(men)=5,197; N(women)=5,375

### 5.2.3 Father's social class

The occupational status of the cohort member's father at birth was measured using the Registrar General's measure of Social Class (RGSC), which goes beyond simply representing the job status but is also associated with education, prestige and lifestyle (Marsh, 1986). The RGSC has six categories: I (professional), II (intermediate), III non-manual (skilled non-manual), III manual (skilled manual), IV (partly skilled) and V (unskilled). In this study, I combined categories I and II to represent professional and managerial social class, as well as combining "III non-manual" and "III manual" to represent manual and non-manual skilled professions. For both cohorts some information on father's social class was missing or not-known. In such cases I used mother's social class information to substitute unknown or missing father's social class for BCS and mother's father's social class for the NCDS cohort. These derived measures are referred to as *father's social class* hereafter due to a vast amount of data coming from the measures of father's social class. Similar proportions of cohort members' fathers were in each category of social class measure. The majority of fathers were in non-manual/manual skilled professions (60%) and the minority was in professional and managerial (under 5%).

Figures 5-5 and 5-6 below represent the average scores on attitudes for each cohort at the first time point by their father's social class (BCS age 26 and NCDS age 33). The relationship between father's social class at cohort members' birth and cohort members' attitudes at 30 (BCS) and 42 (NCDS) follow similar patterns within the cohorts (not presented here). Among BCS, attitudes of men at 26 and 30 differed significantly depending on their father's social class (BCS men age 26:  $F(3, 3509)=4.43, p<0.01$ ; age 30:  $F(3, 4797)=3.76, p<0.05$ ). Those men whose fathers were in unskilled professions held significantly more traditional attitudes than men whose fathers were in the highest social class group – professional or managerial. Father's social class did not differentiate significantly between BCS women's attitudes at either of the time points (BCS women age 26:  $F(3, 4257)=0.56, p>0.05$ ; age 30:  $F(3, 5111)=1.31, p>0.05$ ).

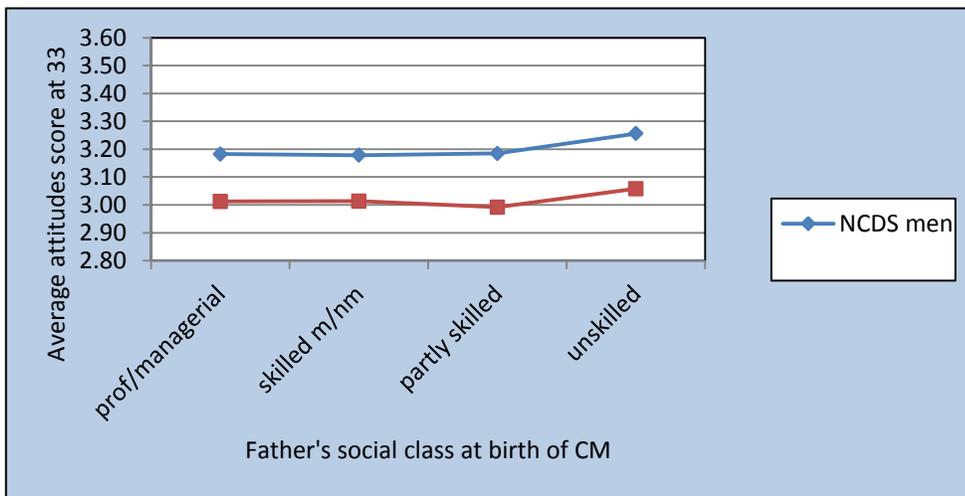
**Figure 5-5: Father's social class and cohort members' attitudes at 26, BCS**



N(men)=3,513; N(women)=4,261

Among the NCDS cohort at 33, the pattern of average attitude scores among men and women is more similar to each other than for the BCS cohort. However, father's social class does not differentiate significantly between men's attitudes at either age 33 or 42, but does among women's attitudes at the age of 42 (NCDS men: age 33:  $F(3, 4739)=1.15, p>0.05$ ; age 42:  $F(3, 5055)=1.39, p>0.05$ ; NCDS women: age 33:  $F(3, 5040)=0.68, p>0.05$ ; age 42:  $F(3, 5250)=3.71, p<0.05$ ).

**Figure 5-6: Father's social class and cohort members' attitudes at 33, NCDS**

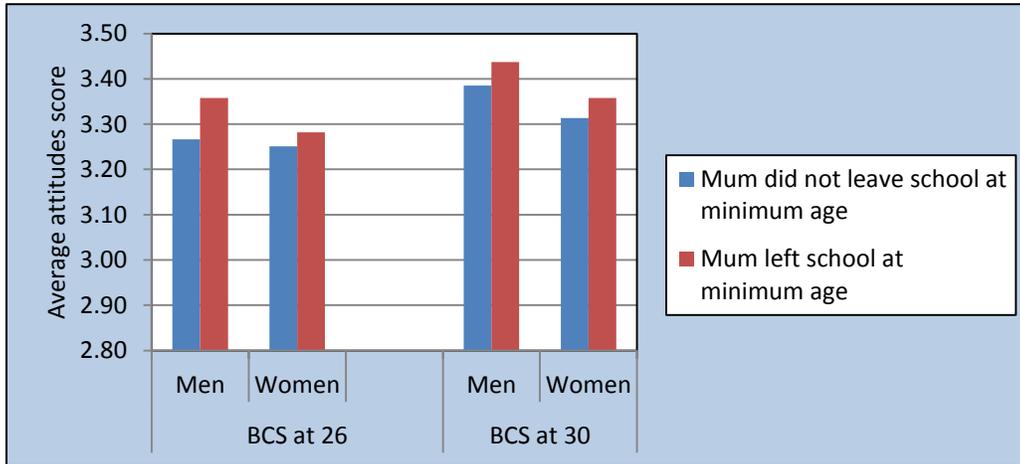


N(men)= 4,743; N(women)= 5,044

## 5.2.4 Mother's education

Research shows that women's lower educational qualifications are highly correlated with earlier fertility (Hansen et al, 2009; Kneale and Joshi, 2008), which in turn could have an effect on their attitudes and life course transitions.

**Figure 5-7: Mother's level of education and cohort members' attitudes, BCS**

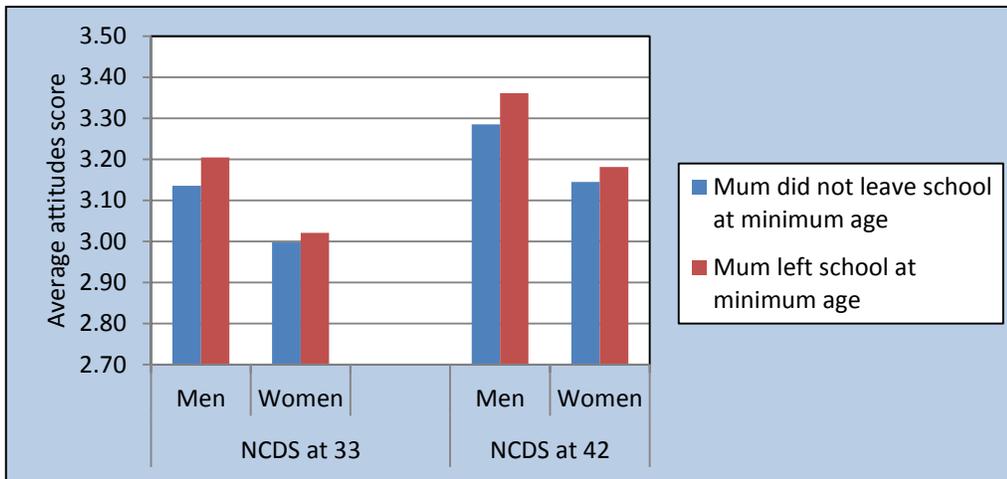


At 26: N(men)=3,541; N(women)=4,323; At 30: N(men)=4,820; N(women)=5,178

Mother's lower educational attainment is significantly associated with more traditional attitudes to family and marriage among the BCS men at 26 ( $t=-3.577$ ;  $df=3539$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and 30 ( $t=-2.4173$ ;  $df=4818$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and BCS women at 30 ( $t=-2.133$ ;  $df=5176$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

Among the respondents of the NCDS sample, mother's educational attainment significantly differentiates between the attitudes of men at 33 ( $t=2,751$ ;  $df=4,872$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and at 42 ( $t=-3.228$ ;  $df=5,179$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) but not the attitudes of women.

**Figure 5-8: Mother’s level of education and cohort members’ attitudes, NCDS**



At 33: N(men)=4,874; N(women)=5,144; At 42: N(men)=5,181; N(women)=5,364

### 5.2.5 Mother’s employment

While the NCDS cohort was born towards the end of the “baby boom” years (a period in the UK between 1940s and 1950s with unusually high rates of births), the BCS children were born during the period associated with the decline in fertility and rising age of women at birth of their children. The baby boom period is related to the rise in optimism of the population following the end of World War II, when people concentrated on the things they were unable to do during the time of conflict. Additionally, gender inequality in employment opportunities encouraged men’s ability to secure work after coming back from the war in order to care for their families, while women, in particular young women entering employment for the first time following the war, experienced a lack of jobs available to them and therefore many ‘chose’ to start a family and stay at home instead of pursuing a career (Doepke et al, 2007). Maternal employment of the NCDS children may therefore be a result of limited labour opportunities rather than traditional gender and family roles of women who looked after the home and family instead of working, which would be in contrast to the BCS cohort’s mothers.

Aside from the labour market opportunities, whether a mother takes up paid work is also influenced by their social position and educational qualifications, the ability to afford to care for their child (Hansen et al, 2009) and the presence of young children at home.

Additionally, whether a mother chooses to work or not could be influenced by their beliefs about the best ways to bring up children or by the affiliation to more traditional gender role attitudes within a family, such as believing that a mother should stay at home and look after the family while a father should be the breadwinner. Stokes and Peyton (1986) showed that working women held significantly less traditional attitudes towards gender roles than women who were looking after the home full time. Such attitudes could potentially be transferred to their children. Thornton et al (1983) found a strong relationship between maternal gender-role attitudes and their children's attitudes to the same issues.

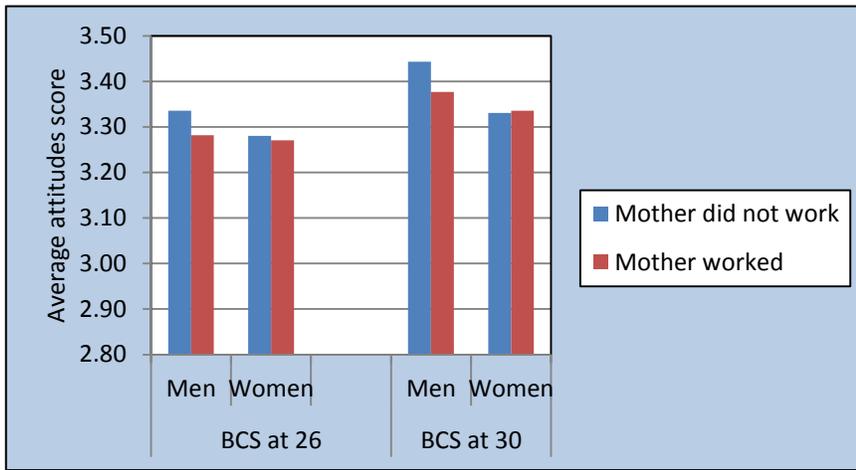
When the NCDS cohort members were age 7 and the BCS were age 5, their mothers were asked whether they had worked since the cohort child started school. I combined those who were working part time and full time into one category so as to distinguish only between mothers who worked and those who did not. Just over half of the cohort members' mothers said that they had not worked among the two cohorts while 42% and 45% were working among the BCS and NCDS cohort respectively.

While these proportions are very similar, some of the BCS cohort children might not have started school by the time their mothers answered the employment question or they might have started only very recently. These results may therefore underestimate the proportions of BCS mothers working once cohort children started school. For example, among NCDS mothers, only 29% were working when cohort children were pre-school (not shown here). It is possible that if maternal employment among the BCS mothers was measured at exactly the same age as for NCDS, a greater proportion of BCS mothers would have been in employment. Data from the Millennium Cohort study shows that almost 60% of cohort members' mothers were working when cohort children were age 5 (Hansen et al, 2009), indicating a clear increase in proportions of mothers working when their children were young over time. In the absence of an alternative, I will continue to use the employment indicators described above in the remainder of this work, despite the limitation in inter-cohort comparisons.

Among the BCS cohort, men whose mothers were not working up to age 5 were significantly more traditional in their attitudes than men whose mothers were working before age 5 at both time points: age 26 ( $t=2.0138$ ;  $df=3161$ ;  $p<0.05$ ); age 30 ( $t=2.98$ ;

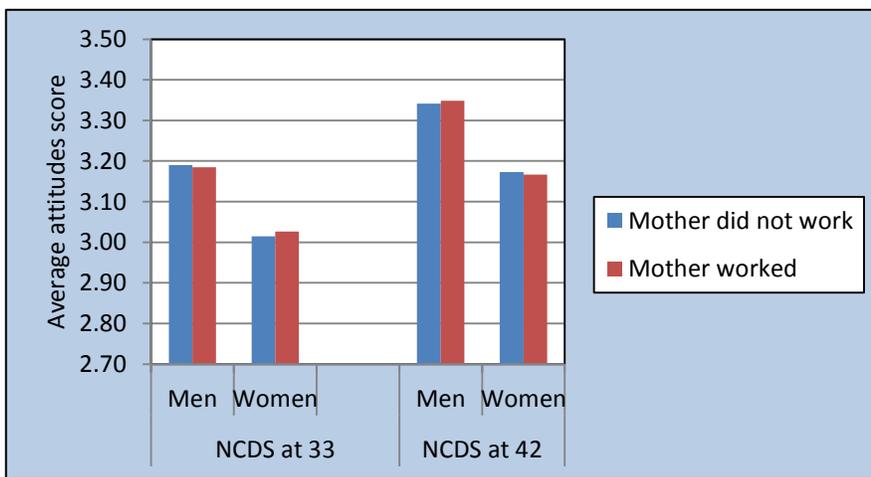
df=4308;  $p < 0.01$ ). There was no significant difference in average attitude scores between BCS women whose mothers worked and those whose mothers did not work before the cohort member was age 5. Among NCDS there is no significant difference for either men or women in attitudes to family and marriage at two time points depending on whether their mothers worked.

**Figure 5-9: Mother’s employment since cohort child started school and cohort members’ attitudes, BCS**



At 26: N(men)=3,163; N(women)=3,850; At 30: N(men)=4,310; N(women)=4,563

**Figure 5-10: Mother’s employment (CM pre-school) and cohort members’ attitudes, NCDS**



At 33: N(men)=4,320; N(women)=4,559; At 42: N(men)=4,575; N(women)=4,773

There is a distinction between the prevalence of working mothers who had children other than the cohort member, particularly children of a younger age, and those who did not. There were slightly larger proportions of working mothers among the NCDS cohort than

BCS and this is reflected in the proportion of working mothers among those with and without children younger than the cohort members (see Table 5-2 below). Although a larger proportion of NCDS mothers who had younger children at home were not working rather than working (63% and 37% respectively), this differs from the BCS mothers in that a greater proportion of the NCDS mothers were working even when they had younger children. Among the BCS, 72% of mothers with children younger than the BCS cohort member were not working and 28% were working.

**Table 5-2: Mother’s employment and younger siblings, BCS and NCDS**

	CM has younger siblings at 5 (BCS)			CM has younger siblings at 7 (NCDS)		
	no	yes	Total	no	yes	Total
Mother did not work	47.1%	71.8%	58.1%	44.2%	63.0%	55.3%
	3,388	4,163	7,551	2,608	5,278	7,886
Mother worked	52.9%	28.2%	41.9%	55.8%	37.0%	44.7%
	3,805	1,638	5,443	3,286	3,095	6,381
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	7,193	5,801	12,994	5,894	8,373	14,267

### 5.2.6 Cohort members ever in care during childhood

Spending time in public care during childhood is found to be associated with adverse adult outcomes, including health (Cheung and Buchanan, 1997; Viner and Taylor, 2005), socioeconomic and educational outcomes (Viner and Taylor, 2005). Additionally, women who leave care are at an increased risk of becoming young mothers (Biehal, Clayden and Stein, 1995).

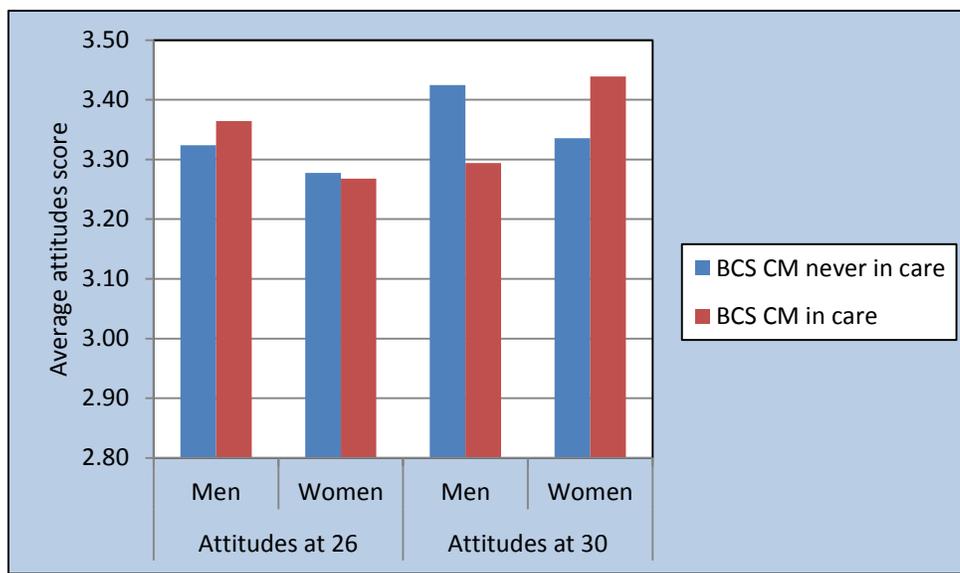
A measure was derived for ever experiencing spells of care by combining mother’s accounts of ever being separated from a cohort child for a period of longer than one month at 5 and 10 (BCS) and at 7 and 11 (NCDS). Among the BCS cohort, mothers reported on whether the cohort member was “now” or “in the past” in either Local Authority or Voluntary care. More precisely, for BCS at the age of 5 and 10 mothers were asked whether they had ever been separated from their cohort child for more than one month and where he/she was cared for during these separations. If a cohort child was cared for by non-

relatives or in an institution, I assigned having spells “in care by age 5/age 10” to the cohort member; while if a mother was never separated from the child or if the child was cared for in his/her own home or by relatives, I assigned “not in care by age 5/age 10” to the cohort child. I combined the two measures of ever being in care either prior to age 5 or age 10 to represent spells of care between birth and 10. In total there were 457 BCS children whose mothers reported them to have ever been in care up to the age of 10. I derived a similar measure of ever being in care between birth and 11 years of age for the NCDS cohort members. At the age of 7 and 11, mothers of NCDS children reported on whether the cohort child was ever (now or in the past) in the care of a Local Authority, Voluntary care or care abroad. A combined measure of ever being in care was derived and in total there were 582 cohort members whose mothers reported them as ever being in care by the age of 11. Being “ever in care” is based on at least 1 report of care (i.e. a report of ever being in care at either 7 or 11 for NCDS and either 5 or 10 for BCS), while “never in care” is based on two non-missing responses of never being in care.

Among the younger cohort, spending time “in care” is not associated with significantly different attitudes to family and marriage in adulthood compared to those who never experienced spells of care in childhood (BCS age 26: men:  $t=-0.556$ ,  $df=2345$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; women:  $t=0.114$ ,  $df=2847$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; BCS age 30: men:  $t=1.846$ ,  $df=3161$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; women:  $t=-1.514$ ,  $df=3381$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). However, average scores of those BCS respondents who were ever in care and never in care differ visually and it is especially prominent at a later age.

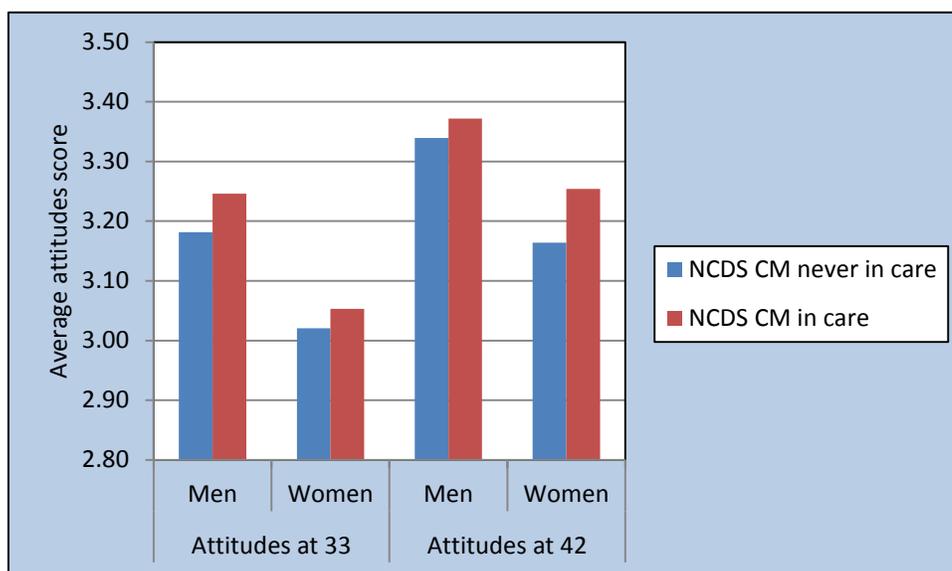
Figure 5-11 below shows that men who spent some of their childhood in care were less traditional than men who did not. This is the reverse of what is observed for women: BCS women who were in care at some point in their childhood were more traditional at the age of 30 than women who were not. Among NCDS men and women (Figure 5-12 below), those who experienced spells in care as a child were, on average, consistently more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage in adult years than those who did not spend any time in care, although these differences were not statistically significant (NCDS age 33: men:  $t=-0.920$ ;  $df=3990$ ;  $p>0.05$ , women:  $t=-0.524$ ,  $df=4206$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; NCDS age 42: men:  $t=-0.474$ ,  $df=4227$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; women:  $t=-1.389$ ,  $df=4400$ ,  $p>0.05$ ).

**Figure 5-11: Any spells of care during childhood and attitudes in adulthood, BCS**



At 26: N(men)=2,347; N(women)=2,849; At 30: N(men)=3,163; N(women)=3,383

**Figure 5-12: Any spells of care during childhood and attitudes in adulthood, NCDS**



At 33: N(men)= 3,992; N(women)=4,206; At 42: N(men)= 4,229; N(women)=4,402

### 5.2.7 Parental separation

Parental divorce is hypothesised to have an impact on many spheres of a child’s life, but there is a varying consensus on its effects and how long they last. Parental divorce, for example, could affect the way parents and, in turn, their children feel about marital separation. This could happen due to the unpleasant memories of conflict during marriage

and/or during the process of separation, which is likely in many cases to be accompanied by arguments, unwillingness to compromise and division of the assets. Parental negative feelings about the process are likely to be transferred onto their children, who, additionally, may have also witnessed the separation and, in more cases than not, would be highly affected emotionally by their parents splitting up. This in turn could affect their attitudes towards marriage and divorce in general.

It is recognised and supported by numerous studies that experience of parental divorce in childhood is associated with outcomes in both childhood (e.g. Elliot and Ridchards, 1991; Ní Bhrolcháin et al, 2000) and adult years (e.g. Sigle-Rushton et al, 2001). The effect of parental divorce, however, varies in its strength and durability, whereby some find it is no longer significant when a person's own experiences are taken into account or when a considerable period of time passes following the parental divorce. Therefore, although it is possible that parental divorce results in the immediate change in behaviour and emotional perceptions of the child (e.g. the loss of faith in marriage or close relationships, obedience problems that in turn could undermine the relationships with parents and other adults) and that these are carried forward into this child's adult life, some research shows that these do not always have long-term effects. For example, in their study, Chase-Lansdale and Hetherington (1990) found that although there were significant adjustment difficulties following parental divorce, these were generally short-term. In another study, Berrington and Diamond (1999) found that although parental separation was a significant risk factor of marital separation among the NCDS cohort when only the parental background and characteristics of cohort members were taken into account, when early marital factors of cohort members were included into the models, the effect of parental separation decreased for men and disappeared for women.

Others argue that divorce per se might not be the influence on later life outcomes but that it depends on the circumstances in which it takes place. For example, it might not be the divorce per se that has an effect on the child, but the conflict and stress associated with it, worsened relationships with one or both parents, changes in living arrangements such as entering a step family and so on. Thus, Amato (1996) demonstrated that the experience of parental divorce may affect marital outcomes through its effect on socialisation in interpersonal behaviours.

Nonetheless, parental divorce has been consistently found to be a strong predictor of family-related behaviour such as increased risk of marital dissolution, cohabitation and childbearing outside marriage (Amato, 1996; Kiernan, 1992; Kiernan, 2003; Teachman, 2002; Thornton, 1991). Previous studies found that people whose parents were divorced were more likely to follow in their footsteps and experience a union dissolution themselves (Amato and de Boer, 2001; Berrington and Diamond, 1999; Kiernan and Cherin, 1999). It is therefore possible for children to “learn” commitment and form successful partnerships if they are brought up in happy intact families. These experiences, in turn, make these adults more susceptible to subsequent partnership dissolutions.

In Chapter 4, I showed that a person’s own experience of partnerships and their dissolutions is strongly associated with their perceptions of family and marriage. For example, those who have experienced a separation before, whether from a cohabiting or a marital partner, are more likely to have less traditional attitudes than those who have never experienced a separation. It is possible that parental separation has an indirect effect on their children’s marital/partnership behaviour through its impact on children’s attitudes to relevant issues. Thus, previous research indicates that children who experienced parental divorce have more negative attitudes towards marriage and more liberal attitudes towards divorce and alternative family arrangements than those whose parents did not separate (Axinn and Thornton, 1996; Amato, 1988).

Although parental separation is predicted to influence people’s family-related behaviour and attitudes as discussed above, their own positive experiences of family life might alter this. Thus, while children might form particular values in relation to family and marriage following their experience of parental divorce, which makes them more likely to “select” into a particular path corresponding to their values, experiencing a path that is in discordance with their attitudes may have an adaptive effect on the values they hold towards that particular path or situation. Such selection and adaptation effects of attitudes might well be responsible for some variation in the paths and attitudes of adults who have experienced parental separation during their childhood. This will be looked at in detail in Chapters 6 and 7, while the next section begins to unpick the relationship between parental separation and cohort members’ attitudes to family and marriage.

### Parental separation measure

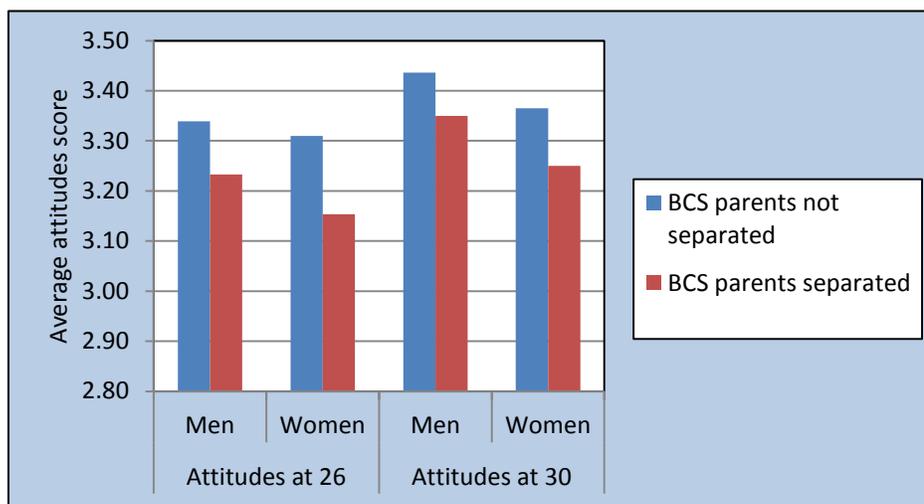
A parent (a mother, in most cases) gave information on whether the BCS cohort member lived with both natural/biological parents at birth, at 5, 10 and 16 years of age, and whether any changes in such situations took place between birth and age 5, 5 and 10, 10 and 16, and whether any of these were as a result of a parental separation or divorce. To boost the number of valid cases for the variable described above, I used information collected from adult cohort members about the disruption of their parents' partnership where the childhood information was missing. At the age of 30, BCS cohort members were asked if their parents had ever permanently separated or divorced and if so, how old they were when they last lived together. When NCDS cohort members were 33 years old, they were also asked whether their parents ever permanently separated or divorced. Prior to that, at the age of 7, 11 and 16, parental separation can be assumed from the relationship of the child to mother and father figure in the household. I used information on whether the child lived with their natural mother and natural father or adoptive/step/foster parent to derive an indicator of whether a child lived with both biological parents at all the ages. If a child was not living with both parents at any given point, a variable indicating a divorce or separation of parents was used to identify such cases. Given a different nature of the parental separation due to death compared to "voluntary" separation or divorce, those who experienced the death of their parent(s) were excluded from the variable identifying parental separation. In most cases, parents were together at the birth of the cohort member (in both BCS and NCDS cohorts). The rare cases where parents never lived together (n=66 for BCS and n=36 for NCDS) and where a cohort child never lived with parents (n=37 for BCS and n=16 for NCDS) were excluded from the derived parental separation variable. Thus, in the following analyses the sample is based on the cohort members whose parents were together at his or her birth. The loss of the few respondents would not make a significant impact on the results as the small number of individuals who never lived with their parents or whose parents were never together becomes even smaller when only those with data on attitudes are selected.

## Parental separation and cohort members' attitudes

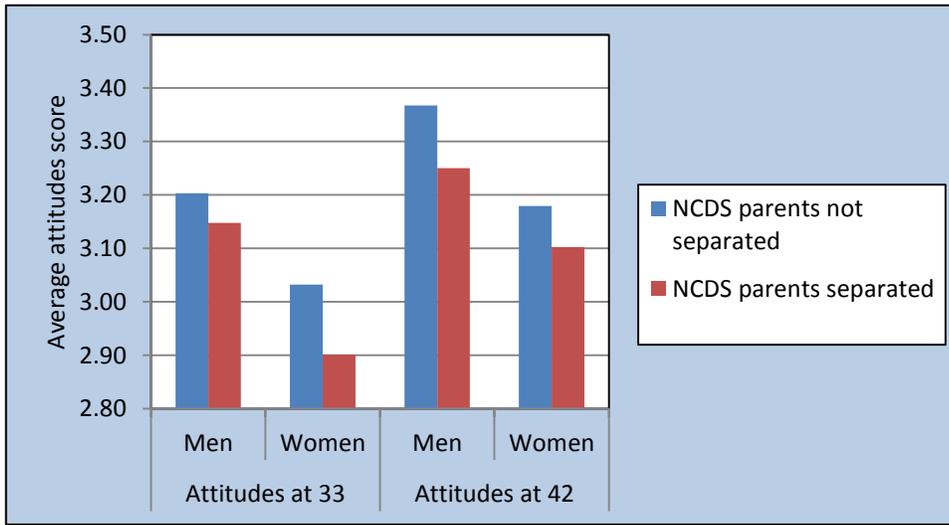
The older cohort was less likely to have experienced separation or divorce of their parents during childhood compared to the younger cohort: 12% of NCDS respondents' parents got divorced or separated compared to 20% of BCS respondents' parents. However, research suggests that older cohorts could be more affected by these rarer instances of divorce than younger cohorts (e.g. Amato and Keith, 1991 on well-being). Thus the impact of parental divorce could have stronger implications for the attitudes and marital behaviour of the NCDS cohort than the BCS.

Figures 5-13 and 5-14 below show that experience of parental divorce or separation in childhood has a statistically significant association with less traditional attitudes of men and women among both cohorts, confirming the hypothesis that parental divorce could be affecting children's attitudes towards family and marriage long after they grow up (BCS age 26: men:  $t=3.144$ ,  $df=3356$ ,  $p<0.01$ ; women  $t=5.312$ ,  $df=4184$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; BCS age 30: men:  $t=3.258$ ,  $df=4906$ ,  $p<0.01$ ; women:  $t=4.545$ ,  $df=5378$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 33: men:  $t=1.516$ ,  $df=5101$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; women:  $t=3.866$ ,  $df=5378$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 42: men:  $t=3.2371$ ,  $df=5062$ ,  $p<0.01$ ; women:  $t=2.2798$   $df=5291$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

**Figure 5-13: Experience of parental separation in childhood and average attitudes scores in adulthood, BCS**



**Figure 5-14: Experience of parental separation in childhood and average attitudes scores in adulthood, NCDS**



### 5.2.8 Summary

In this part of the chapter, I found that certain parental characteristics have a strong bivariate relationship with cohort members' attitudes to family and marriage. These are summarised below:

- BCS men at the age of 26 were significantly less traditional if they were born to fathers of higher social class.
- Higher educational qualifications of cohort members' mothers was found to have a negative association with men's attitudes at both time points in both cohorts and women's attitudes among the BCS cohort at the age of 30, whereby cohort members whose mothers stayed in education after minimum school-leaving age were less traditional than those whose mothers did not.
- Mother's employment when the cohort child was of school age is significantly associated with less traditional attitudes among BCS men at both ages.
- Although graphically it appears that experiencing spells of living in care in childhood is associated with less traditional attitudes in adulthood (with the exception of BCS women age 30), these relationships were not found to be statistically significant.

- Parental separation in childhood was found to be highly significant in differentiating between adults' attitudes towards family and marriage, whereby respondents who had experienced parental separation or divorce were significantly less traditional than those who lived with both natural parents throughout their childhood (from birth to age 16). This finding is consistent across genders and cohorts.

### **5.3 Cohort members' own characteristics**

Having discussed the possibility of the family background having an impact on the cohort members' attitudes in this chapter, and the ways in which a cohort member's partnership and marital status might affect their attitudes, the remainder of this chapter examines cohort members' other characteristics as adults and the relationships of these to attitudes to family and marriage. A review of previous studies on these relationships was outlined in Chapter 2 and is further developed here as appropriate.

#### **5.3.1 Cohort members and their children**

##### Presence of children and marital/partnership behaviours: previous research

The fact that couples who have children are at a lower risk of marital dissolution than couples who remain childless has found confirmation in a wide range of studies (e.g. Waite and Lillard, 1991; Lillard and Waite, 1993; Berrington and Diamond, 1999; Wu, 1995). The seemingly stabilising effect of the presence of children on parents' partnerships could be due to a combination of factors. Economic theories suggest that having children increases the gains of marriage and at the same time increases the costs of separation (Lillard and Waite, 1993). Therefore, some couples might decide to stay together in anticipation of the economic burden that the separation would most probably incur. Others may be staying together, despite problematic relationships, for the sake of their children's well-being. Thus, Thornton (1977) provides some examples of the literature to support the claim that some parents could choose to stay together for the "good of their children" (p. 531). Some couples might prefer to stay married in order to avoid having to "divide" the child(ren) or for the fear of losing custody of them. "The incentive to separate is smaller the more important are investments that are "specific" to a particular marriage. The most obvious and dominant

example of marriage-specific<sup>13</sup> investment is children...” (Becker, 1974: 23). Some parents might have strong beliefs that children should grow up with both parents and that they should not therefore separate for the sake of their children. The latter points towards the mediating effect of attitudes on partnership breakdown, whereby having children combined with strong negative attitudes towards parental separation may well decrease the risk of separation.

There are other propositions about the nature of the relationship between having children and parental union stability. Lillard and Waite (1993), for example, suggest that having children could be an indication of the commitment to the partnership and it could therefore be both the cause and the effect of parental partnership stability. The authors test the relationship between the decision to have children and the decision to maintain a marriage. They found that there is a negative relationship between the two, whereby the hazard of marital breakdown decreases the chances of having children especially among women who already have them. Age of children was found to have an impact on the way their presence affects parental partnership stability. Waite and Lillard (1991), for example, found that pre-school age of first child has a positive effect on parental partnership stability while the presence of any additional children has a similar effect only when they are at a very young age. Wu and Hart (1999) also showed in a Canadian study that those who had children under the age of 6 were less at risk of marital disruption. Presence of children from previous relationships can be seen as an obstacle in the “marriage market” as well as a source of conflict in a relationship, which might increase the chances of separation (Steele, 2005). Less research has been done on the effects of children from previous partnerships on the stability of cohabiting relationships.

Although theoretically children (particularly of a young age) should have a stabilising effect on union stability (Hoem, 1997) and this, as argued by Landale and Forste 1991, should be similar for both marital and non-marital unions, the empirical evidence of the relationship between presence of children and parental partnership permanence is at times contradictory to this notion. While there is evidence that in some cases presence of young children affects cohabiting partnership stability in a similar way to marital stability (e.g. Steele, 2005; Wu and Hart, 1999), others failed to find any effect of having children on

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<sup>13</sup> The author notes that in the example of children, they would be considered to be a specific investment if the pleasure received by a parent after permanent separation from them is smaller than that experienced before the separation.

parental separation or even a negative effect among cohabiting couples. Ermisch and Francesconi (2000) showed that cohabiting couples are more likely to end up separating than continuing their partnership or getting married if they have children compared to childless cohabiters, while Wu and Hard (1999) found that presence of young children among cohabiting women increases the likelihood of marriage and decreases the risk of separation. Morgan and Waite (1987) also showed that those who have children have more traditional attitudes toward marriage than those who do not.

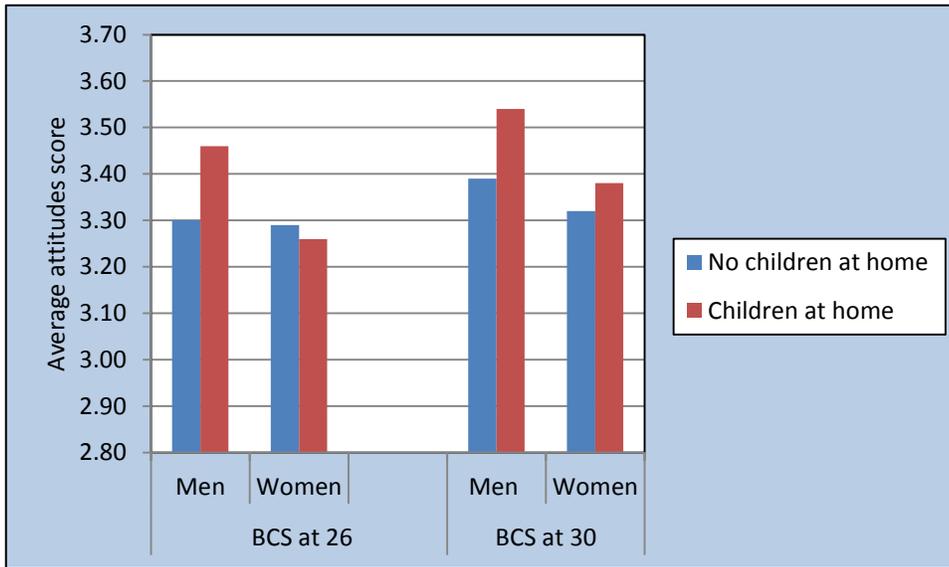
Drawing on previous findings outlined above, distinguishing between respondents' parental status could potentially add to the understanding of the relationship between having children and parental attitudes towards and predisposition to form and end partnerships. In Chapter 7, I will explore the relationship between cohort members' parental status and the likelihood of partnership formation and dissolution, controlling for a range of background factors. But firstly, I investigate the relationship between presence of children and attitudes to family and marriage by comparing average attitude scores among respondents who have children and those who do not. I consider various indicators of presence of children in cohort members' households such as distinguishing between biological and non-biological children and the age of the youngest child.

#### Children of cohort members

As expected, the majority of BCS cohort members (72%) reported having no children living with them in their household when they were 26 years old. This reduced to 50% by the time they were 30 years old. Among the NCDS cohort members, 25% and 18% did not have any children living with them at age 33 and 42 respectively. The difference in the proportions of those with and without children between the cohorts reflects both their age – a particularly young age of the BCS – and the period that cohort members were living in at the time of each study.

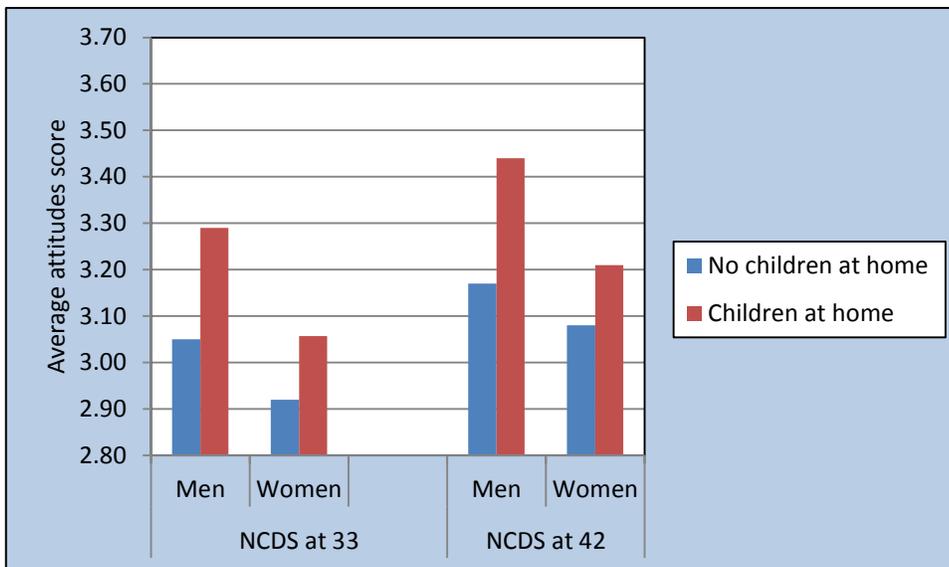
In both cohorts men and women who had any children living in their homes (with the exception of women at 26 in the BCS cohort) were significantly more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage than men and women who had no children at home. These relationships are graphically illustrated in Figures 5-15 and 5-16 below.

**Figure 5-15: Average attitudes score of cohort members and presence of any children at home, men and women, BCS**



BCS age 26: men:  $t=-5.126$ ,  $df=1101.296$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; women:  $t=101221$ ,  $df=2730.252$ ,  $p>0.05$   
 BCS age 30: men:  $t=-7.440$ ,  $df=4567$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; women:  $t=-3.131$ ,  $df=4627.315$ ,  $p<0.01$

**Figure 5-16: Average attitude score of cohort members and presence of any children at home, men and women, NCDS**



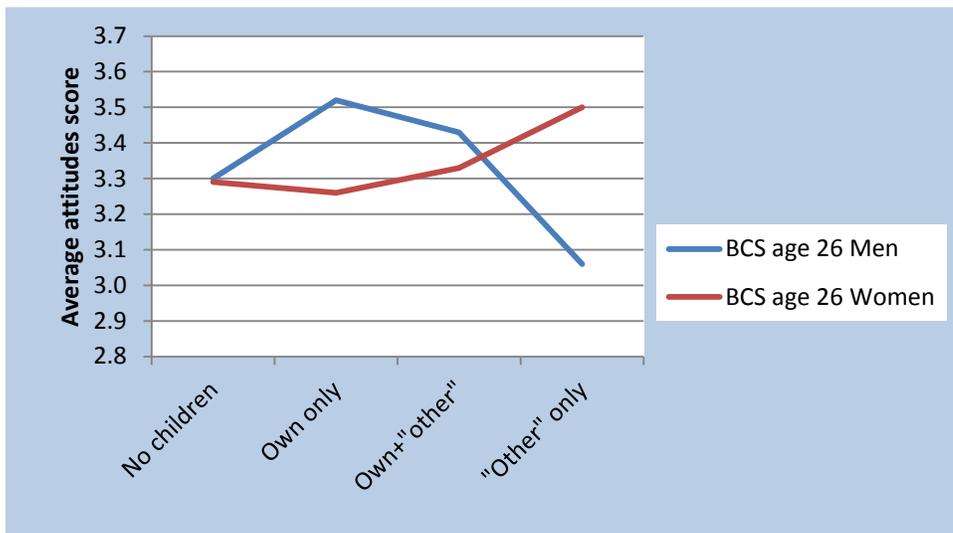
NCDS age 33: men:  $t=-9.836$ ,  $df=2715.973$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; women:  $t=-5.111$ ,  $df=5132$ ,  $p<0.001$   
 NCDS age 42: men:  $t=-10.188$ ,  $df=1660.107$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; women:  $t=-4.757$ ,  $df=1166.288$ ,  $p<0.001$

The majority of cohort members who reported having children at home are parents to their biological children and only between two and six per cent of the cohort members from the whole sample were parenting non-biological children. Figures 5-17 and 5-18 below show

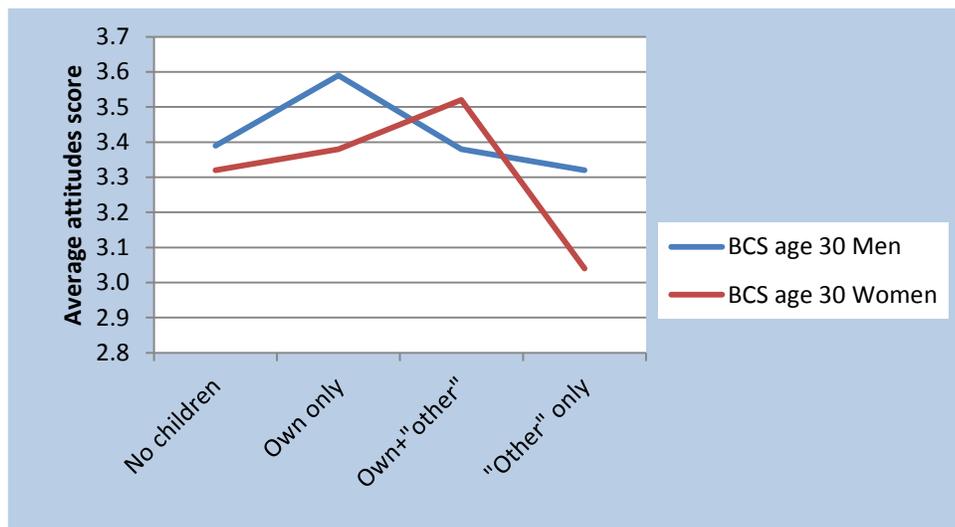
the average scores of respondents who have no children living with them, their own (biological) children living with them, a combination of their own and ‘other’ children, and those who have ‘other’ children only living with them. The ‘other’ children group consists mainly of step children but also includes adopted and foster children. The number of respondents who lived with step/adopted/foster children only is quite low among both cohorts, remarkably so for men. This reflects the fact that biological children normally remain with their mother after the separation of parents.

Among the BCS cohort at both ages, men who only had their own children living with them expressed significantly more traditional attitudes towards family and marriage than men who had “other” children as well as those who had no children living with them. BCS women’s average attitudes did not differ significantly at 26 depending on the presence of children in the household. BCS women’s attitudes at 30 were significantly more traditional if they only had their own children living with them compared to women who had no children or “other” children only.

**Figure 5-17: Average attitude scores and presence of children at home, BCS men and women age 26**



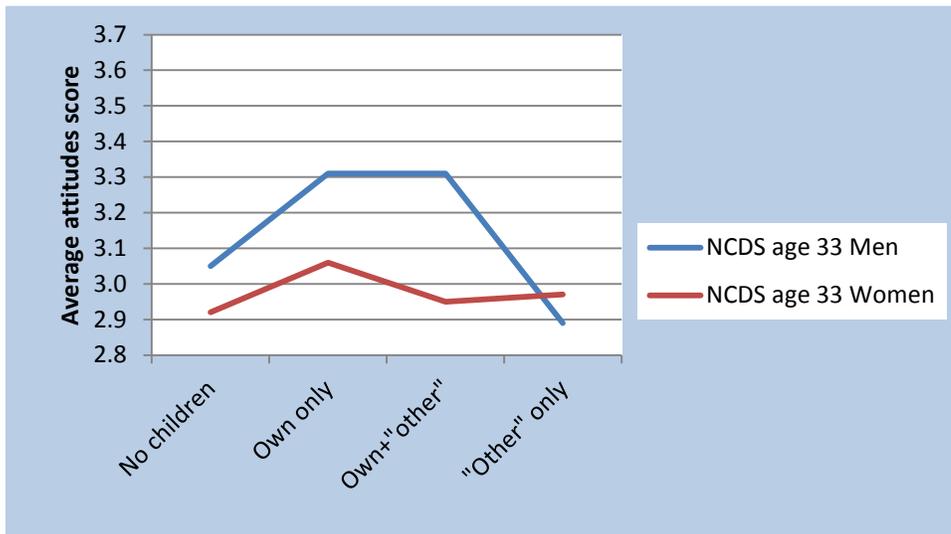
**Figure 5-18: Average attitude scores and presence of children at home, BCS men and women age 30**



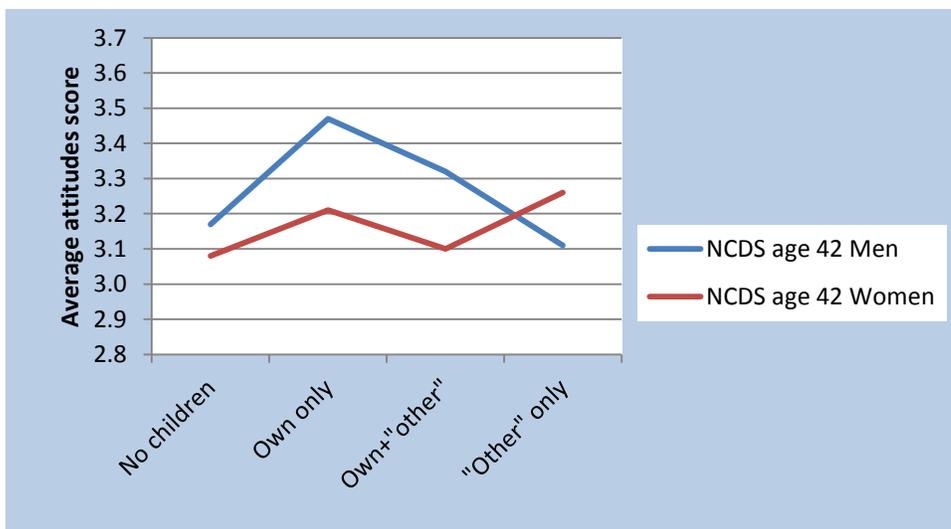
Among NCDS respondents age 33, men who lived with their own children only were significantly more traditional than men who either had no children or who lived with “other” children only. Those men who had a combination of own and “other” children were significantly more traditional than those who had no children and those who had “other” children only. NCDS women who did not have any children living with them at the age of 33 were significantly less traditional than women who lived with their biological children.

At 42, men who lived with their own children were significantly more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage than men who lived with no children, “other” children only and a mixture of own and “other” children. Men who had a mixture of own and “other” children expressed significantly more traditional attitudes than those with no children or with “other” children only. NCDS women at 42 were significantly more traditional in their attitudes if they they had only their own children living with them compared to those women who had no children. I would expect a greater proportion of women (than men) who have only biological children living in their households to be either lone parents or in a partnership with non-biological other parents. This could, in part, explain why women’s relative attitudes are not as traditional as men’s if they only have their own children living with them.

**Figure 5-19: Average attitude scores and presence of children at home, NCDS men and women age 33**



**Figure 5-20: Average attitude scores and presence of children at home, NCDS men and women age 42**



Overall, the trends in attitudes of men who have only their biological children living with them in the household are similar across time and cohorts: these men are the most traditional compared to men of other paternal statuses. Additionally, the least traditional men are those who only have “other” children living with them, which mainly includes step-children. Among women, the trends in attitudes depending on the type of parental status are not as comparable across the ages and the cohorts. Very low numbers of those

who only live with “other” children, particularly among women, make these results less reliable and the less than clear-cut patterns of the results described above might just be an illustration of that. In the next section I continue to explore the relationship between parental status and attitudes by looking at the age of the youngest child in the household.

Children’s age

I derived a combined measure of the presence of children in the cohort member’s household and the age of the youngest child using household grid questions in both studies at both time points. Since some of the literature indicates that younger children may act as a protective factor against partnership dissolution and as a facilitator of marital transition among the cohabiting couples, I distinguish between pre-school age children (under the age of 5) and school age children (older than age 5 years). While the overwhelming majority of the BCS cohort at both time points had children under 5 at home, a greater proportion of NCDS respondents, particularly at a later age, had children who were 5 years or older living with them (Table 5-3 below). Even at a comparable age (BCS age 30 and NCDS age 33), a greater proportion of the NCDS cohort had school age children compared to BCS, confirming postponement of childbearing among the younger cohort.

**Table 5-3: Proportion of cohort members with no children, children under 5 years old and children who are 5 years of age or older, BCS and NCDS**

	BCS		NCDS	
	Age 26	Age 30	Age 33	Age 42
no children living in household	5,807	4,819	2,650	1,911
	72.8%	48.7%	25.3%	18.3%
pre-school (under 5)	1,861	3,900	4,928	1,381
	23.3%	39.4%	47.1%	13.2%
school age (5 years old+)	310	1,186	2,887	7,147
	3.9%	12.0%	27.6%	68.5%
Total	7,978	9,905	10,465	10,439
	100%	100%	100%	100%

When comparing average attitude scores of the respondents without any children at home with those with the youngest child of a pre-school age and those with the youngest child of school age, some interesting patterns appear among men and women in both cohorts. BCS men and women varied significantly in their attitudes depending on whether they had children under 5, above 5 years of age or no children (BCS age 26: Men: F(2,

3398)=21.010,  $p<0.001$ ; women:  $F(2, 4351)=7.631$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; BCS age 30: Men:  $F(2, 4566)=34.150$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; women:  $F(2, 5196)=20.928$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Among BCS men and women, the most traditional of the three groups are those who have child(ren) under 5 (see Table 5-4 below). Multiple comparison results from ANOVA analyses (see Appendix 3, Tables A31 and A32) confirm that these respondents are significantly more traditional than those who have no children (with the exception of BCS women at 26) and significantly more traditional than those whose youngest child is school age. Additionally, childless men and women (with the exception of BCS women at 26), expressed similar average attitudes as those with children aged 5 or above at home.

**Table 5-4: Average attitude scores and age of youngest child at home, BCS men and women**

	Average attitude scores/frequencies (in brackets)			
	26 years old		30 years old	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
No children at home	3.30 (2,721)	3.29 (2,954)	3.39 (2,636)	3.31 (2,125)
<5 years old (pre-school)	3.51 (592)	3.30 (1,196)	3.57 (1,563)	3.42 (2,280)
5+ years old (school age)	3.17 (88)	3.09 (204)	3.43 (370)	3.25 (794)
Total N	(3,401)	(4,354)	(4,569)	(5,199)

The attitudes of men and women in the NCDS cohort at the age of 33 differ significantly depending on the presence and age of children (NCDS at 33: men:  $F(2, 4671)=49.942$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; women:  $F(2, 5131)=13.882$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Table 5-5 below shows these differences although there is no statistically significant within-gender difference between the attitudes of the respondents depending on the age of the youngest child. ANOVA results for the NCDS men and women at the age of 42 do not indicate any association between average attitude scores and presence and age of the youngest child in the household (NCDS at 42: men:  $F(2, 3085)=0.767$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; women:  $F(2, 3250)=0.475$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). Please refer to

Appendix 3, Tables A33 and A34 for the multiple comparisons between the groups of NCDS cohort members with and without children.

**Table 5-5: Average attitude scores and age of youngest child at home, NCDS men and women**

	Average attitude scores/frequencies (in brackets)			
	33 years old		42 years old	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
No children at home	3.05 (1,454)	2.92 (1,006)	3.36 (546)	3.16 (624)
<5 years old (pre-school)	3.30 (2,177)	3.04 (2,475)	3.30 (399)	3.13 (452)
5+ years old (school age)	3.27 (1,043)	3.08 (1,653)	3.34 (2,143)	3.17 (2,177)
Total N	(4,674)	(5,134)	(3,088)	(3,253)

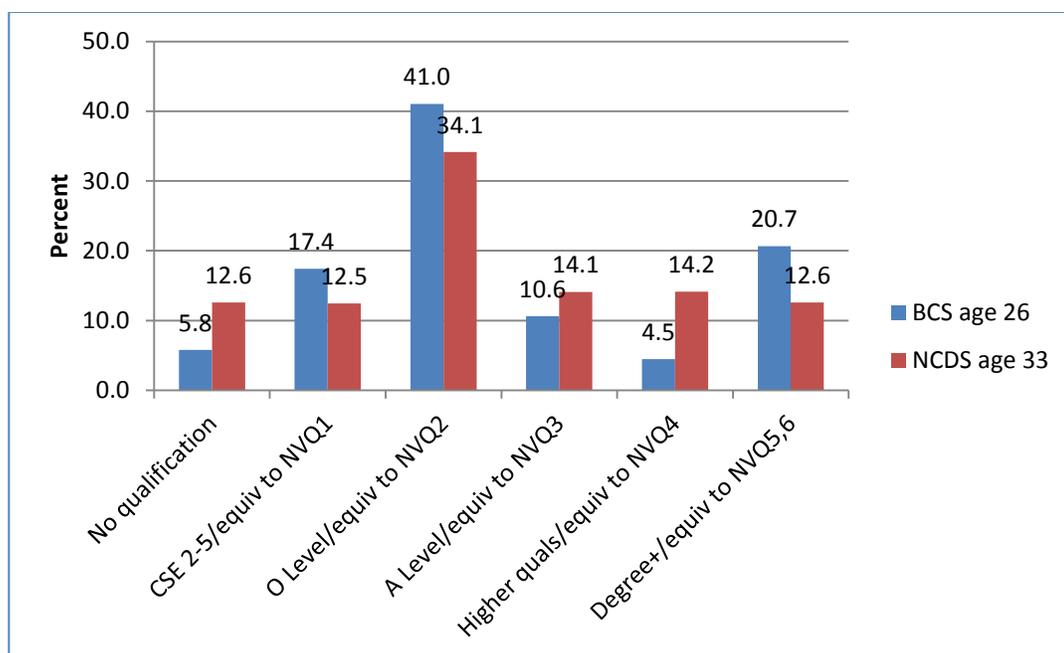
### 5.3.2 Highest level of education

In the last few decades the educational patterns have changed dramatically across cohorts and gender. While there has been an increase in the proportion of men who obtain higher levels of education, this increase is substantially higher among women, narrowing the educational gap between men and women across years and cohorts (Smith and Ratcliffe, 2009). Research shows that women’s education is one of the strongest predictors of their early childbearing (Rendall and Smallwood, 2003; Rindfuss et al, 1996), whereby according to the opportunity cost of childbearing hypothesis, those who have less to lose (in terms of monetary gain and career prospects) tend to become mothers the soonest (e.g. Hansen et al, 2009). The educational qualifications of women are also closely linked to their employment prospects, which in turn may affect their childbearing behaviour. Additionally, higher levels of education are found to be associated with marital and partnership behaviour. Wu and Hart (1999), for example, found that higher educational qualifications among women significantly increase the likelihood of marital dissolution

among those who are married and increase the likelihood of marital transition for those who are cohabiting. Having such strong links with family-related behaviour, educational qualifications are therefore likely to be highly correlated with family-related attitudes. Previous studies found that higher educational qualifications are associated with less traditional attitudes to family-related issues (Jarvis et al., 2000). Furthermore, a significant change in family-related attitudes among NCDS women who participated in adult academic learning between age 33 and 42 was found by Preston and Feinstein (2004).

By the time of first observations of attitudes for the two cohorts (BCS age 26 and NCDS age 33) they had reached the age at which the majority would have had a chance to attain the highest level of qualifications. The difference in the educational qualifications gained by 26 (BCS) and 33 (NCDS) are striking between the cohorts. While 12.6% of the NCDS cohort reported no specific qualifications, only 5.8% of the BCS cohort had no qualifications (see Figure 5-21 below). The difference between the two cohorts persists on the opposite spectrum of educational achievement, whereby 20.7% of the BCS cohort has qualifications equivalent to a degree level or higher and only 12.6% of the NCDS cohort does.

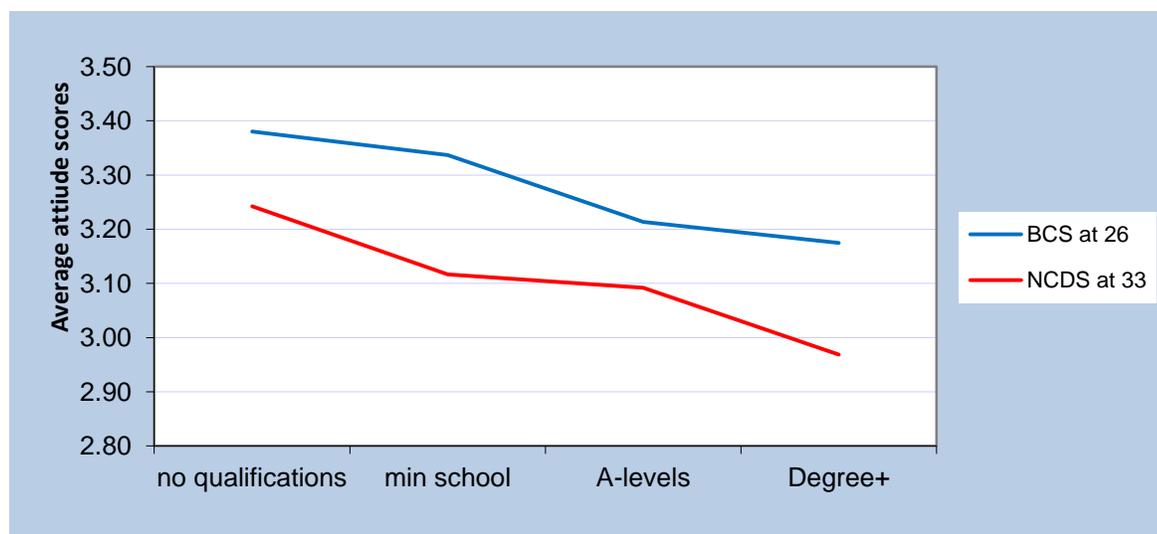
**Figure 5-21: Highest level of educational qualifications obtained, BCS age 26 and NCDS age 33**



To compare the attitude scores of respondents by their highest educational attainment achieved, I recoded the educational indicator to reflect: no qualifications, minimum school level qualifications (equivalent to NVQ 1 and 2), A-level or higher pre-degree qualifications (equivalent to NVQ 3 and 4) and degree-level or higher qualifications (equivalent to NVQ 5 and 6). Looking at the average scores on attitude scales for both cohorts below, it is evident that there is a clear negative relationship between the level of education respondents attained and their family values. Thus the lower the qualifications the higher and therefore more traditional the attitudes are. One way ANOVA analysis of variance was carried out for each cohort and confirmed that different educational qualifications corresponded to significantly different average scores on the attitude scale for both cohorts (BCS age 26:  $F(3,8229)=27.46$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 33:  $F(3,10424)=27.58$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

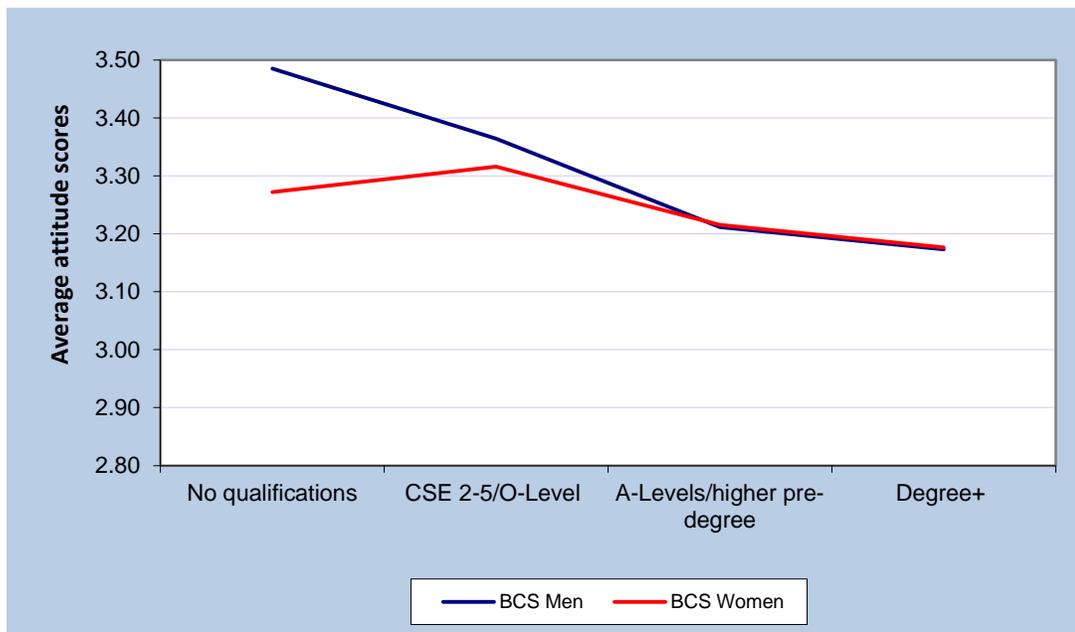
Exploration of the mean comparisons between each pair of educational attainment groups corroborates that those who have no qualifications are significantly more traditional in their attitudes compared to all other educational groups among both cohorts, except the minimum school level educated in BCS (see Appendix 3, Tables A35 and A36). As expected, those who were educated to at least a degree level exhibited the least traditional attitudes among the educational groups in both cohorts, with the exception of BCS cohort members with A-level or equivalent level of qualifications.

**Figure 5-22: Average attitude scores and highest level of education attained, BCS age 26 and NCDS age 33**



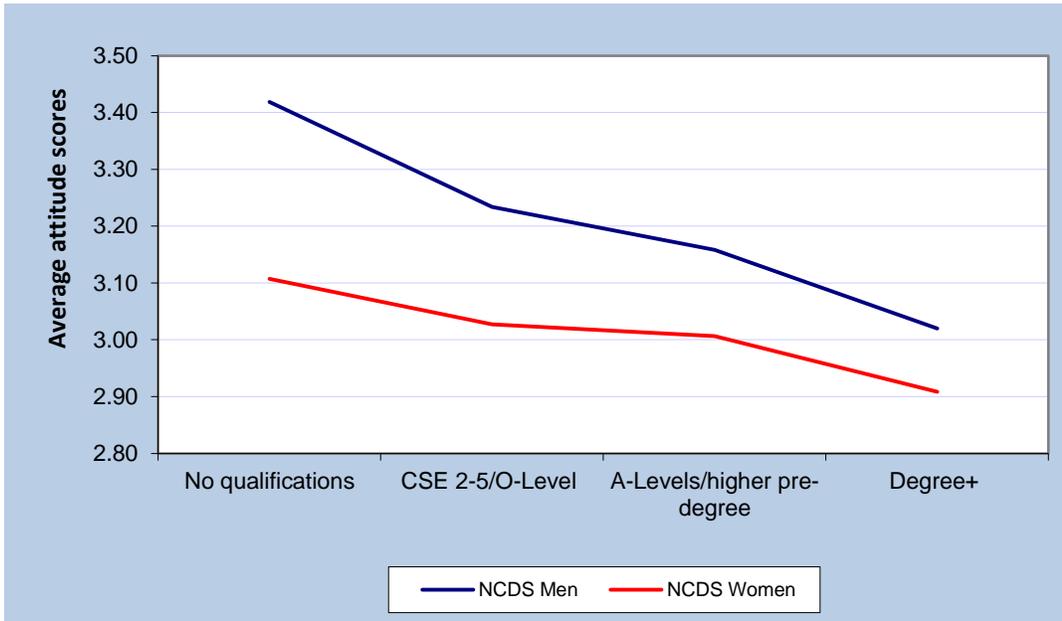
The relationship between educational attainment and respondents' attitudes differed significantly for men and women in both cohorts (BCS:  $F(1, 8117)=9.080, p<0.01$ ; NCDS:  $F(1, 10338)=122.67, p<0.001$ ). Additionally, the results from ANOVA analyses of both cohorts show significant interaction effects between educational qualifications and gender, indicating a significantly different impact of education on the attitudes of men and women (BCS:  $F(3, 8117)=3.090, p<0.05$ ; NCDS:  $F(3, 10338)=4.33, p<0.01$ ). Please refer to Appendix 3, Table A37 for the complete set of these results, which are graphically illustrated in Figures 5-23 and 5-24 below. The impact of gender on the relationship between qualifications and attitudes to family and marriage differs for the two cohorts. While BCS men and women exhibit almost identical scores on the attitude scale at the higher end of educational qualifications (A-level and above), they differ dramatically at the lower end of qualifications, particularly among men and women with no qualifications.

**Figure 5-23: Average attitudes scores and highest level of education attained for men and women, BCS age 26**



A different picture appears in the differences in attitudes between men and women from the NCDS cohort: women consistently express less traditional attitudes than men in each group of educational qualifications. The difference between these attitudes does, however, decrease towards the lower end of educational qualifications, but not as dramatically as it appears in the BCS cohort.

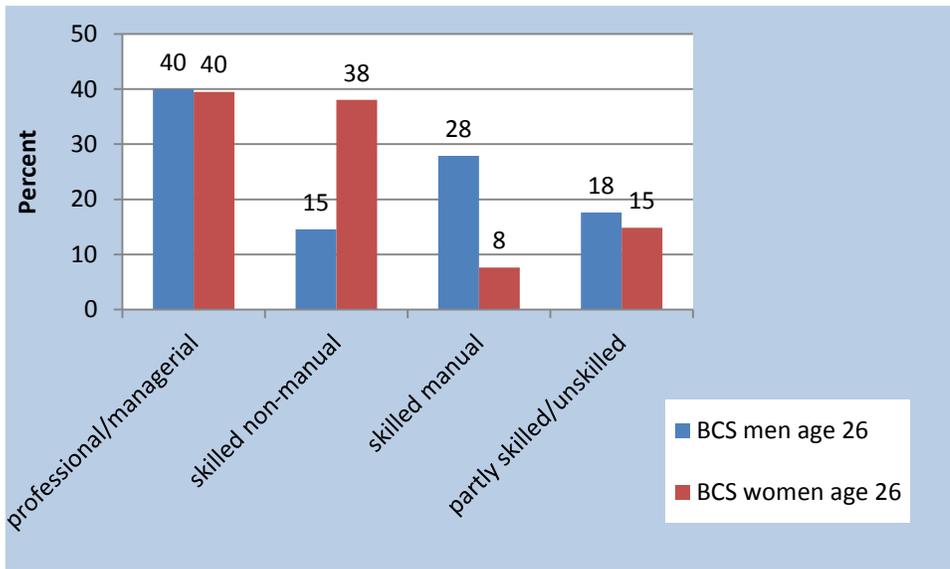
**Figure 5-24: Average attitudes scores and highest level of education attained for men and women, NCDS age 33**



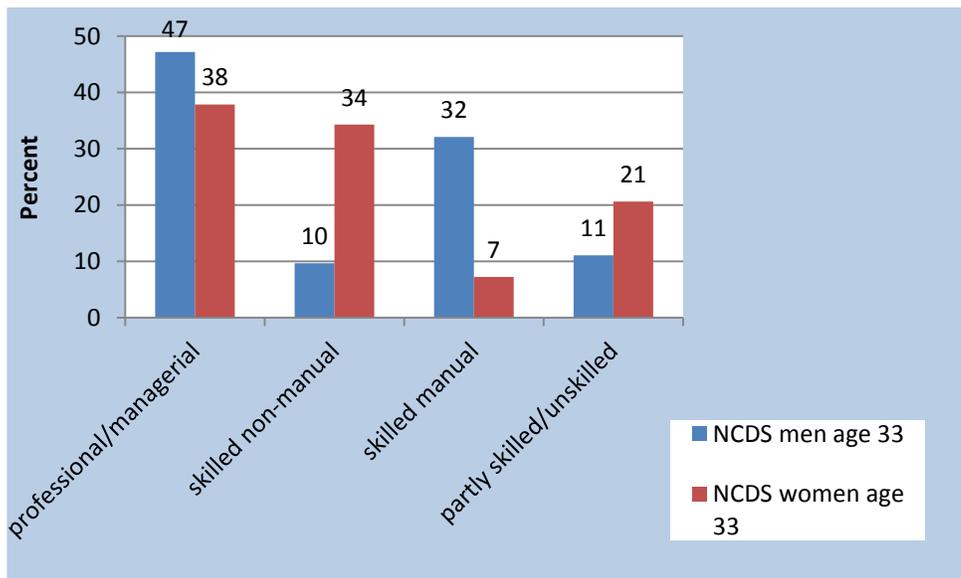
### 5.3.3 Social class

There are considerable differences in the proportions of men and women in different social class groups between the two cohorts, particularly in the highest and lowest ends of the social class spectrum. While a slightly greater proportion of BCS men than women were partially skilled or unskilled, the reverse is observed in the NCDS cohort where a substantially greater proportion of women were at the lowest end of the social class spectrum (see Figures 5-25 and 5-26 below). Also, similar proportions of BCS men and women occupy the highest level of social class (professional/managerial); the difference between men and women is apparent in the NCDS cohort, where women were less likely than men to be high status. This, once again, signifies changes that have taken place affecting more recent cohorts, whereby the gender gap in employment has narrowed.

**Figure 5-25: Social class of cohort members, BCS men and women age 26**



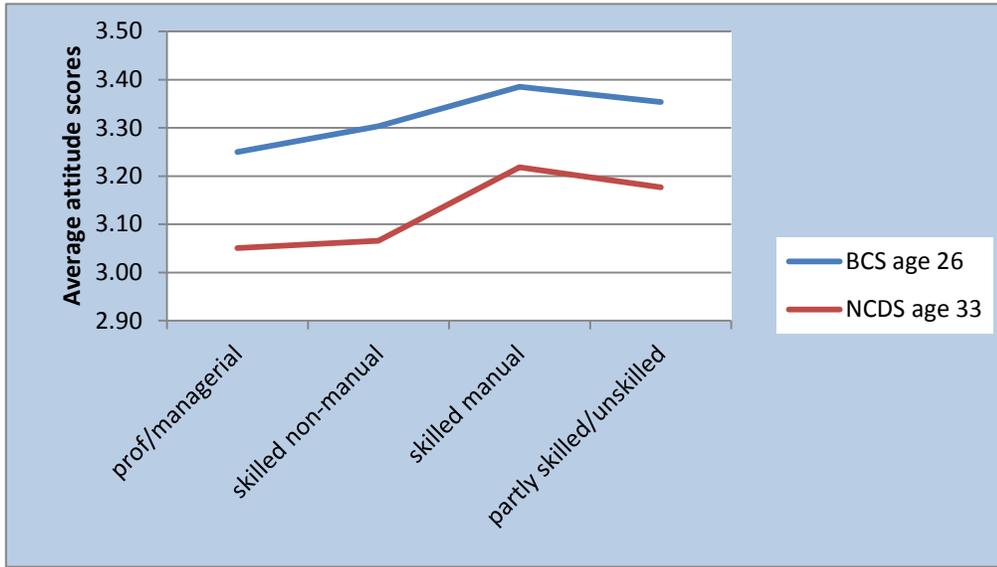
**Figure 5-26: Social class of cohort members, NCDS men and women age 33**



Among the respondents in both cohort studies a significant difference in average attitude scores among the social class groups was observed (BCS age 26:  $F(3,6656)=11.39$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; NCDS age 33:  $F(3, 7912)=22.940$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). A clear pattern emerged when comparing the scores of respondents in each social class category: lower social class (partly-skilled/unskilled and skilled manual) are associated with the most traditional attitudes among the cohort members, the highest social class is associated with the least

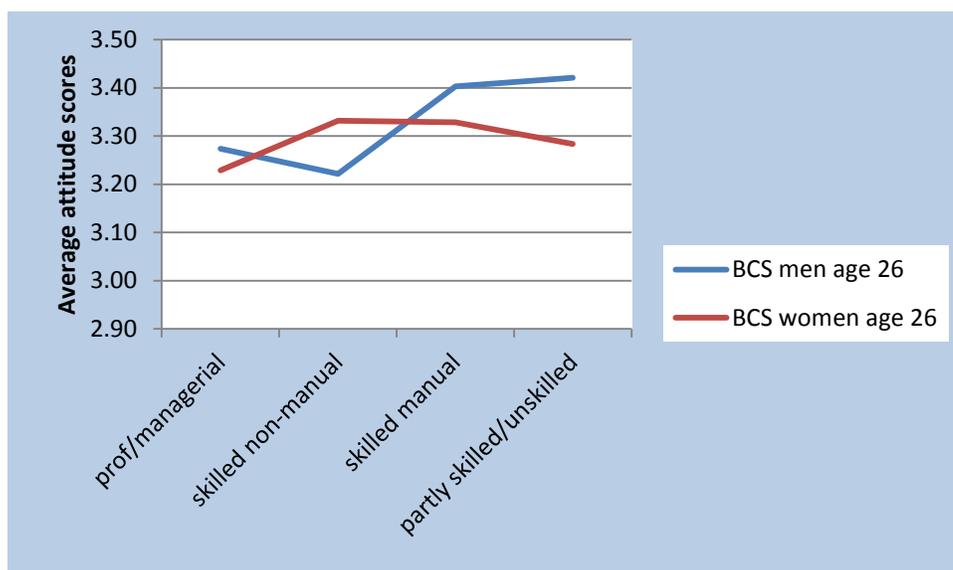
traditional attitudes. Both cohorts follow a similar pattern of attitudes by social class (see Figure 5-27 below).

**Figure 5-27: Average attitudes scores and social class of cohort members, BCS and NCDS**



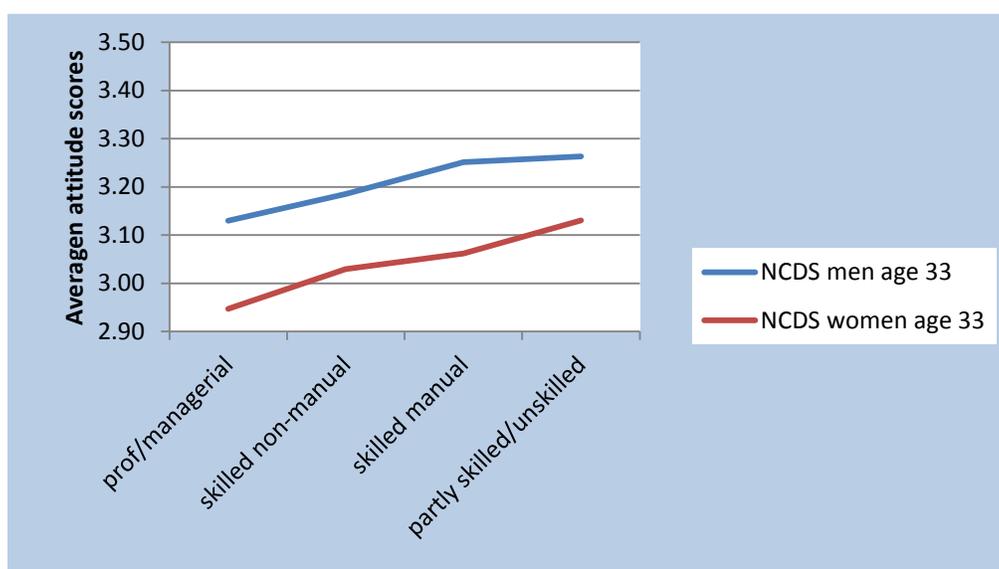
Whether a different impact of social class on attitudes among men and women existed, mirroring that of educational level, was also tested. The results from a two-way ANOVA for BCS respondents showed that, after controlling for gender and the interaction between gender and social class, social class was still significantly associated with attitudes ( $F(3,6646)=8.31$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), while cohort member's gender was not ( $F(1,6646)=3.17$ ). However, gender did have a significant impact on the relationship between social class and attitudes ( $F(3,6646)=6.58$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Figure 5-28 below illustrates how these differences are observed in the data. Firstly, although for both men and women the top social class means the least traditional views and the bottom group – the most traditional, what happens among the “in between” social groups varies between genders. Figure 5-28 below shows that when social class is taken into account, BCS men in all social class groups (with the exception of skilled non-manual) are still more traditional than women in their attitudes to family and marriage.

**Figure 5-28: Average attitudes scores and social class of cohort members, BCS men and women age 26**



ANOVA analyses of the NCDS data shows that while social class and gender main effects are significant in predicting attitude scores (social class:  $F(3, 7908)=15.110$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; gender:  $F(1,7908)=61.480$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), there is no interaction of the two ( $F(3, 7908)=0.390$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). These results are shown graphically in Figure 5-29 below, which shows that men in each social class group scored consistently higher than women on the attitude scale at the age of 33 (see full results for both BCS and NCDS in Appendix 3, Table A38).

**Figure 5-29: Average attitudes scores and social class of cohort members, NCDS men and women age 33**



### 5.3.4 Employment status

Becker's economic theory of the gains of marriage lies in the advantage to marriage comparative to remaining unmarried, whereby if the gains to marriage are greater than remaining single, then a marriage will take place (1973, 1981). According to this theory, women's economic independence (such as a prosperous career) undermines the arrangements of mutual dependencies of husband and wife where traditional gender roles are clearly maintained: a man is a breadwinner and a woman is a home-maker. The gains of such marriages are therefore reduced and the risk of separation – increased. Women in such partnerships would have less “traditional” roles and would therefore more likely hold less traditional gender-role attitudes. In opposition to Becker's theory, Oppenheimer (1997), for example, criticises the focus on traditional family type with clear gendered division of roles being not only invalid in the modern world, where the majority of married women are working, but also misleading. She argues and explores some empirical work of others (see Oppenheimer, 1997 for references to these studies). which shows that in some cases women's education and employment can actually reinforce marital stability. She further addresses the issues of marital formation, more precisely, the lack of empirical evidence for the women's economic independence theory outlined by Becker, whereby it is not a non-marriage that is the result of women's more frequent employment but their postponing of marriage. Finally, Oppenheimer talks about the importance of time when theorising the impact of women's independence on marital formation and dissolution; with cohorts living during the times of widespread acceptance of women working, such constraining theory would not be applicable in its original stand and it was originally confirmed partly due to the fact that the data used was that of the early post-war period – the era where women's, particularly married women's, employment was a rare occasion.

In more recent empirical investigations of men and women's employment and union stability, for example in the work by Wu and Hart (1999), both women and men's employment was found to reduce the risk of separation, whether from a marital or a cohabiting partner. But just as Oppenheimer (1997) found contrasting evidence to Becker's theory in the empirical testing of it, others found contradicting results to Oppenheimer's suggestion that post-war period data was a factor in the empirical evidence supporting Becker's theory. South (2001), for example,

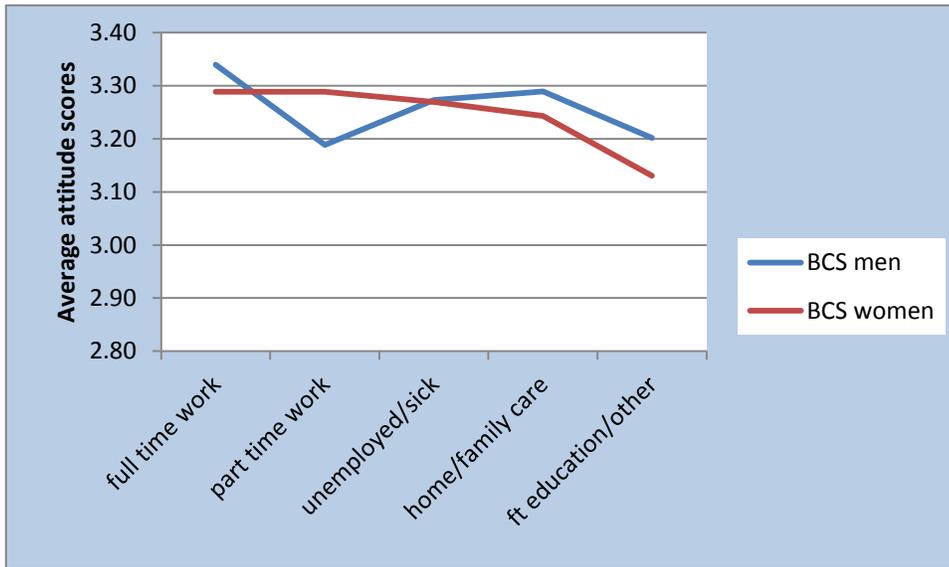
found positive effects of women's employment<sup>14</sup> on marital breakdown only for the most recent cohorts (i.e. observations for the period between 1985 and 1992 and not for the observation between 1969 and 1976 or between 1977 and 1984). Most research into employment and attitudes focuses on the impact of women's employment on their gender roles within family attitudes (e.g. Crompton et al, 2005; Crompton et al, 2003; Berrington et al, 2008) but few focus on the way employment affects men's and women's attitudes to family and marriage.

Attitudes of the BCS cohort members differed significantly depending on their employment status (BCS ( $F=4, 8572$ )=4.580,  $p<0.001$ ), while NCDS cohorts' attitudes did not (NCDS:  $F(4, 10544)=2.220$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), controlling for gender and the interaction between gender and employment status. Furthermore, while the interaction of gender and employment was not a significant factor in determining attitudes in both cohorts (BCS:  $F(4, 8572)=0.920$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; NCDS:  $F(4, 10544)=0.810$ ), women in the BCS cohort were not significantly less traditional in their attitudes compared to men, controlling for their employment, than NCDS women were (BCS:  $F(1, 8572)=0.1$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; NCDS:  $F(1, 10544)=16.400$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) – see Appendix 3, Table A39 for the full details of these ANOVA analyses. Figures 5-30 and 5-31 below illustrate these relationships. Full-time employed men and women among the BCS cohort were the most traditional in their attitudes towards family and marriage at the age of 26, while those in full-time education or “other” were the least traditional. Among NCDS men and women, those who were working full time and those who were in full-time education were the least traditional among all, while those who were in part-time work among women and home care among both men and women were the most traditional. Men who were unemployed or permanently/temporarily sick or disabled had the highest average attitudes scores among men.

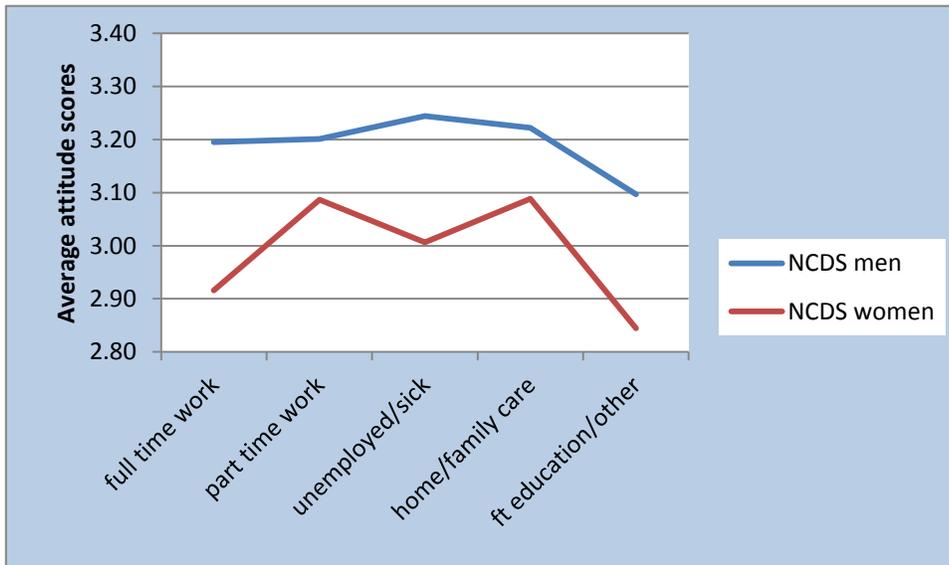
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<sup>14</sup> when measured by either a continuous variable of the number of hours they worked or by a binary indicator

**Figure 5-30: Average attitudes scores and employment status of cohort members, BCS men and women at 26**



**Figure 5-31: Average attitudes scores and employment status, NCDS men and women age 33**



### 5.3.5 Summary

- The presence of any children in the household of the respondents, whether own or step/adoptive/foster is associated with a higher average score on the attitude scale

among both men and women in the BCS and NCDS cohorts than among those with no children in the household (with the exception of BCS women at 26).

- While the majority of cohort men and women living with pre-school age children were found to be significantly more traditional than those who did not live with any children (NCDS men and women age 42 and BCS women age 26), only among BCS at the age of 26 and NCDS at the age of 33 were those with children older than 5 years of age significantly more traditional in attitudes than childless men and women. Furthermore, men and women among the BCS cohort at both time points also had significantly more traditional attitudes towards family and marriage if they had pre-school age children than those whose children were older.
- NCDS women consistently express less traditional attitudes than men in each group of educational qualifications. The difference between these attitudes does, however, decrease towards the lower end of educational qualifications, but not as dramatically as it does in the BCS cohort, where the difference in attitudes between men and women with A-level qualifications or above almost completely disappears.
- Men and women in professional or managerial positions were the least traditional in their attitudes towards family and marriage in both cohorts, while women and men who were in the lowest social group (either partly skilled or unskilled) were the most traditional.
- Employment status of cohort members significantly differentiates between attitudes of both men and women among the BCS cohort, but not among the NCDS cohort. Furthermore, there is no significant impact of gender on the pattern of average attitude scores by employment status, signifying a similar relationship between employment and attitudes among women and men at the age of 26: the most traditional were those who were in full time employment, while the least traditional were those who were still in full time education.

## 5.4 Conclusions

This chapter presented some explorative further work on cohort members' own characteristics as adults and their attitudes towards family and marriage. Chapter 4 illustrated the way respondents' marital and partnership status are highly related to their value orientation. Additionally, I hypothesised, some other factors, such as parental status and socio-economic characteristics, would have an impact on their attitudes. Indeed this chapter confirms that, as predicted, having children, an education at a lower level, and an occupation of lower social class are associated with the most traditional attitudes among both men and women in both cohorts.

Furthermore, cohort members' family background characteristics also appear to have significant associations with their attitudes to family and marriage. The most consistent was experiencing parental separation or divorce during childhood in differentiating cohort members' attitudes, whereby respondents whose parents split up when they were growing up expressed significantly less traditional attitudes to family and marriage. This was true for both men and women in both cohorts. Socio-economic characteristics of parents did not have a significant relationship with NCDS cohort members' attitudes but they did with BCS respondents'. Maternal employment and maternal education were associated with lower attitude scores of BCS men at both time points, while BCS women were less traditional if they were born into families where fathers were of a higher social class.

These relationships are interesting in themselves, but due to the nature of the analysis presented here, establishing that the associations between each factor and attitude scores are not due to some other characteristics of cohort member or their parents is not possible without further analyses. Therefore, in the next chapter I utilise a set of multiple linear regressions to explore the ways each of these background and adult factors are related to cohort members' attitudes, while simultaneously controlling for others. I also perform the analyses in "block" of information in order to further understand the way parental divorce is associated with cohort members' attitudes: does it have a lasting effect on respondents' marital values or does its impact disappear once cohort members' own experiences of partnerships are taken into account?

## **CHAPTER 6: Determinants of attitudes: A multiple regression approach**

The aim of this chapter is to extend the exploration of the relationships between attitudes and background characteristics examined in preceding chapters (chapters 4 and 5) by illuminating the association between each characteristic and attitudes, while controlling for other potential predictors of attitudes. This is done using multiple regression analysis.

Multiple regression models are useful in predicting outcome on the dependent variable (DV) using a set independent variables (IV). This extends the bivariate analyses of attitudes and background factors presented earlier, in that the effects of these factors on respondents' attitudes are considered simultaneously, and a relationship between each covariate and attitudes is adjusted to control for the other factors' influence on attitudes in the model. Thus, regression analysis helps to identify the existing relationships between each independent variable and a dependent variable that remain present even after controlling for other potential confounding factors.

The aims of this chapter are to firstly examine the effects of parental characteristics on attitudes of their grown up children and then to explore the contributions that cohort members' own attributes have on their attitudes to family and marriage. Later analyses explore whether any of the family background characteristics remain significant predictors of cohort members' attitudes after cohort members' personal characteristics are taken into consideration. Long-term effects of parental divorce/separation are of particular interest, especially in comparison to the effect that cohort members' own partnership dissolutions have on their attitudes. The relationship between cohort members' marital and partnership status and their attitudes are also the subject of interest in further analyses.

## 6.1 Method

### 6.1.1 Multiple linear regression

Linear regression models are used to establish the relationships between parental and cohort members' (CMs) own characteristics and their attitudes to family and marriage. The nested regression method allows us to enter variables in blocks and in a specified sequence. In these analyses, the first block of information is related to cohort members' family backgrounds and the second to their own characteristics. Entering variables in such blocks in this order allows for the investigation of the predictive power of family background in isolation (when the first block is entered) and to test whether these effects remain once CMs' own experiences and characteristics are also taken into account (when block 2 is entered into the model).

This method is valuable in investigating, for example, whether parental divorce/separation during CMs' childhood is a significant predictor of their attitudes to family and marriage during adulthood prior to and after controlling for CMs' own experiences as adults. Although in Chapter 5, it was found that respondents whose parents separated or divorced when they were children held significantly less traditional attitudes to family and marriage than those whose parents remained in a relationship, cohort members' own experiences of partnerships and separations might also have an impact on their feelings about family and marriage, over and above their experience of parental separation. On the other hand, experience of parental separation could have a lasting effect on CMs' attitudes, which in turn might be a selecting factor on their own experiences of separation. Thus, investigating the effects of parental separation on attitudes, controlling for family background factors first and then adding respondents' own experiences of relationship breakdown, will provide more nuanced and robust results than previously presented from bivariate associations, or than if all factors were entered into the regression model simultaneously.

Additionally, the nested regression method allows for the determination of how much more variance in attitudes is explained by respondents' own characteristics, as a set, above the attributes of their family background, and whether these increments in  $R^2$  are statistically significant. The hypothesis here is that although parental background characteristics are

predicted to have an impact on cohort members' attitudes (particularly experience of parental separation), respondents' own experiences (particularly partnerships and their breakdowns) would have a stronger effect on their feelings towards family and marriage.

### 6.1.2 Interpreting the results

The results from the linear regression models are presented in tables and include different parameters, which are explained below. There are two sets of results that are of primary interest here: firstly, the overall model evaluation of how well the set of chosen variables predicts attitudes; and secondly, the impact of each predictor on the dependent variable and how much a change in each predictor increases or decreases the attitudes scores. The estimates used to evaluate these are described below.

The beta coefficients (sometimes called regression coefficients) represent the change in Y given a unit change in X if it is a continuous variable and in comparison to a reference group for categorical variables. Since independent variables are measured in different units, a direct comparison of their sizes (effects) is not possible in all cases as it is not possible to compare, for example, a change in attitudes with an increase of 1 year in mother's age with the impact on attitudes of being married as opposed to being single.

Each table of the results in this chapter includes unstandardised coefficients (referred to as *coefficients* in this and the following tables) and standardised coefficients (referred to as *Beta* in the following tables). Unstandardised coefficients are estimates that indicate the amount of increase in attitudes that would be predicted by a 1 unit increase in the predictor variable (if the predictor is a continuous variable) or by comparing predictor category to its reference (if categorical). The unit refers to the unit of measurement of each individual variable. So, for example, if a predictor is measured in years (e.g. mother's age) then 1 unit is equivalent to 1 year. These coefficients are used to calculate the predicted value of the dependent variable (i.e. the score on the attitude scale in this case) in the regression equation shown below, where Y is the dependent variable (attitudes);  $b_0$  is the constant (or the intercept);  $b_1$  is the unstandardised coefficient for the predictor variable  $x_1$ ;  $b_2$  is the coefficient for predictor variable  $x_2$ , etc.

$$Y = b_0 + b_1 * x_1 + b_2 * x_2 + \dots + b_n * x_n$$

Standardised beta coefficients (Beta) are useful when comparing the relative impact of predictors that are measured in different units, and represent the change in the number of standard deviations of attitudes score given a one standard deviation change in a chosen predictor. It is therefore possible, to some degree, to examine the relative importance of each independent variable in predicting values on the dependent variable. This, however, creates certain ambiguity in trying to decipher the meaning of these rankings as changes of one standard deviation are conceptually difficult to interpret when studying real-life relationships. Additionally it becomes impossible to interpret the standardised coefficients of binary variables (Tarling, 2009: 45). Since the aim of this study is not to place the predictors in the order of importance of their effect on attitudes, but simply to illuminate the ways in which certain characteristics predict attitudes, I will be using unstandardised beta coefficients when summarising and interpreting the output from the models.

To evaluate the statistical significance of each individual coefficient t-values with a corresponding p-value are used. I use a value of alpha of 0.05 at the most and compare each p-value to it. If the p-value is larger than 0.05 then the corresponding coefficient is not statistically significant (i.e. the change in this predictor is not judged to yield a significant change in attitudes score). Coefficients with p-values less than 0.05 are therefore considered to be statistically significant predictors of attitudes and the null hypothesis (coefficient is not significantly different from zero) can therefore be rejected.

Additionally, measures to evaluate the whole model are reported underneath each results table. These are R-Squared ( $R^2$ ), an overall measure of the strength of association between attitudes and all the predictors in the model, and the F-ratio signifying the reliability of independent variables in predicting the dependent variable.  $R^2$  represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable which can be predicted from all the independent variables and is often reported in percentages. The higher the value, the higher the proportion of variance explained and the stronger the predictive power of the predictors. Meanwhile the F-ratio is a ratio of the Mean Square Model and the Mean Square Residual, which comes with an associated p-value; the larger the F-ratio, the more likely it is to represent a reliable predictive power indicating that the Mean Square Residual value is

much smaller than the Mean Square Model value. P-values of 0.05 or under are used to indicate the statistical significance of the F-ratio; if the F-ratio is statistically significant it shows that the independent variables as a set show a significant relationship and reliably predict attitudes.

All the analyses presented in this chapter have been carried out using STATA software.

## 6.2 Sample selection and description of measures used

The sample for the analyses of attitudes for both BCS and NCDS are those with non-missing information on attitudes as well as all the potential predictors identified in preceding chapters. These predictors are shown in the Table 6-1 below.

**Table 6-1: Variables to be used in regression models to predict attitudes (at time 1: BCS age 26 and NCDS age 42)**

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Potential predictors of attitudes

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*Cohort member's family background*  
Mother's age at birth of CM  
Father's social class (or mother's if missing) at birth of CM  
Mum left school minimum age  
Mum worked when CM pre-school  
CM has younger siblings at 5 (BCS) or 7 (NCDS)  
Parents divorced/ separated when CM was 16 or younger

*Cohort member's own characteristics*  
Sex of cohort member  
Educational qualifications (at time 1)  
Social Class (at time 1)  
Employment status (at time 1)  
Dependent children at home (at time 1)  
Relationship breakdown(s) (prior to time 1)  
Marital status (at time 1)  
Partnership/marital status (at time 1)  
Partnership/marital breakdown(s) (prior to time 1)

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Separate models were implemented where one of the marital/partnership variables (shown in Table 6-1 above) was used. Firstly, to explore the effect of legal marital status on attitudes, I include a marital status variable in each regression model. This is measured at

the same time as the attitudes under investigation and consists of the following categories: single never married; married for the first time; remarried; and separated/divorced. The “single never married” category does not take into account the cohabiting status of the cohort member, only their legal marital status. The second set of regression models includes the partnership/marital status variables measured at the same time as corresponding attitudes. These reflect the partnership status of the respondents, at the same time distinguishing between those who were married at the time and those who were not. Thus, the partnership/marital variables have the following categories: married (whether first time or remarried); single (not cohabiting, not married); and cohabiting (either separated/divorced or never married cohort members who are in a cohabiting partnership). These variables are accompanied by a control variable for previous relationship breakdowns. In the models that include the legal marital status variable, a relationship breakdown indicator is used, which refers to any relationship dissolution prior to time 1. In the models that contain partnership/marital status as a predictor, partnership/marital breakdown indicators which distinguish between marital and cohabiting relationship breakdown(s) are included. The effects of partnership/marital status and partnership/marital breakdown(s) on attitudes are discussed in this chapter but the results tables are shown in Appendix 4 and are referred to where appropriate.

An indicator of whether the CM had ever been in care, which was explored earlier (chapter 5), is omitted in the following analyses due to the unacceptably small sample sizes and the absence of any effect on attitudes once all other controls are taken into account (the results are not shown here).

Having to omit an indicator of ever being in care is a result of limiting the analyses to using only the available data. Each wave’s non-response, whether due to not being able to find particular cohort members or their deliberate drop out, is further aggravated by restricting the available sample through requiring all the relevant questions in the analysis to have non-missing responses. Limiting the sample to only those who have data on all the relevant questions results not only in a dramatically reduced sample size but also restricts the inferences that are plausible to make about each cohort. The results from the following analyses are therefore limited in making direct inferences about predicting the attitudes of all cohort members, but do provide strong indications. More work would be needed to fully

explore the effect of missing data, possibly using imputation techniques such as multiple imputation in STATA (e.g. using MICE application).

The results presented in this chapter are for those cohort members who responded to all the variables under investigation. Additional analyses (results not presented here but available upon request) have been undertaken where dummy variables which represent missing cases for variables with particularly vast amounts of missing data were introduced. This enabled a greater retention of the sample for the analysis. Some implications of the results using complete data only are discussed at the end of the chapter.

### 6.3 Hypotheses

The main focus of this study is on partnerships and separations, although the effect of each predictor (presented in Table 6-1 above) have on attitudes is also of interest. Below are the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 2, section 2.4 which are addressed in this Chapter:

*HYPOTHESIS (1): Cohort members' marital/partnership status is a strong predictor of attitudes to family and marriage, after controlling for all other factors.*

*HYPOTHESIS (2): Cohort members' experience of any form of separation (either from a cohabiting partner or a spouse) has a strong negative effect on attitudes to family and marriage, controlling for all other factors. Additionally, those who have separated from a spouse are hypothesised to be significantly less traditional than those who have separated from a cohabiting partner(s), regardless of their current partnership/marital status.*

*HYPOTHESIS (3): Parental separation/divorce has a lasting negative effect on cohort members' attitudes, even after taking cohort members' own experiences of separations into account.*

### 6.4 Results

The results section of this chapter contains outcomes from a number of models for each cohort. Firstly, these aim to predict attitudes at time 1 using parental characteristics and

cohort members' sex variables only. Respondents' own characteristics and present the results for regression models are then added to these models. Additionally, the importance of adding cohort members' attributes to the initial models that use only their parental characteristics is explored. As is the case with all the previous chapters, I present the results for the BCS sample first, followed by the results for the NCDS cohort.

### **6.4.1 Predicting attitudes at time 1**

#### BCS: predicting attitudes at 26 using parental characteristics only

Table 6-2 below shows the results from linear regression, modelling the impact of family background factors as predictors of attitudes to family and marriage at age 26, for the whole BCS sample and for women and men separately.

As a set, family background related variables contribute significantly to the prediction of attitudes at the age of 26 among the sample of BCS respondents:  $F(9, 3629)=4.010$ ,  $p<0.001$ . However, the overall variance explained by these predictors is marginal - these variables explain only 1% of the total variance in attitudes. The only significant individual predictors among family background characteristics are mother's education and parental separation or divorce. The results demonstrate that the attitudes are more traditional among those whose mothers left school at minimum school age compared to those whose mothers had continued their education (attitudes scores are on average 0.067 higher among those whose mothers have lower educational qualifications). As hypothesised, parental divorce/separation during childhood has a significant negative effect on attitudes at 26 among BCS respondents, controlling for cohort members gender and all other parental characteristics. The attitudes of those whose parents separated are on average 0.179 lower than those whose parents stayed together during cohort members' childhood years.

Surprisingly, using the whole available sample of BCS respondents, there is gender effect on attitudes when only parental background characteristics were used.

When men and women were split into two samples and two separate models were implemented (see results for men and women in Table 6-2), the pattern of significant predictors described above was repeated for men but not for women. Women's attitudes

were not significantly affected by maternal education while men's were. However, both men and women were significantly less traditional if their parents separated or divorced. The effect of parental divorce is stronger for men than women: men's attitude scores were 0.206 lower if their parents separated, while women's scores were 0.140 lower. However, the results for these individual predictors are called into question for the women's sample because, on the whole, the set of family of origin predictors accounted for less than 1% of the variance in women's attitudes; they were not judged to be reliable predictors, as the p-value for F-ratio exceeded the traditional 5% cut off point ( $F(8, 2001)=1.790, p>0.05$ ).

**Table 6-2: Parameter estimates for the linear regression of attitudes at 26 using family of origin characteristics as predictors, BCS**

	All (n=3,655)			Women (n=2,026)				Men (n=1,629)				
	Coef.	Beta	T	Coef.	Beta	T	Coef.	Beta	T			
Women	-0.037	-0.026	-1.580									
Mother's age at birth of CM	-0.001	-0.009	-0.480	0.002	0.012	0.530	-0.004	-0.030	-1.110			
Father's Social class (prof/managerial – ref)												
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.009	-0.006	-0.270	-0.051	-0.035	-1.200	0.045	0.030	0.920			
partly skilled	-0.018	-0.008	-0.400	-0.052	-0.024	-0.900	0.024	0.011	0.360			
unskilled	0.039	0.010	0.570	-0.073	-0.019	-0.820	0.165	0.044	1.530			
Mum left school minimum age	0.067	0.046	2.630	**	0.043	0.030	1.260	0.096	0.065	2.520	*	
Mum worked CM aged 5	0.007	0.005	0.290		0.023	0.016	0.690	-0.012	-0.008	-0.310		
CM has younger siblings at 5	-0.011	-0.008	-0.410		0.000	0.000	-0.010	-0.022	-0.015	-0.530		
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.170	-0.085	-5.010	***	-0.140	-0.070	-3.250	***	-0.206	-0.102	-3.810	***
Constant	3.364		40.340	***	3.284		30.440	***	3.401		26.580	***
	R <sup>2</sup> =0.010, F(9, 3629)=4.010, p<0.001			R <sup>2</sup> =0.007, F(8, 2001)=1.790, p>0.05				R <sup>2</sup> =0.017, F(8, 1605)=3.260, p<0.01				

Adding cohort members' own experiences and characteristics to the model for the whole BCS sample significantly increases the  $R^2$  value ( $F(16, 3629)=21.77$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $R^2$  (change)=0.0845<sup>15</sup>) and alters the associations between attitudes and parental characteristics described above. With the addition of cohort members' own experiences and characteristics, the significant effect of maternal education observed in Table 6-2 disappears, and the effect of parental separations attenuates but is nonetheless significant (see Table 6-3 below). Adding cohort members' own characteristics to the model using a sample of BCS women and men separately also significantly increases the  $R^2$  values (Women:  $F(16, 2001) =14.63$ ;  $p<0.001$ ;  $R^2$  (change)=0.0999; Men:  $F(15, 1605)= 9.66$ ;  $p<0.001$ ;  $R^2$  (change)=0.0719) and slightly reduces the confidence in the parameter for parental separation of attitudes among women (the decrease in attitudes associated with parental separation is significant at  $p<0.01$  and not  $p<0.001$  as the coefficient is reduced from -0.140 to -0.110).

#### BCS: predicting attitudes at 26 using parental and own characteristics

As mentioned above, adding cohort members' characteristics to the models increases the  $R^2$  and thus the amount of variance explained by all the independent variables. Table 6-3 below shows the results of the regression models containing of all the predictors, including legal marital status of the BCS cohort at the age of 26.

On the whole the predictors explain approximately 9% of the variance in attitudes for the whole sample, and 11% and 9% for women and men respectively.

For the whole BCS sample at age 26, having lower educational qualifications (no qualifications and NVQ1/2 equivalent) compared to the highest level (equivalent of the NVQ5/6 or degree or above) is associated with more traditional attitudes to family and marriage, controlling for all the other predictors. Being in a skilled manual profession is also associated with more traditional attitudes compared to being in a professional/managerial position. However, the parameter for those in less skilled jobs compared to the most skilled did not reach a statistically significant level.

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<sup>15</sup> Please note, statistics associated with the changes in  $R^2$  are not presented in any tables

Those who had children aged 5 years or older living at home at the age of 26 were significantly less traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage than those who had no children.

Having experienced a partnership breakdown (whether a marriage or a cohabitation) is associated with a significant decrease in attitudes (movement in a less traditional direction) compared to those who had never separated from a partner/spouse before. The beta coefficient for own separation is smaller than the beta for parental separation. This is unlikely to be an indication of there being a stronger influence of parental separation/divorce on cohort members' attitudes over their own separation but more likely to be due to the fact that respondents' marital status was included as one of the predictors, which is likely to explain some of the effects of the separation variable. No control for maternal marital status was included in the family of origin-related predictors.

The parameter estimates for cohort marital status groups are included in the main table of the results below, with first time married respondents chosen to be a reference category<sup>16</sup>. Respondents who were married at the age 26 sweep were the most traditional in their attitudes. Compared to married individuals, those who were single (never married), remarried or separated/divorced were significantly more likely to be less traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage (Table 6-3). Respondents in all the other marital groups were significantly more traditional in their attitudes than those who were legally separated or divorced (see Appendix 4, Table A40). The smallest difference in attitudes is between the separated/divorced and remarried cohort members. Being remarried is associated with an increase in attitude score of 0.235 compared to being separated/divorced, while being married for the first time as opposed to separated/divorced, is associated with an increase of 0.782.

Both remarried and separated/divorced cohort members are significantly less traditional in their attitudes than single (never married) cohort members at 26 (see Appendix 4, Table A41). This is an interesting finding suggesting that a marital breakdown, whether or not

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<sup>16</sup> To aid the understanding of the relationship between legal marital status groups in their family-related attitudes, parameter estimates depicting the effect of each marital group in comparison to a reference group are included in Appendix 4 with one table showing the single (never married) group as a reference and another – separated/divorced.

followed by another marriage, is associated with a change of attitudes in a less traditional direction.

Although the results for the whole BCS sample at 26, presented in the first three columns in Table 6-3 below, indicate that there is no gender impact on attitudes holding all other predictors constant, separate regression models for women and men show some variation in how certain predictors affect attitudes. For example, although having low educational qualifications (no qualifications or NVQ Level 1/2 equivalent) is associated with significantly more traditional attitudes among men and women, being unemployed/disabled/sick as opposed to working full time has a significant impact for women, but not for men<sup>17</sup>. Women, but not men, had significantly less traditional attitudes if they had young children living at home compared to those who had no children. Dissimilarity between men and women is also uncovered in the effect previous experiences of partnership breakdowns has on attitudes – a previous break-up(s) had a significant negative impact on men’s attitudes, but not women’s among BCS respondents at 26, net of all the other predictors.

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<sup>17</sup> Please note that the employment variable for men has fewer categories than for women due to a very small number of men who were looking after their home or their family. Those few men who did stay at home for these purposes were included together in the “other” category.

**Table 6-3: Parameter estimates for the linear regression of attitudes at 26 on family of origin and CM's characteristics, BCS**

	All (n=3,655)			Women (n=2,026)			Men (n=1,629)		
	Coef.	Beta	T	Coef.	Beta	T	Coef.	Beta	t
Women	-0.012	-0.008	-0.470						
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.001	0.006	0.350	0.003	0.019	0.830	0.000	-0.002	-0.09
Father's Social class (prof/managerial – ref)									
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.048	-0.032	-1.520	-0.085	-0.058	-2.050 *	-0.006	-0.004	-0.12
partly skilled	-0.066	-0.031	-1.540	-0.102	-0.048	-1.770	-0.033	-0.016	-0.51
Unskilled	-0.051	-0.013	-0.750	-0.147	-0.038	-1.750	0.067	0.018	0.62
Mum left school minimum age	0.017	0.012	0.690	0.003	0.002	0.090	0.038	0.026	0.99
Mum worked CM aged 5	0.007	0.005	0.280	0.029	0.020	0.920	-0.020	-0.014	-0.55
CM has younger siblings at 5	0.004	0.003	0.150	0.010	0.007	0.310	0.004	0.002	0.09
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.156	-0.078	-4.780 ***	-0.110	-0.055	-2.670 **	-0.214	-0.105	-4.12 ***
Education (nvq5/6 – ref)									
no qualifications	0.321	0.080	4.350 ***	0.268	0.053	2.410 *	0.343	0.101	3.49 ***
nvq1/2	0.176	0.121	5.000 ***	0.171	0.118	3.650 ***	0.181	0.123	3.38 ***
nvq3/4	0.010	0.005	0.260	0.017	0.009	0.330	0.002	0.001	0.04
Social class (professional/managerial – ref)									
skilled non-manual	0.014	0.009	0.480	0.038	0.026	1.050	-0.042	-0.021	-0.78
skilled manual	0.078	0.041	2.210 *	0.108	0.041	1.870	0.051	0.032	1.11
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.062	0.030	1.610	0.035	0.017	0.650	0.091	0.046	1.64
Employment (employed FT - ref)									
employed PT	-0.053	-0.022	-1.220	-0.004	-0.002	-0.070	-0.228	-0.042	-1.90
unemployed/disabled/sick	0.103	0.005	0.370	0.493	0.022	2.920 **	-0.210	-0.010	-0.54
home/family care	-0.166	-0.012	-0.520	-0.105	-0.010	-0.330			
full time education/other	-0.074	-0.011	-0.650	-0.016	-0.003	-0.130	-0.169	-0.017	-0.64
Dependent children (none – ref)									
children under 5	-0.055	-0.030	-1.580	-0.101	-0.055	-1.980 *	-0.020	-0.011	-0.41
children over 5	-0.154	-0.033	-2.140 *	-0.138	-0.031	-1.450	-0.220	-0.043	-1.96
Relationship breakdown prior to 26	-0.122	-0.061	-3.210 ***	-0.083	-0.044	-1.670	-0.165	-0.077	-2.81 **
Marital status (married first time – ref)									
Single	-0.258	-0.176	-10.130 ***	-0.276	-0.195	-8.470 ***	-0.226	-0.147	-5.52 ***
Remarried	-0.547	-0.049	-5.500 ***	-0.534	-0.048	-3.210 ***	-0.539	-0.049	-4.33 ***
separated/divorced	-0.782	-0.189	-9.330 ***	-0.839	-0.240	-8.870 ***	-0.671	-0.116	-3.560 ***
Constant	3.43		40.29 ***	3.392		31.03 ***	3.423		26.25 ***
	R <sup>2</sup> =0.094, F(25, 3629)=15.840, p<0.001			R <sup>2</sup> =0.107, F(24, 2001)=10.500, p<0.001			R <sup>2</sup> =0.089, F(24, 1605)=7.960, p<0.001		

Further analysis of the impact of marital groups through changing the reference category revealed some additional dissimilarity between genders yet again. Remarried men are significantly less traditional in their attitudes than single (never married) men; while remarried women's attitudes are not significantly different than attitudes of women who are single (see Appendix 4, Table A40). Interestingly, when men and women's attitudes are modelled separately, both men and women who were remarried were on average no different from those who were separated or divorced in their attitudes to marriage and the family, although the results for the whole sample reached a statistical significant difference in attitudes between the two marital groups (see Appendix 4, Table A41).

### **Partnership/Marital status – BCS**

Replicating the above analyses using partnership/marital status and partnership/marriage breakdown variables instead of legal marital status and relationship breakdown variables, enables us to further explore the effects of partnerships on attitudes. Table 6-4 below shows the results from regression analyses for these two variables using the full set of predictors (coefficients for the other predictors are not included here, see Appendix 4, Table A44 for full details).

Men and women in the BCS cohort differ in the way partnership breakdown(s) affects their attitudes to family and marriage. Both men and women score significantly lower on the attitude scale if they have experienced a breakdown of a marriage compared to those who have never separated from any partnership. Additionally, men, but not women, who experienced a cohabiting relationship breakdown were also significantly less traditional than men who did not report any relationship break up (see Table 6-4 below). Nevertheless, a breakdown of a marital relationship has a stronger effect on people's feelings towards family and marriage than a breakdown of a cohabiting partnership for both men and women (see Appendix 4, Table A45).

**Table 6-4: Parameter estimates for partnership/marital breakdown and partnership/marital status from the linear regression model of attitudes at 26 (BCS) using parental and own characteristics**

	All (n=3,655)				Women (n=2,026)				Men (n=1,629)			
	Coef.	Beta	t		Coef.	Beta	t		Coef.	Beta	T	
Relationship breakdown prior to 26 (none - ref)												
Cohabiting relationship	-0.123	-0.055	-3.220	***	-0.084	-0.039	-1.690		-0.164	-0.072	-2.790	**
marital relationship	-0.650	-0.167	-9.640	***	-0.646	-0.193	-8.440	***	-0.626	-0.122	-4.400	***
Relationship status (married – ref)												
Single	-0.231	-0.153	-7.690	***	-0.251	-0.164	-6.380	***	-0.199	-0.133	-4.150	***
Cohabiting	-0.280	-0.182	-10.010	***	-0.299	-0.195	-8.120	***	-0.246	-0.158	-5.590	***
_Constant	3.429		40.270	***	3.396		31.060	***	3.419		26.200	***
R <sup>2</sup> =0.095, F(25, 3655)=15.370, p<0.001				R <sup>2</sup> =0.108, F(24, 2026)=10.520, p<0.001				R <sup>2</sup> =0.090, F(24, 1629)=7.160, p<0.001				

### NCDS: predicting attitudes at 33 using parental characteristics only

Table 6-5 below shows that, as a set, variables representing family of origin contribute significantly to the prediction of attitudes at the age of 33 among the whole sample of NCDS respondents:  $F(9, 5641)=10.020$ ,  $p<0.001$ . However, just as was the case for the BCS cohort, the variance explained by these predictors is marginal - these variables explain less than 2% of the total variance in attitudes. Moreover, this significant power is mainly attributed to the inclusion of the cohort members' gender. Among NCDS respondents, women were significantly less traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage than men. Parental separation has a significant negative effect on attitudes (attitudes become less traditional) for the whole sample as well as for women, but not for men when modelled separately, controlling for parental background factors only. The results for men but not for women show that there is a significant effect of maternal education on the CMs' attitudes – NCDS men whose mothers left school at minimum age on average scored 0.095 points higher on the attitudes scale (and are therefore more traditional) compared to those whose mothers gained higher qualifications. Interestingly, and somewhat surprisingly, NCDS men, but not women, scored significantly lower on the attitudes scale if their fathers were in skilled manual/non-manual professions compared to those whose fathers were in professional/managerial positions.

### NCDS: predicting attitudes at 33 using parental and own characteristics

Adding cohort members' own characteristics to the model described above increases the  $R^2$  value significantly ( $F(16, 5615)=41.08$ ,  $R^2$  change=0.103) and alters the effect of the parental divorce/separation on cohort members attitudes at 33. Once cohort members' own characteristics are controlled for, parental separation does not have a significant effect on their grown up children's attitudes. This is true for the whole sample of NCDS respondents as well as for men and women separately.

Whilst father's social class still has a significant effect on the attitudes of NCDS men even after controlling for the whole range of added independent variables, the effect of mother's educational qualifications on their son's attitudes disappears. At the same time, women's attitudes, but not men's, are significantly less traditional if their mothers left school at the

minimum age as opposed to carrying on with their education, adjusting for all the other variables. This is the opposite effect of that which was observed earlier among men – when only parental characteristics were controlled for NCDS men were more likely to be more traditional if their mothers left school at minimum age.

**Table 6-5: Parameter estimates for the linear regression of attitudes at 33 (NCDS) using family of origin characteristics as predictors**

	All (n=5,641)			Women (n=2,802)			Men (n=2,839)					
	Coef.	Beta	T	Coef.	Beta	T	Coef.	Beta	T			
Woman	-0.166	-0.111	-8.380	***								
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.000	-0.004	-0.250		-0.001	-0.005	-0.230	0.000	-0.002	-0.110		
Father's Social class (prof/managerial – ref)												
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.054	-0.035	-1.900		-0.021	-0.014	-0.510	-0.086	-0.055	-2.180	*	
partly skilled	-0.047	-0.020	-1.250		-0.051	-0.022	-0.940	-0.043	-0.019	-0.810		
unskilled	-0.007	-0.002	-0.150		0.065	0.025	1.070	-0.085	-0.029	-1.300		
Mum left school minimum age	0.039	0.023	1.650		-0.019	-0.011	-0.560	0.095	0.057	2.800	**	
Mum worked CM pre-school	-0.010	-0.006	-0.460		0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.022	-0.013	-0.680		
CM has younger siblings at 7	0.034	0.023	1.540		0.038	0.026	1.260	0.032	0.021	1.000		
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.097	-0.035	-2.660	**	-0.110	-0.042	-2.240	*	-0.078	-0.027	-1.440	
Constant	3.21		46.16	***	3.062		32.21	***	3.194		32.02	***
	R <sup>2</sup> =0.016, F(9, 5641)=10.020, p<0.001				R <sup>2</sup> =0.004, F(8, 2802)=1.510, p>0.05				R <sup>2</sup> =0.005, F(8, 2839)=1.780, p>0.05			

Once all the predictor variables related to the cohort members' own characteristics were entered into the models of attitudes for the whole NCDS sample at 33, as well as for the sample of NCDS women and men separately, the amount of variance explained by all the variables was approximately 11% in each model (see Table 6-6 below). This is close to the findings of the BCS sample at 26.

Examining the effects of the cohort members' own characteristics on their attitudes at 33, similarities with the results for BCS at 26 in the effect of education are detected. Both men and women in the NCDS with lower educational qualifications are likely to be significantly more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage than those who have a degree or higher (equivalent to NVQ Level 5/6).

Unlike the BCS cohort, both men and women among the NCDS sample were significantly less traditional if they had experienced a relationship breakdown prior to 33, whereas only men in the BCS sample showed the same pattern. Also, NCDS women in the least skilled jobs were significantly more traditional in terms of their attitudes to family and marriage than women in professional and managerial positions. This was not observed in the BCS sample of women.

Among the NCDS sample, those who were married at 33 had significantly more traditional attitudes than those who were single, remarried or separated/divorced. However, considering men's and women's responses separately, men and women who were remarried were not significantly different in their attitudes than those who were married for the first time. This differs from the results for the BCS sample of men and women discussed earlier, where remarried men and women held significantly less traditional attitudes than those who were married for the first time. This is an interesting result as it indicates a possibility of adaptation effects of attitudes following a remarriage, especially when taking into consideration the fact that separated or divorced respondents were significantly less traditional than those who were either married or remarried (for coefficients where separated/divorced is a reference category, see Appendix 4, Table A43).

**Table 6-6: Parameter estimates for the linear regression of attitudes at 33 on family of origin and CM's own characteristics, NCDS**

	All (n=5,641)				Women (n=2,802)				Men (n=2,839)				
	Coef.	Beta	t		Coef.	Beta	T		Coef.	Beta	t		
Women	-0.187	-0.125	-6.990	***									
<b>Family characteristics</b>													
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.000	0.003	0.230		0.000	0.002	0.080		0.000	0.003	0.170		
Father's social class (prof/managerial – ref)													
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.084	-0.055	-3.090	**	-0.043	-0.029	-1.100		-0.125	-0.081	-3.330	***	
partly skilled	-0.093	-0.040	-2.540	*	-0.080	-0.035	-1.550		-0.108	-0.046	-2.080	*	
Unskilled	-0.056	-0.020	-1.290		0.029	0.011	0.490		-0.146	-0.049	-2.290	*	
Mum left school minimum age	-0.005	-0.003	-0.210		-0.070	-0.042	-2.160	*	0.057	0.034	1.720		
Mum worked CM pre-school	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.026	0.017	0.910		-0.036	-0.021	-1.180		
CM has younger siblings at 7	0.029	0.019	1.380		0.023	0.016	0.790		0.037	0.024	1.220		
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.060	-0.022	-1.750		-0.074	-0.029	-1.600		-0.037	-0.013	-0.730		
<b>Cohort members' own characteristics</b>													
Education (nvq5/6 - ref)													
no qualifications	0.280	0.105	5.940	***	0.196	0.078	2.960	**	0.357	0.127	5.260	***	
nvq1/2	0.189	0.126	5.460	***	0.151	0.103	2.960	**	0.218	0.143	4.640	***	
nvq3/4	0.129	0.080	3.900	***	0.096	0.058	1.940		0.155	0.099	3.470	***	
Social class (professional/managerial – ref)													
skilled non-manual	0.049	0.027	1.810		0.044	0.029	1.290		0.075	0.030	1.560		
skilled manual	0.069	0.037	2.430	*	0.081	0.028	1.300		0.063	0.039	1.890		
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.087	0.042	2.710	**	0.084	0.047	2.060	*	0.100	0.039	1.840		
Employment (employed FT – ref)													
employed PT	0.055	0.029	1.720		0.073	0.048	1.970	*	-0.096	-0.012	-0.650		
unemployed/temp/perm disabled/sick	-0.026	-0.006	-0.440		-0.102	-0.020	-1.080		0.022	0.005	0.290		
home/family care	0.029	0.013	0.800		0.046	0.027	1.080		-0.006	0.000	-0.020		
ft education/other	-0.025	-0.003	-0.210		-0.086	-0.012	-0.590		0.071	0.007	0.370		
Dependent children (none – ref)													
children under 5	0.027	0.018	0.980		0.020	0.013	0.450		0.019	0.013	0.520		
children over 5	-0.046	-0.027	-1.500		-0.047	-0.030	-1.040		-0.048	-0.027	-1.110		
Relationship breakdown prior to 33	-0.293	-0.163	-7.440	***	-0.370	-0.218	-6.720	***	-0.230	-0.121	-4.120	***	
Marital status (married first time – ref)													
Single	-0.283	-0.123	-8.470	***	-0.227	-0.093	-4.580	***	-0.325	-0.150	-7.180	***	
Remarried	-0.137	-0.048	-2.550	*	-0.089	-0.034	-1.260		-0.161	-0.052	-1.950		
separated/divorced	-0.352	-0.128	-6.650	***	-0.242	-0.099	-3.390	***	-0.464	-0.148	-5.830	***	
_Constant	3.186		44.160	***	3.048		30.460	***	3.154		31.150	***	
					R <sup>2</sup> =0.114, F(25, 5615)=28.02, p<0.001					R <sup>2</sup> =0.107, F(24, 2814)=13.20, p<0.001			
					R <sup>2</sup> =0.113, F(24, 2777)=14.51								

## **Partnership/Marital status - NCDS**

Replacing legal marital status and relationship breakdown variables with partnership/marital status and partnership/marriage breakdown variables enables further exploration of the effects of partnerships on attitudes. Table 6-7 below shows the coefficients from regression analyses for these two variables using the full set of predictors (coefficients for the other predictors are not included here, see Appendix 4, Table A46 for the full results).

There is a significant difference in attitudes between those who experienced any type of separation (whether marital or cohabiting) and those who had never separated for both men and women (see Table 6-7 below). However, men who separated from their wives were significantly less traditional in their attitudes than men who separated from their cohabiting partners, while the type of separation did not differentiate between women's attitudes (see Appendix 4, Table A47). This gives an interesting picture: among NCDS cohort members, any previous breakdown of a relationship affects women's attitudes equally, but men's attitudes are more affected if the breakdown was from a marriage. This could be due to the way men view cohabiting relationships in comparison to marital ones. It is possible that they, from the outset, give these relationships different meanings whereby the disappointments of cohabiting relationships ending do not affect their attitudes to marriage and family as much as marital breakdowns do. Women, however, may be just as affected by cohabiting relationship breakdowns as they are with marital ones. It is possible that women do not differentiate between these types of partnerships in the same way. Perhaps women expect a cohabiting relationship to precede or substitute a marriage. Men, on the other hand, might view cohabiting relationships as more temporary or distinct from marital relationships – and are therefore not as affected by them ending as they are by the breakdown of a marriage.

The hypothesis that men might be treating marital and cohabiting relationships slightly differently is not reflected in the difference in attitudes between married and cohabiting men and women. Both men and women have significantly more traditional attitudes if they are married compared to if they are single (not partnered) and single (cohabiting) (Table 6-7), while cohabiting men and women are the least traditional group.

**Table 6-7: Parameter estimates for partnership/marital breakdown and partnership/marital status from the linear regression model of attitudes at 33 (NCDS) using parental and own characteristics<sup>18</sup>**

	All (n=5,641)			Women (n=2,802)			Men (n=2,839)					
	Coef	Beta	t	Coef	Beta	t	Coef	Beta	t			
Relationship breakdown prior to 33 (none – ref)												
cohabiting relationship	-0.291	-0.096	-7.420	***	-0.378	-0.123	-6.960	***	-0.211	-0.072	-3.800	***
marital relationship	-0.396	-0.192	-13.220	***	-0.433	-0.230	-11.140	***	-0.352	-0.154	-7.470	***
Relationship status (married – ref)												
Single	-0.140	-0.057	-3.820	***	-0.116	-0.050	-2.350	*	-0.139	-0.054	-2.440	*
Cohabiting	-0.379	-0.151	-10.950	***	-0.296	-0.115	-5.760	***	-0.445	-0.184	-9.570	***
_Constant	3.187	.	44.350	***	3.054	.	30.600	***	3.136	.	31.050	***
			R <sup>2</sup> =0.118, F(25, 5615)=30.440, p<0.001			R <sup>2</sup> =0.116, F(24, 2802)=15.320, p<0.001			R <sup>2</sup> =0.109, F(24, 2814)=15.280, p<0.001			

<sup>18</sup> Please refer to Appendix for the full results

## **6.5 Conclusions and Discussion**

In this chapter, the relationship between family and marriage attitudes with parental background variables and cohort members' own characteristics were explored by means of multiple linear regression models. Some of the main findings are summarised in the three sections below, followed by the discussion of the hypotheses outlined earlier in the chapter.

### **6.5.1 Influence of the family background characteristics**

Overall, there is no consistent evidence that parental background factors considered in this study, whether on their own or combined with cohort members' own characteristics, have a strong effect on cohort members' attitudes to family and marriage once they reach adulthood, with the exception of parental separation for the younger BCS cohort. Parental separation during childhood has a significant negative impact on the attitudes of BCS (representing less traditional attitudes) but not NCDS men and women, controlling for the whole set of predictors.

### **6.5.2 Predictors of attitudes at time 1 associated with cohort members' own characteristics**

The results showed some evidence of an impact of gender on attitudes, whereby women had significantly less traditional attitudes than men among the NCDS respondents but not among the BCS. This is consistent with previous findings on the attitudes of men and women, which found women to be less supportive of the traditional family values than men (e.g. Amato, 1988; Trent and South, 1992). More specifically, women were found to be more favourable towards divorce than men (e.g. Smith et al, 2007), more likely to hold more egalitarian gender-role attitudes (Thornton, 1989) and less likely to agree that 'it is better to marry than stay single' and 'that marriage is for life' (Oropesa and Gorman, 2000).

Legal marital status had a very strong effect on the way cohort members scored on the attitude scale, mostly supporting the patterns found in bivariate analyses of attitudes and marital status in Chapter 4. Married respondents were the most traditional among all the

marital groups for each gender. The separated or divorced cohort members tended to express the least traditional attitudes, especially the women.

Any previous relationship breakdowns (not distinguishing between cohabiting and marital breakdown) had a significant negative impact on the attitudes of NCDS men and women compared to those who had not experienced any partnership break-ups. Among the BCS cohort only, men, but not women, were significantly less traditional at the age of 26 if they had experienced any relationship dissolution before they were 26 years old, net of all the other predictors.

When including different measures of partnership/marital status and previous separations in the models, it emerged that for both cohorts an experience of a marital breakdown(s) was associated with less traditional attitudes to marriage and family, while the experience of a cohabiting relationship breakdown(s) compared to no partnership dissolutions does not necessarily have a similar effect on cohort members' attitudes. Among the BCS cohort, men, but not women, who experienced a cohabiting relationship breakdown had significantly less traditional attitudes than those who had not experienced a cohabiting relationship breakdown. While among the NCDS sample, both men and women's attitudes were negatively affected by a cohabiting relationship breakdown compared to no relationship breakdown(s).

In addition, cohort members of both NCDS and BCS were significantly less traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage if they had experienced a split from their marital partner(s) compared to those who had split from a cohabiting partner. But while this was the case for both men and women among the BCS cohort, it was not among NCDS women.

Table 6-8 below summarises the results from all the regression models presented in this chapter, where a '+' indicates a significant positive relationship between a predictor and attitude score, a '-' sign denotes a negative relationship and no sign indicates that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is not significant, at least

at 95% confidence level. Positive in this case represents a more traditional stance on family and marriage, and negative a less traditional viewpoint.

**Table 6-8: Summary of results from linear regression models of attitudes on family characteristics and cohort members' own characteristics, BCS age 26 and NCDS age 33: for all, women and men**

	BCS age 26			NCDS age 33		
	All	♀	♂	All	♀	♂
Women	–					
<b>Family characteristics</b>						
Mother's age at birth of CM						
Father's social class (prof/managerial-ref)						
skilled manual/non-manual		–		–		–
partly skilled				–		–
unskilled						–
Mum left school minimum age						
Mum worked CM age 5/7						
CM has younger siblings at 5/7						
Parents separated CM 16 or under	–	–	–			
<b>CM's own characteristics</b>						
Education (nvq5/6 – ref)						
no qualifications	+	+	+	+	+	+
nvq1/2	+	+	+	+	+	+
nvq3/4				+		+
Social class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled non-manual						
skilled manual	+			+		
semi-skilled/unskilled				+	+	
Employment (employed FT - ref)						
employed PT						
unemployed/disabled/sick			+			
home/family care						
full time education/other						
Dependent children (none – ref)						
children under 5						
children over 5	–					
Previous relationship breakdown(s)	–		–	–	–	–
Marital status (married– ref)						
single	–	–	–	–	–	–
remarried	–	–	–	–		
separated/divorced	–	–	–	–	–	–

Regression analysis used in this chapter demonstrates to what degree a set of independent variables are related to the dependent variable but it does not imply any causal relationship between them (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). Therefore, although one might view a strong association between an independent and dependent variable, this does not represent causality. It is not possible to establish causation mechanisms within regression methods which could only be achieved in an experimental design: whereby certain explanatory variables are manipulated while the rest are kept constant. As Tabachnick and Fidell point out: “Demonstration of causality is a logical and experimental, rather than statistical, problem” (2001: 115).

Additionally, there are other potentially influential factors which I have not accounted for in this work. Although carefully selected, the control variables included in the models above are limited, and their effect on attitudes could well change if additional factors were included. The regression model is therefore sensitive to the independent variables included and each variable association with the dependent variable is influenced by the whole set of predictors included (Tabachnik and Fidell, 2001). The results therefore present evidence on positive and negative associations between each independent variable and attitudes which cannot be explained by other independent variables included in the analyses.

### **6.5.3 Hypotheses answered**

The hypotheses presented at the beginning of the chapter, and based on the review of the previous literature and developed in Chapter 2, are addressed below:

*HYPOTHESIS (1): Cohort members’ marital/partnership status is a strong predictor of attitudes to family and marriage, controlling for all other factors. I predicted that married respondents would be the most traditional in their attitudes of all the marital groups.*

This hypothesis is confirmed for the whole sample in the two cohorts and for men and women separately among the BCS cohort in line with the findings from previous studies (e.g. Wiggins and Bynner, 1993; Trent and South, 1992). Married NCDS women and

men at the age of 33 were no more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage than those who were remarried, possibly indicating a protective nature of remarriage in relation to traditional family values.

Remarried respondents were initially expected to be less traditional than those who were married for the first time, but more traditional than those who were separated or divorced. This would, in a way, show some support for the theory of the selection and adaptation effects of attitudes whereby marriage makes one more traditional, while divorce, perhaps accompanied by the disappointment, makes one less traditional than before. Not all results, however, offer support for this hypothesis. While remarried men and women were significantly less traditional than first-time married people among the BCS cohort, this was not the case among the NCDS cohort members. And there is even weaker support for the adaptation effect of remarriage when looking at the attitudes of those who were remarried compared to those who were separated or divorced – only men and women among the NCDS cohort were significantly more traditional if remarried than those who were separated or divorced.

*HYPOTHESIS (2): Cohort members' experience of any form of separation (either from a cohabiting partner or a spouse) has a strong negative effect on attitudes to family and marriage, controlling for all other factors. Additionally, I expect those who have separated from a spouse to be significantly less traditional than those who have separated from a cohabiting partner(s), regardless of their current partnership/marital status.*

In the first set of models (which included the legal marital status and any prior separation variables) all but BCS men at the age of 26 were significantly less traditional than those who had never separated in the past. The second hypothesis relating to the relative impact of the separation from marriage and cohabitation on cohort members' attitudes is supported by the results for BCS and NCDS men and for BCS women. Table 6-9 below summarises these results.

**Table 6-9: Summary of the results for attitudes of cohort members with and without experience of separation**

	BCS	NCDS
	age 26	age 33
“separated from marriage” less traditional than “never separated”	Women & Men	Women & Men
“separated from cohabitation” less traditional than “never separated”	Men	Women & Men
“separated from marriage” less traditional than “separated from cohabitation”	Women & Men	Men

*HYPOTHESIS (3): Parental separation/divorce has a lasting negative effect on cohort members’ attitudes, even after taking cohort members’ own experiences of separations into account.*

There is support for this hypothesis for both men and women among the BCS cohort but not in the NCDS. Previous studies linking parental divorce to adults’ family-related attitudes found some consistencies in parental separation affecting their children’s attitudes as well as their behaviour. For example, Axinn and Thornton (1996) found some direct effects of parental divorce on their adult children’s attitudes towards divorce as well as a substantial indirect effect via the mothers’ own attitudes. Another study showed that family-related attitudes of those whose parents were divorced and those who grew up in intact families differed significantly, but the differences attenuated once adjusted for other background factors for the majority of the measures (Amato, 1988); for example, those whose parents were divorced were no less likely to think that marriage had advantages over being single than those who grew up in intact families and they did not score differently on the ‘traditional family values scale’. Amato (1988) did find some significant difference in the scores of individual attitudinal items from a family values scale which showed that although adults from divorced families valued marriage as much as those from intact families (they were just as likely to agree that ‘marriage is for life’ and ‘divorce is too easy to get these days’), they appeared to be more aware of its limitations and were more accepting of other

alternatives (more likely to agree that ‘it’s all right to have children without being married’ and disagree that ‘you need two parents to bring up a child’).

#### 6.5.4 Limitations

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the results presented here are based on the sample of cohort members with non-missing information on all the variables. This severely limits the generalisation of these results to the wider population.

Firstly, there is a problem of attrition, briefly discussed in Chapter 3, which limits the sample available for the analyses. Further reduction of the sample size comes from item non-response on the covariates included in the model. However, item non-response related to the attitude statements used in this thesis was relatively good with well over 90% of those who took part in each study at the two time points in both cohorts responding to all three statements. So, to exploit this positive quality of the data, I derived an extra category for some of the covariates with particularly large amounts of missing information to correspond to missing cases<sup>19</sup> - this allowed a greater retention of the sample for the regression analysis. I then reproduced the same models used in this chapter using these dummy variables for some of these problematic covariates (the results are not included in the thesis, but are available on request).

This resulted in a much larger sample size than that presented in the analyses in this chapter. For the BCS analyses, models at age 26 had a sample of 5,063 instead of the 3,655 used in this chapter. The NCDS sample aged 33 was also boosted to 7,577 instead of 5,641.

Despite a relatively large increase in the sample sizes due to the inclusion of these dummies for missing cases, the overall results were similar to those presented in this chapter, particularly with respect to the key relationships: between parental separation, cohort members’ own experience of partnership breakdown and their marital status and

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<sup>19</sup> For BCS age 26 these were: father’s social class, parental separation, cohort member’s social class and relationship breakdown prior to 26; Among NCDS at age 33 these variables were father’s social class, parental separation, cohort member’s social class and relationship breakdown prior to 42

attitudes towards family and marriage. The missing dummies were insignificant for most of the analyses indicating that it is likely that the missing data was missing at random. This is also confirmed by the fact that the results of the models with and without dummy variables for missing cases were very similar. Ideally, more work should be undertaken in exploring the nature of missing data and perhaps an item non-response category should be created for each covariate in the analyses in order to test the nature of all the missing data. More work in relation to minimising the impact of missing data is suggested in the final chapter of the thesis.

## CHAPTER 7: Selection and Adaptation Effects of Attitudes

### 7.1 Introduction

One of the aims of this research is to explore the associations between initial attitudes and subsequent family-related transitions as well as the associations of family-related transitions and subsequent attitudes controlling for the other potentially influential factors explored earlier in the study. This chapter's main purpose is to explore the relationship between attitudes and behaviour in a way that uncovers whether attitudes can be predicted by behaviour, whether behaviour can be predicted by attitudes, or whether there is a bidirectional process among various sub-groups of cohort members. Having a record of attitudes at two time points and information on marital/partnership transitions between these two time points allows for the identification of the order in which these took place. Thus, attitudes at time 1 are measured first, and then a partnership transition takes place prior to attitudes being measured for the second time.

To determine the impact that attitudes have on behaviour and, in turn, the impact of behaviour on attitude change, graphical representation of the series of regression models is used. The benefit of this method is precisely in these graphs – they describe the results in a way that is easy to interpret and understand, taking into account and displaying all the relationships between the covariates used in various sets of analyses, and at the same time flagging up the relationships of interest (here - attitudes and behaviour).

The structure of this section is as follows. First, I consider the relationship between transitions from a single never married (unpartnered) state into first marriage or cohabitation and the attitudes for each cohort separately. I then look at the relationship between a breakdown of first marriage and attitudes for the NCDS cohort only. And finally, I explore the association between attitudes and transitions from cohabitation of never married BCS cohort members into either first marriage or breakdown of cohabiting relationship and the subsequent impact on attitudes. Table 7-1 below shows the outcome variables upon which the analysis is carried out, the sample used and the statistical method utilised. Further details about the analysis are presented in section 7.6 of the chapter.

**Table 7-1: The outcome variables, samples and methods used in the analyses of reciprocal relationship between marital/partnership behaviour and attitudes**

Outcome variable	Sample	Method
<b>Transition from single state</b> 1. Continuously never married, unpartnered 2. Never married, unpartnered => cohabiting 3. Never married, unpartnered => first marriage	Single never married (unpartnered) CMs at Time 1 who either carried on unpartnered, entered a cohabiting relationship or got married for the first time by Time 2 (BCS and NCDS)	Multinomial logistic regression
<b>Breakdown of first marriage</b> 1. Continuously married 2. First marriage => separated/divorced (unpartnered)	CMs who were married for the first time at Time 1 and either remained married or separated/divorced without forming a consecutive relationship by Time 2 (NCDS)	Binary logistic regression
<b>Transition from cohabitation</b> 1. Continuously cohabiting 2. Cohabiting (never married) => first marriage 3 Cohabiting (never married) => single (unpartnered)	Cohabiting never married CMs at Time 1 who either continued to cohabit, got married for the first time or separated from their cohabiting partner by Time 2 (BCS)	Multinomial logistic regression
<b>Attitudes at Time 1 and Attitudes at Time 2</b>	Depends on the transition under investigation*	Multiple linear regression

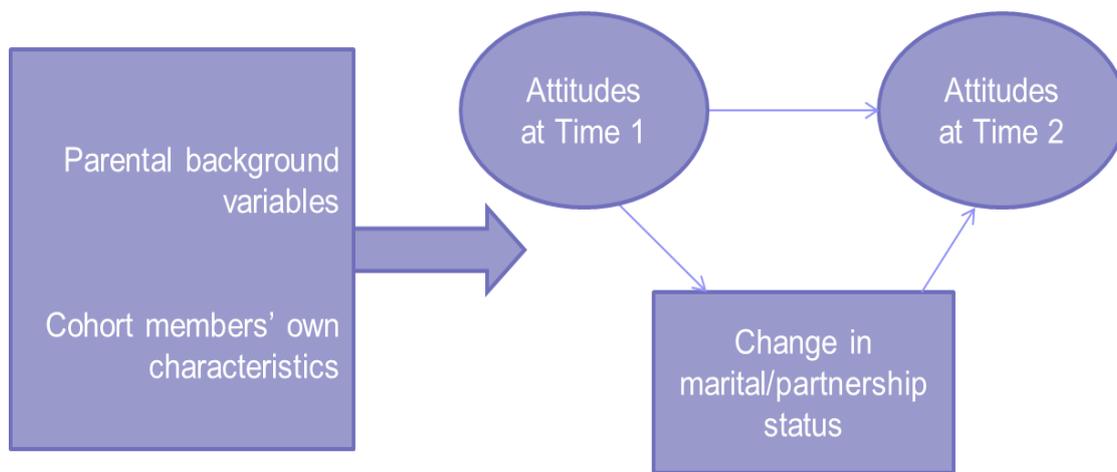
\* For example, when investigating breakdown of first marriage, sample size in the analyses of Attitudes at Time 1 and Time 2 is as indicated for the "breakdown of first marriage" outcome in the Table above

The underlying theoretical assumptions for predicting attitudes are similar to those explored in Chapter 6. Parental background characteristics are hypothesised to have an effect on cohort members' own life experiences, including attitudes and partnerships. Thus it is possible that cohort members' marital behaviour is indirectly affected by parental separation via the effect it had on their children's attitudes. At the same time, it is fair to predict that respondents' own experiences and characteristics would have an impact on their behaviour and attitudes that is stronger than that acquired through parents. Indeed, the results of Chapter 6 indicate that although there is some evidence that parental separation has an effect on cohort members' attitudes for the younger BCS cohort at both ages, this was not found for the NCDS cohort (with the exception of NCDS men aged 42). Nonetheless, in the subgroup analyses of this chapter, the effect of parental separation on cohort members' attitudes is re-examined. Additionally, this chapter sets out to examine where the links exist between parental separation, attitudes of cohort members and their marital and partnership behaviour. I therefore include all

the parental and cohort members' related control variables<sup>20</sup> used in previous analyses when building models of attitudes and behaviour in this chapter.

The structure of the conceptual framework used throughout this chapter is shown in Figure 7-1. The blocks and oval shapes are positioned in order to reflect the timing of events/measurement points read from left to right, as far as possible.

**Figure 7-1: Conceptual framework for the reciprocal relationship between attitudes and marital/partnership transitions, controlling for background characteristics of cohort members**



Starting from the left of the figure and moving to the right: parental background characteristics and cohort members' own traits are hypothesised to have an impact on attitudes at both time points as well as on marital/partnership transitions. Thus, there is a large arrow leading from the parental and own characteristics block towards attitudes and change in marital/partnership status block. Two arrows pointing from attitudes at time 1 illustrate the fact that attitudes at time 1 are hypothesised to predict both partnership transition and subsequent attitudes. An arrow from partnership change leading to attitudes at time 2 shows that marital/partnership transition is examined as a predictor of attitudes at time 2.

<sup>20</sup> Some models exclude certain control variables for various reasons. These are clearly stated in the following sections.

## 7.2 Predicting marital and partnership behaviour

As discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2, previous research on the relationship between attitudes and the associated behaviours concluded with contradicting results. These vary due to numerous reasons such as: variations in the attitudes measured and the associated behaviour; how specific the attitudes are to the behaviour in question; what the mediating factors are included in the analyses; among other factors. Generally, the consensus is that attitudes cannot accurately predict behaviour and certainly not on their own. The notion of attitudes predicting behaviour is also questionable due to a vast number of mediating factors involved in that relationship, making management of all these different covariates difficult if at all possible. However, this should not hinder research investigating the relationship between people's attitudes and the behaviour associated with them as it adds to the understanding of the meaning and motivation behind their actions.

The frameworks for understanding union formation and dissolution used in this study are identical for both marital and cohabiting unions as it is argued that the frameworks used to understand the latter can be applied to studying the former, despite some obvious differences between the two (Landale and Forste, 1991). In their study of marital and non-marital partnership separations in Canada, Wu and Hart (1999) found that many of the predictors for the risks of marital disruption/stability also apply to the prediction of cohabiting union disruption/stability, such as women's employment (reduces the risk of separation), men's employment (reduces the risk of separation), women's higher levels of education (increased risk of union separation), and presence of young children (increases likelihood of union stability). The authors found some experiences, such as parental divorce, increased the risk of any union separation among women, but increased the risk of marital separation alone among men.

## 7.3 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses (also outlined in Chapter 2, sections 2.2.4.1 and 2.2.4.2) are outlined in this chapter:

*HYPOTHESIS (4): I expect unpartnered, never married respondents who were more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage to be more likely to enter a marital partnership than remain unpartnered compared to those who were less traditional (selection effect).*

*HYPOTHESIS (5): I expect unpartnered single, never married respondents who were more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage to be more likely to enter a marital partnership than a cohabiting one (selection effect).*

*HYPOTHESIS (6): I expect the cohort members who were less traditional whilst married for the first time to be more likely to get divorced or separated than those who were more traditional (selection effect).*

*HYPOTHESIS (7): I expect cohort members who formed their first marital partnership to become more traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage than those who remained unpartnered (adaptation effect). Further, I do not expect those who formed a cohabiting relationship to become significantly more traditional in their attitudes than those who remained unpartnered (adaptation effect).*

*HYPOTHESIS (8): I expect cohort members who experienced a marital breakdown to become less traditional in their attitudes to family and marriage compared to those who remain married (adaptation effect).*

## **7.4 Method**

I use graphical representation of regression models to aid interpretation of the complex relationships between multivariate systems, which otherwise would be difficult to describe and summarise. This method loosely follows a well-established Graphical Chain model technique which has been used to explore various multivariate relationships where establishing causal direction of the relationships was of importance (e.g. Borgoni et al, 2004; Magadi et al, 2004; Berrington et al, 2008). In the area of attitudes, this method was used by Berrington and colleagues (2008) to depict the relationship between women's gender-role attitudes and fertility/employment.

As Table 7.1 earlier in this chapter shows, the three statistical methods used in the analyses are multiple linear regression (the description of this method is presented in Chapter 6), binary logistic regression and multinomial logistic regression. The analysis outline is presented below together with the description of the ways the results tables are interpreted.

### 7.4.1 Analysis outline

The outcome of the analysis is a series of graphical diagrams which illustrate the relationship between attitudes and behaviour and are based on regression models. For each cohort, the relationships between marital/partnership *breakdown* and attitudes and the relationship between marital/partnership *formation* and attitudes are investigated. The type of regression models used in the analyses depends on the nature of the outcome variable. This is explained in more detail below.

Firstly models of attitudes at time 1 containing background characteristics, including parental background and own life experiences are constructed using linear multiple regression for BCS respondents at the age of 26 and NCDS respondents at the age of 33. The results from these analyses provide an indication of what predicts initial attitude scores of these subgroups of respondents.

Secondly, the effect of marital formation/dissolution on change in attitudes is investigated through modelling attitudes at the second time point (BCS respondents at 30 and NCDS respondents at 42) as a predictor of marital trajectory, controlling for attitudes at Time 1 and all other independent variables using multiple linear regression. Including initial attitudes as a predictor of attitudes at time 2 makes this investigation an estimation of *change* in attitudes scores. This type of model is often called a conditional change model since the prediction of the dependent variable is conditional on its preceding value (Berrington et al, 2006). This method is preferable to modelling where the actual change score is regressed on the predictors (unconditional change score model). The latter method assumes independence of attitudes at time 1 given the predictor variables, which is often an unrealistic assumption (Berrington et al, 2006). For example, the results in Chapter 4 demonstrate that NCDS separated/divorced cohabiting respondents had the lowest average scores on attitudes at the age of 33 among all cohort members grouped by their partnership trajectory between 33 and 42. Although they had the lowest score at 33, once they re-married by 42, their scores increased the most between these time points. Another example is the average attitude score among the BCS respondents who were married at 30, which was among the highest between all the trajectory groups at that time; this decreased the most once these BCS respondents got divorced. Thus it is evident that previous marital status is

correlated with the initial attitude score and the change in attitudes following the transition. Conditional change models are therefore applied here.

Finally, binary or a multinomial logistic regression models are constructed to examine the effect of attitudes measured at the first time point on respondents' marital trajectory, controlling for previous relationship breakdown as well as parental and own characteristics. The dependent variable in these analyses has either two or three categories which determined the choice of models used (binary – for those variables where there are two categories and multinomial – where there are three). Throughout this chapter, odds ratios and relative risk ratios are presented for binary and multinomial logistic models respectively, while their corresponding regression coefficients together with standard errors can be found in Appendix 5, section 5.2.

#### **7.4.2 Binary Logistic Regression**

Binary, also known as ordinary, logistic regression is used here to investigate the predictors of change in behaviour, namely marital dissolution among the NCDS cohort. Binary logistic regression is a useful tool in analysing data where the dependent variable, as its title suggests, has only two categories.

As was the case with the results from the multiple linear regression models described in section 6.1.1 of the preceding chapter, there are two sets of results that are of interest here: the overall model evaluation, or how well the set of chosen variables predicts behaviour, as well as the impact of each predictor on the dependent variable. Of particular interest here is the impact of attitudes at Time 1 on marital dissolution.

Whereas in linear regression the aim is to predict a value of the dependent variable using a set of predictors, in binary logistic regression the aim is to calculate a probability ( $p$ ) of an event taking place (value of 1) over not taking place (value of 0). This analysis focuses on predicting whether a marital dissolution occurred, as opposed to cohort members staying continuously married. Similarly to the multiple linear regression, each predictor has a unique coefficient ( $b$ ), which indicates how the dependent variable varies with changes with respect to each independent variable. To overcome nonlinearity of the relationship of  $p$  as a function of a set of predictors as well as the fact that  $p$  can only take on values of 0 and 1, a logistic transformation of

probability is taken (also known as logit) which is the log of the odds that the event occurs, and symbolically it is expressed as follows:

$$\mathbf{logit(p)=log(p/(1-p))}$$

To fit the data using logistic regression the following equation is used:

$$\mathbf{logit(p)= log(p/(1-p))=a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + \dots +b_nx_n}$$

For ease of interpretation of the coefficients they can be exponentiated and the model is then written in terms of the odds ratios (OR), which signify the ratio of the odds for a one-unit increase in x to the odds when x is unchanged:

$$\mathbf{p/(1-p) = exp(a + b_nx_n)}$$

In the equation above, p is the probability of event taking place, (p/1-p) is the odds of event taking place over not taking place; a is a constant; x<sub>n</sub> is the nth independent variable; and b<sub>n</sub> is a parameter estimate for the nth independent variable.

This chapter reports the results as odds ratios (OR). To evaluate the statistical significance of each individual odds ratio, z-values with a corresponding p-value are used (not reported here). I use a value of alpha to be 0.05 or less and compare each p-value to it. If the p-value is larger than 0.05 then the corresponding odds ratio is not judged to be statistically significant at the 5% level (i.e. not to yielding a statistically significant change in odds of the divorce taking place); statistically significant results at the 0.01, 0.05 or 0.001 levels are indicated by asterisks (\*, \*\* or \*\*\* respectively) in the results tables.

To evaluate the overall fit of the model, the likelihood ratio chi-square with a corresponding p-value is used. If the p-value is less than 0.05, I consider such a model, as a whole, to be statistically significant as compared to a model with no predictors.

### 7.4.3 Multinomial Logistic Regression

A multinomial logistic regression is an application of a logistic regression where the dependent variable is nominal: it has more than two categories with no specific order to them. Similarly to binary logistic regression, the aim here is to find the probability of being in a particular category compared to a reference category. It is easy to think of these types of models as separate binary logistic models where each category is compared to a baseline category. In practice, STATA models the comparisons to the reference category simultaneously using maximum likelihood estimation.

In this thesis, for example, the effect of predictors (particularly attitudes) on the probability of getting married and starting a cohabiting relationship compared to remaining unpartnered are investigated (Table 7-7 in section 7.6.3). This is achieved by specifying those who remained single to be a reference category in the dependent variable - partnership formation. This yields two columns of results - one for each pair of categories – getting married versus remaining single and starting a cohabiting relationship versus remaining single. Additionally, as the way in which cohabiting partnership formation differs from marital partnership formation is of interest, another model is fitted that sets those who got married as the reference category, with those who started cohabiting being compared to it. Multinomial models can be fitted using the dependent variable with a different baseline category without the overall model fit changing.

The models of three choices between outcomes would look like this (choice 3 is a reference group):

$$\begin{aligned}\log(p(y=1)/p(y=3)) &= \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n \\ \log(p(y=2)/p(y=3)) &= \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_n\end{aligned}$$

Similarly to the binary logistic regression, the results are presented in exponentiated form with the same denotation of statistical significance. These exponentiated coefficients are called relative risk ratios (RRR) and denote the ratio of probabilities of being in a specific category compared to a reference category. When there are only two categories in the outcome variable, the RRR and OR are the same.

#### **7.4.4 Presentation of the final results**

The results from the regression models are illustrated graphically. For these purposes, red arrows are used to indicate a negative relationship between variables and blue arrows denote positive relationships. The absence of an arrow between pairs of variables shows their independence. For simplicity of presentation, control variables that do not have any significant impact (at least at 95% level) on either attitudes or behavioural variables are not included. Thus the absence of control variables from the list shown in Table 6-1 in Chapter 6 does not mean they were excluded from the analyses unless explicitly specified.

#### **7.5 Sample selection and measures of marital formation and dissolution**

When investigating the effects of partnership changes, whether it is a formation or a breakdown, on attitudes and vice versa, the sample was limited to those cohort members who either had no relationship change or had only one relationship change between the two time points. Therefore respondents who, for example, were married at time 1 and separated/divorced at time 2 having already started a new cohabiting relationship were excluded. Such selection enables the investigation of the actual partnership change on attitudes rather than detecting the “noise” of possible effects of multiple trajectories between two time points. If the hypothesis of adaptation effects is true, then the attitudes of such respondents would be expected to change following a breakdown of a relationship and then change again following the formation of another, and it would be difficult to ascertain whether the results were driven by the dissolution or the formation of a partnership.

Cohort members who gave inconsistent information about their partnerships in different questions were excluded. For example, those who were married at time 1 and indicated the end of a marital relationship between time 1 and time 2 but reported to be “single, never married” at time 2 were considered to be inconsistent and therefore removed from the analysis sample. Additionally, anyone whose partner died between time 1 and time 2 was excluded from the following analyses. This is due to the different nature of the “separation” caused by death. Finally, those who had ever been in a same-sex partnership were also excluded from the sub group analyses presented in this chapter.

This chapter includes two separate groups to explore the way attitudes are associated with the formation of first marital union: firstly, one group includes never married and non-cohabiting BCS respondents at the age of 26 and NCDS at the age of 33 who either remained in that state, started a cohabiting relationship or got married by the second time point; the second group includes BCS cohort members that were cohabiting although were never married, who then either formed a first marriage with that partner, split up from them or remained in the cohabiting relationship with the same partner.

Some consideration was given to including previously married respondents in the sample investigating the relationship between attitudes and marital formation. However, in the same way cohabiting partnership breakdowns would have a lasting effect on attitudes to family and marriage and subsequent marital transitions, marital breakdowns would also influence these. Furthermore, experience of marital breakdown is hypothesised to affect both behaviour and attitudes to family and marriage even more than the end of a cohabiting relationship. The descriptive analysis in Chapter 4 showed that those who were separated or divorced non-cohabiting at time 1 were significantly less traditional than those who were never married non-cohabiting. Additionally, among the NCDS sample, getting married resulted in a different change in attitudes depending on whether they were getting married for the first time or getting remarried. For those who got married for the first time between time 1 and time 2 the average increase in attitude score was 0.37, while the scores among those who remarried increased by 0.45 points on the attitude scale. Therefore it was necessary to distinguish between those who had a previous marital breakdown and those who had not in addition to whether they experienced dissolution of any cohabiting relationships, by controlling for both marital and cohabiting relationships breakdowns. This would prove to be difficult, especially for the younger BCS sample, since very few of them experienced marital breakdown prior to the age of 26. Additionally, this sample becomes even smaller when considering only those separated/divorced BCS respondents who were not cohabiting at 26 and were remarried by the time they were 30 (n=27 among BCS sample with consistent information on marital/partnership status at both ages and no relationship breakdown or other relationship formation between 26 and 30).

To investigate the relationship between attitudes and marital dissolution, those cohort members who were in their first marriage at time 1, had no more than one relationship breakdown between time 1 and time 2, and, if there was a breakdown, had not formed

another relationship by time 2, were selected. Further description of the samples selected for these analyses is provided later in the chapter.

## **7.6 Transitions of never married (unpartnered) cohort members: formation of first marriage: BCS and NCDS**

### **7.6.1 Description of analyses samples**

A sample of never married cohort members who were not in a cohabiting relationship at time 1 and who had no more than one partnership trajectory between time 1 and time 2 were selected to investigate the effects of attitudes on partnership formation and the effects of partnership formation on subsequent attitudes. These respondents either remained unmarried or formed a cohabiting partnership or got married between time 1 and time 2, thus forming three possible trajectories: “continuously single, no partner”; “single, no partner at time 1  $\Rightarrow$  cohabiting at time 2” and “single, no partner at time 1  $\Rightarrow$  married at time 2”. The sample is restricted to those who have information on all the other variables that are included in the proposed analyses such as attitudes scores at both time points, parental background and own characteristics. The effects of this restriction on the sample size and resulting distribution of trajectories for both BCS and NCDS are easily detectable by examining Tables 7-2 and 7-3.

Approximately 65% of potential BCS sample for analysis of reciprocal relationship between attitudes and marital formation (those with relevant information on their marital trajectories and attitudes at time 1 and time 2) was not included in the analyses as a result of respondents who had missing information for the control variables (n=2,800 for all those with marital trajectories data and n=1,258 in the analysis sample). Furthermore, among the available sample, respondents were more likely to remain continuously single and less likely to form a marital partnership compared to the analysis sample (see Table 7-2 below).

**Table 7-2: Formation of first marriage, BCS between 26 and 30, analysis and available samples**

BCS, partnership formation	Women		Men		Total	
	analysis sample	available sample	analysis sample	available sample	analysis sample	available sample
	207	618	266	735	473	1,353
single, not cohabiting	33.7%	45.8%	41.3%	50.7%	37.6%	48.3%
single, not cohabiting->cohabiting	148	331	157	388	305	719
	24.1%	24.5%	24.4%	26.7%	24.2%	25.7%
single, not cohabiting -> married first time	259	400	221	328	480	728
	42.2%	29.7%	34.3%	22.6%	38.2%	26.0%
Total	614	1,349	644	1,451	1,258	2,800
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

In the available sample's marital trajectory variable, 46% of women and 51% of men were continuously single (never married and not cohabiting) from age 26 through to 30 compared to 34% of women and 42% of men in the analysis sample. Similarly, there are distinctions in proportions in other categories of the marital trajectory variable. For example, in the available sample, 23% of men and 30% of women got married between 26 and 30, while 34% of men and 42% of women did in the analysis sample. These figures mean that the analysis sample is under-represented by those who remain unpartnered, while over represented by those who got married.

Among the NCDS, the reduction of the sample size is not as large as for the BCS sample, yet it is still a sizable 36% (from n=918 in the available sample down to n=584 in the analysis sample). The distribution of cohort members in each category of the trajectory among the analysis sample of NCDS respondents is not dissimilar to the available sample's distribution. The proportions of men and women in each of the trajectory categories for available and analysis samples are shown in Table 7-3 below.

**Table 7-3: Formation of first marriage, NCDS between 33 and 42, analysis and available samples**

	Women		Men		Total	
	analysis sample	available sample	analysis sample	available sample	analysis sample	available sample
NCDS, partnership formation						
single never married, not cohabiting	159 66.0%	245 61.6%	195 56.9%	311 59.8%	354 60.6%	556 60.6%
single not cohabiting -> cohabiting	41 17.0%	67 16.8%	56 16.3%	75 14.4%	97 16.6%	142 15.4%
single not cohabiting -> married first time	41 17.0%	86 21.6%	92 26.8%	134 25.8%	133 22.8%	220 24.0%
Total	241 100%	398 100%	343 100%	520 100%	584 100%	918 100%

There is a big difference in the way the results from these analyses should be compared for the two birth cohorts. Getting married for the first time between time 1 and time 2 is a more common event for the younger cohort than for the older due to their age differences. As reported in Chapter 4, a large proportion of the NCDS cohort were already married by the age of 33 (63%), while only a third of the BCS cohort were married for the first time at 26. While the proportion of first time married cohort members increased by the time BCS respondents were 30, the proportion of first time married decreased among the NCDS cohort due to divorces/separations and remarriages.

The type of people among the BCS cohort who get married for the first time between the ages of 26 and 30 therefore differs greatly to those among the NCDS cohort who get married for the first time between 33 and 42. It is possible that, on the whole, NCDS respondents in the analysis sample for the investigation of the relationship between attitudes and marital formation are already less traditional than those in the BCS sample, having remained single (never married) up to age 33.

### 7.6.2 Results: Formation of first marriage between 26 and 30: BCS

Table 7-4 shows the descriptive statistics for the control variables used to investigate a relationship between formation of first marriage and attitudes among the BCS respondents. The information on these variables is based on the sample of respondents who were eligible for the analyses (n=1,264), having non-missing information on all the

control variables as well as attitudes and having a particular marital trajectory as outlined in the preceding section.

**Table 7-4: Descriptive statistics of the control variables used in the analyses of the relationship between attitudes and formation of first marriage, BCS**

Variable	% or mean, n=1,264
<b>Sex</b>	
Women	48.81%
Men	51.19%
<b>Father's social class</b>	
professional/managerial	21.84%
semi-skilled manual/non-manual	63.45%
partly skilled/unskilled	14.71%
<b>Mother's age at CM's birth</b>	26.65 (std deviation=5.13)
<b>Mother left school at minimum age</b>	
No	43.91%
Yes	56.09%
<b>Mother worked, CM age 5</b>	
No	58.15%
Yes	41.85%
<b>Younger siblings, CM age 5</b>	
No	55.22%
Yes	44.78%
<b>Parents separated CM 16 or younger</b>	
No	86.95%
Yes	13.05%
<b>Qualifications at 26</b>	
Lower levels of qualifications (up to equivalent of NVQ2)	56.88%
Higher levels of qualifications (equivalent to NVQ3 to NVQ6)	43.12%
<b>Social Class at 26</b>	
professional/managerial	43.83%
skilled non-manual	27.61%
skilled manual/partly skilled/unskilled	28.56%
<b>CM ever separated from cohabiting relationship prior to 26</b>	
No	86.00%
Yes	14.00%

Two problematic variables – employment status and having dependent children living at home at 26 (not shown in Table 7-4 above) – were excluded from these analyses. Only 14 BCS respondents at the age of 26 in the analysis sample were not in employment, and employment status was therefore excluded. This is a limitation as men's employment status could be a significant predictor of marital formation (Oppenheimer, 2000). Using all the available data and looking at a relationship between the marital formation variable and employment status for men at 26, it is evident that men who were not in employment were less likely to get married than those who were. The

figures below show that 25% of men who were employed at 26 got married between 26 and 30, while only 6% of men who were not in employment at 26 did so.

**Table 7-5: Trajectories of BCS single (not cohabiting) men by their employment status at 26, using a sample with all available data on marital trajectories and employment unrestricted by any other variables**

Men's trajectories	not employed	employed	Total
continuously single	142	584	726
	69.61%	47.29%	50.45%
single -> cohabiting	50	337	387
	24.51%	27.29%	26.89%
single -> married	12	314	326
	5.88%	25.43%	22.65%
Total	204	1,235	1,439
	100%	100%	100%

Chi2=47.31, p<0.001

A variable indicating whether a respondent had any children living with him/her at home was also problematic for the BCS sample due to low numbers of those who had any children. Among men, only 34 reported having children at home at 26. The rare occurrence of having children living at home among never married and non-cohabiting men is not a surprising finding because of their relatively young age. Many who had fathered children would be either in a cohabiting or a marital partnership with the mother of those children, or the children would be living elsewhere. I therefore excluded 'children at home' variable from the analyses of marital formation among BCS men.

#### Estimates from regression models

Below are the results for the BCS cohort from regression analyses predicting attitudes at age 26 of the single non-cohabiting respondents (Table 7-6), attitudes at 30 (Table 7-7), and the formation of first marriage for the whole sample of the BCS cohort, while controlling for gender of the respondents (Table 7-8) as well as the results for men and women separately (Table 7-9).

### Attitude at 26

Parental separation has a negative effect on single non-cohabiting men's attitudes at 26, net of all other predictors, whereby men whose parents separated or divorced are likely to score 0.288 points lower on the attitudes scale than men who grew up in intact families with both biological parents present. Cohort members' own cohabiting relationship breakdown prior to 26 did not have a significant impact on their attitudes towards family and marriage, suggesting the lasting effects of parental separation and its greater influence on cohort members' attitudes compared to their own cohabiting experiences.

Respondents' higher qualifications had a significant negative impact on attitudes compared to those with lower educational achievement for both men and women, while having children also had a significant negative impact on the attitudes of women at 26 (note: control for children in the home was not included in the analysis for men).

### Attitudes at 30

Men, but not women, who got married for the first time, on average, became significantly more traditional than men who remained single non-cohabiting.

**Table 7-6: Parameter estimates from linear regression of attitudes at 26, BCS sample of never married (not cohabiting) respondents at 26**

Attitudes at 26			
	ALL	Women	Men
Women	-0.027 [0.041]		
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.003 [0.004]	0.008 [0.006]	-0.001 [0.006]
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial-ref)			
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.014 [0.053]	-0.049 [0.078]	0.005 [0.073]
partly skilled/unskilled	-0.040 [0.072]	-0.037 [0.103]	-0.057 [0.102]
Mum left school minimum age	0.058 [0.042]	0.040 [0.061]	0.074 [0.059]
Mum worked CM aged 5	0.019 [0.041]	0.115 * [0.057]	-0.066 [0.059]
CM has younger siblings at 5	0.008 [0.044]	0.026 [0.060]	-0.007 [0.064]
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.136 * [0.063]	0.032 [0.083]	-0.288 ** [0.093]
	*		**
Qualifications at 26: NVQ3 or above	-0.247 * [0.046]	-0.286 * [0.067]	-0.228 * [0.066]
Social Class (prof/managerial-ref)			
skilled non-manual/manual	-0.060 [0.050]	-0.057 [0.065]	-0.082 [0.080]
partly skilled/unskilled	-0.015 [0.051]	-0.065 [0.078]	0.013 [0.068]
Dependent children at home at 26	-0.078 [0.077]	-0.251 * [0.102]	
Relationship breakdown prior to 26	-0.097 [0.060]	-0.046 [0.075]	-0.144 [0.098]
	*	**	**
Constant	3.274 * [0.222]	3.177 * [0.195]	3.474 * [0.202]
Observations	1264	617	647
r <sup>2</sup>	0.039	0.048	0.058
F(13,1250)	3.930	F(12,604)=2.8	F(11,635)=3.4
p>F	0.000	2	1
		0.002	0.000

Note: employment variable was not included in the regressions shown in this table. Additionally, an indicator of children at home was also omitted from the regression using the sample of men.

**Table 7-7: Parameter estimates from linear regression of attitudes at 30, BCS sample of never married (not cohabiting) respondents at 26**

Attitudes at 30						
	ALL		Women		Men	
Women	-0.003 [0.033]					
Mother's age at birth of CM	-0.007 * [0.003]		-0.008 [0.004]		-0.006 [0.005]	
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled manual/non-manual	0.044 [0.042]		0.039 [0.061]		0.043 [0.057]	
partly skilled/unskilled	-0.015 [0.056]		0.095 [0.081]		-0.113 [0.078]	
Mum left school minimum age	-0.017 [0.034]		0.021 [0.048]		-0.057 [0.049]	
Mum worked CM aged 5	-0.035 [0.033]		-0.028 [0.045]		-0.036 [0.048]	
CM has younger siblings at 5	-0.08 * [0.035]		-0.034 [0.047]		-0.13 * [0.052]	
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.05 [0.050]		-0.031 [0.075]		-0.073 [0.068]	
Qualifications at 26: NVQ3 or above	-0.029 [0.037]		-0.036 [0.053]		-0.018 [0.053]	
CM's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled non-manual/manual	0.004 [0.040]		0.058 [0.051]		-0.073 [0.066]	
partly skilled/unskilled	0.02 [0.042]		0.072 [0.069]		-0.006 [0.056]	
Dependent children at home at 26	0.013 [0.058]		-0.038 [0.076]			
Relationship breakdown prior to 26	-0.07 [0.047]		-0.073 [0.062]		-0.065 [0.073]	
Partnership formation (continuously single, no partner - ref)						
began cohabiting between 26 and 30	0.04 [0.041]		-0.001 [0.056]		0.067 [0.059]	
married between 26 and 30	0.131 *** [0.035]		0.059 [0.049]		0.196 *** [0.050]	
Attitudes at 26	0.557 *** [0.024]		0.527 *** [0.032]	***	0.578 *** [0.035]	***
Constant	1.758 *** [0.140]		1.843 *** [0.189]	***	1.733 *** [0.203]	***
Observations	1258		614		644	
r2	0.367		0.350		0.400	
F	F( 16, 1241)= 43.68		F(15, 598)=23.69		F(14,629)=26.83	
p>F	0.000		0.000		0.000	

Note: the employment variable was not included in the regressions shown in this table. Additionally, an indicator of children at home was also omitted from the regression using the sample of men.

**Table 7-8: Relative-Risk Ratios from the multinomial logistic regression of the partnership/marital formation between 26 and 30, BCS sample of never married (not cohabiting) respondents at 26**

	single->cohabiting /continuously single	single->married /continuously single	single->cohabiting /single->married
Women	1.194	1.536 **	0.777
Mother's age at birth of CM	1.008	0.948 ***	1.063 ***
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled manual/non-manual	0.860	1.090	0.789
partly skilled/unskilled	1.334	1.136	1.174
Mum left school minimum age	1.133	1.043	1.086
Mum worked CM aged 5	0.896	1.056	0.849
CM has younger siblings at 5	0.991	0.981	1.010
Parents separated CM 16 or under	0.995	1.052	0.946
Qualifications at 26: equivalent NVQ3+	0.706	0.904	0.782
CM's Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)			
skilled non-manual/manual	1.316	0.696 *	1.890 ***
partly skilled/unskilled	1.080	0.696 *	1.552 *
Dependent children at home at 26	0.418	3.297 ***	0.127 ***
Relationship breakdown prior to 26	0.763	0.786	0.970
Attitudes at 26	0.908	1.246 *	0.729 **
Observations	1258		
LR chi2	106.080		
P>chi2	0.000		
Pseudo R2	0.040		
Log likelihood	-1304.294		

Note: employment variable was not included in the regressions shown in this table.

### Transitions from single (unpartnered) state

Respondents with more traditional attitudes were significantly more likely to experience a marital union compared to remaining unmarried and unpartnered, indicating strong evidence of those with more traditional attitudes “selecting” themselves into more traditional arrangements. Attitudes did not have a significant impact on transitions into cohabitation over remaining single.

The results in Table 7-8 above show that the odds of getting married over remaining single decrease by 0.948 with every year increase in mother’s age for the whole sample of BCS respondents. Similarly, the odds of getting married over starting a cohabiting relationship decrease by 0.941 (that is 1/1.063) with every year increase in mother’s age<sup>21</sup>. The odds of getting married over remaining continuously single are significantly greater for women than for men among the BCS sample. Having children at home also has a significant positive impact on the odds of getting married and the odds of starting a cohabiting partnership over remaining single (note: this indicator was only included for women).

Evaluating the relative risks of getting married for men and women separately (see Table 7-9 below), does not produce a reliable model for the analysis of men (chi sq=32.644, p>0.05). Among BCS women, those who had children were more likely to start a marital relationship over cohabiting, and less likely to cohabit than to remain single. It is possible that women who had children were getting married to the father of their offspring and those who had children and did not get married might have found it difficult to find a cohabiting partner while caring for a child. Experience of previous relationship breakdown(s) among BCS women who were single at 26 meant that they were significantly less likely to start a cohabiting relationship than to remain single.

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<sup>21</sup> Note that although **Table 7-8** reports relative risk ratios for the “single cohabiting” group as compared to “single->married” (ref), it is the same as comparing “single->married” to “single cohabiting” (ref) with relative risk ratio of 1/RRR “single->married”(ref).

**Table 7-9: Relative Risk Ratios from the multinomial logistic regression of the partnership/marital formation, BCS 26 to 30: women and men**

	WOMEN			MEN		
	single->cohabiting /single	single->married /single	single->cohabiting /single->married	single->cohabiting /single	single->married /single	single->cohabiting /single->married
Mother's age	1.000	0.932 ***	1.074 **	1.008	0.957 *	1.054 *
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled manual/non-manual	1.023	1.159	0.882	0.755	1.014	0.744
partly skilled/unskilled	1.925	1.510	1.275	1.001	0.912	1.098
Mum left school minimum age	1.064	0.893	1.192	1.159	1.189	0.975
Mum worked CM aged 5	0.825	0.921	0.896	0.940	1.282	0.733
CM has younger siblings at 5	1.036	1.068	0.970	0.912	0.882	1.035
Parents separated CM 16 or under	0.612	0.812	0.753	1.467	1.318	1.113
Qualifications at 26: NVQ3+	0.629	0.784	0.803	0.740	0.896	0.826
CM's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled non-manual/manual	1.150	0.732	1.570	1.508	0.667	2.260 **
partly skilled/unskilled	1.091	0.568 *	1.922 *	1.056	0.850	1.242
Dependent children at home at 26	0.366 *	0.989	0.370 *			
Relationship breakdown prior to 26	0.528 *	0.614	0.860	1.095	1.008	1.086
Attitudes at 26	0.873	1.121	0.779	0.966	1.373 *	0.704 *
Observations	614			644		
LR chi2	48.100			32.644		
P>chi2	0.019			0.112		
Pseudo R2	0.005			0.024		
Log likelihood	-635.148			-676.841		

Note: the employment variable was not included in the regressions shown in this table. Additionally, an indicator of children at home was also omitted from the regression using the sample of men.

### Graphical representation of regression models: formation of first marriage among single (unpartnered) BCS respondents

The following graphs were made using the variables that had significant effects (marked with either one or more asterisks) on attitudes at 26, attitudes at 30 and formation of first marriage.

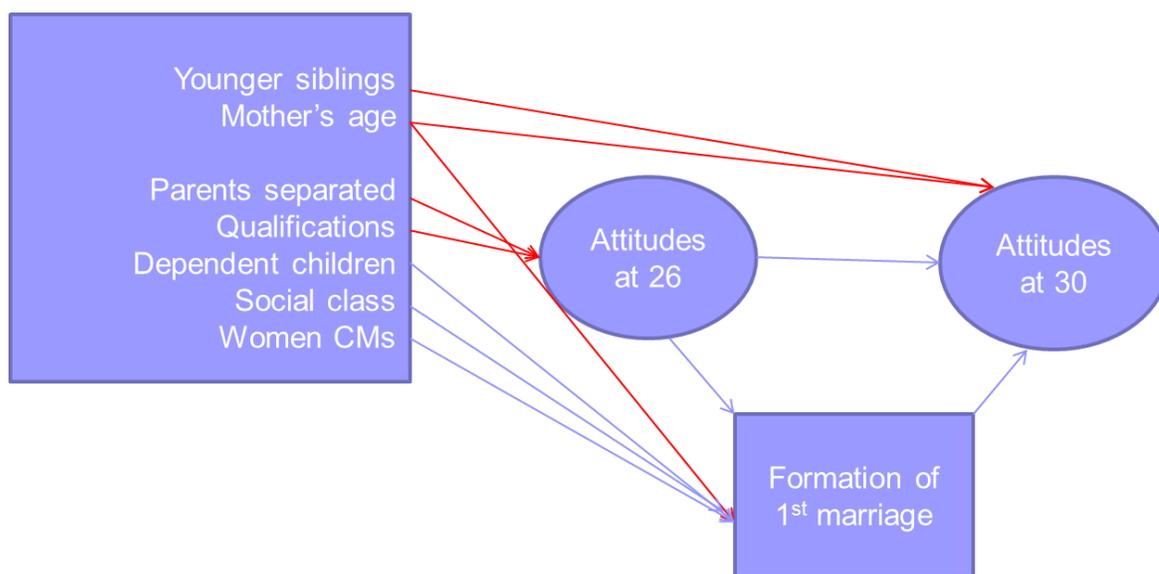
Some covariates in the regressions above were not coded in the same way as in the tables for graphical purposes. For example, in Table 7-8 the odds of getting married over remaining single for BCS cohort are significantly lower if respondents are in skilled non-manual/manual jobs as opposed to professional or managerial. When depicting these results in the graphical representation, the results show that people in the *higher* social class (professional/managerial) are significantly more likely to get married as opposed to remaining single or forming a cohabiting partnership. This means that the effect of social class is presented as if it was positively coded – higher social class (professional/managerial) means a positive effect on marital formation.

The graphs below show the effects on and the effects of *getting married* over remaining single and/or starting a cohabiting relationship. Thus, an arrow that points to “formation of first marriage” shows that there is a significant effect of this variable on the formation of first marriage over remaining single and/or starting a cohabiting relationship. An arrow that points from a rectangle that represents formation of first marriage towards attitudes at 30 means that the attitudes of those who got married changed significantly more than the attitudes of those who remained continuously single<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Regression tables for attitudes at 30 show the “continuously single” group as a reference category, comparison of the effects of marriage compared to forming a cohabiting relationship on attitudes is not shown here

**Figure 7-2: Graphical representation of the relationship between attitudes and formation of first marriage, BCS between 26 and 30**



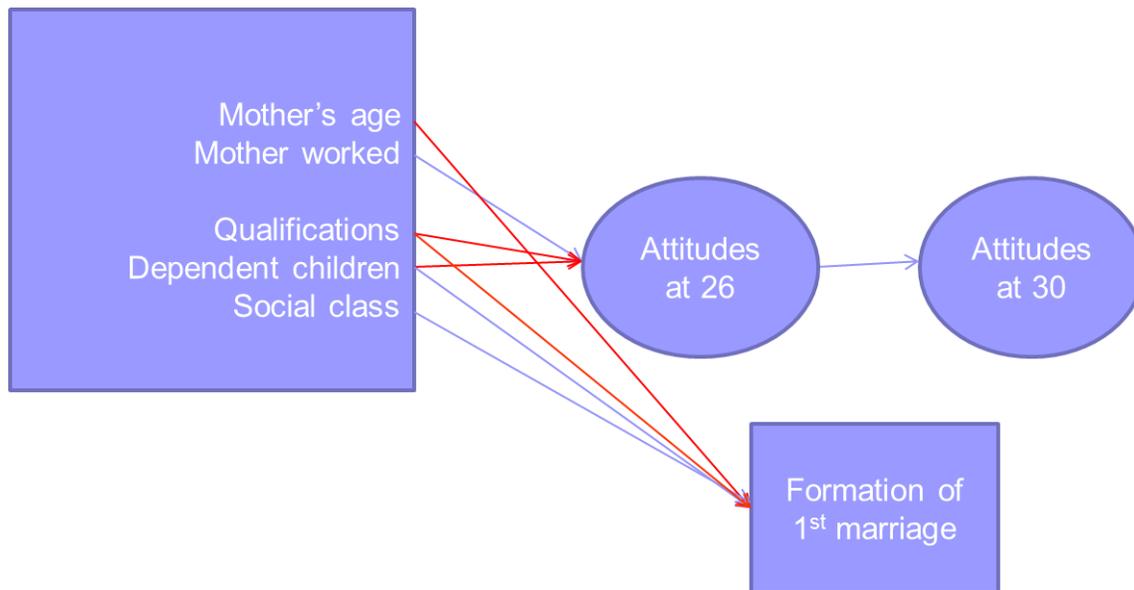
Note: variable employment at 26 was excluded from the analyses used to produce this graph

The diagram in Figure 7-2 above portrays the results from the series of regression models presented earlier in this section, with an easier to read representation of the relationships. A blue arrow from “Women CMs” towards the “formation of first marriage” block indicates that women are more likely to get married than stay continuously single compared to men. No difference between men and women in getting married as opposed to starting a cohabiting relationship was found (refer back to Table 7-8). A red arrow from “Mother’s age” towards the “formation of first marriage” block shows that the mother’s age has a strong negative impact on the cohort members’ odds of getting married compared to remaining single (or cohabiting, as seen in Table 7-8 above).

Those who had more traditional attitudes at 26 were significantly more likely to get married than start a cohabiting relationship or remain single. Therefore, there is evidence of a selection effect of attitudes into first marriage for the whole sample of BCS respondents. Those who got married were significantly more likely to change their attitudes in a more positive direction, i.e. become more traditional, in comparison to those who remained single and non-cohabiting. Therefore there is also evidence of an adaptation effect of attitudes for the whole sample of BCS cohort members following their first marriage.

The graphs of separate models for men and women are presented in Figures 7-2 above and 7-3 below while the corresponding estimates for regression models predicting marital trajectories are in Table 7-9 above and the parameter estimates from linear regression of attitudes at 26 and 30 are included in Tables 7-6 and 7-7 above along with the estimates for the whole sample.

**Figure 7-3: Graphical representation of the relationship between attitudes and formation of first marriage, BCS between 26 and 30, WOMEN**

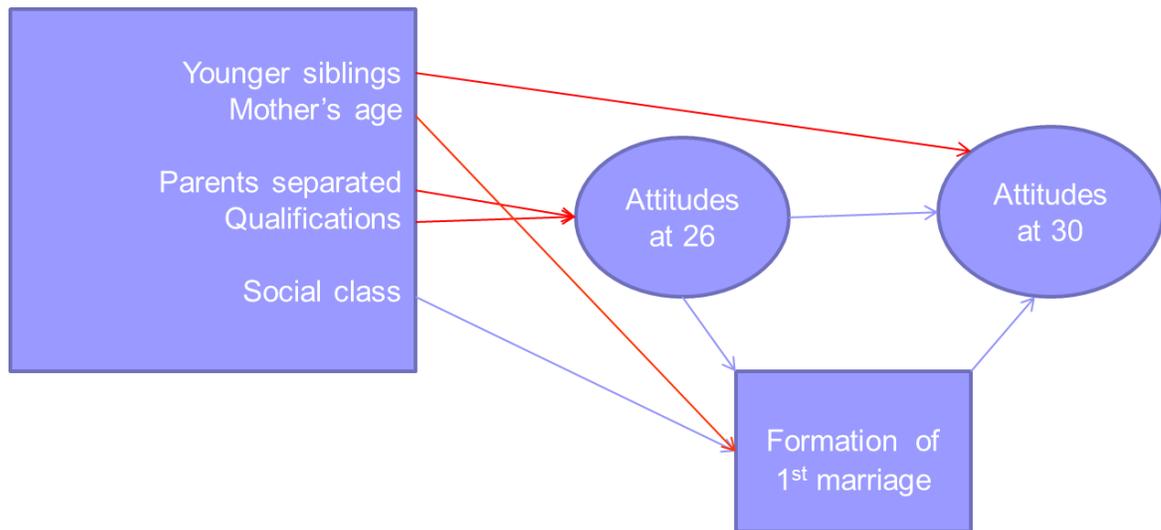


Note: variable employment at 26 was excluded from the analyses used to produce this graph

Unlike the findings for the whole sample, BCS never married women's attitudes did not provide any evidence for the effect of attitudes on marital formation. Similarly, there is no evidence of the effect of marital formation on subsequent attitude change among BCS women.

BCS women were more likely to get married than form a cohabiting relationship if they had children at the age of 26. Having children did not have a significant impact on getting married as opposed to remaining single. Also women were less likely to form a cohabiting relationship than to remain single if they had children at the age of 26, suggesting possible difficulties faced by single mothers in finding a partner.

**Figure 7-4: Graphical representation of the relationship between attitudes and formation of first marriage, BCS between 26 and 30, MEN**



Note: The following variables were excluded from the analyses used to produce this graph: employment status and dependent children at home at 26

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Men who had more traditional attitudes at 26 were significantly more likely to get married than either to remain single or start a cohabiting relationship between 26 and 30, indicating a selection effect of attitudes on marital formation. Men who got married became significantly more traditional in their attitudes at the age of 30 than those who remained continuously single between 26 and 30, indicating evidence of adaptation effects of attitudes among them.

### **7.6.3 Results: Formation of first marriage between 33 and 42: NCDS**

Table 7-10 below contains some description of the variables included in the analysis of the reciprocal relationship between attitudes and marital formation for the NCDS cohort. The logic and the structure of the analyses follow that described for the BCS cohort.

The dependent children at home variable was not included in the following analyses as there were only 34 people in the analysis sample who fell into this category within the analysis sample - all of these were women and most of these women remained continuously single between 33 and 42. Employment status and whether the cohort members' parents had ever separated were also not included in the following analyses due to low numbers: only 21 women and 31 men were not in employment at 33, while 13 and 16 women's and men's parents respectively had separated.

**Table 7-10: Descriptive statistics of control variables to be used in the analyses of the relationship between attitudes and formation of first marriage, NCDS**

Variable	% or mean, n=584
<b>Sex</b>	
Women	41.27%
Men	58.73%
<b>Father's social class</b>	
professional/managerial	27.23%
semi-skilled manual/non-manual	55.65%
partly skilled/unskilled	17.12%
<b>Mother's age at CM's birth</b>	28.54 (std deviation=5.52)
<b>Mother left school at minimum age</b>	
No	35.62%
Yes	64.38%
<b>Mother worked, CM age 7</b>	
No	77.05%
Yes	22.95%
<b>Younger siblings, CM age 7</b>	
No	45.89%
Yes	54.11%
<b>Qualifications at 33</b>	
Lower levels of qualifications (up to equivalent of NVQ2)	45.89%
Higher levels of qualifications (equivalent to NVQ3 to NVQ6)	54.11%
<b>Social Class at 33</b>	
professional/managerial	47.77%
skilled non-manual	22.26%
skilled manual/partly skilled/unskilled	29.97%
<b>CM ever separated from cohabiting relationship prior to 33</b>	
No	76.71%
Yes	23.29%

Below are the results from regression analyses predicting attitudes at age 33 of the single non-cohabiting respondents (Table 7-11), attitudes at age 42 (Table 7-12) and formation of first marriage for the whole sample of the NCDS cohort, while controlling for gender of the respondents (Table 7-13). The results for the men's and women's samples separately are presented in Table 7-14.

Overall, the regression model of attitudes at age 33 for men was not reliable ( $F(10, 332)=0.90, p>0.05$ ) and none of the independent variables were significant predictors of men's attitudes at 33 (Table 7-11). However, among single (never married and non-cohabiting) NCDS women at 33, the set of predictors explained 14% of variance in attitudes. Women who had experienced a previous separation were significantly less

traditional than women who had not (on average, 0.438 points on the scale) and they were also less traditional if they were in professional/managerial jobs compared to women in less skilled employment.

Table 7-12 shows that men's attitudes become significantly less traditional at age 42 if they have higher educational qualifications. The attitudes for both men and women become more traditional if they got married between ages 33 and 42.

Table 7-13 shows that, for the whole NCDS sample, those who are in lower skilled jobs are less likely to get married than to form a cohabiting relationship compared to those in professional or managerial positions. While those with experience of previous cohabiting partnerships are more likely to either get married or start another cohabiting partnership than remain single. They are also more likely to start another cohabiting relationship than form a marital partnership. Results for the sample of men (Table 7-14) support the above findings. Women, on the other hand, were no more likely to get married than to start a cohabiting relationship if they had had a previous cohabiting experience compared to those who had not.

**Table 7-11: Parameter estimates from the linear regression of attitudes at 33, NCDS sample of never married (unpartnered) respondents at 33**

ATTITUDES AT 33	ALL	Women	Men
Women	-0.082 [0.064]		
Mother's age at birth of CM	-0.002 [0.006]	-0.011 [0.009]	0.003 [0.009]
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.090 [0.082]	-0.084 [0.114]	-0.089 [0.115]
partly skilled/unskilled	-0.140 [0.104]	-0.156 [0.139]	-0.129 [0.149]
Mum left school minimum age	0.094 [0.072]	0.015 [0.096]	0.146 [0.100]
Mum worked CM pre-school	0.129 [0.075]	0.193 [0.100]	0.063 [0.108]
CM has younger siblings at 7	-0.060 [0.067]	-0.052 [0.090]	-0.065 [0.095]
Educational qualifications equivalent NVQ3+	0.045 [0.072]	0.134 [0.099]	0.011 [0.100]
CM's Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)			
skilled non-manual/manual	0.119 [0.084]	0.236 * [0.107]	0.078 [0.137]
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.212 ** [0.082]	0.336 ** [0.116]	0.163 [0.106]
Relationship breakdown prior to 33	-0.280 *** [0.072]	-0.438 *** [0.085]	-0.155 [0.115]
Constant	3.074 *** [0.219]	3.225 *** [0.313]	2.940 [0.299] ***
Observations	584	241	343
R2	0.056	0.136	0.027
F( 11, 572)	3.230	F(10,230)= 4.46	F(10,332) =0.90
p>F	0.000	0.000	0.534

Note: The following variables were not included in the analyses shown in this table due to sample limitation: parents separated, employment at 33, dependent children at home at 33

**Table 7-12: Parameter estimates from the linear regression of attitudes at 42, NCDS sample of never married (unpartnered) respondents at 33**

ATTITUDES AT 42	ALL	Women	Men
Women	-0.106 *		
	[0.048]		
Mother's age at birth of CM	-0.002	-0.001	-0.003
	[0.005]	[0.006]	[0.006]
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.005	0.073	-0.073
	[0.055]	[0.090]	[0.072]
partly skilled/unskilled	-0.103	-0.058	-0.157
	[0.068]	[0.112]	[0.085]
Mum left school minimum age	0.078	0.059	0.091
	[0.050]	[0.077]	[0.065]
Mum worked CM pre-school	-0.093	-0.088	-0.080
	[0.054]	[0.075]	[0.076]
CM has younger siblings at 7	-0.125 **	-0.123	-0.115
	[0.046]	[0.071]	[0.062]
Educational qualifications equivalent NVQ3+	-0.176 **	-0.144	-0.184 *
	[0.054]	[0.084]	[0.072]
CM's Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)			
skilled non-manual/manual	-0.076	-0.020	-0.150
	[0.059]	[0.086]	[0.084]
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.073	-0.032	0.120
	[0.064]	[0.108]	[0.081]
Relationship breakdown prior to 33	0.051	0.060	0.030
	[0.060]	[0.080]	[0.089]
Partnership formation (continuously single - ref)			
started cohabiting between 33 and 42	-0.145 *	-0.159	-0.134
	[0.064]	[0.091]	[0.089]
married between 33 and 42	0.256 ***	0.301 **	0.238 **
	[0.059]	[0.103]	[0.073]
Attitudes at 33	0.502 ***	0.460 ***	0.524 ***
	[0.033]	[0.055]	[0.041]
Constant	1.921 ***	1.841 ***	1.935 ***
	[0.191]	[0.280]	[0.260]
Observations	581	241	340
R2	0.426	0.356	0.451
F(14,566)	28.650	F(13,227) =9.15	F(13,326) = 21.48
p>F	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note: The following variables were not included in the analyses shown in this table due to sample limitation: parents separated, employment at 33, dependent children at home at 33

**Table 7-13: Relative Risk Ratios from the multinomial logistic regression of marital/partnership formation between 33 and 42, NCDS sample of never married (unpartnered) respondents at 33**

	Single ->cohabiting/ continuously single	Single->married/ continuously single	Single->married/ single->cohabiting
Women	0.781	0.476 **	0.609
Mother's age at birth of CM	1.000	0.998	0.998
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled manual/non-manual	1.537	0.890	0.579
partly skilled/unskilled	1.513	1.078	0.712
Mum left school minimum age	0.898	0.756	0.842
Mum worked CM pre-school	0.907	1.109	1.223
CM has younger siblings at 7	1.183	1.054	0.891
Educational qualifications NVQ3+	1.138	0.836	0.734
Social class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled non-manual/manual	1.046	0.499 *	0.477
semi-skilled/unskilled	1.469	0.321 ***	0.218 ***
Relationship breakdown prior to 33	5.602 ***	2.222 **	0.397 **
Attitudes at 33	0.886	1.380 *	1.557 *
Observations	581		
LR chi2	92.634		
p>chi2	0.000		
Pseudo R2	0.085		
Log likelihood	-500.304		

Note: The following variables were not included in the analyses shown in this table due to sample limitation: parents separated, employment at 33, dependent children at home at 33

**Table 7-14: Relative Risk Ratios from the multinomial logistic regression of marital/partnership formation between 33 and 42, NCDS sample of never married (unpartnered) respondents at 33**

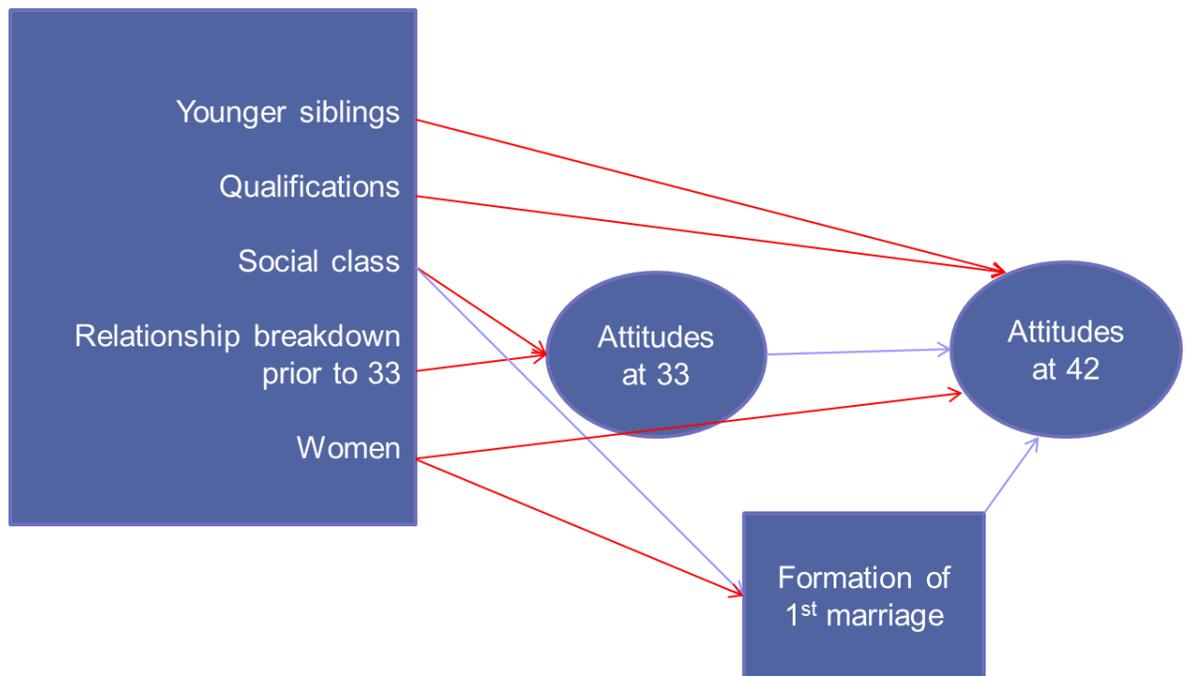
	WOMEN			MEN		
	Single ->cohabiting/ continuously single	Single->married/ continuously single	Single->married/ single->cohabiting	Single ->cohabiting/ continuously single	Single->married/ continuously single	Single->married/ single->cohabiting
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.991	1.012	1.021	0.999	0.988	0.989
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled manual/non-manual	1.454	0.513	0.353	1.685	1.175	0.697
partly skilled/unskilled	1.14	1.09	0.956	1.765	1.07	0.606
Mum left school minimum age	1.229	0.559	0.455	0.708	0.797	1.127
Mum worked CM pre-school	0.616	0.695	1.127	1.147	1.434	1.25
CM has younger siblings at 7	0.949	0.938	0.988	1.327	1.001	0.754
Educational qualifications NVQ3+	1.201	0.49	0.408	1.211	1.056	0.872
CM's Social class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled non-manual/manual	1.484	0.687	0.463	0.651	0.275 **	0.423
semi-skilled/unskilled	2.064	0.277	0.134 *	1.278	0.305 ***	0.238 **
Relationship breakdown prior to 33	5.32 ***	2.762 *	0.519	5.831 ***	2.061 *	0.353 **
Attitudes at 33	0.943	1.834 *	1.945	0.872	1.299	1.489
Observations	241			340		
LR chi2	40.146			60.079		
p>chi2	0.010			0.000		
Pseudo R2	0.095			0.091		
Log likelihood	-191.295			-300.939		

Note: The following variables were not included in the analyses shown in this table: parents separated, employment at 33, dependent children at home at 33

Graphical representation of regression models: transition into first marriage among single never married (unpartnered) respondents, NCDS

As was the case for the graphs for the BCS sample, the following graphs for the NCDS cohort were made using the variables that had significant effects (marked with either one or more asterisks) on attitudes at time 1 (age 33), attitudes at time 2 (age 42) and formation of first marriage, using results presented in Tables 7-10 to 7-13 above.

**Figure 7-5: Graphical representation of the relationship between attitudes and formation of first marriage among non-cohabiting respondents, NCDS between 33 and 42**



Note: The following variables were not included in the analyses used to produce this graph: parents separated, employment at 33, dependent children at home at 33

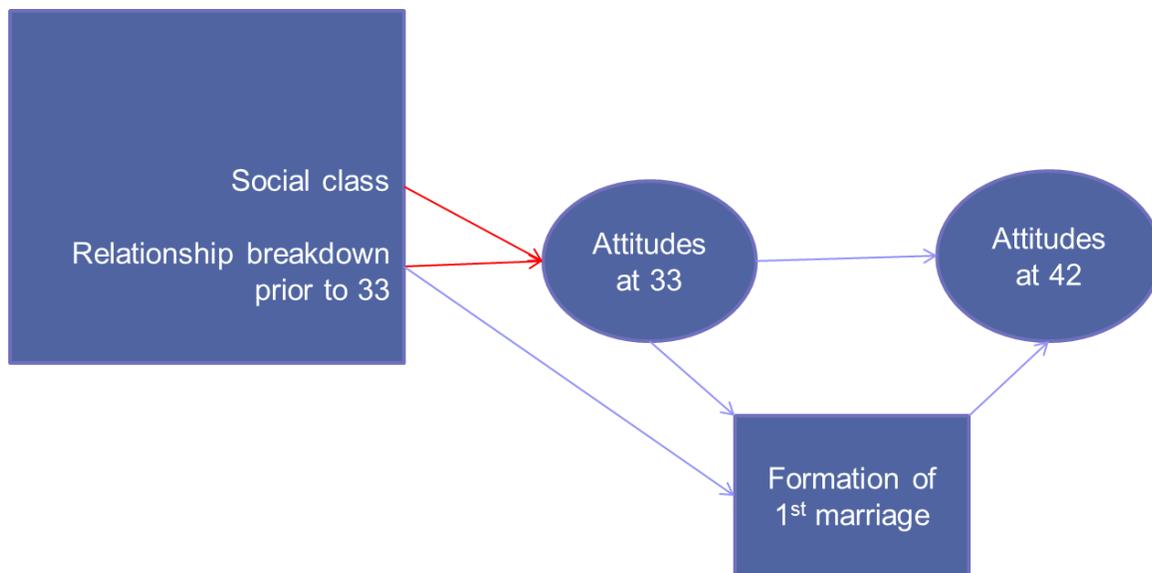
Figure 7-5 above shows that the NCDS cohort members who were in professional/managerial positions were more likely to get married than remain single between 33 and 42 compared to those in the lowest social groups. These respondents were also more likely to get married than form a cohabiting relationship (as shown in Table 7-13 above).

Previous cohabiting partnership dissolution(s) did not have a significant impact on marital formation over either remaining single or forming a cohabiting relationship. However,

those who had a relationship breakdown prior to 33 were more likely to cohabit than remain single between 33 and 42.

There is no evidence of selection effects of attitudes as attitudes at 33 did not predict marital formation between 33 and 42. However, there is evidence of adaptation effects of attitudes, whereby NCDS respondents who got married between 33 and 42 became significantly more traditional in their attitudes than those who remained continuously single. Interestingly, as the regression results showed, those who formed a cohabiting relationship became significantly less traditional than those who continued living on their own.

**Figure 7-6: Graphical representation of the relationship between attitudes and formation of first marriage among non-cohabiting respondents, NCDS between 33 and 42, WOMEN**



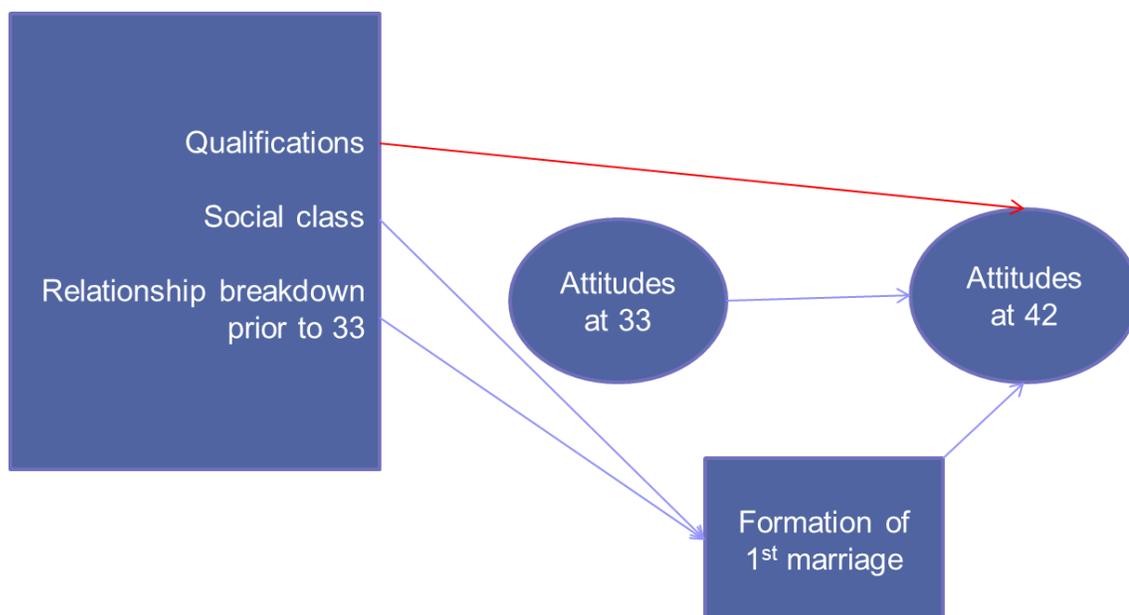
Note: The following variables were not included in the analyses used to produce this graph: parents separated, employment at 33, dependent children at home at 33

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Figures 7-6 (above) and 7-7 (below) represent regression results for the samples of NCDS women and men separately. While data for men, similarly to the whole sample results, showed no evidence of selection effects of attitudes into marital formation of single non-cohabiting cohort members, the results for women showed that those who were more traditional at 33 were more likely to be married by the age of 42, indicating evidence of

selection effect of marital attitudes. Data for both men and women, similarly to the whole sample, suggested adaptation of attitudes following marriage whereby those who did marry became more traditional (than those who remained single and non-cohabiting) by the time their attitudes were measured for the second time.

**Figure 7-7: Graphical representation of the relationship between attitudes and formation of first marriage among non-cohabiting respondents, NCDS between 33 and 42, MEN**



Note: The following variables were not included in the analyses used to produce this graph: parents separated, employment at 33, dependent children at home at 33

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## 7.7 Breakdown of a first marriage: NCDS

This section of the chapter looks at the breakdown of a first marriage among the NCDS cohort between the ages of 33 and 42. The sample size of the BCS cohort for the analysis is too low – the models are therefore unreliable and their results are not included here, but can be found in Appendix 5, section 5.1. Even the available sample (that is, those who have consistent information for the divorce trajectory without taking into account more missing responses due to missing information in other predictors) is rather small and shows that very few BCS respondents, particularly men, separated/divorced between age 26 and 30 without forming a new partnership.

### 7.7.1 Description of analysis sample

Despite a vast difference in sample sizes, the proportions of first time married cohort members at 33 who separated or divorced by the age of 42 are quite similar in the analysis sample and available sample. Table 7-15 below shows that while the vast majority of respondents remained married, around 8% of women and 6.5% of men in the available sample and 7% of women and 6% of men in the analysis sample experienced the dissolution of their first marriage.

**Table 7-15: Breakdown of first marriage, men and women, NCDS analysis sample and available sample**

NCDS, marital dissolution	Women		Men		Total	
	analysis sample	available sample	analysis sample	Available sample	analysis sample	available sample
	1,696	2,670	1,781	2,476	3,477	5,146
continuously married	92.8%	92.1%	94.1%	93.5%	93.5%	92.8%
	132	228	111	171	243	399
married -> separated/divorced	7.2%	7.9%	5.9%	6.5%	6.5%	7.2%
Total	1,828	2,898	1,892	2,647	3,720	5,545
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### 7.7.2 Results: Dissolution of first marriage between 33 and 42: NCDS

The sample for the investigation of the effects of attitudes on marital dissolution as well as the effects of marital breakdown on subsequent attitudes is those who were married for the first time aged 33. The ‘choices’ of marital trajectories for first time married respondents are therefore to either remain married or to legally separate or get divorced.

Similarly to previous chapters, I combine the separated and divorced cohort members since I am interested in the effects of separation from a marital partner, whether it was a divorce or legal separation. I therefore assume that separating and getting divorced have a similar impact on attitudes to marriage and family. This could potentially be a rather strong assumption as people who have gone through a divorce procedure might differ in their

feelings about it compared to those who have not. However these feelings could go in different directions.

Firstly, it is possible that for those who have already divorced their partners more time has passed between the time they decided to separate and the divorce than those who are legally separated and are going through a painful realisation of marital breakdown. This could result in less hostile feelings about the separation as more time had passed since the separation. On the other hand, they could also have been hurt more in the process of obtaining the divorce, potentially resulting in more hostile feelings towards their partner, their dissolved marriage or the divorce. Another possibility is that some of the respondents who are separated but not yet divorced might be hoping for reconciliation and their attitudes might not therefore be affected by the separation in the same way. Although plausible, these hypotheses are difficult to test in the framework that is set in this research. Additionally, due to the nature of these different processes in shaping the attitudes discussed above, I will assume that, on average, these should not differentiate between the change in attitudes following a divorce or a separation.

Table 7-16 below shows how the average attitude scores of NCDS respondents change depending on whether they remain in their first marriage throughout the period under investigation or separate from their husband/wife. While the attitudes of those who were continuously married increased by 0.18 points on the attitude scale, the attitudes of those who were separated or divorced by the age of 42 decreased by 0.31 points, reinforcing the hypothesis that an attitude change is likely to be observed in the multivariate analysis, in the same direction as shown here.

**Table 7-16: Change in attitudes between 33 and 42, analysis sample of NCDS respondents who were married at 33 and either remained married or separated/divorced by 42**

	Observations	Mean	Std. deviation	Change in average score
<b>Continuously married</b>				
Attitudes at 33	3,455	3.26	0.69	0.18
Attitudes at 42	3,455	3.44	0.69	
<b>Married first time -&gt; separated/divorced</b>				
Attitudes at 33	242	3.10	0.73	-0.31
Attitudes at 42	242	2.79	0.84	

Table 7-17 below describes the distributions of the covariates used in the analyses of marital breakdown among the NCDS cohort between the age of 33 and 42 and

Tables 7-18 to 7-20 contain the results from the regression models.

**Table 7-17: Descriptive statistics of control variables used in the analyses of the relationship between attitudes and breakdown of first marriage, NCDS**

Variable	% or mean, n=3,720
<b>Sex</b>	
Women	49.14%
Men	50.86%
<b>Father's social class</b>	
professional/managerial	19.35%
semi-skilled manual/non-manual	61.67%
partly skilled/unskilled	18.97%
<b>Mother's age at CM's birth</b>	27.58 (std deviation=5.53)
<b>Mother left school at minimum age</b>	
No	27.37%
Yes	72.63%
<b>Mother worked, CM age 7</b>	
No	71.56%
Yes	28.44%
<b>Younger siblings, CM age 7</b>	
No	41.88%
Yes	58.12%
<b>Parents separated CM 16 or younger</b>	
No	93.15%
Yes	6.85%
<b>Qualifications at 33</b>	
Lower levels of qualifications (up to equivalent of NVQ2)	54.22%
Higher levels of qualifications (equivalent to NVQ3 to NVQ6)	45.78%
<b>Social Class at 33</b>	
professional/managerial	43.90%
skilled non-manual	21.77%
skilled manual/partly skilled/unskilled	34.33%
<b>Employment at 33</b>	
not in employment	16.08%
in employment	83.92%
<b>Dependent children living in household at 33</b>	
No	14.87%
Yes	85.13%
<b>CM ever separated from cohabiting relationship prior to 33</b>	
No	95.03%
Yes	4.97%

**Table 7-18: Parameter estimates [standard errors] from the linear regression of attitudes at 33, NCDS sample of first time married respondents at 33**

Attitudes at 33	ALL	Women	Men
Women	-0.141 *** [0.025]		
Mother's age at birth of CM	-0.001 [0.002]	-0.002 [0.003]	0.000 [0.003]
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.101 ** [0.032]	-0.045 [0.046]	-0.151 *** [0.045]
partly skilled/unskilled	-0.079 * [0.039]	-0.013 [0.055]	-0.140 * [0.056]
Mum left school minimum age	-0.006 [0.027]	-0.051 [0.037]	0.036 [0.040]
Mum worked CM pre-school	-0.028 [0.025]	0.000 [0.035]	-0.061 [0.037]
CM has younger siblings at 7	0.035 [0.026]	0.044 [0.035]	0.031 [0.037]
Parents separated	-0.072 [0.044]	-0.124 * [0.057]	-0.011 [0.069]
Educational qualifications NVQ3+	-0.106 *** [0.026]	-0.052 [0.037]	-0.154 *** [0.036]
CM's Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)			
skilled non-manual/manual	0.025 [0.032]	0.033 [0.040]	0.037 [0.060]
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.070 * [0.029]	0.089 * [0.044]	0.059 [0.038]
Employed	0.012 [0.033]	0.016 [0.036]	0.076 [0.087]
Dependent children at home	0.076 * [0.032]	0.144 ** [0.047]	0.029 [0.044]
Relationship breakdown prior to 33	-0.335 *** [0.053]	-0.400 *** [0.074]	-0.284 *** [0.074]
Constant	3.385 *** [0.095]	3.150 *** [0.125]	3.390 *** [0.151]
Observations	3,720	1,828	1,892
R2	0.036	0.034	0.030
F(14,3705)	10.370	F(13,1814)=5.08	F(13,1878)= 4.63
p>F	0.000	0.000	0.000

**Table 7-19: Parameter estimates [standard error] from the linear regression of attitudes at 42, NCDS sample of first time married respondents at 33**

Attitudes at 42	ALL	Women	Men
Women	-0.086 *** [0.022]		
Mother's age at birth of CM	-0.001 [0.002]	0.000 [0.003]	-0.002 [0.003]
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled manual/non-manual	0.051 [0.028]	0.099 * [0.040]	0.007 [0.038]
partly skilled/unskilled	0.081 * [0.035]	0.127 * [0.050]	0.037 [0.049]
Mum left school minimum age	0.028 [0.024]	0.007 [0.034]	0.048 [0.035]
Mum worked CM pre-school	-0.001 [0.023]	-0.016 [0.032]	0.012 [0.032]
CM has younger siblings at 7	0.014 [0.022]	0.009 [0.031]	0.017 [0.032]
Parents separated	-0.038 [0.040]	0.007 [0.055]	-0.096 [0.057]
Educational qualifications NVQ3+	-0.049 * [0.023]	-0.036 [0.034]	-0.051 [0.031]
Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)			
skilled non-manual/manual	-0.041 [0.029]	-0.022 [0.037]	-0.079 [0.053]
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.017 [0.025]	0.020 [0.040]	0.018 [0.032]
Employed	-0.055 [0.029]	-0.037 [0.032]	-0.175 * [0.078]
Dependent children	-0.011 [0.029]	-0.021 [0.043]	0.001 [0.039]
Relationship breakdown prior to 33	-0.075 [0.050]	-0.140 * [0.071]	-0.020 [0.071]
Divorced between 33 and 42	-0.565 *** [0.052]	-0.647 *** [0.074]	-0.467 *** [0.071]
Attitudes at 33	0.496 *** [0.016]	0.488 *** [0.023]	0.500 *** [0.022]
Constant	1.906 *** [0.100]	1.803 *** [0.137]	2.034 *** [0.151]
Observations	3,697	1,819	1,878
R2	0.302	0.301	0.294
F(16,3680)	88.930	F(15,1803)= 46.63	F(15,1862)=45.11
p>F	0.000	0.000	0.000

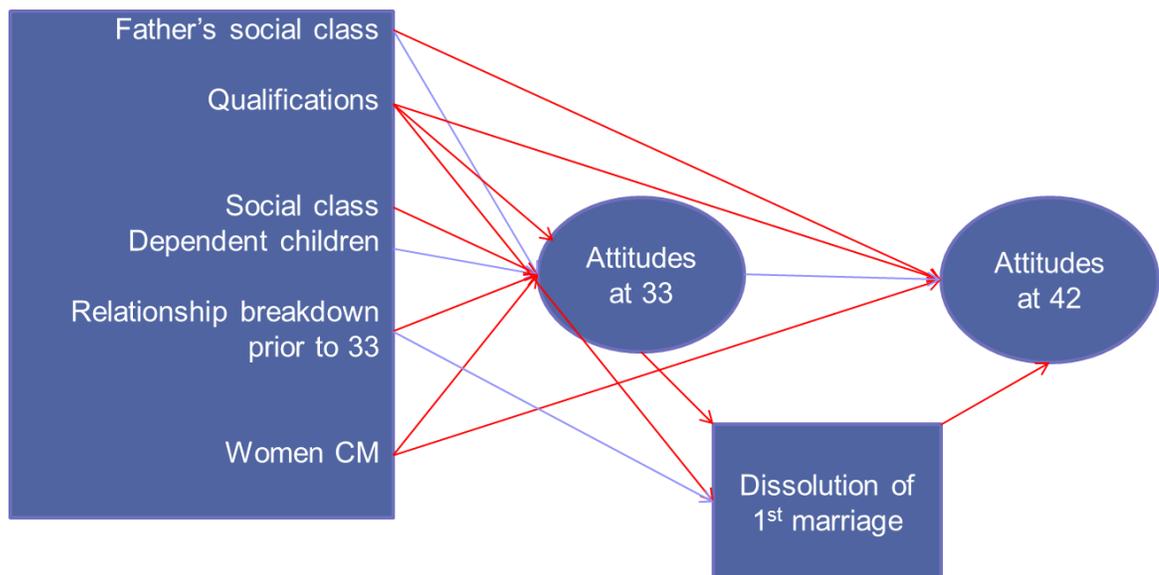
**Table 7-20: Odds Ratios from the logistic regression of divorce taking place between 33 and 42, NCDS sample of first time married respondents at 33**

Predicting divorce	ALL	Women	Men
Women	1.131		
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.981	0.952 *	1.012
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled manual/non-manual	0.722	0.638	0.831
partly skilled/unskilled	0.730	0.637	0.864
Mum left school minimum age	1.122	1.094	1.131
Mum worked CM pre-school	1.075	1.226	0.916
CM has younger siblings at 7	0.906	0.861	0.979
Parents separated	1.087	0.796	1.555
Educational qualifications NVQ3+	0.679 *	0.817	0.574 *
CM's Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)			
skilled non-manual/manual	1.208	1.224	1.269
semi-skilled/unskilled	1.098	1.051	1.119
Employed	1.161	1.185	0.898
Dependent children	0.949	0.952	0.967
Relationship breakdown prior to 33	1.649 *	1.433	1.848
Attitudes at 33	0.709 ***	0.594 ***	0.832
Observations	3,697	1,819	1,878
Chi2	34.000	29.021	15.860
p>Chi2	0.003	0.010	0.322

Graphical representation of regression models: transition into first marriage among single never married (non-cohabiting) respondents, NCDS

The results from the regression models are presented graphically in Figures 7-8 to 7-10 below for an easier overview of the relationships of interest, namely attitudes and dissolution of marriage among first time married NCDS respondents. The whole sample's results as well as those for women suggest the presence of both selection and adaptation effects of attitudes on marital breakdown, whereby those who were less traditional while still married at the age of 33 were at a higher risk of marital dissolution by 42 (selection); additionally, those who experienced a divorce were more likely to have experienced an attitude change in a less traditional direction compared to those who remained married (adaptation). Only the latter was observed using data for men separately.

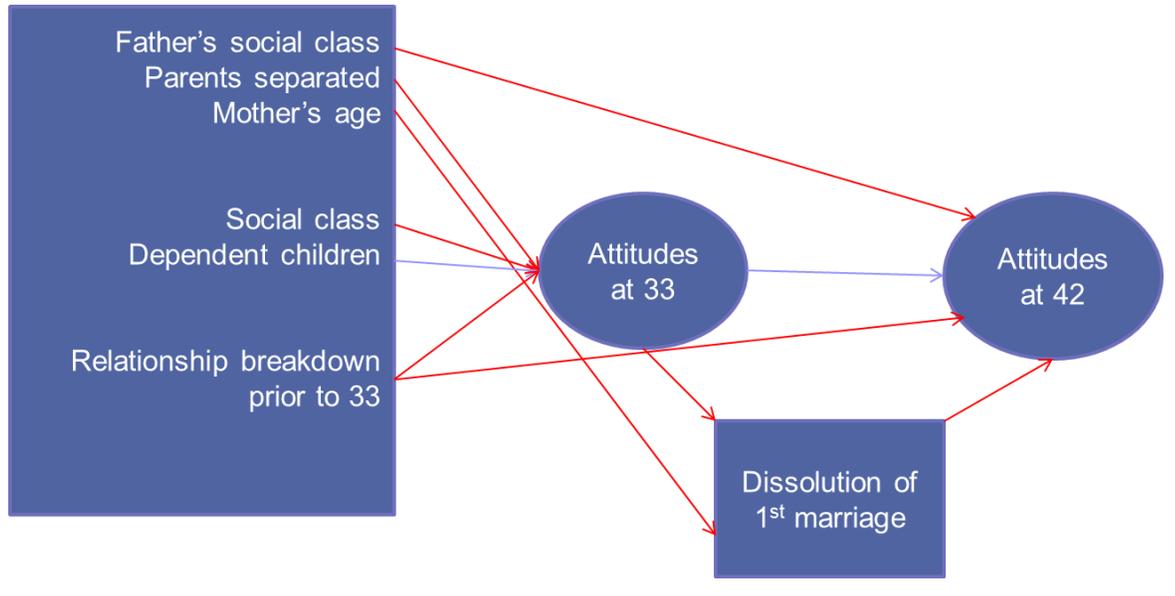
**Figure 7-8: Graphical representation of the relationship between attitudes and dissolution of first marriage, NCDS between 33 and 42**



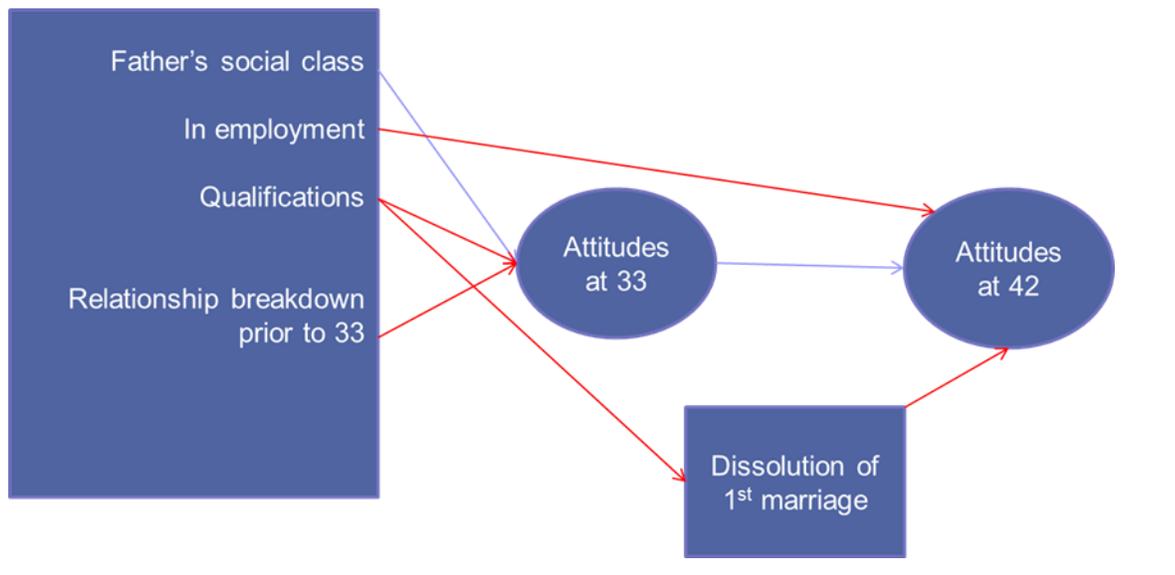
In the analyses of women, parental separation has a direct effect on attitudes at time 1 but only an indirect effect on marital disruption through attitudes. In addition, Cohort members' own previous separation from cohabiting partner(s) does not have a significant direct effect on marital disruption in the analyses of men's and women's data separately, but it does in the results for the whole NCDS sample of first time married respondents, whereby those with any experience of cohabiting relationship breakdown(s) were significantly more likely

to separate from their marital partners between the ages of 33 and 42. Previous separation does, however, have a significant negative effect on attitudes, measured at the age of 33.

**Figure 7-9: Graphical representation of the relationship between attitudes and dissolution of first marriage, NCDS between 33 and 42, WOMEN**



**Figure 7-10: Graphical representation of the relationship between attitudes and dissolution of first marriage, NCDS between 33 and 42, MEN**



## **7.8 Transitions of cohabiting (never married) cohort members: formation of first marriage: BCS**

In their study, Amato and Thornton (1992) speculated that “cohabitations that end may reinforce the idea that intimate relationships are fragile and temporary in today's world. This view might reduce the expectation that marriage is a lifetime relationship and commitment, or it might weaken commitment to marriage as an institution”. Empirically, it is well documented that cohabiting relationships are more fragile than marital ones (Waite and Gallagher, 2000), more likely to be short-lived (Kiernan, 2003) and that those who cohabit are likely to be less traditional in their attitudes towards family, divorce and marriage itself (Axinn and Thornton, 1992). Kiernan (2003) suggests that this could be due to the selection of stronger partnerships with greater commitment to each other into marriage rather than for cohabitation, which, in turn, results in less committed partners forming cohabiting unions instead. She shows that this, however, may be changing (and already is in Sweden and France) with the increasing trend of forming cohabiting partnerships among parents, which could in time become a more durable alternative to marriage.

Empirical work on the relationship between the attitudes and marital behaviour of cohabiting individuals supports the notion that more traditional attitudes are likely to promote more traditional behaviour among these individuals, similarly to non-cohabiting people. Thus, Moors and Bernhardt (2009) showed that cohabiting people who expressed more favourable family-related attitudes were more likely to marry and those who expressed less favourable attitudes were more likely to experience a separation from a cohabiting partner (both with reference to continuously cohabiting individuals). I therefore expect to find more traditional BCS cohort members to be marrying their cohabiting partners rather than continuing to cohabit between the ages of 26 and 30, while I expect less traditional cohort members to be more likely to separate.

Other factors that are taken into account while modelling the relationship between attitudes and trajectories of cohabiting BCS cohort members are similar to the ones used in other analyses in this chapter, the assumption being that cohabiting individuals will be driven to marry by similar characteristics to the non-cohabiting respondents explored earlier.

In particular, I expect parental separation and cohort members' own experience of partnership breakdown to have an impact on their initial attitudes and therefore, indirectly, on their subsequent transitions. In my earlier investigation of trajectories into marriage among non-cohabiting never married cohort members, no direct effect of parental separation on cohort members' behaviour was observed. Similar findings were presented by Berrington (2001) for the cohabiting sample of NCDS respondents, whereby no relationship was found between parental separation and cohort members' transitions out of cohabitation. I therefore predict no direct effects of parental separation on cohabiting cohort members' transitions. In the analyses presented earlier, I did find some association between cohort members' own experience of partnership dissolution and transitions into marriage of the non-cohabiting NCDS cohort members, whereby own partnership breakdown was significantly associated with transitions into marriage over remaining single never-married. Nonetheless, I would not hypothesise that previous break ups would increase the likelihood of cohort members entering marriage following their cohabitation as opposed to continuing to cohabit, but I do expect these individuals to be at greater risk of separation than continuing to cohabit.

Having children in a cohabiting partnership, particularly if they are the couple's biological children, would increase the likelihood of that couple getting married over continuing to cohabit when compared to those who have no children. Additionally, having younger children at home, as Wu and Hart (1999) demonstrate, increases the likelihood of the marital transition of cohabiting respondents. However, it is not in the scope of this study to consider the implications for transitions of those with biological and non-biological children or those with younger and older children due to the relatively small numbers of BCS cohort members with any children at all at the age of 26. Only the presence of any children at cohort members' homes is tested in the models below.

In Chapter 4, I showed some evidence of possible selection and adaptation effects of attitudes for initially cohabiting never married respondents. The attitudes of cohort members who were never married and currently cohabiting were significantly less traditional than those who were not cohabiting among the NCDS respondents, but not among the BCS. Additionally, when the marital/partnership trajectories of those who were single, cohabiting at time 1 were considered, the attitudes of those who were married by time 2 became significantly more traditional, while the attitudes of those

who were no longer cohabiting did not change significantly among the respondents in both cohort studies. However, these trajectories only describe the change in marital/partnership status between the two time points and do not account for any partnership dissolutions in between. In this section, I investigate a change in attitudes following transitions out of cohabitation of the never married BCS cohort members who had no more than one transition between age 26 and 30. The sample size does not permit such analyses for the NCDS cohort as there are very few respondents in the “single, cohabiting->single, not cohabiting” trajectory group, which is reduced even further in the multivariate analyses.

Additionally, in Chapter 6, I showed that experience of any cohabiting relationship breakdown, controlling for present marital/partnership status is mostly related to more negative attitudes towards family and marriage compared to those who had never experienced a breakdown. I therefore hypothesise that this might be reflected in the results here, whereby those who do separate from their cohabiting partners would become significantly less traditional than they were while still in the relationship with their partners.

### **7.8.1 Description of analysis sample: BCS**

The analysis sample in this section of the chapter appears to be not only dramatically lower than the available sample (cohort members who have information of both their attitudes and partnership transitions for two time periods), but also to be under-represented by the cohort members who ended up separating from their cohabiting partner by the time they were 30 years old and over-represented by those who married their cohabiting partners. Table 7-21 below shows these percentages for both analysis and available samples. This can undermine the conclusions drawn from the results in relation to their representativeness.

**Table 7-21: Trajectories of cohabiting respondents at time 1: analysis and available samples, BCS between 26 and 30, by gender**

	Women		Men		Total	
	analysis sample	available sample	analysis sample	available sample	analysis sample	available sample
Cohabiting	178 30.4%	346 32.1%	168 30.8%	285 28.5%	346 30.6%	631 30.4%
Cohabiting -> not cohabiting	148 25.3%	331 30.7%	157 28.7%	388 38.8%	305 27.0%	719 34.6%
Cohabiting -> married first time	259 44.3%	400 37.1%	221 40.5%	328 32.8%	480 42.4%	728 35.0%
Total	585 100%	1,077 100%	546 100%	1,001 100%	1,131 100%	2,078 100%

### 7.8.2 Results: transitions from cohabitation between 26 and 30: British Cohort Study

Similarly to the analyses of the formation of first marriage among the non-cohabiting cohort members, multinomial logistic regression models are utilised to model attitudes at time 2 on change in marital/partnership situation, along with background characteristics and attitudes held at time 1 (Table 7-24). Results from the multiple linear regression models of attitudes at the age of 26 and 30 are presented in Tables 7-22 and 7-23 respectively.

The results from Table 7-22 show that cohabiting men’s and women’s attitudes at 26 were independent of their previous experience of partnership dissolution, but men’s attitudes were significantly less traditional if their parents had separated or divorced than if their parents had stayed together during the cohort member’s childhood (on average, 0.241 points on the scale), indicating the greater importance of parental separation on grown up BCS men’s attitudes compared to their own separation.

Table 7-23 below indicates that women’s and men’s attitudes became significantly more traditional at 30 if they got married to their cohabiting partner as opposed to continuing to cohabit. Additionally, women’s attitudes were also more likely to become more traditional if they had split up from their partner as opposed to continuing with the cohabiting relationship. The latter is surprising given that those who had experienced previous cohabiting relationship breakdowns were, on average, less traditional in their attitudes than those who had not.

As predicted, and in line with the findings by Moors and Bernhardt (2009), cohabiting men and women who expressed more traditional attitudes towards family and marriage were more likely to marry their partners than continue to cohabit (see Table 7-24). However, no support was found (by the same authors) for the hypothesis that those with less traditional attitudes were more likely to separate than remain in the relationship.

Among other factors significantly associated with partnership/marital transitions among cohabiting BCS women were: mother's employment (whereby women whose mothers were working when cohort members were children were more likely to continue to cohabit than to either get married or break up); presence of dependent children at home (whereby women who had them were more likely to either get married or end their relationship than carry on cohabiting). Additionally, women, but not men, whose parents separated were also more likely to break up with their cohabiting partner than continue the relationship, suggesting that these women might be affected by their parents' separation in that their partnerships are more fragile. This contradicts the findings by Berrington (2001) who found no relationship between parental separation and NCDS cohort members' transitions out of cohabitation. However, in this study, parental separation also had no effect on the odds of respondents marrying their cohabiting partner among the BCS respondents. Cohort members' own separation from a cohabiting partner in the past equally had no direct impact on their transition out of cohabitation.

**Table 7-22: Parameter estimates [standard errors] from the linear regression of attitudes at 26, BCS sample of cohabiting (never married) respondents age 26**

Predicting attitudes at 26	All	Women	Men
Women	-0.050 [0.042]		
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.002 [0.004]	0.012 [0.006]	-0.006 [0.006]
Father's social class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled manual/non-manual	0.077 [0.059]	0.03 [0.086]	0.102 [0.081]
partly skilled/unskilled	0.057 [0.072]	0.052 [0.103]	0.042 [0.104]
Mum left school at minimum age	0.034 [0.044]	0.034 [0.062]	0.032 [0.062]
Mum worked CM aged 5	0.018 [0.042]	0.066 [0.059]	-0.028 [0.060]
CM had younger siblings at 5	-0.001 [0.045]	0.011 [0.062]	-0.014 [0.066]
Parents separated/divorced (CM 0 to 16)	-0.155 ** [0.058]	-0.06 [0.079]	-0.241 ** [0.085]
Higher level of qualifications (NVQ3 or above)	-0.193 *** [0.048]	-0.248 *** [0.069]	-0.153 * [0.068]
CM's social class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled non-manual/manual	-0.003 [0.052]	0.027 [0.069]	-0.06 [0.083]
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.051 [0.052]	0.077 [0.077]	0.035 [0.070]
Dependent children at home	-0.061 [0.058]	-0.16 [0.084]	
Ever separated prior to age 26	-0.067 [0.058]	0.001 [0.080]	-0.13 [0.087]
Constant	3.227 *** [0.145]	2.923 *** [0.209]	3.487 *** [0.200]
N	1,131	585	546
r <sup>2</sup>	0.038	0.049	0.047
P	0.000	0.002	0.018

Note: employment variable is not included in this model

**Table 7-23: Parameter estimates [standard errors] from the linear regression of attitudes at 30, BCS sample of cohabiting (never married) respondents age 26**

Predicting attitudes at 30	All	Women	Men
Women	-0.042 [0.035]		
Mother's age at birth of CM	-0.005 [0.003]	-0.008 [0.005]	-0.002 [0.005]
Father's social class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.023 [0.043]	-0.070 [0.064]	0.011 [0.059]
partly skilled/unskilled	-0.038 [0.056]	0.034 [0.081]	-0.115 [0.077]
Mum left school at minimum age	0.021 [0.036]	0.053 [0.051]	-0.022 [0.053]
Mum worked CM aged 5	0.024 [0.034]	-0.027 [0.047]	0.087 [0.047]
CM had younger siblings at 5	-0.051 [0.036]	-0.085 [0.050]	-0.008 [0.052]
Parents separated/divorced (CM 0 to 16)	-0.018 [0.047]	0.053 [0.070]	-0.088 [0.065]
Higher level of qualifications (NVQ3 or above)	-0.062 [0.039]	-0.097 [0.055]	-0.003 [0.056]
CM's social class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled non-manual/manual	-0.013 [0.042]	0.037 [0.052]	-0.117 [0.072]
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.000 [0.044]	0.001 [0.072]	0.020 [0.057]
Dependent children at home	0.020 [0.050]	-0.005 [0.077]	
Ever separated prior to age 26	-0.067 [0.050]	-0.042 [0.069]	-0.095 [0.070]
Partnership trajectory (remained cohabiting- ref)			
break up of cohabiting relationship by 30	0.125 ** [0.045]	0.167 ** [0.063]	0.090 [0.061]
got married to a cohabiting partner by 30	0.223 *** [0.039]	0.226 *** [0.057]	0.218 *** [0.054]
Attitudes at 26	0.523 *** [0.027]	0.507 *** [0.037]	0.532 *** [0.039]
Constant	1.767 *** [0.148]	1.845 *** [0.201]	1.634 *** [0.213]
N	1,131	585	546
r <sup>2</sup>	0.349	0.343	0.381
P	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note: employment variable is not included in these models along with presence of dependent children at home for men

**Table 7-24: Relative Risk Ratios from the multinomial logistic regression of marital formation/partnership dissolution of never married cohabiting respondents, between 26 and 30, BCS (continuously cohabiting, never married respondents - reference)**

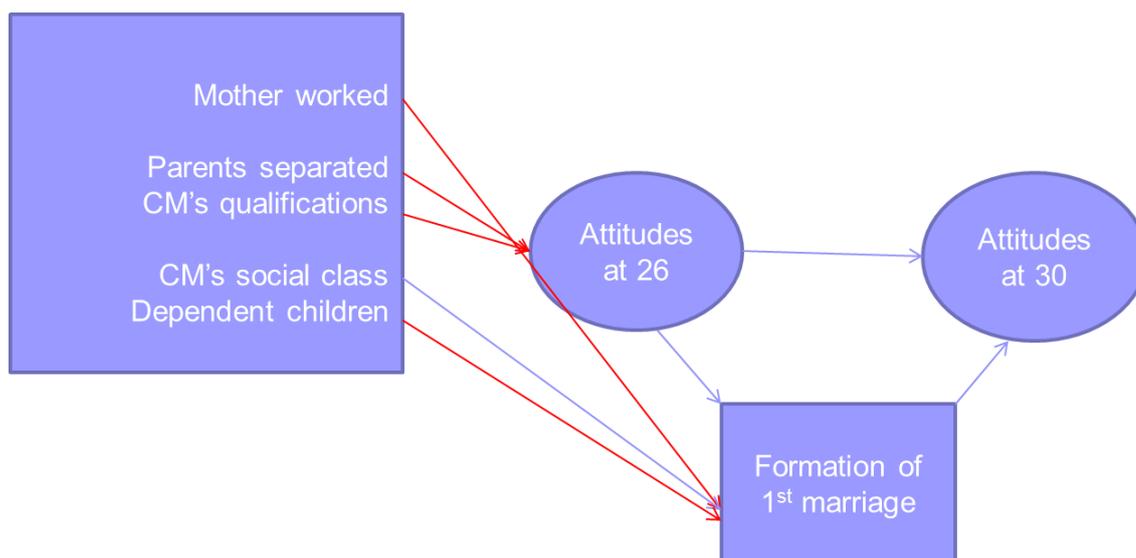
	All		Women		Men	
	break up	got married	break up	got married	break up	got married
Women	0.756	1.009				
Mother's age at birth of CM	1.027	0.972	1.067 **	0.998	0.992	0.947 *
Father's social class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled manual/non-manual	0.915	1.121	1.063	1.214	0.775	0.983
partly skilled/unskilled	1.009	0.821	0.951	0.783	0.822	0.769
Mum left school at minimum age	0.899	0.842	1.022	0.887	0.723	0.754
Mum worked CM aged 5	0.550 ***	0.662 **	0.492 **	0.560 **	0.598 *	0.807
CM had younger siblings at 5	0.964	0.906	0.987	0.974	0.838	0.819
Parents separated/divorced (CM 0 to 16)	0.706	0.713	0.493 *	0.648	0.904	0.768
Higher level of qualifications (NVQ3 or above)	1.054	1.284	1.060	1.332	1.103	1.276
CM's social class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled non-manual/manual	1.552 *	0.854	1.534	0.962	1.293	0.597
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.980	0.616 *	1.054	0.555 *	0.717	0.568 *
Dependent children at home	0.065 ***	0.502 ***	0.191 ***	0.485 *		
Ever separated prior to age 26	0.793	0.829	0.852	0.958	0.817	0.739
Attitudes at 26	1.169	1.604 ***	1.148	1.513 **	1.182	1.693 **
Observations	1,131		585		546	
LR chi2	167.383		80.039		47.775	
p>chi2	0.000		0.000		0.003	

Note: employment variable is not included in this model

Graphical representation of regression models: transition into first marriage of cohabiting respondents: BCS

The results from the series of regression models above are summarised using graphs in Figures 7-11 to 7-13 below, clearly indicating an important relationship between cohabiting respondents' attitudes and subsequent marital formation, followed by a significant attitude change. These relationships are present among men and women as well as the whole BCS sample. Although the covariates that are significant in predicting attitudes and marital behaviour vary between the sexes, the effect of attitudes on that behaviour and its change following marriage are consistent in the analyses for men and women.

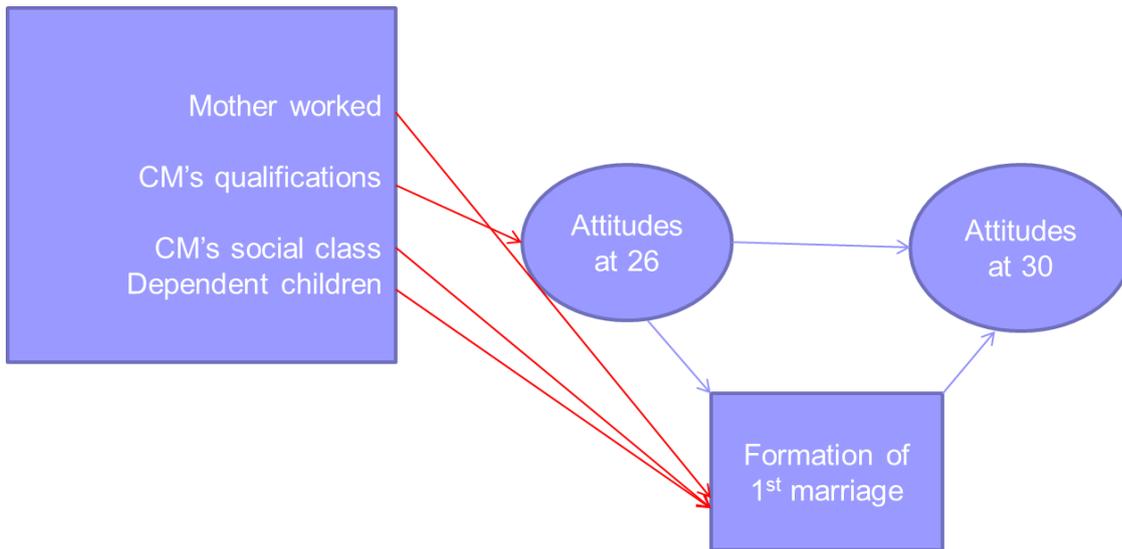
**Figure 7-11: Graphical representation of the relationship between attitudes and formation of first marriage among cohabiting respondents, BCS between 26 and 30, ALL**



Note: the employment variable is not included in the analyses used to produce this graph nor is the presence of children in the analysis for men

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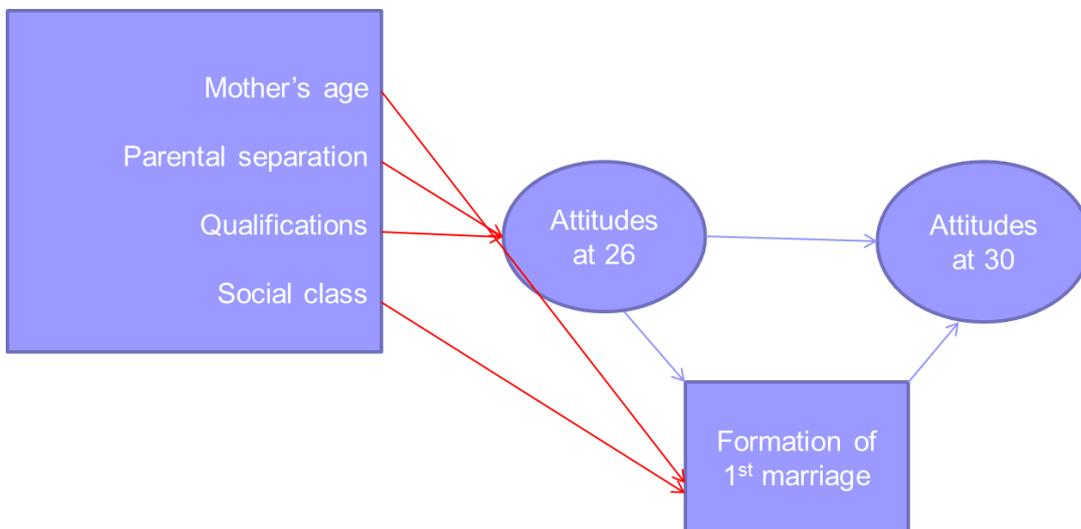
**Figure 7-12: Graphical representation of the relationship between attitudes and formation of first marriage among cohabiting respondents, BCS between 26 and 30, WOMEN**



Note: the employment variable is not included in the analyses used to produce this graph

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**Figure 7-13: Graphical representation of the relationship between attitudes and formation of first marriage among cohabiting respondents, BCS between 26 and 30, MEN**



Note: the employment variable is not included in the analyses used to produce this graph as well as presence of children

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## Summary and conclusions: reciprocal relationships of attitudes and partnership formation and dissolution

In this chapter, I found some evidence of both selection and adaptation effects of attitudes in relation to marital and partnership trajectories. Table 7-25 below summarises these results, where presence of the selection and adaptation for each marital trajectory is indicated by a tick (“√”).

**Table 7-25: Summary of the evidence of selection and adaptation effects of attitudes, BCS and NCDS**

		All	BCS		All	NCDS	
			Women	Men		Women	Men
<b>Marital formation (of never married not cohabiting respondents)</b>	Selection effects	√		√		√	
	Adaptation effects	√		√	√	√	√
<b>Marital formation (of never married cohabiting respondents)</b>	Selection effects	√	√	√			
	Adaptation effects	√	√	√			
<b>Dissolution of first marriage</b>	Selection effects				√	√	
	Adaptation effects				√	√	√

NOTE: Shaded area = the relationship was not explored here

It is evident that this study has uncovered more support for the adaptation effects of attitudes (attitudes adjust to a change in a person’s circumstances) than the selection effects (attitudes predict behaviour). The adjustment of attitudes following the formation of a first marriage (whether from a cohabiting state or a non-cohabiting one) is present for both cohorts (with the exception of single non-cohabiting BCS women). The adaptation of attitudes following the dissolution of a first marriage among the NCDS cohort is also well supported in the data (the BCS cohort was not used to test this relationship due to restrictions in sample size). This indicates that marriage, as a transition, plays an important role in shaping people’s attitudes towards family and commitment to a marital union in a favourable way, while its dissolution results in less traditional attitudes towards issues surrounding it.

Given the variety of attitude measures and analytical techniques used in previous literature, there are numerous difficulties in comparing the findings. Firstly, as discussed in Chapter 2, there is no standard measure of attitudes towards family and marriage and in the majority of studies the measurement depends on the availability of statements in the data. Secondly, the nature of control variables used in the analyses dictates some of the differences in the results observed as omission or inclusion of certain controls may alter the association between attitudes and behaviour. Thirdly, the analytical samples for the analyses vary from study to study and some are based on a specific sub-group of individuals, such as mothers and children living in the Detroit Metropolitan Area (e.g. Thornton, 1985; Cunningham and Thornton, 2005) or a sample of high school class of 1972 (e.g. Clarkberg et al, 1995). Nonetheless, the majority of findings point towards at least a partial presence of selection and/or adaptation effects of attitudes towards family-related issues in relation to marital and/or partnership transitions, regardless of the methods and data used.

For example, in a study on selection and adaptation effects of attitudes towards cohabitation and divorce using data from the British Household Panel Study (BHPS), Smith and colleagues (2007) found evidence of the selection effect of attitudes towards divorce on marital formation but no adaptation of attitudes following getting married. In contrast, they found support for the adaptation of attitudes towards divorce following a breakdown of first marriage but divorce attitudes were not significant predictors of divorce. Furthermore, they found persistent gender differences. Similar findings were produced by Thornton (1985), who found evidence of the adaptation but not the selection effect of attitudes towards divorce ('parents should not stay together for the sake of their children') in relation to marital dissolution.

Both the selection and adaptation effects of women's attitudes in relation to marital formation were found by Moors (2000). Moors' work has a number of advantages over many other comparable studies; for example, he uses a large number of attitude statements to derive a robust attitudinal scale that captures multiple spheres of family-related values including position of children in one's life, responsibility as a parent, traditional opinion about marriage, importance of family life, woman's place in household duties and subordination to a man. This enables the author to capture a whole range of attitudes that are relevant to marital formation. This could be the reason he

finds both selection and adaptation effects of attitudes where others failed to capture these in their data due to the specific nature of attitudes used.

## 7.9 Limitations

Similarly to the issues relating to sample size and missing data discussed in the last part of Chapter 6, the analysis undertaken in this chapter was heavily restricted by the availability of data. The sample sizes are dramatically smaller than the available data on marital/partnership transitions and attitudes. This resulted in having to drop certain important covariates from the analysis in some instances (for example, an employment variable was excluded from all analyses with the exception of the investigation of trajectories of first time married NCDS cohort members).

To get an idea of the severity of this problem, I reproduced the models used in this chapter with item non-response dummy variables substituted for certain covariates where a large amount of data was missing (i.e. the social class and parental separation variables). The results from these models are not included here but are available upon request. This enabled retention of the employment variable in the analyses where it was dropped due to low sample size before. Below are the differences that arise from the results where non-response dummy variables were introduced compared to the results presented in this chapter. Where the findings are similar, these are not generally mentioned below.

### Transitions of the never married (non-cohabiting) sample of BCS respondents

Compared to the available sample size consisting of those with non-missing information on marital trajectories among the BCS group of never married non-cohabiting cohort members (n=2,800), the sample size used in this chapter was dramatically smaller (n=1,258). The sample size used for the analysis involving dummy variables for some of the missing cases resulted in an improved sample size of n=1,736 respondents and yielded the following results:

- Being in employment (this covariate was dropped from the analyses in this chapter) proved to have a significant negative impact on the attitudes of men at the age of 26. Additionally, it was also a significant factor in predicting greater

odds of getting married over remaining single as well as over forming a cohabiting relationship among both men and women.

- Parental separation has a significant negative impact on attitudes at 30 among men, while cohort members' own experience of partnership breakdown has a significant and negative impact on the attitudes of women at the same age.
- Similarly to the analyses presented in this chapter, results from the models with dummies for missing cases revealed no impact of parental separation on the odds of getting married over remaining single for either men or women. But these results showed a significant negative effect on the odds of getting married over remaining unmarried for those who had missing data/other situation on the parental separation variable, but no impact on getting married over starting a cohabiting relationship.

#### Transitions of the never married (non-cohabiting) sample of NCDS respondents

The available sample size for the NCDS never married non-cohabiting cohort members for the analyses of their trajectories is 918 respondents. Although the sample size used in the analyses with dummy variables for some missing cases (not shown here) was smaller (n=691), it was still larger than that used in this chapter (n=584) and resulted in some differences in the outcomes obtained, which are listed below.

- The employment variable (which was not included in the analysis in this chapter) had no impact on the attitudes of the NCDS men and women at either 33 or 42 years of age, but showed a significant impact on the increased odds of marriage (over remaining single) for the whole sample of NCDS respondents.
- Attitudes at 33 no longer showed a significant impact on transitions to marriage (as opposed to remaining single) for either men or women, while it was significant in the analyses for women in this chapter.
- Having experienced a previous relationship breakdown significantly increases the odds of getting married (over remaining single) for men but not women. However, this analysis not only confirms the findings of this chapter (that a

previous separation among men increases the odds of starting a cohabiting partnership over a marital one) but shows that it also applies for women.

#### Transitions of the first time married sample of NCDS respondents

The sample of first time married NCDS respondents used in this chapter was  $n=3,720$  – much smaller compared to that of the available cohort members for these analyses ( $n=5,545$ ). The analyses undertaken with the addition of dummies for some of the missing cases (not shown here) had a substantially larger sample ( $n=4,276$  and resulted in some differences in the outcomes obtained, which are listed below.

- Parental separation was no longer a significant predictor of attitudes at 33 among women, but contrary to the results presented in this chapter, it was a significant predictor of men's attitudes at the age of 42.
- Women with missing information on social class were significantly more traditional than women who worked in professional/managerial positions, suggesting that the analysis sample used in this study is perhaps under-represented by women from lower social groups. Additionally, men with missing data on the social class variable were more likely to get divorced between the ages of 33 and 42 than men who were in the top social class category.

## **CHAPTER 8: Summary and Conclusions**

This thesis on the exploration of attitudes related to family and marriage, using two birth cohorts – the 1970 British Cohort Study and the 1958 National Child Development Study – has contributed to the quantitative literature on the family-related attitudes and their relevance to the marital/partnership behaviour of men and women in Britain. This chapter starts with an overview of the key findings which are then discussed further along with the main differences between the results obtained for the two cohorts. The last part of the chapter offers propositions for further development of this work.

### **8.1 Summary and discussion of the main results**

#### **8.1.1 Key findings**

- On a bivariate level, attitudes to family and marriage appear to be strongly associated with both parental background variables and cohort members' own characteristics. These attitudes appear to be particularly strongly related to an individual's partnership and marital status in both bivariate and multivariate analyses.
- Although in the multivariate analyses the chosen variables do not explain a large amount of variance in the attitude scores for both cohorts, this was expected as the covariates selected here were limited.
- Very few parental characteristics were significant in predicting attitude scores in the multivariate analyses, with parental separation being the most consistent.
- The most consistent predictor of attitudes across cohorts was respondents' marital status at the time of attitude measurement, followed by their previous experience of separation and their educational qualifications.

- Despite the claims of some literature that attitudes cannot predict behaviour, this thesis shows that particular attitudes do in fact appear to be strongly related to marital/partnership behaviour (selection effects of attitudes).
- There is even more evidence of the adaptation effects of attitudes, whereby I show that men's and women's attitudes tend to change following changes in their marital/partnership status.
- Some differences between the relationships outlined above are observed between the two cohorts, suggesting perhaps cohort, period and age effects.

### **8.1.2 Bivariate relationships between cohort members' attitudes and parental and cohort members' own characteristics**

Chapters 3 to 5 were predominantly preoccupied with the exploration of the bivariate relationships between attitudes to family and marriage, parental characteristics and cohort members' own characteristics. The descriptions of these results, although unreliable in terms of clear predictions of the actual relationships between attitudes and these factors (as no other factors are taken into account) represent rich material for the British marital attitudes of the two cohorts, born 12 years apart.

With the changing demographic characteristics of British families as well as the changing norms in relation to what constitutes a "family", whereby cohabiting partnerships are not only becoming a popular arrangement among people prior to getting married, but also an alternative to this 'traditional' partnership, the population is expected to become more accepting towards various other forms of family structures and the issues surrounding them, such as single-parent families, cohabiting partnerships with children, same-sex unions and dissolutions of unhappy marriages. But, as research in the US shows, people of the new generations still tend to value marriage and regard it as a lifelong commitment, despite their more relaxed views on other related issues.

Initial exploration of the average attitude scores of cohort members in Chapter 3 showed that the BCS cohort was, on average, more traditional than the older NCDS cohort at both points in time. This is surprising bearing in mind the older 'generation' of the latter cohort, which one may intuitively regard as being more traditional.

In Chapter 3, I explained that a large number of BCS cohort were missing from the achieved sample at age 26 due to a number of reasons, which may have influenced the achieved sample's characteristics. One of the hypotheses was that those who were not in the sample might have been less traditional than those in the sample and the remaining of the sample of BCS respondents is therefore skewed towards the more traditional end. However, my exploration of the average attitude scores of those who were present at both age 26 and age 30 data collections and those who were only present at age 30 showed that it was not the case and that those missing from the sample at age 26 were in fact more traditional at age 30 than those present at both waves of the study (Chapter 3, Figure 3-9).

Considering the context in which the two cohorts became adults, might shed some light on the patterns of average attitude scores, which show that the BCS cohort is more traditional in the way they view marriage and family than the NCDS cohort. The growth in divorce rates since the mid-1960s, particularly their increase in the 1980s (Kiernan, 2003) accompanied by marital separation becoming more socially acceptable (Thornton, 1985), meant that NCDS cohort members were entering their early 20s during changing times. The descriptive statistics for each attitude item indeed showed that NCDS cohort members aged 33 were more likely to disagree/strongly disagree that "a divorce is easy to get these days" compared to the BCS cohort at a similar age (aged 30). They were also more likely to disagree with the statement that "parents who have children should not separate", indicating their more accepting attitudes towards divorce compared to the BCS cohort at approximately the same age. Although divorce rates were still at high levels when the BCS cohort were entering their early 20s, in the 1990s, and perhaps forming their values and attitudes towards various issues during those times, the demographic conditions were more stable compared to the earlier years, particularly in the 1970s when almost every characteristic of the population underwent a transformation (Haskey, 2001).

When the average changes in attitudes between time 1 and time 2 among the two cohorts were compared, although a positive change of attitudes is observed in both cohorts, there was a substantially greater increase in average scores among NCDS respondents than BCS. This may be indicating their different life course position and a

greater amount of time passing between the attitudes measurements of the NCDS cohort.

The following parental characteristics were found to be significantly associated with more traditional attitudes of adult cohort members in Chapter 5:

- Fathers in unskilled professions compared to the highest social class group – professional or managerial (BCS men).
- Mothers leaving school at minimum age (BCS: men age 26, women age 30; NCDS men age 33 and 42).
- Mothers not in work (BCS men 26 and 30).
- No experience of parental separation or divorce (BCS and NCDS men and women at both ages).

The following characteristics of cohort members themselves were significantly related to more traditional attitudes of adult cohort members:

- No educational qualifications by age 26 and 33 among BCS and NCDS men and women respectively.
- Lower levels of social class – partly skilled and skilled manual – along with a clear gender difference among BCS men and women at the age of 26.
- Full-time employment.

### **8.1.3 Multivariate analyses of the relationships between cohort members' attitudes and parental and cohort members' own characteristics**

The following parental characteristics were found to be significant predictors of more traditional attitudes towards family and marriage among the two cohorts (BCS age 26 and NCDS age 33) in multivariate analyses which included all the covariates (including cohort members' own characteristics) entered into regressions simultaneously:

- No experience of parental separation (BCS men and women).
- Mother's education (education beyond school leaving age for NCDS women).
- Father's highest level of social class (BCS women age 26; NCDS men age 33).

Among cohort members' own characteristics the following were significantly associated with more traditional attitudes, net of all other factors including parental characteristics:

- Lower levels of qualifications (all).
- Lower levels of social class (NCDS women).
- Employment (women among BCS and NCDS).
- No children at home (BCS women).
- No relationship breakdown prior to attitude measurement (all but BCS women).
- Being married (all).

It is evident from the results above that parental separation has a lasting effect on grown up BCS cohort members' attitudes. However, in the case of the NCDS cohort, it appears that the impact of parental separation on respondents' attitudes is mediated by their own experiences, in particular their experience of partnership dissolution. Entering the cohort members' own characteristics into the regression model of attitudes at age 33, following parental factors, eliminates the previously significant effect of parental separation/divorce on attitudes for the whole sample of NCDS, as well as for women separately. Although neither of the parental separation coefficients (with or without the cohort members' own characteristics) appear to be significant in the results for attitudes of men aged 33, adding cohort members' factors dramatically reduces the regression coefficient associated with parental separation. So it appears that parental separation is more 'damaging' to the attitudes of the younger cohort than the older one. It is possible that the difference in the effect of parental separation on respondents' attitudes towards family and marriage could be attributed to the age effect, whereby NCDS respondents are older at the time of attitude measurement and might be more "set in their ways" than the younger cohort, whose childhood experiences are still fresh in their memories.

These mixed results on the relationship between attitudes and parental separation add to the similarly diverse literature on the topic. For example, Axinn and Thornton (1996) found some direct effects of parental divorce on their adult children's attitudes towards divorce, as well as a substantial indirect effect via the mother's own attitudes. Also, Amato and de Boer (2001) showed that parental divorce fosters lower commitment to marriage among grown up children. However, another study failed to uncover these relationships and concluded with contrasting results depending on the measure of attitudes used (Amato, 1988). Additionally, most of the differences in attitudes between those who grew up in intact families and those who did not only appeared in the

bivariate analyses. As mentioned in Chapter 6, regression models are sensitive to the independent variables included in the analyses and each variable's association with the dependent variable is influenced by the whole set of predictors in the model. Given the range of different control variables in the above studies, in addition to various measures of attitudes, it is not surprising that the resulting relationships between parental separation and attitudes vary from study to study.

Results in Chapter 6 showed that women expressed significantly less traditional attitudes than men among the NCDS respondents but not the BCS, indicating a smaller gender difference in attitudes among the younger cohort. The results for the NCDS sample are consistent with previous findings, which found women to be less supportive of traditional family values than men (e.g. Amato, 1988; Trent and South, 1992), more favourable towards divorce (e.g. Smith et al, 2007), more likely to hold more egalitarian gender-role attitudes (Thornton, 1989) and less likely to agree that 'it is better to marry than stay single' and that 'marriage is for life' (Oropesa and Gorman, 2000).

#### **8.1.4 Selection and Adaptation effects of attitudes**

In Chapter 7, the results indicate the presence of both selection and adaptation effects of attitudes, varying slightly by gender. Due to both the different life stages of the cohort members during the time of attitude measurement and the sample size constraints, it was not possible to reliably predict divorce rates for the younger first time married BCS cohort and therefore cohort comparison is also unavailable for these trajectories. Similarly, it was only plausible to investigate the relationship between transitions to first marriage of cohabiting BCS respondents and their attitudes, as too few respondents among the NCDS cohort at the age of 33 were never married and living with a partner, particularly when other factors were taken into account. This limits the comparisons that can be made between selection and adaptation effects of attitudes for the two cohorts. But, as far as possible, these differences are illuminated below.

Chapter 7 concludes with a summary table (Table 7-25), which reviews the presence of selection and adaptation effects on marital formation and marital dissolution among the two cohorts, suggesting slightly more support for the adaptation effects of attitudes (attitudes adjust to a change in person's circumstances) than for the selection effects (attitudes predict behaviour).

Adjustment of attitudes following the formation of a first marriage (whether from a cohabiting or non-cohabiting state) is present for both cohorts (with the exception of single non-cohabiting BCS women). While adaptation of attitudes following the dissolution of a first marriage among the NCDS cohort is also well supported in the data, the BCS cohort was not used to test this relationship due to restrictions in sample size. Additionally, there is evidence of selection and adaptation effects of attitudes in relation to partnership transitions: such as starting a cohabiting relationship compared to remaining single; breaking up with a cohabiting partner compared to continuing with the relationship. These and other important relationships that shape cohort members' attitudes and marital/partnership transitions are summarised below.

#### **8.1.4.1 Attitudes and marital formation**

##### The importance of traditional attitudes for marital formation

The results for a never married and non-cohabiting sample of BCS respondents show that while there is evidence of selection effects of attitude at age 26 on formation of first marriage (as opposed to remaining single) among the whole sample and for men separately, this relationship was not significant for women. These findings are both consistent with and contradictory to previous research. There is evidence in the previous literature that confirm a positive relationship between attitudes towards marriage and the likelihood of getting married (e.g. Axinn and Thornton, 1992; Clarkeberg et al, 1995). Also, similarly to the results for BCS cohort presented here, Sassler and Schoen (1999) found no evidence of the relationship between women's attitudes and likelihood of getting married (as opposed to remaining single). Moors (2000), on the other hand, showed that women's positive attitudes were translated into marriage, which contradicts the findings in Chapter 7. Additionally, among the BCS cohort, no significant relationship was found between attitudes and starting a cohabiting relationship (as opposed to remaining single never married). These results may indicate that the attitude statements are not appropriate predictors of non-marital behaviour as they are closely related to marriage and not cohabitation.

In contrast to the results for the BCS cohort, my findings using NCDS data show support for previous work on selection effects of attitudes into marriage for never married non-cohabiting women but not for men (e.g. Sassler and Schoen, 1999; Moors, 2000). Additionally, at age 33, a significant negative effect of attitudes on the formation

of a cohabiting partnership (as opposed to a marital one) was found among the whole sample of single never married NCDS.

The analysis of the relationship between attitudes and partnership behaviour amongst never married cohabiting BCS respondents shows that there is no effect of attitudes on the dissolution of cohabiting partnerships (compared to continuously cohabiting). However, cohabiting cohort members who are more traditional in their attitudes are significantly more likely to get married than remain single.

#### Marital relationships strengthen traditional attitudes

The results in Chapter 7 show that those BCS men (and the whole sample) who got married became significantly more traditional in their family related attitudes than those who remained single (non-cohabiting). However, no significant relationship was found between starting a cohabiting partnership (as opposed to remaining single) and attitude change between the two time points. Again, this could signal a poor suitability of attitude questions for the relationship between marital attitudes and non-marital partnership behaviour since the attitude items are closely related to marriage and divorce and not to cohabitation. There were no direct effects of parental or own separation on the trajectories of single (never married) BCS respondents. The former is somewhat consistent with the findings by Thornton (1991), who concluded that parental separation increases the chances of cohabitation but has no impact on marital formation. I did, however, find an indirect effect of parental separation on marital/partnership transitions via attitudes at the age of 26 among BCS men.

The results for NCDS sample also indicate that those who got married became significantly more traditional in their family attitudes. Additionally, a significant change of attitudes in a less traditional direction among those who formed a cohabiting partnership (compared to those who remained single) was found among the whole sample of NCDS respondents. This relationship did not appear in the analyses of men and women separately. A parental separation variable was not included in the analyses due to sample size limitations. However, own relationship breakdown in the past proved to be a significant predictor of transition to a cohabiting partnership (as opposed to remaining single) for the whole sample as well as for men and women separately. Experience of parental separation also resulted in increased odds of transition to a

cohabiting relationship as opposed to a marital one among the whole sample of NCDS respondents as well as for men separately. If parental separation had been included in the analyses, it is possible that it would affect the results of the respondents' behaviour in some way. For example, Berrington and Diamond (2000) found that parental separation shapes decisions of the single NCDS cohort member to cohabit but not to marry.

The results for single but cohabiting sample of BCS cohort members show that previously cohabiting BCS cohort members who got married became significantly more traditional in their attitudes compared to those who remained cohabiting, while those who experience a breakdown of a cohabiting relationship become even less traditional. This illustrates that cohabiters' attitudes towards family and marriage become relatively less traditional with time spent in cohabiting relationships compared to those who marry.

Parental and own separations have no direct effects on the marital trajectory of cohabiting cohort members, but there are indirect effects via attitudes at 26 among the whole sample and men separately. There is, however, a direct negative effect of parental separation on BCS women's odds of splitting up from a cohabiting partner (as opposed to continuing to cohabit). This is an important finding, as relatively little is known about the effect of parental separation on the trajectories of cohabiting individuals. Additionally, these results contradict those found by Berrington (2001) whereby parental separation was not a predictor of transitions out of cohabitation among the NCDS cohort. However, in her work, Ann Berrington controlled for a larger number of potential mediators and only included first cohabiting partnerships in the analysis, which makes the comparison to this work impractical. However, similarly to the results presented here, Moors and Bernhardt (2009) showed that never married cohabiting individuals were less likely to split up with their partners if their parents were separated. Additionally, and not present in the results of this study, they found that these cohabiting individuals were also less likely to get married (compared to continuing to cohabit). But just as was the case with comparing my results on predictors of attitudes earlier in the chapter, non-compromising comparisons of the relationships between attitudes and transitions from cohabitation simply do not exist.

### 8.1.4.2 Attitudes and marital breakdown

#### The importance of traditional attitudes for marital stability and their change with divorce

The results in Chapter 7 show that less traditional NCDS women were more likely to get divorced than those who were more traditional, indicating the relevance of traditional family values to sustaining a marriage. The same was found to hold in the analysis of the whole sample of first time married NCDS respondents. Once divorced, NCDS cohort members became significantly less traditional than those who remained in intact marriages.

The presence of selection and adaptation effects of attitudes on marital dissolution (with the exception of selection effects among men) both confirms and contradicts findings from other research. For example, although Thornton (1985) found evidence of the adaptation effects of attitudes towards divorce in relation to marital dissolution, he failed to find any evidence of the selection effects. Again, a comparison of the results presented here is not completely feasible given the different attitude measure used in that study.

Parental separation has no direct effect on cohort members' odds of getting divorced, which is in agreement with findings by Berrington and Diamond's (1999) work on the marital dissolution of the NCDS cohort. There is an indirect effect of parental separation via attitudes at the age of 26 on the risk of marital dissolution among NCDS women. Cohort members' own experience of partnership breakdown significantly increases the odds of divorce among the whole sample of the NCDS cohort. Previous studies found competing effects of parental separation on adults' marital dissolution.

In all the above described results on the selection effects of attitudes, parental separation did not appear to play a crucial role in affecting respondents' marital/partnership behaviour, but seemed to operate more often via the influence on their attitudes. Previous research suggests that it is the characteristics of parental divorce, such as its duration and the conflict accompanying it, rather than the divorce per se that would have a greater impact on grown up children (Booth and Edwards, 1989; Demo and Acock, 1988). However, testing this hypothesis was not in the scope of this study.

### 8.1.5 Discussion of the results

This research, in line with some previous studies, shows that attitudes can predict behaviour and at the same time they change while adjusting to new circumstances. Being closely related to marital formation and dissolution, it is not surprising that these attitudes are better at predicting marital change rather than change in cohabiting partnerships. The degree to which attitudes can be used in predicting behaviour is affected by the level of specificity of these attitude measurements: the more specific the attitudes are, the more likely they are to predict the behaviour in question (Kraus, 1998 cited in Hakim, 2003). This finds support in the empirical literature. For example, Franzoi (1996) found that political attitudes are highly correlated with respondents' voting behaviour. Thus it is highly likely that attitudes measuring acceptability of non-marital relationships, pre-marital sex and having children outside of wedlock would be better predictors of cohabiting partnership behaviour than attitudes related to marital stability and divorce.

As some would argue, we are living in the individualised society (e.g. Giddens, 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995) which promotes various forms of partnerships and families as people become increasingly preoccupied with their 'own' lives and are less constrained by social and institutional norms. Changes in attitudes towards pre-marital sex, cohabitation, having children with unmarried partners and so on, highlight the shift in people's attitudes and the emphasis they put on meeting their own needs instead of conforming to the rules and the norms set by the society. In the midst of this, people still value marriage, hope to marry one day and believe that it should be a life-long commitment. The results from the bivariate analyses in this research show that the younger cohort is more traditional in their attitudes towards family and marriage than the older cohort, despite the expected 'cohort effect' which should bring about less traditional attitudes. Is it possible that as people are increasingly long for intimacy and idealise love (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995), that their attitudes towards marriage and intimate relationships remain (or become more) favourable? As Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) argue, while these longings bring people together, the same 'forces' tear them apart as greater disagreements and uncertainties enter their lives. This is shown by increased rates of divorces and 'serial monogamies'. So the question is, whilst people may value marriage, can they sustain it?

The results from this study show an agreement between marital attitudes and marital stability, whereby those who favour commitment in marriage are more likely to stay married than to get separated or divorced, indicating a relationship between attitudes and behaviour that is complimentary rather than destructive. As Reynolds and Mansfield (1999) question: is it possible that the growing concern over unstable marriages, the rising numbers of lone parent families, and the experience of divorce itself began to influence people's attitudes in a stabilising way? As mentioned in Chapter 1, according to Lewis (2001), whilst the marriage system has undergone dramatic changes over the past decades, this cannot be attributed to people becoming more selfish in pursuing their own goals, but rather to the change in their mentalities towards the ways families operate and how people negotiate their roles within the family. Therefore it is possible for the attitudes to remain favorable towards marriage even while marriages and relationships become less stable as people thrive towards satisfying happy relationships. The latter is also reflected in the work on Giddens (1992) who argues that the rise of a 'pure relationship' means people separate when mutual satisfaction no longer exists, explaining increased instances of divorces. These circumstances themselves, Giddens (1992) continues, could bring about a change in the way that people view their satisfaction. Measuring attitudes of the future cohorts is therefore not only advisable but also necessary to allow us to explore the way modern relationships operate: seeking equality and freedom alongside commitment and intimacy.

## **8.2 Possible bias of the results**

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, comparison of the results from this study to those found in other research is challenging, if at all possible. This is due to several factors, including the varying attitude measurements utilised, the different set of covariates introduced into the modelling, and the samples and statistical methods used. Additionally, there are other issues such as missing data. The summary of the results from the additional models produced (but not presented here), treating missing data differently to the findings discussed in Chapter 6 and 7, is discussed below.

In Chapters 6 and 7, some of the differences are presented between the results obtained from the models described here, using the listwise deletion method in tackling missing data, and those which were reproduced using dummy variables created for item non-response for some variables that have a large amount of missing data. Although for

consistency purposes and in order to retain all of the data, dummy variables for each covariate should be included, this exercise gave a brief overview of the effect of a larger amount of retained information.

Despite a relatively large increase in the sample sizes due to the inclusion of these dummies for missing cases, the overall results with these dummies were similar to those presented in Chapter 6, particularly with respect to the key relationships such as parental separation; cohort members' own experience of partnership breakdown and their marital status; and attitudes towards family and marriage. The missing dummies were insignificant for most of the analyses, indicating that it is likely that the missing data was missing at random.

The picture is somewhat worse for the analyses presented in Chapter 7. Due to the limited sample sizes in the analyses of the trajectories of never married (non-cohabiting) BCS and NCDS cohort members, the employment covariate was dropped from these analyses. In the analysis where missing data (particularly on cohort members' social class) was substituted with dummies (not shown here), there was a significant positive effect of employment for the transitions to marriage among the whole sample of NCDS respondents and among the whole sample of BCS cohorts, including the results for men and women separately.

In addition, these new results showed some altered relationships of the key variables, such as attitudes at age 33 and transitions into marriage among NCDS women, which was significant in the results presented here. Other relationships appear to be more important, such as the effect of previous separation among women as well as men (already shown here) on increasing the odds of starting a cohabiting partnership over a marital one.

Similarly, conflicting findings were found in the exploration of the relationship between attitudes and marital dissolution among the NCDS cohort, whereby parental separation was no longer a significant predictor of attitudes at age 33 among women, but contrary to the results presented in Chapter 7, it was a significant predictor of men's attitudes at the age of 42.

Additionally, and worryingly, the results from the models using dummies for missing cases showed a significant negative effect on the odds of getting married (over remaining unmarried) for those who had missing data/other situation on the parental separation variable, indicating a need for more thorough investigation of the data on those who were not included in the initial analyses of Chapter 7.

Therefore, restricting the analyses samples to those who had information on each and every variable used in the analyses results in a dramatic reduction in the sample size otherwise available for exploration of attitudes and this reduction was most probably not as a result of a random drop out and item non-response. A thorough investigation of the missing data is therefore required in order to make more conclusive inferences from the results presented as part of this thesis. After exploring the nature of missing data, a plausible solution to the problem could be to impute values for the missing variables using a method such as MICE in STATA.

### **8.3 Implications for future surveys**

In this study, I showed that family-related attitudes have the ability to predict marital and partnership behaviour as well as adjust following changes in marital and partnership status. Population ageing and increasing instances of ‘serial monogamy’ mean that potentially more and more people will be undergoing complex marital and partnership transitions for longer periods in their lives. This study of the relationship between attitudes and marital/partnership behaviour for the two cohorts during a limited period in their lives provides us with a partial evidence on the ways attitudes and behaviour are related throughout people’s lifecourse. Being provided with consistent data on the attitude items for the two cohorts at each wave of data collection would have enabled the exploration of changes in attitudes with multiple changes in partnership behaviour. As Moors puts it “Even when values or attitudes prove to be ‘poor’ predictors at the early stage of family formation they may gain significance in the transition process itself and hence become predictors of subsequent demographic behaviour” (2003: 202). It is therefore advisable for those responsible for building surveys to include such attitude items in subsequent surveys so that further work on the relationship between family-related attitudes and behaviour could be undertaken.

## 8.4 Further work

This section of the chapter addresses issues that were not in the scope of this study, but nonetheless deserve extra attention, perhaps in the work following my PhD.

### 8.4.1 Restricting more in-depth work on attitudes and marital/partnership behaviour to one cohort (possibly, BCS)

This would be useful in order to avoid limitations due to the availability of data (particularly attitude statements) for the other cohort. Not only would this allow the building of a more robust scale to work with, but it would also open up the possibility of using maternal attitudes to family and marriage. The latter, I hypothesise, would be a strong predictor of the attitudes of cohort members at least indirectly via mother's marital/partnership behaviour. It is also possible that mother's attitudes have a direct effect on their children's feelings towards family and marriage. For example, in their study, Trent and South (1992) found that maternal attitudes are especially effective in predicting their children's attitudes to marriage. Axinn and Thornton (1993) found that mother's attitudes towards cohabitation had both a direct and an indirect effect on their children's partnership behaviour. The authors concluded that as well as influencing children's attitudes towards cohabitation, the mother's approval of cohabitation was a significant predictor of children's marital behaviour, controlling for their own attitudes. In their more recent work, Axinn and Thornton (1996) investigated the relationship between parental attitudes to family-related issues, including marriage, divorce and cohabitation, and respondents' own attitudes to these issues. They found that mother's attitude plays an important intervening role in linking mother's marital experiences to their children's attitudes. Similarly, Cunningham (2001) found that parental attitudes to gender roles were found to have a strong association with their adult children's gender role attitudes.

Some preliminary work (not shown here) provided no evidence for any association between parental family- and marriage-related attitudes measured when cohort members were 5 years old (BCS) and cohort members' own attitudes at age 26. However, the limitation of that analysis was that the attitudes statements used to measure parental attitudes and cohort members' attitudes were not exactly the same. In further work I would consider using only one of the two cohorts (most probably BCS) so to avoid restrictions due to the attitude availability in the other cohort, as from the outset, the

attitude statements chosen for this project were chosen due to their availability for both cohorts and at two points in time. Choosing similar attitude statements for both mothers and their children would enable the exploration of the effects of parental attitudes on both cohort members' attitudes and their marital/partnership behaviour. In their work, Axinn and Thornton (1993), for example, used the exact same attitude statements for mothers and their children, where they found a strong relationship between the two.

In Chapter 6, I showed that BCS men are significantly less likely to hold traditional attitudes to family and marriage if their parents separated/divorced. Furthermore, I showed that less traditional men are significantly less likely to form a marital relationship themselves between 26 and 30. I would hypothesise that parental attitudes might have an indirect effect on their children's marital/partnership behaviour via the direct effect of their behaviour (e.g. separation/divorce) on their children's attitudes. In short, parental attitudes might affect their own marital/partnership behaviour, which in turn affects the attitudes of their children and could potentially translate into behaviour as well. This is yet to be examined and further work is needed.

#### **8.4.2 Exploring a larger number of factors which could potentially be related to cohort members' attitudes and marital/partnership behaviour**

Certain important predictors of marital formation and/or dissolution were omitted in this study which could add to the predictive ability of the models used in Chapters 6 and 7. Refining predictor variables might not only increase the power of these models (i.e. increase the amount of variance explained by the predictors), but it might also alter the relationship between attitudes and other variables used in these analyses, including marital/partnership behaviour.

- For example, previous research shows (e.g. White, 1990; Clarke and Berrington, 1999) that marriage at a younger age has a negative effect on marital stability. This, in turn, could mediate the effect that attitudes have on divorce/separation of the respondents. Similarly, pre-marital cohabitation with the future spouse could make marital dissolution more likely. This is supported in numerous publications (e.g. Axinn and Thornton, 1992; Haskey, 1992; Berrington and Diamond, 1999) with some differences in the explanations of how pre-marital

cohabitation affects marital dissolution. One of the suggestions is that those who are willing to cohabit from the outset have a less traditional view of family formation and thus might be more accepting of divorce (e.g. Axinn and Thornton, 1992) and are therefore more likely to divorce.

- Other potential mediators of the relationship between attitudes and behaviour could be those related to other circumstances surrounding marital formation (e.g. pre-marital pregnancy, age at marriage) and divorce/separation (e.g. relationship quality, number of children). Including such covariates into the models would produce a more “true” depiction of life events and their relationship with one’s attitudes.
- To explore the relationship between parents and cohort members using additional information to that of parental separation. For example, Coleman and Ganong (1984) pointed out that their results confirm the effect of a child’s relationship with both parents and not the effect of their parental marital breakdown or even a remarriage per se, on the marital attitudes of these children.
- A possible influence on the attitude change of cohort members could potentially, at least partially, lie in their partners. Therefore, an exploration of the possibility of taking partner/spouse’s views/histories into account could prove beneficial in understanding the relationship between marital attitudes and the behaviour associated with it. Kalmijn (2005), for example, found that sex-role attitudes of ‘husbands’ (a partner in either a cohabiting or a marital relationship) tend to change as a result of their ‘wives’ views or behaviours. These changes are thought to occur either directly or in response to changed behaviour (e.g. the husband helps around the house, as asked by his wife and, as a result, his views on the division of labour in the house might also change). This way of thinking could potentially be applied to the attitudes towards family and marriage, whereby one of the spouses might be influencing the attitudes of the other.

Others have used partners’ information to predict marital behaviour. For example, Amato (1996) found an increased risk of marital dissolution among couples where both spouses experienced parental divorce. However, the usefulness of using partner’s information is yet to be explored and some find it

adds little to the investigation. For example, in their study, Berrington and Diamond (1999) found no impact of the respondent's spouse's previous marriage on the risk of marital separation. Authors attribute this, at least to a certain extent, to the fact that missing data is particularly problematic for the responses of partners. Careful examination of the available data for the spouse/partner is therefore necessary before proceeding to use it in any future work.

- Finally, advancing the methods to using Structural Equation Modelling (Smith et al, 2009) could be advisable, in addition to appropriate treatment of missing cases. This is yet to be explored further.

#### **8.4.3 Exploring other transitions which occur between time 1 and time 2 that could have an impact on attitude change**

The partnership transitions, as well as attitudes under investigation here, could be affected by changes in cohort members' parenthood status. Becoming a parent could influence the decision to get married or start cohabiting so that the caring responsibilities could be shared. Also, the decision to have a child could arise when people get married or find a suitable partner to cohabit with. The two transitions – partnership and parenthood – are therefore potentially inter-related. There is evidence that supports this strong inter-relationship between fertility and partnership transitions in previous literature (e.g. Aassve et al, 2004; Steele et al, 2005). Therefore some consideration of the two processes would be beneficial to further develop the model used in this work.

Additionally, having children may impact on the way people view commitment within a relationship, affecting their attitudes towards family and marriage. It is possible that attitudes become more traditional with the arrival of children. As shown in Chapter 4, cohort members who have children living in the household, particularly their own (with the exception of BCS women), are more accepting of traditional attitudes towards family and marriage than those who do not have any children living with them. Also, there may be an interaction effect of partnership status and becoming a parent on attitudes, whereby attitudes of those cohort members who are in a relationship with their child's father or mother may be more affected by the arrival of children compared to those who are not. This may be true because those who were already separated from

their child's mother or father may view parental separation and divorce more favourably than those who are still together. Similarly, there may be some differences in attitudes between those who married and had a child and those who married but did not have any children, whereby the former would probably become more traditional in their attitudes compared to the latter group.

Parenthood does not affect men and women in the same way, especially when children are born out of a relationship; in such circumstances it is usually women who care for and live with the child. Similarly, in the cases of parental separation, it is women who would most likely end up being the carer. The investigation would therefore need to include the transition to having a child who resides with the cohort member and those with children residing with their partner, or only selecting those cohort members who had children who lived with them, or only considering using a sample of women for this type of analysis.

## **8.5 Concluding remarks**

There is no doubt, in my opinion, that the exploration and monitoring of social attitudes, including those related to family and marriage are of great importance. In the US, this appears to be a more widely applied practice, perhaps due to a greater proportion of those with religious beliefs and those attempting to “save” a ‘traditional family’ compared to the more liberal UK. However, regardless of the population's attitudes and its characteristics in any particular country, it is vital to know not only the demographic profile of its inhabitants, but their intentions, values and thoughts on issues that are so close to everyone's hearts.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 (Chapter 3)

### 1.1 Distribution of responses on attitude statements

Table A1 Percentage distribution of answers to attitude statements, BCS and NCDS

	Marriage is for life				Divorce is too easy to get these days				Couples with children shouldn't separate			
	BCS		NCDS		BCS		NCDS		BCS		NCDS	
	26	30	33	42	26	30	33	42	26	30	33	42
Strongly disagree (%)	1.9	1.7	2.8	2.7	1.9	2.3	3.4	2.6	7.7	6.0	7.1	5.2
Disagree (%)	10.8	9.5	20.3	14.9	18.1	13.1	24.6	15.3	49.9	41.2	56.8	42.1
Neither (%)	14.7	19.4	16.1	25.7	29.4	32.5	25.6	31.1	26.9	35.7	21.1	35.7
Agree (%)	38.9	32.9	37.5	31.3	37.5	34.4	35.8	33.8	11.6	13.0	12.0	13.1
Strongly agree (%)	33.6	36.5	23.3	25.3	13.1	17.8	10.7	17.2	3.9	4.1	3.0	4.0
Total	8833	11110	10713	11272	8849	11109	10756	11275	8896	11106	10715	11270

### 1.2 Descriptive statistics for attitude statements

Table A2 Descriptive statistics for attitude statements, BCS age 26

BCS70 at 26	Obs	Min	Max	Mean	Std. dev.	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
							Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Divorce is too easy to get these days	8,849	1	5	3.42	0.991	0.982	-0.221	0.026	-0.656	0.052
Marriage is for life	8,833	1	5	3.92	1.04	1.083	-0.819	0.026	-0.077	0.052
Couples with children should not separate	8,896	1	5	2.54	0.933	0.87	0.747	0.026	0.232	0.052
Total (listwise)	8,736									

Table A3 Descriptive statistics for attitude statements, BCS age 30

BCS70 at 30	Obs	Min	Max	Mean	Std. dev	Variance	Skewness	Std.	Kurtosis	Std.
							Statistic	Error	Statistic	Error
Divorce is too easy to get these days	11,109	1	5	3.52	1.001	1.003	-0.261	0.023	-0.505	0.046
Marriage is for life?	11,110	1	5	3.93	1.044	1.090	-0.725	0.023	-0.291	0.046
Couples with kids should not separate	11,106	1	5	2.68	0.918	0.842	0.526	0.023	0.024	0.046
Total (listwise)	11,099									

Table A4 Descriptive statistics for attitude statements, NCDS age 33

NCDS at 33	Obs	Min	Max	Mean	Std. dev	Var	Skewness	Std.	Kurtosis	Std.
							Statistic	Error	Statistic	Error
Divorce too easy to get these days	10,758	1	5	3.26	1.048	1.099	-0.148	0.024	-0.859	0.047
Marriage is for life	10,715	1	5	3.58	1.133	1.283	-0.430	0.024	-0.881	0.047
Couples who have children should not separate	10,717	1	5	2.47	0.901	0.812	0.909	0.024	0.440	0.047
Total (listwise)	10,646									

Table A5 Descriptive statistics for attitude statements, NCDS age 42

NCDS at 42	Obs	Min	Max	Mean	Std. dev	Variance	Skewness	Std.	Kurtosis	Std.
							Statistic	Error	Statistic	Error
Divorce is too easy to get these days	11,277	1	5	3.475	1.029	1.058	-0.246	0.023	-0.599	0.046
Marriage is for life?	11,272	1	5	2.688	0.906	0.822	0.565	0.023	0.049	0.046
Couples with kids should not separate	11,275	1	5	3.616	1.098	1.205	-0.368	0.023	-0.752	0.046
Total (listwise)	11,267									

### 1.3 Correlation of attitude statements

Table A6 Correlation between attitude statements, BCS age 26

	Divorce	Marriage	Parental separation
Divorce	1		
Marriage	.386**	1	
Parental separation	.315**	.315**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table A7 Correlation between attitude statements, BCS age 30

	Divorce	Marriage	Parental separation
Divorce	1		
Marriage	.353**	1	
Parental separation	.267**	.305**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table A8 Correlation between attitude statements, NCDS age 33

	Divorce	Marriage	Parental separation
Divorce	1		
Marriage	.345**	1	
Parental separation	.304**	.349**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table A9 Correlation between attitude statements, NCDS age 42

	Divorce	Marriage	Parental separation
Divorce	1		
Marriage	.367**	1	
Parental separation	.306**	.390**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table A10 Correlations of individual items with the sum of the rest, BCS and NCDS

	BCS		NCDS	
	age 26	age 30	age 33	age 42
Divorce	0.434	0.387	0.397	0.406
Marriage	0.433	0.414	0.429	0.467
Parental separation	0.378	0.348	0.399	0.422
Total	8,736	11,099	10,644	11,265

## Appendix 2 (Chapter 4)

Table A11 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis, Tukey HSD, BCS at 26

Status 1	Status 2	Mean Difference (Status 1 - Status 2)	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Single	Married	-0.289 ***	0.017	-0.335	-0.242
	Remarried	0.381 **	0.104	0.098	0.664
	Separated	0.649 ***	0.066	0.470	0.829
	Divorced	0.594 ***	0.054	0.447	0.741
Married	Single	0.289 ***	0.017	0.242	0.335
	Remarried	0.669 ***	0.104	0.385	0.954
	Separated	0.938 ***	0.067	0.756	1.120
	Divorced	0.883 ***	0.055	0.733	1.033
remarried	Single	-0.381 **	0.104	-0.664	-0.098
	Married	-0.669 ***	0.104	-0.954	-0.385
	Separated	0.269	0.122	-0.064	0.602
	Divorced	0.214	0.116	-0.103	0.530
separated	Single	-0.649 ***	0.066	-0.829	-0.470
	Married	-0.938 ***	0.067	-1.120	-0.756
	Remarried	-0.269	0.122	-0.602	0.064
	Divorced	-0.055	0.084	-0.284	0.174
divorced	Single	-0.594 ***	0.054	-0.741	-0.447
	Married	-0.883 ***	0.055	-1.033	-0.733
	Remarried	-0.214	0.116	-0.530	0.103
	Separated	0.055	0.084	-0.174	0.284

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level  
 $F(4, 8591)=147.83, p<0.001$

Table A12 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis, Tukey HSD, BCS at 30

Status 1	Status 2	Mean Difference (Status 1 - Status 2)		Std. Error	p-level	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
single	married	-0.279	***	0.014	0.000	-0.317	-0.241
	remarried	0.227	***	0.055	0.000	0.078	0.376
	separated	0.426	***	0.041	0.000	0.314	0.537
	divorced	0.428	***	0.032	0.000	0.341	0.516
married	single	0.279	***	0.014	0.000	0.241	0.317
	remarried	0.506	***	0.055	0.000	0.356	0.655
	separated	0.704	***	0.041	0.000	0.592	0.816
	divorced	0.707	***	0.032	0.000	0.619	0.795
remarried	single	-0.227	***	0.055	0.000	-0.376	-0.078
	married	-0.506	***	0.055	0.000	-0.655	-0.356
	separated	0.199	*	0.067	0.025	0.016	0.381
	divorced	0.201	*	0.062	0.010	0.032	0.371
separated	Single	-0.426	***	0.041	0.000	-0.537	-0.314
	married	-0.704	***	0.041	0.000	-0.816	-0.592
	remarried	-0.199	*	0.067	0.025	-0.381	-0.016
	divorced	0.003		0.050	1.000	-0.134	0.140
divorced	single	-0.428	***	0.032	0.000	-0.516	-0.341
	married	-0.707	***	0.032	0.000	-0.795	-0.619
	remarried	-0.201	*	0.062	0.010	-0.371	-0.032
	separated	-0.003		0.050	1.000	-0.140	0.134

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level  
 $F(4, 11084)=227.54, p<0.001$

Table A13 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis, Tukey HSD, NCDS at 33

Status 1	Status 2	Mean Difference (Status 1 - Status 2)		Std. Error	p-level	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
single	married	-0.286	***	0.019	0.000	-0.339	-0.233
	remarried	0.097	*	0.032	0.021	0.010	0.184
	separated	0.355	***	0.046	0.000	0.229	0.481
	divorced	0.309	***	0.030	0.000	0.227	0.392
married	single	0.286	***	0.019	0.000	0.233	0.339
	remarried	0.383	***	0.028	0.000	0.305	0.460
	separated	0.641	***	0.044	0.000	0.521	0.761
	divorced	0.595	***	0.026	0.000	0.523	0.667
remarried	single	-0.097	*	0.032	0.021	-0.184	-0.010
	married	-0.383	***	0.028	0.000	-0.460	-0.305
	separated	0.259	***	0.051	0.000	0.120	0.397
	divorced	0.213	***	0.037	0.000	0.113	0.313
separated	single	-0.355	***	0.046	0.000	-0.481	-0.229
	married	-0.641	***	0.044	0.000	-0.761	-0.521
	remarried	-0.259	***	0.051	0.000	-0.397	-0.120
	divorced	-0.046		0.050	0.888	-0.181	0.090
divorced	single	-0.309	***	0.030	0.000	-0.392	-0.227
	married	-0.595	***	0.026	0.000	-0.667	-0.523
	remarried	-0.213	***	0.037	0.000	-0.313	-0.113
	separated	0.046		0.050	0.888	-0.090	0.181

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level  
 $F(4, 10463)=217.252, p<0.001$

Table A14 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis, Tukey HSD, NCDS at 42

Status 1	Status 2	Mean Difference (Status 1 - Status 2)	Std. Error	p-level	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
single	married	-0.347 ***	0.021	0.000	-0.405	-0.289
	remarried	-0.013	0.028	0.991	-0.090	0.064
	separated	0.329 ***	0.038	0.000	0.225	0.433
	divorced	0.279 ***	0.027	0.000	0.206	0.353
married	single	0.347 ***	0.021	0.000	0.289	0.405
	remarried	0.334 ***	0.023	0.000	0.273	0.396
	separated	0.676 ***	0.034	0.000	0.583	0.770
	divorced	0.626 ***	0.021	0.000	0.569	0.683
remarried	single	0.013	0.028	0.991	-0.064	0.090
	married	-0.334 ***	0.023	0.000	-0.396	-0.273
	separated	0.342 ***	0.039	0.000	0.236	0.448
	divorced	0.292 ***	0.028	0.000	0.215	0.369
separated	single	-0.329 ***	0.038	0.000	-0.433	-0.225
	married	-0.676 ***	0.034	0.000	-0.770	-0.583
	remarried	-0.342 ***	0.039	0.000	-0.448	-0.236
	divorced	-0.050	0.038	0.682	-0.154	0.054
divorced	single	-0.279 ***	0.027	0.000	-0.353	-0.206
	married	-0.626 ***	0.021	0.000	-0.683	-0.569
	remarried	-0.292 ***	0.028	0.000	-0.369	-0.215
	separated	0.050	0.038	0.682	-0.054	0.154

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level  
 F(4, 11188)=172.665, p<0.001

Table A15 Two-way ANOVA results: marital status and gender on attitudes, BCS age 26 and 30

	BCS age 26			BCS age 30		
	df	F	Prob>F	df	F	Prob>F
Model	9	66.160	0.000	9	110.720	0.000
marital status	4	124.060	0.000	4	215.650	0.000
gender	1	7.360	0.007	1	41.980	0.000
marital status*gender	4	1.300	0.266	4	5.380	0.000
Residual (df)	8,447			10,844		
Observations	8,457			10,854		
R-squared	0.066			0.084		
Root MSE	0.712			0.692		

Table A16 Two-way ANOVA results: marital status and gender on attitudes, NCDS age 33 and 42

	NCDS age 33			NCDS age 42		
	df	F	Prob>F	df	F	Prob>F
Model	9	112.170	0.000	9	164.850	0.000
marital status	4	201.170	0.000	4	315.640	0.000
gender	1	64.030	0.000	1	126.400	0.000
marital status*gender	4	2.090	0.079	4	6.390	0.000
Residual (df)	10,368			11,067		
Observations	10,368			11,077		
R-squared	0.089			0.118		
Root MSE	0.731			0.717		

Table A17 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis, Tukey HSD, BCS at 26 marital/partnership groups

Status 1	Status 2	Mean Difference (Status 1 - Status 2)	Std. Error	p-level	95% CI	
					Lower	Upper
single, unpartnered	single, cohabiting	0.016	0.020	0.966	-0.040	0.072
	married	-0.283 ***	0.019	0.000	-0.337	-0.230
	remarried	0.408 **	0.106	0.002	0.105	0.711
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.544 ***	0.054	0.000	0.390	0.698
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.715 ***	0.066	0.000	0.527	0.903
single, cohabiting	single, unpartnered	-0.016	0.020	0.966	-0.072	0.040
	married	-0.299 ***	0.021	0.000	-0.359	-0.239
	remarried	0.392 **	0.107	0.003	0.088	0.696
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.528 ***	0.055	0.000	0.372	0.684
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.699 ***	0.067	0.000	0.509	0.889
married	single, unpartnered	0.283 ***	0.019	0.000	0.230	0.337
	single, cohabiting	0.299 ***	0.021	0.000	0.239	0.359
	remarried	0.691 ***	0.107	0.000	0.388	0.995
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.827 ***	0.054	0.000	0.672	0.982
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.998 ***	0.066	0.000	0.809	1.187
remarried	single, unpartnered	-0.408 **	0.106	0.002	-0.711	-0.105
	single, cohabiting	-0.392 **	0.107	0.003	-0.696	-0.088
	married	-0.691 ***	0.107	0.000	-0.995	-0.388
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.136	0.118	0.858	-0.200	0.472
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.307	0.124	0.131	-0.046	0.660
sep/div, unpartnered	single, unpartnered	-0.544 ***	0.054	0.000	-0.698	-0.390
	single, cohabiting	-0.528 ***	0.055	0.000	-0.684	-0.372
	married	-0.827 ***	0.054	0.000	-0.982	-0.672
	remarried	-0.136	0.118	0.858	-0.472	0.200
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.171	0.083	0.315	-0.067	0.409
sep/div, cohabiting	single, unpartnered	-0.715 ***	0.066	0.000	-0.903	-0.527
	single, cohabiting	-0.699 ***	0.067	0.000	-0.889	-0.509
	married	-0.998 ***	0.066	0.000	-1.187	-0.809
	remarried	-0.307	0.124	0.131	-0.660	0.046
	sep/div, unpartnered	-0.171	0.083	0.315	-0.409	0.067

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level  
F(5, 8477)=118.229, p<001

Table A18 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis, Tukey HSD, BCS at 30 marital/partnership groups

Status 1	Status 2	Mean Difference (Status 1 – Status 2)	Std. Error	p-level	95% CI	
					Lower	Upper
single, unpartnered	single, cohabiting	-0.035	0.019	0.438	-0.089	0.019
	married	-0.294 ***	0.016	0.000	-0.340	-0.248
	remarried	0.212 **	0.055	0.002	0.054	0.369
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.387 ***	0.033	0.000	0.292	0.482
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.452 ***	0.041	0.000	0.335	0.569
single, cohabiting	single, unpartnered	0.035	0.019	0.438	-0.019	0.089
	married	-0.259 ***	0.018	0.000	-0.309	-0.209
	remarried	0.247 ***	0.056	0.000	0.088	0.406
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.422 ***	0.034	0.000	0.325	0.519
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.487 ***	0.042	0.000	0.368	0.605
married	single, unpartnered	0.294 ***	0.016	0.000	0.248	0.340
	single, cohabiting	0.259 ***	0.018	0.000	0.209	0.309
	remarried	0.506 ***	0.055	0.000	0.349	0.662
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.681 ***	0.033	0.000	0.588	0.774
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.746 ***	0.040	0.000	0.631	0.861
remarried	single, unpartnered	-0.212 **	0.055	0.002	-0.369	-0.054
	single, cohabiting	-0.247 ***	0.056	0.000	-0.406	-0.088
	married	-0.506 ***	0.055	0.000	-0.662	-0.349
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.175	0.062	0.054	-0.002	0.353
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.240 **	0.067	0.004	0.051	0.430
sep/div, unpartnered	single, unpartnered	-0.387 ***	0.033	0.000	-0.482	-0.292
	single, cohabiting	-0.422 ***	0.034	0.000	-0.519	-0.325
	married	-0.681 ***	0.033	0.000	-0.774	-0.588
	remarried	-0.175	0.062	0.054	-0.353	0.002
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.065	0.050	0.784	-0.077	0.207
sep/div, cohabiting	single, unpartnered	-0.452 ***	0.041	0.000	-0.569	-0.335
	single, cohabiting	-0.487 ***	0.042	0.000	-0.605	-0.368
	married	-0.746 ***	0.040	0.000	-0.861	-0.631
	remarried	-0.240 **	0.067	0.004	-0.430	-0.051
	sep/div, unpartnered	-0.065	0.050	0.784	-0.207	0.077

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level  
F(5, 11083)=183.12, p<0.001

Table A19 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis, Tukey HSD, NCDS at 33 marital/partnership groups

Status 1	Status 2	Diff (Status 1- Status 2)	Std. Error	p-level	95% CI Lower	Upper
single, unpartnered	single, cohabiting	0.225 ***	0.037	0.000	0.119	0.331
	married	-0.215 ***	0.023	0.000	-0.279	-0.150
	remarried	0.168 ***	0.034	0.000	0.071	0.265
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.316 ***	0.035	0.000	0.217	0.415
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.526 ***	0.040	0.000	0.411	0.641
single, cohabiting	single, unpartnered	-0.225 ***	0.037	0.000	-0.331	-0.119
	married	-0.440 ***	0.032	0.000	-0.531	-0.348
	remarried	-0.057	0.041	0.726	-0.174	0.059
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.091	0.041	0.243	-0.027	0.209
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.301 ***	0.046	0.000	0.169	0.433
married	single, unpartnered	0.215 ***	0.023	0.000	0.150	0.279
	single, cohabiting	0.440 ***	0.032	0.000	0.348	0.531
	remarried	0.383 ***	0.028	0.000	0.302	0.463
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.530 ***	0.029	0.000	0.447	0.613
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.741 ***	0.036	0.000	0.639	0.842
remarried	single, unpartnered	-0.168 ***	0.034	0.000	-0.265	-0.071
	single, cohabiting	0.057	0.041	0.726	-0.059	0.174
	married	-0.383 ***	0.028	0.000	-0.463	-0.302
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.148 **	0.039	0.002	0.038	0.258
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.358 ***	0.044	0.000	0.234	0.483
sep/div, unpartnered	single, unpartnered	-0.316 ***	0.035	0.000	-0.415	-0.217
	single, cohabiting	-0.091	0.041	0.243	-0.209	0.027
	married	-0.530 ***	0.029	0.000	-0.613	-0.447
	remarried	-0.148 **	0.039	0.002	-0.258	-0.038
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.210 ***	0.044	0.000	0.084	0.336
sep/div, cohabiting	single, unpartnered	-0.526 ***	0.040	0.000	-0.641	-0.411
	single, cohabiting	-0.301 ***	0.046	0.000	-0.433	-0.169
	married	-0.741 ***	0.036	0.000	-0.842	-0.639
	remarried	-0.358 ***	0.044	0.000	-0.483	-0.234
	sep/div, unpartnered	-0.210 ***	0.044	0.000	-0.336	-0.084

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level  
 $F(5, 10416)=187.127, p<0.001$

Table A20 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis, Tukey HSD, NCDS at 42 marital/partnership groups

Status 1	Status 2	Mean Difference (Status 1 - Status 2)	Std. Error	p-level	95% CI	
					Lower	Upper
single, unpartnered	single, cohabiting	0.173 ***	0.040	0.000	0.058	0.287
	Married	-0.287 ***	0.025	0.000	-0.359	-0.215
	remarried	0.047	0.032	0.663	-0.043	0.137
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.317 ***	0.032	0.000	0.227	0.407
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.408 ***	0.036	0.000	0.306	0.509
single, cohabiting	single, unpartnered	-0.173 ***	0.040	0.000	-0.287	-0.058
	Married	-0.459 ***	0.034	0.000	-0.555	-0.364
	remarried	-0.125 *	0.039	0.015	-0.235	-0.015
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.144 **	0.039	0.003	0.035	0.255
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.235 ***	0.042	0.000	0.116	0.355
married	single, unpartnered	0.287 ***	0.025	0.000	0.215	0.359
	single, cohabiting	0.459 ***	0.034	0.000	0.364	0.555
	remarried	0.334 ***	0.023	0.000	0.270	0.399
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.604 ***	0.023	0.000	0.539	0.669
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.694 ***	0.028	0.000	0.615	0.774
remarried	single, unpartnered	-0.047	0.032	0.663	-0.137	0.043
	single, cohabiting	0.125 *	0.039	0.015	0.015	0.235
	Married	-0.334 ***	0.023	0.000	-0.399	-0.270
	sep/div, unpartnered	0.270 ***	0.029	0.000	0.186	0.354
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.360 ***	0.034	0.000	0.264	0.456
sep/div, unpartnered	single, unpartnered	-0.317 ***	0.032	0.000	-0.407	-0.227
	single, cohabiting	-0.144 **	0.039	0.003	-0.255	-0.035
	Married	-0.604 ***	0.023	0.000	-0.669	-0.539
	remarried	-0.270 ***	0.029	0.000	-0.354	-0.186
	sep/div, cohabiting	0.091	0.034	0.078	-0.006	0.187
sep/div, cohabiting	single, unpartnered	-0.408 ***	0.036	0.000	-0.509	-0.306
	single, cohabiting	-0.235 ***	0.042	0.000	-0.355	-0.116
	Married	-0.694 ***	0.028	0.000	-0.774	-0.615
	remarried	-0.360 ***	0.034	0.000	-0.456	-0.264
	sep/div, unpartnered	-0.091	0.034	0.078	-0.187	0.006

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level  
 $F(5, 11187)=269.728, p<0.001$

Table A21 Two-way ANOVA: partnership status and gender on attitudes, BCS age 26 and 30

	BCS age 26			BCS age 30		
	df	F	Prob>F	df	F	Prob>F
Model	11	53.640	0.000	11	88.170	0.000
partnership status	5	96.530	0.000	5	169.870	0.000
Gender	1	7.340	0.007	1	36.250	0.000
partnership status*gender	5	0.740	0.590	5	2.800	0.016
Residual (df)	8,357			10,939		
Observations	8,369			10,950		
R-squared	0.066			0.081		
Root MSE	0.713			0.695		

Table A22 Two-way ANOVA: partnership status and gender on attitudes, NCDS age 33 and 42

	NCDS age 33			NCDS age 42		
	df	F	Prob>F	df	F	Prob>F
Model	11	98.240	0.000	11	138.680	0.000
partnership status	5	174.840	0.000	5	255.900	0.000
Gender	1	77.690	0.000	1	100.880	0.000
partnership status*gender	5	1.980	0.079	5	8.920	0.000
Residual (df)	10,325			11,043		
Observations	10,337			11,055		
R-squared	0.095			0.121		
Root MSE	0.729			0.716		

Table A23 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis of attitudes, Tukey HSD, BCS age 26 separation histories groups

Group 1	Group 2	Group 1 mean	Group 2 mean	mean difference	
never separated	separated from cohabitation	3.350	3.181	0.169	***
never separated	separated from marriage	3.350	2.638	0.712	***
separated from cohabitation	separated from marriage	3.181	2.638	0.543	***

F(2, 7341)=173.87, p<0.001

Table A24 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis of attitudes, Tukey HSD, BCS age 30 separation histories groups

Group 1	Group 2	Group 1 mean	Group 2 mean	mean difference	
never separated	separated from cohabitation	3.375	3.159	0.216	***
never separated	separated from marriage	3.375	3.031	0.344	***
separated from cohabitation	separated from marriage	3.159	3.031	0.128	***

F(2, 11073)=328.00, p<0.001

Table A25 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis of attitudes, Tukey HSD, NCDS age 33 separation histories groups

Group 1	Group 2	Group 1 mean	Group 2 mean	mean difference	
never separated	separated from cohabitation	3.224	2.881	0.344	***
never separated	separated from marriage	3.224	2.729	0.496	***
separated from cohabitation	separated from marriage	2.881	2.729	0.152	***

F(2, 10388)=387.99, p<0.001

Table A26 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis of attitudes, Tukey HSD, NCDS age 42 separation histories groups

Group 1	Group 2	Group 1 mean	Group 2 mean	mean difference	
never separated	separated from cohabitation	3.430	3.106	0.324	***
never separated	separated from marriage	3.430	2.917	0.512	***
separated from cohabitation	separated from marriage	3.106	2.917	0.189	***

F(2, 9901)=508.48, p<0.001

Table A27 Two-way ANOVA: legal partnership status and separation on attitudes, BCS age 26 and 30

	BCS age 26			BCS age 30		
	df	F	Prob>F	df	F	Prob>F
Model	8	76.040	0.000	8	121.260	0.000
legal partnership status	2	19.700	0.000	2	55.470	0.000
separation histories	2	111.030	0.000	2	188.910	0.000
status*histories	4	2.420	0.047	4	2.690	0.030
Residual (df)	7,308			10,908		
Observations	7,317			10,917		
R-squared	0.077			0.082		
Root MSE	0.710			0.694		

Table A28 Two-way ANOVA: legal partnership status and separation on attitudes, NCDS age 33 and 42

	NCDS age 33			NCDS age 42		
	df	F	Prob>F	df	F	Prob>F
Model	8	127.920	0.000	8	163.540	0.000
legal partnership status	2	75.430	0.000	2	117.640	0.000
separation histories	2	140.990	0.000	2	121.150	0.000
status*histories	4	0.380	0.825	4	0.870	0.482
Residual (df)	10,341			9,744		
Observations	10,350			9,753		
R-squared	0.090			0.118		
Root MSE	0.731			0.719		

Tables A29 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis, Tukey HSD, marital/partnership trajectories BCS between 26 and 30 and attitudes to family and marriage at 26

a) Initially single, unpartnered BCS age 26

group (1)	group (2)	mean (1)	mean (2)	mean diff (2)-(1)	HSD test	
single, lone	single, lone -> single cohab	3.182	3.207	0.026	0.973	
single, lone	single, lone -> married	3.182	3.471	0.289	10.915	***
single, lone -> single cohab	single, lone -> married	3.207	3.471	0.263	9.943	***

F(2, 2827)=31.37, p<0.001

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level

b) Initially single, cohabiting BCS age 26

group (1)	group (2)	mean (1)	mean (2)	mean diff (2)-(1)	HSD test	
single, cohab	single, cohab -> married	3.132	3.360	0.228	7.364	***
single, cohab	single, cohab -> single, lone	3.132	3.081	-0.051	1.640	
single, cohab -> married	single, cohab -> single, lone	3.360	3.081	-0.279	9.004	***

F(2, 1765)=27.15, p<0.001

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level

c) Initially married BCS age 26

group (1)	group (2)	mean (1)	mean (2)	mean diff (2)-(1)	HSD test	
married	married -> sep/div, lone	3.547	3.431	-0.115	2.333	
married	married -> sep/div, cohab	3.547	3.337	-0.210	4.248	***
married -> sep/div, lone	married -> sep/div, cohab	3.431	3.337	0.095	1.915	

F(2, 2196)=6.67, p<0.01

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level

Tables 4.20 Multiple comparisons from one-way ANOVA analysis, Tukey HSD, marital/partnership trajectories NCDS between 33 and 42 and attitudes to family and marriage at 33

a) Initially single, unpartnered NCDS age 33

group (1)	group (2)	mean (1)	mean (2)	mean diff (2)-(1)	HSD test	
single, lone	single, lone -> single, cohab	3.0342	2.8406	-0.1936	4.0872	*
single, lone	single, lone -> married	3.0342	3.1101	0.0759	1.6031	
single, lone -> single, cohab	single, lone -> married	2.8406	3.1101	0.2696	5.6903	***

F(2, 1002)=6.49, p<0.01

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level

b) Initially single, cohabiting NCDS age 33

group (1)	group (2)	mean (1)	mean (2)	mean diff (2)-(1)	HSD test
single, cohab	single, cohab -> married single, cohab -> single,	2.6837	2.9427	0.259	3.6406
single, cohab	lone	2.6837	2.5977	-0.086	1.2092 **
single, cohab -> married	single, cohab -> single, lone	2.9427	2.5977	-0.345	4.8498 ***

F(2, 462)=8.04, p<0.001

c) Initially married NCDS age 33

group (1)	group (2)	mean (1)	mean (2)	mean diff (2)-(1)	HSD test
married	married -> sep/div, lone	3.278	3.088	-0.190	4.764 ***
married	married -> sep/div, cohabiting	3.278	2.993	-0.285	7.123 ***
married	married -> remarried	3.278	3.101	-0.177	4.429 ***
married -> sep/div, lone	married -> sep/div, cohabiting	3.088	2.993	-0.094	2.359
married -> sep/div, lone	married -> remarried	3.088	3.101	0.013	0.336
married -> sep/div, cohab	married -> remarried	2.993	3.101	0.108	2.695

F(3, 5972)=24.420, p<0.001

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level

d) Initially separated/divorced, unpartnered  
NCDS age 33

group (1)	group (2)	mean (1)	mean (2)	mean diff (2)-(1)	HSD test
sep/div, lone	sep/div, lone -> sep/div, cohab	2.747	2.667	-0.081	1.247
sep/div, lone	sep/div, lone -> remarried	2.747	2.663	-0.085	1.309
sep/div, lone -> sep/div, cohab	sep/div, lone -> remarried	2.667	2.663	-0.004	0.062

F(2, 545)=0.68, p>0.05

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level

e) Initially separated/divorced, cohabiting  
NCDS age 33

group (1)	group (2)	mean (1)	mean (2)	mean diff (2)- (1)	HSD test
sep/div, cohab	sep/div, cohab -> remarried	2.490	2.463	-0.028	0.392
sep/div, cohab	sep/div, cohab -> sep/div, lone	2.490	2.461	-0.029	0.412
sep/div, cohab -> remarried	sep/div, cohab -> sep/div, lone	2.463	2.461	-0.001	0.020

F(2, 338)=0.06, p>0.05

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level

f) Initially remarried NCDS age 33

group (1)	group (2)	Mean (1)	mean (2)	mean diff (2)- (1)	HSD test
remarried	remarried -> sep/div, lone	2.857	2.916	0.059	0.753
remarried	remarried -> sep/div, cohab	2.857	2.731	-0.126	1.618
remarried -> sep/div, lone	remarried -> sep/div, cohab	2.916	2.731	-0.185	2.371

F(2, 581)=1.05, p>0.05

Mean difference: \* significant at the .05; \*\* significant at the .01; \*\*\* significant at the .001 level

## Appendix 3 (Chapter 5)

### 3.1 Attitudes and whether youngest child in the household is pre-school age or school age: Multiple Comparison Tables: AMOVA

Table A31 Attitude and age of youngest child at home, BCS age 26

	Group 1	Group 2	Mean difference (Group 1 - Group 2)	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
MEN	no children	pre-school	-0.205	*** 0.033	-0.283	-0.126
		school age	0.131	0.080	-0.056	0.318
	pre-school	no children	0.205	*** 0.033	0.126	0.283
		school age	0.335	*** 0.084	0.138	0.532
WOME N	no children	pre-school	-0.006	0.025	-0.065	0.053
		school age	0.204	*** 0.053	0.079	0.329
	pre-school	no children	0.006	0.025	-0.053	0.065
		school age	0.210	*** 0.056	0.079	0.340

Mean difference: \* significant at 0.05 level; \*\* significant at the 0.01 level; \*\*\* significant at the 0.001 level

Men: F(2, 3398)=21.010, p<0.001; women: F=(2, 4351)=7.631, p<0.001)

Table A32 Attitude and age of youngest child at home, BCS age 30

	Group 1	Group 2	Mean difference (Group 1 - Group 2)	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
MEN	no children	pre-school	-0.185	*** 0.023	-0.238	-0.133
		school age	-0.039	0.039	-0.131	0.053
	pre-school	no children	0.185	*** 0.023	0.133	0.238
		school age	0.146	** 0.041	0.050	0.242
WOME N	no children	pre-school	-0.107	*** 0.022	-0.158	-0.056
		school age	0.061	0.030	-0.009	0.132
	pre-school	no children	0.107	*** 0.022	0.056	0.158
		school age	0.169	*** 0.030	0.099	0.238

Mean difference: \* significant at 0.05 level; \*\* significant at the 0.01 level; \*\*\* significant at the 0.001 level  
 Men:  $F(2, 4566)=34.150, p<0.001$ ; women  $(F(2, 5196)=20.928, p<0.001)$

Table A33 Attitude and age of youngest child at home, NCDS age 33

	Group 1	Group 2	Mean difference (Group 1 - Group 2)	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
MEN	no children	pre-school	-0.245	*** 0.026	-0.305	-0.185
		school age	-0.223	*** 0.031	-0.295	-0.151
	pre-school	no children	0.245	*** 0.026	0.185	0.305
		school age	0.022	0.028	-0.044	0.089
WOME N	no children	pre-school	-0.123	*** 0.028	-0.188	-0.057
		school age	-0.153	*** 0.030	-0.224	-0.083
	pre-school	no children	0.123	*** 0.028	0.057	0.188
		school age	-0.031	0.024	-0.087	0.025

Mean difference: \* significant at 0.05 level; \*\* significant at the 0.01 level; \*\*\* significant at the 0.001 level  
 Men:  $F(2, 4671)=49.942, p<0.001$ ; women:  $F(2, 5131)=13.882, p<0.001$

Table A34 Attitude and age of youngest child at home, NCDS age 42

	Group 1	Group 2	Mean difference (Group 1 - Group 2)	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
MEN	no children	pre-school	0.061	0.049	-0.055	0.177
			0.027	0.036	-0.057	0.112
	pre-school	no children	-0.061	0.049	-0.177	0.055
		school age	-0.034	0.041	-0.130	0.062
WOMEN	no children	pre-school	0.029	0.047	-0.082	0.139
			-0.010	0.035	-0.091	0.071
	pre-school	no children	-0.029	0.047	-0.139	0.082
		school age	-0.038	0.039	-0.130	0.054

Mean difference: \* significant at 0.05 level; \*\* significant at the 0.01 level; \*\*\* significant at the 0.001 level  
 Men:  $F(2, 3085)=0.767, p>0.05$ ; women:  $F(2, 3250)=0.475, p>0.05$

### 3.2 Multiple comparisons of attitude means by educational attainment

Table A35 Attitude difference between cohort members with varying levels of education, BCS age 26

	No qualifications	Minimum school level	A-level equivalent
Minimum school level	-0.043		
A-level equivalent	-0.167***	-0.123***	
Degree level or higher	-0.205***	-0.162***	-0.039

Mean difference: \* significant at 0.05 level; \*\* significant at the 0.01 level; \*\*\* significant at the 0.001 level  
 $F(3,8229)=27.46, p<0.001$

Table A36 Attitude difference between cohort members with varying levels of education, NCDS age 33

	No qualifications	Minimum school level	A-level equivalent
Minimum school level	-0.126***		
A-level equivalent	-0.151***	-0.025	
Degree level or higher	-0.273***	-0.147***	-0.123***

Mean difference: \* significant at 0.05 level; \*\* significant at the 0.01 level; \*\*\* significant at the 0.001 level  
 $F(3,10424)=27.58, p<0.001$

### 3.3 AVOVA results for attitudes on qualifications/social class/employment

Table A37 ANOVA results for the relationship between qualifications, gender and attitudes, BCS age 26 and NCDS age 33

	BCS age 26			NCDS age 33		
	df	F	Prob>F	df	F	Prob>F
Model	7	13.190	0.000	7	36.68	0.000
qualifications	3	25.930	0.000	3	33.42	0.000
gender	1	9.080	0.003	1	122.67	0.000
qualifications*gender	3	3.090	0.026	3	4.33	0.005
Residual	8,117			10,338		
Observations	8,125			10,346		
R-squared	0.011			0.024		
Root MSE	0.730			0.758		

Table A38 ANOVA results for the relationship between social class, gender and attitudes, BCS age 26 and NCDS age 33

	BCS age 26			NCDS age 33		
	df	F	Prob>F	df	F	Prob>F
Model	7	8.070	0.000	7	22.280	0.000
social class	3	8.310	0.000	3	15.110	0.000
gender	1	3.170	0.075	1	61.480	0.000
social class*gender	3	6.580	0.000	3	0.390	0.762
Residual	6,646			7,908		
Observations	6,654			7,916		
R-squared	0.008			0.019		
Root MSE	0.726			0.749		

Table A39 ANOVA results for the relationship between employment, gender and attitudes, BCS age 26 and NCDS age 33

	BCS age 26			NCDS age 33		
	df	F	Prob>F	df	F	Prob>F
Model	9	3.460	0.000	9	23.680	0.000
employment	4	4.580	0.001	4	2.220	0.064
gender	1	0.100	0.758	1	16.400	0.000
employment*gender	4	0.920	0.449	4	0.810	0.521
Residual	8,562			10,534		
Observations	8,572			10,544		
R-squared	0.004			0.020		
Root MSE	0.735			0.760		

## Appendix 4 (Chapter 6)

### 4.1 Predicting attitudes at time 1 using legal marital status among the predictors

Table A40 Predicting attitudes at 26 using all the predictors, BCS (single, never married as a reference)

	All				Women				Men			
	coef	beta	T		coef	beta	t		coef	beta	t	
Marital status (single – ref)												
married first time	0.258	0.173	10.130	***	0.276	0.192	8.470	***	0.226	0.144	5.520	***
Remarried	-0.289	-0.026	-2.960	**	-0.258	-0.023	-1.560		-0.313	-0.028	-2.630	**
Separated/divorced	-0.524	-0.127	-6.390	***	-0.563	-0.161	-6.140	***	-0.445	-0.077	-2.400	*

Table A41 Predicting attitudes at 26 using all the predictors, BCS (separated/divorced as a reference)

	All				Women				Men			
	coef	beta	T		coef	beta	t		coef	beta	t	
Marital status (sep/divorced - ref)												
single	0.524	0.359	6.390	***	0.563	0.397	6.140	***	0.445	0.289	2.400	*
married first time	0.782	0.525	9.330	***	0.839	0.582	8.870	***	0.671	0.429	3.560	***
Remarried	0.235	0.021	2.020	*	0.305	0.027	1.730		0.132	0.012	0.640	

Table A42 Predicting attitudes at 33 using all the predictors, NCDS (single, never married as a reference)

	All				Women				Men			
	coef	Beta	t		coef	Beta	T		coef	beta	t	
Marital status (single – ref)												
married first time	0.283	0.169	8.470	***	0.227	0.140	4.580	***	0.325	0.190	7.180	***
Remarried	0.146	0.052	2.590	**	0.138	0.053	1.850		0.164	0.053	1.900	
Separated/divorced	0.069	0.025	1.270		0.015	0.006	0.200		0.139	0.044	1.730	

Table A43 Predicting attitudes at 33 using all the predictors, NCDS (separated/divorced as a reference)

	All				Women				Men			
	coef	Beta	t		coef	Beta	T		coef	beta	t	
Marital status (separate/divorced - ref)												
single	0.069	0.030	1.270		0.015	0.006	0.200		0.139	0.064	1.730	
married first time	0.352	0.211	6.650	***	0.242	0.150	3.390	***	0.464	0.272	5.830	***
Remarried	0.216	0.076	4.220	***	0.153	0.059	2.380	*	0.303	0.097	3.620	***

#### 4.2 Predicting attitudes at time 1 using partnership/marital status among the predictors

Table A44 Parameter estimates for linear regression of attitudes at 26 on the full set of predictors, BCS (*partnership/marital status*)

Attitudes at 26	All (n=3655)			Women (n=2026)			Men (n=1629)					
	Coef.	Beta	T	Coef.	Beta	T	Coef.	Beta	t			
Women	-0.009	-0.007	-0.370									
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.001	0.004	0.240	0.002	0.017	0.740	-0.001	-0.004	-0.150			
Father's Social class (prof/managerial – ref)												
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.046	-0.031	-1.480	-0.085	-0.058	-2.030	*	-0.004	-0.003	-0.090		
partly skilled	-0.066	-0.031	-1.530	-0.100	-0.047	-1.750		-0.035	-0.017	-0.530		
Unskilled	-0.050	-0.013	-0.740	-0.144	-0.038	-1.720		0.063	0.017	0.590		
Mum left school minimum age	0.018	0.012	0.710	0.003	0.002	0.090		0.039	0.026	1.020		
Mum worked CM aged 5	0.008	0.006	0.360	0.030	0.021	0.960		-0.018	-0.012	-0.490		
CM has younger siblings at 5	0.004	0.003	0.160	0.011	0.008	0.340		0.003	0.002	0.070		
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.154	-0.077	-4.720	***	-0.109	-0.055	-2.640	**	-0.211	-0.104	-4.050	***
Education (nvq5/6 - ref)												
no qualifications	0.325	0.081	4.410	***	0.274	0.054	2.460	*	0.346	0.102	3.540	***
Nvq1/2	0.178	0.122	5.080	***	0.174	0.121	3.720	***	0.183	0.125	3.420	***
Nvq3/4	0.012	0.006	0.300		0.020	0.011	0.380		0.003	0.002	0.060	
Social class (professional/managerial – ref)												
skilled non-manual	0.012	0.007	0.390		0.034	0.024	0.960		-0.045	-0.022	-0.830	
skilled manual	0.077	0.041	2.190	*	0.105	0.040	1.810		0.051	0.032	1.090	
Semi-skilled/unskilled	0.059	0.029	1.530		0.031	0.015	0.580		0.087	0.044	1.580	
Employment (employed FT - ref)												
Employed PT	-0.055	-0.023	-1.280		-0.003	-0.001	-0.050		-0.228	-0.042	-1.900	
unemployed/disabled/sick	0.081	0.004	0.300		0.469	0.021	2.760	**	-0.229	-0.011	-0.590	
home/family care	-0.167	-0.012	-0.520		-0.103	-0.010	-0.320					
FT education/other	-0.078	-0.012	-0.680		-0.017	-0.003	-0.140		-0.181	-0.019	-0.690	
Dependent children (none – ref)												
children under 5	-0.047	-0.025	-1.350		-0.097	-0.053	-1.900		-0.009	-0.005	-0.170	
children over 5	-0.147	-0.031	-2.040	*	-0.142	-0.032	-1.490		-0.201	-0.039	-1.760	
Relationship breakdown prior to 26 (none - ref)												
cohabiting relationship	-0.123	-0.055	-3.220	***	-0.084	-0.039	-1.690		-0.164	-0.072	-2.790	**
marital relationship	-0.650	-0.167	-9.640	***	-0.646	-0.193	-8.440	***	-0.626	-0.122	-4.400	***
Relationship status (married – ref)												
Single	-0.231	-0.153	-7.690	***	-0.251	-0.164	-6.380	***	-0.199	-0.133	-4.150	***
Cohabiting	-0.280	-0.182	-10.010	***	-0.299	-0.195	-8.120	***	-0.246	-0.158	-5.590	***
Constant	3.429	.	40.270	***	3.396	.	31.060	***	3.419	.	26.200	***

All: R<sup>2</sup>=0.095, F(25, 3655)=15.370, p<0.001\*\*\*; Women: R<sup>2</sup>=0.108, F(24, 2026)=10.520, p<0.001\*\*\*; Men: R<sup>2</sup>=0.090, F(24, 1629)=7.160, p<0.001\*\*\*

Table A45 Parameter estimates – partnership breakdown and partnership/marital status, reference categories changed, BCS (*cohabiting relationship breakdown and single as references*)

	All				Women				Men			
	coef	beta	t		Coef	beta	t		coef	beta	t	
Relationship breakdown prior to 26 (cohabiting relationship breakdown - ref)												
no relationship breakdown	0.123	0.062	3.220	***	0.084	0.045	1.690		0.164	0.077	2.790	***
marital relationship breakdown	-0.528	-0.136	-7.070	***	-0.562	-0.168	-6.470	***	-0.461	-0.090	-3.040	**
Relationship status (single – ref)												
Married	0.231	0.156	7.690	***	0.251	0.174	6.380	***	0.199	0.128	4.150	***
Cohabiting	-0.049	-0.032	-1.670		-0.048	-0.031	-1.190		-0.047	-0.030	-1.070	

Table A46 Parameter estimates for linear regression of attitudes at 33 on the full set of predictors, NCDS (*partnership/marital status*)

Predicting attitudes at 33	All (n=5641)				Women (n=2802)				Men (n=2839)			
	Coef.	Beta	t		Coef.	Beta	T		Coef.	Beta	t	
Women	-0.192	-0.128	-7.220	***								
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.000	0.002	0.170		0.000	0.001	0.040		0.000	0.002	0.090	
Father's SEG (prof/managerial – ref)												
Skilled manual/non-manual	-0.080	-0.052	-2.970	**	-0.041	-0.027	-1.050		-0.119	-0.077	-3.200	***
partly skilled	-0.090	-0.039	-2.470	*	-0.077	-0.034	-1.510		-0.105	-0.045	-2.030	*
Unskilled	-0.051	-0.018	-1.170		0.031	0.012	0.510		-0.134	-0.045	-2.110	*
Mum left school minimum age	-0.007	-0.004	-0.300		-0.073	-0.044	-2.230	*	0.056	0.033	1.690	
Mum worked CM pre-school	0.000	0.000	0.010		0.028	0.018	0.960		-0.035	-0.021	-1.160	
CM has younger siblings at 7	0.029	0.019	1.350		0.022	0.015	0.770		0.037	0.024	1.200	
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.056	-0.020	-1.610		-0.075	-0.029	-1.600		-0.025	-0.009	-0.490	
Education (nvq5/6 – ref)												
no qualifications	0.262	0.098	5.530	***	0.182	0.073	2.750	**	0.336	0.119	4.930	***
Nvq1/2	0.175	0.117	5.070	***	0.143	0.097	2.800	**	0.198	0.130	4.220	***
Nvq3/4	0.117	0.072	3.530	***	0.085	0.051	1.720		0.141	0.089	3.150	**
SEG (professional/managerial – ref)												
skilled non-manual	0.042	0.023	1.550		0.038	0.025	1.110		0.068	0.027	1.420	
skilled manual	0.067	0.035	2.350	*	0.083	0.029	1.350		0.057	0.035	1.730	
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.082	0.039	2.540	*	0.080	0.045	1.960	*	0.094	0.037	1.750	
Employment (employed FT - ref)												
employed PT	0.056	0.030	1.760		0.078	0.052	2.100	*	-0.050	-0.006	-0.340	
Unemployed/disabled/sick	-0.036	-0.008	-0.610		-0.092	-0.018	-0.980		-0.004	-0.001	-0.050	
home/family care	0.030	0.013	0.810		0.052	0.030	1.240		-0.097	-0.006	-0.280	
FT education/other	-0.016	-0.002	-0.140		-0.078	-0.011	-0.550		0.084	0.009	0.430	
Dependent children (none – ref)												
children under 5	0.039	0.026	1.460		0.016	0.011	0.370		0.057	0.038	1.530	
children over 5	-0.021	-0.012	-0.680		-0.037	-0.024	-0.840		-0.002	-0.001	-0.050	
Relationship breakdown prior to 33 (none – ref)												
cohabiting relationship	-0.291	-0.096	-7.420	***	-0.378	-0.123	-6.960	***	-0.211	-0.072	-3.800	***
marital relationship	-0.396	-0.192	-13.220	***	-0.433	-0.230	-11.140	***	-0.352	-0.154	-7.470	***
Relationship status (married – ref)												
Single	-0.140	-0.057	-3.820	***	-0.116	-0.050	-2.350	*	-0.139	-0.054	-2.440	*
Cohabiting	-0.379	-0.151	-10.950	***	-0.296	-0.115	-5.760	***	-0.445	-0.184	-9.570	***
_Constant	3.187	.	44.350	***	3.054	.	30.600	***	3.136	.	31.050	***

All: R<sup>2</sup>=0.118, F(25, 5615)=30.440, p<0.001\*\*\*; Women: R<sup>2</sup>=0.116, F(24, 2802)=15.320, p<0.001\*\*\*; Men: R<sup>2</sup>=0.109, F(24, 2814)=15.280, p<0.001\*\*\*

Table A47 Parameter estimates – partnership breakdown and partnership/marital status, reference categories changed, NCDS (*cohabiting relationship breakdown and single as references*)

	All				Women				Men			
	coef	Beta	t		coef	beta	T		coef	beta	t	
Relationship breakdown prior to 33 (cohabiting relationship breakdown - ref)												
no relationship breakdown	0.291	0.161	7.420	***	0.378	0.223	6.960	***	0.211	0.111	3.800	***
marital relationship breakdown	-0.106	-0.051	-2.340	*	-0.055	-0.029	-0.910		-0.141	-0.062	-2.100	*
Relationship status (single – ref)												
Married	0.140	0.075	3.820	***	0.116	0.063	2.350	*	0.139	0.074	2.440	*
Cohabiting	-0.239	-0.095	-5.450	***	-0.180	-0.070	-2.860	**	-0.306	-0.126	-4.840	***

### 4.3 Predicting attitudes at time 2 using parental predictors only

Table A48 Parameter estimates for the linear regression of attitudes at 30 on parental characteristics, BCS men and women

Attitudes at 30	All (n=3,621)				Women (n=2,001)				Men (n=1,620)				
	coef	beta	t		coef	beta	t		coef	beta	t		
Women	-0.069	-0.050	-3.010	**									
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.002	0.011	0.630		0.005	0.033	1.380		-0.002	-0.016	-0.580		
Father's SEG (prof/managerial – ref)													
Skilled manual/non-manual	0.006	0.004	0.200		-0.019	-0.013	-0.440		0.037	0.026	0.780		
partly skilled	0.004	0.002	0.080		0.016	0.008	0.270		-0.014	-0.007	-0.220		
unskilled	-0.013	-0.004	-0.180		0.013	0.003	0.150		-0.041	-0.012	-0.360		
Mum left school minimum age	0.022	0.015	0.860		0.008	0.006	0.250		0.038	0.027	0.990		
Mum worked CM aged 5	0.000	0.000	-0.010		0.019	0.014	0.590		-0.024	-0.017	-0.660		
CM has younger siblings at 5	-0.015	-0.011	-0.580		0.004	0.003	0.120		-0.042	-0.030	-1.080		
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.160	-0.082	-4.720	***	-0.129	-0.066	-2.880	**	-0.194	-0.101	-3.720	***	
_Constant	3.415	.	42.390	***	3.265	.	30.110	***	3.512	.	29.470	***	
R2=0.010, F(9, 3611)=4.030, p<0.001					R2=0.001, F(8, 1992)=1.640, p>0.05					R2=0.013, F(8, 1611)=2.500, p<0.05			

Table A49 Parameter estimates for the linear regression of attitudes at 42 on parental characteristics, NCDS men and women

Attitudes at 42	All (n=6,221)				Women (n=3,029)			Men (n=3,192)				
	coef	beta	t		coef	beta	t	coef	beta	t		
Women	-0.191	-0.129	-10.240	***								
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.001	0.010	0.710		0.002	0.016	0.760	0.001	0.005	0.250		
Father's SEG (prof/managerial – ref)												
Skilled man/non-manual	0.027	0.018	1.040		0.099	0.066	2.630	**	-0.037	-0.024	-1.050	
partly skilled	0.058	0.025	1.600		0.112	0.050	2.120	*	0.008	0.003	0.160	
unskilled	0.097	0.035	2.340	*	0.165	0.062	2.800	**	0.039	0.013	0.660	
Mum left school min age	0.060	0.036	2.670	**	-0.009	-0.005	-0.280		0.123	0.075	3.930	***
Mum worked CM pre-school	-0.005	-0.003	-0.250		-0.041	-0.026	-1.370		0.029	0.018	0.980	
CM has younger siblings at 7	0.013	0.009	0.640		0.019	0.013	0.630		0.008	0.006	0.290	
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.068	-0.025	-1.900		-0.009	-0.003	-0.180		-0.131	-0.047	-2.550	**
Constant	3.239	.	49.120	***	3.025	.	32.770	***	3.258	.	35.270	
	R2=0.020, F(9, 6211)=14.360, p<0.001				R2=0.004, F(8, 3020)=1.580, p>0.05			R2=0.009 F(8, 3183)=3.500, p<0.01				

#### 4.4 Parameter estimates for legal marital status (from regression models with all predictors included – parental and own)

Table A50 Parameter estimates for legal marital status (single – reference), BCS

Attitudes at 30	All			Women			Men					
	coef	beta	t	coef	beta	t	coef	beta	t			
Marital status at 30 (single – ref)												
married first time	0.244	0.175	9.420	***	0.240	0.170	6.790	***	0.246	0.177	6.290	***
remarried	-0.175	-0.033	-1.930		-0.165	-0.033	-1.500		-0.187	-0.032	-1.170	
separated/divorced	-0.392	-0.129	-6.520	***	-0.505	-0.182	-7.040	***	-0.156	-0.045	-1.470	

Table A51 Parameter estimates for legal marital status (separated/divorced – reference), BCS

Attitudes at 30	All			Women			Men					
	coef	beta	t	coef	beta	t	coef	beta	t			
Marital status (sep/div - ref)												
single	0.392	0.272	6.520	***	0.505	0.341	7.040	***	0.156	0.111	1.470	
married first time	0.636	0.455	10.330	***	0.746	0.528	10.040	***	0.402	0.290	3.700	***
remarried	0.217	0.040	2.160	*	0.340	0.068	2.840	**	-0.032	-0.005	-0.170	

Table A52 Parameter estimates for legal marital status (single – reference), NCDS

Attitudes at 42	All			Women			Men					
	coef	beta	t	coef	beta	t	coef	beta	t			
Marital status at 42 (single, never married – ref)												
Married	0.292	0.189	9.200	***	0.307	0.203	7.040	***	0.263	0.169	5.720	***
Remarried	0.099	0.040	2.240	*	0.135	0.058	2.270	*	0.062	0.024	0.960	
separated/divorced	-0.226	-0.108	-5.420	***	-0.259	-0.131	-4.580	***	-0.165	-0.075	-2.730	**

Table A53 Parameter estimates for legal marital status (separated/divorced – reference), NCDS

Attitudes at 42	All			Women			Men					
	coef	beta	t	coef	beta	t	coef	beta	t			
Marital status at 42 (sep/div – ref)												
Single	0.226	0.097	5.420	***	0.259	0.107	4.580	***	0.165	0.074	2.730	**
Married	0.518	0.335	12.690	***	0.565	0.374	10.300	***	0.428	0.275	6.980	***
Remarried	0.325	0.132	8.780	***	0.394	0.169	8.200	***	0.227	0.089	4.000	***

#### 4.5 Predicting attitude at time 2 (partnership/marital status and partnership/marital breakdown)

Table A54 Parameter estimates for the full linear regression of attitudes at 30 (BCS), using marital/partnership status

Attitudes at 30	All (n=3,621)				Women (n=1,976)			Men (n=1,620)				
	coef	beta	t		coef	beta	t	coef	beta	t		
Women	-0.057	-0.041	-2.310	*								
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.003	0.020	1.150		0.004	0.028	1.230	0.002	0.011	0.430		
Father's SEG (prof/managerial – ref)												
Skilled manual/non-manual	-0.012	-0.008	-0.380		-0.034	-0.023	-0.830	0.018	0.012	0.390		
partly skilled	-0.016	-0.008	-0.400		-0.010	-0.005	-0.170	-0.019	-0.009	-0.310		
unskilled	-0.053	-0.014	-0.770		-0.021	-0.005	-0.240	-0.082	-0.024	-0.750		
Mum left school minimum age	-0.007	-0.005	-0.290		-0.017	-0.012	-0.520	-0.002	-0.002	-0.060		
Mum worked CM aged 5	-0.008	-0.006	-0.330		0.015	0.010	0.470	-0.036	-0.026	-1.040		
CM has younger siblings at 5	-0.012	-0.009	-0.480		-0.012	-0.009	-0.370	-0.017	-0.012	-0.460		
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.127	-0.065	-3.870	***	-0.095	-0.048	-2.230	*	-0.163	-0.085	-3.200	***
Education (nvq5/6 - ref)												
no qualifications	0.305	0.079	4.160	***	0.110	0.022	0.940	0.419	0.133	4.370	***	
Nvq1/2	0.115	0.080	3.330	***	0.079	0.055	1.700	0.161	0.113	3.090	**	
Nvq3/4	-0.004	-0.002	-0.110		-0.061	-0.033	-1.150	0.068	0.034	1.110		
SEG (professional/managerial – ref)												
Skilled non-manual	0.024	0.016	0.820		0.045	0.032	1.270	-0.015	-0.008	-0.270		
Skilled manual	0.044	0.024	1.270		0.115	0.044	1.920	-0.004	-0.003	-0.100		
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.040	0.020	1.070		0.039	0.019	0.760	0.039	0.021	0.730		
Employment (employed FT - ref)												
employed PT	0.003	0.001	0.080		0.005	0.003	0.110	0.076	0.015	0.710		
unemployed/temp/perm disabled/sick	0.341	0.016	1.290		-0.059	-0.003	-0.230	0.718	0.036	2.090	*	
home/family care	0.177	0.014	0.760		0.200	0.021	0.860					
FT education/other	-0.130	-0.020	-1.450		-0.084	-0.015	-0.900	-0.291	-0.031	-1.390		
Dependent children at 30 (none – ref)												
children under 5	0.040	0.028	1.510		0.031	0.022	0.880	0.058	0.040	1.450		
children over 5	-0.055	-0.021	-1.230		-0.058	-0.023	-0.940	-0.031	-0.012	-0.470		
Relationship breakdown prior to 42 (none - ref)												
cohabiting relationship	-0.101	-0.055	-3.180	**	-0.084	-0.045	-1.930	-0.128	-0.069	-2.690	**	
marital relationship	-0.499	-0.187	-10.480	***	-0.564	-0.229	-9.910	***	-0.355	-0.117	-4.150	***
Relationship status at 42 (married – ref)												
Single	-0.239	-0.125	-6.650	***	-0.237	-0.119	-4.950	***	-0.227	-0.124	-4.060	***
Cohabiting	-0.244	-0.156	-8.900	***	-0.254	-0.158	-6.770	***	-0.234	-0.153	-5.740	***
Constant	3.453	.	42.420	***	3.400	.	31.200	***	3.442	.	28.040	***
	R2=0.105, F(25, 3595)=16.520, p<0.001				R2=0.124, F(24, 1976)=11.780, p<0.001				R2=0.089, F(23, 1596)=6.500, p<0.001			

Table A55 Parameter estimates – partnership breakdown and partnership/marital status, reference categories changed (*cohabiting relationship breakdown and single as reference*), BCS

Attitudes at 30	All			Women			Men					
	coef	beta	t	coef	beta	t	coef	beta	t			
Relationship breakdown prior to 30 separated from cohab - ref)												
never separated	0.101	0.062	3.180	**	0.084	0.053	1.930		0.128	0.077	2.690	**
marital relationship	-0.398	-0.149	-7.500	***	-0.480	-0.195	-7.470	***	-0.227	-0.075	-2.450	*
Relationship status at 30 (single – ref)												
married	0.239	0.170	6.650	***	0.237	0.167	4.950	***	0.227	0.163	4.060	***
cohabiting	-0.005	-0.003	-0.130		-0.016	-0.010	-0.330		-0.007	-0.005	-0.130	

Table A56 Parameter estimates for the full linear regression of attitudes at 42 (NCDS), using marital/partnership status

Attitudes at 42	All (n=6,221)				Women (n=3,029)				Men (n=3,192)			
	coef	beta	t		coef	beta	t		coef	beta	t	
Women	-0.222	-0.149	-9.490	***								
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.001	0.006	0.460		0.001	0.006	0.330		0.001	0.004	0.230	
Father's SEG (prof/managerial – ref)												
Skilled manual/non-manual partly skilled	-0.011	-0.007	-0.430		0.070	0.046	2.000	*	-0.079	-0.052	-2.340	*
unskilled	0.005	0.002	0.150		0.077	0.034	1.570		-0.063	-0.028	-1.350	
Mum left school minimum age	0.012	0.004	0.310		0.090	0.034	1.660		-0.048	-0.016	-0.850	
Mum worked CM pre-school	0.012	0.007	0.550		-0.041	-0.025	-1.380		0.065	0.039	2.150	*
CM has younger siblings at 7	0.005	0.003	0.260		-0.011	-0.007	-0.410		0.017	0.011	0.620	
CM has younger siblings at 7	0.006	0.004	0.310		0.005	0.003	0.180		0.008	0.005	0.280	
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.042	-0.015	-1.270		0.000	0.000	0.010		-0.087	-0.031	-1.840	
Education (nvq5/6 - ref)												
no qualifications	0.379	0.144	8.770	***	0.274	0.109	4.570	***	0.445	0.164	7.220	***
Nvq1/2	0.182	0.122	5.870	***	0.070	0.048	1.550		0.259	0.172	6.090	***
Nvq3/4	0.092	0.057	3.060	**	0.019	0.011	0.430		0.141	0.090	3.450	***
SEG (professional/managerial – ref)												
skilled non-manual	0.004	0.002	0.150		0.034	0.022	1.050		-0.038	-0.015	-0.860	
skilled manual	0.058	0.031	2.220	*	0.000	0.000	0.010		0.055	0.034	1.730	
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.062	0.030	2.140	*	0.081	0.044	2.080	*	0.050	0.021	1.140	
Employment (employed FT - ref)												
employed PT	0.060	0.031	2.090	*	0.057	0.037	1.790		0.086	0.011	0.660	
unemployed/temp/perm disabled/sick	0.100	0.023	2.010	*	-0.040	-0.008	-0.530		0.167	0.043	2.620	**
home/family care	0.087	0.037	2.560	**	0.084	0.048	2.220	*	-0.104	-0.007	-0.580	
FT education/other	0.129	0.016	1.250		-0.031	-0.004	-0.270		0.363	0.039	1.980	*
Dependent children at 42 (none – ref)												
children under 5	0.021	0.009	0.650		-0.010	-0.004	-0.200		0.105	0.051	2.400	*
children over 5	0.033	0.021	1.350		0.000	0.000	-0.010		0.122	0.082	3.440	***
Relationship breakdown prior to 42 (none - ref)												
cohabiting relationship	-0.172	-0.065	-5.120	***	-0.201	-0.073	-4.230	***	-0.147	-0.057	-3.100	**
marital relationship	-0.372	-0.220	-16.160	***	-0.411	-0.254	-13.270	***	-0.309	-0.176	-9.030	***
Relationship status at 42 (married – ref)												
single	-0.260	-0.127	-8.670	***	-0.359	-0.180	-9.340	***	-0.114	-0.055	-2.420	*
cohabiting	-0.386	-0.160	-12.550	***	-0.363	-0.152	-8.600	***	-0.389	-0.162	-8.750	***
Constant	3.316	.	49.020	***	3.209	.	33.960	***	3.184	.	33.340	***

R2=0.161, F(25, 6195)=48.720, p<0.001

R2=0.184, F(24, 3004)=28.580, p<0.001

R2=0.132, F(24, 3167)=19.600, p<0.001

Table A57 Parameter estimates – partnership breakdown and partnership/marital status, reference categories changed, NCDS (*cohabiting relationship breakdown and single as references*)

Attitudes at 42	All				Women				Men			
	coef	beta	t		coef	beta	t		coef	beta	t	
Relationship breakdown prior to 42 (sep from cohab - ref)												
never separated	0.172	0.108	4.790	***	0.225	0.145	4.370	***	0.131	0.081	2.630	**
marital relationship	-0.180	-0.103	-4.660	***	-0.179	-0.107	-3.290	***	-0.144	-0.079	-2.620	**
Relationship status at 42 (single – ref)												
married	0.240	0.142	8.760	***	0.297	0.177	8.030	***	0.158	0.094	3.880	***
cohabiting	-0.146	-0.039	-3.000	**	-0.023	-0.006	-0.360		-0.276	-0.075	-3.830	***

## Appendix 5 (Chapter 7)

### 5.1 Results from the analyses of BCS sample on the relationship between the breakdown of first marriage and attitudes

Table A58 Marital breakdown trajectory between 26 and 30, BCS analysis sample

BCS, marital dissolution	Analysis sample			Available sample		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
continuously married	706 93.9%	443 97.4%	1,149 95.2%	1,266 93.9%	702 95.40%	1,968 94.4%
married first time->sep/div	46 6.1%	12 2.6%	58 4.8%	82 6.1%	34 4.6%	116 5.6%
Total	752 100%	455 100%	1,207 100%	1,348 100%	736 100%	2,084 100%

Table A59 Change in attitude scores among those among those who remained continuously married and those who separated/divorced between 26 and 30, BCS analysis sample

	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Difference in average score
Continuously married				
scale26	1149	3.523	0.644	0.031
scale30	1149	3.554	0.665	
Married first time -> separated/divorced				
scale26	58	3.471	0.726	-0.741
scale30	58	2.730	0.832	

Table A60 Parameter estimates from the linear regression of attitudes at 26, BCS sample of first time married respondents at 26

ATTITUDES AT 26						
	ALL		Women		Men	
Women	-0.022					
	[0.041]					
Mother's age at birth of CM	-0.002		-0.001		-0.001	
	[0.004]		[0.005]		[0.007]	
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.135	*	-0.169	*	-0.049	
	[0.053]		[0.066]		[0.091]	
partly skilled/unskilled	-0.161	*	-0.261	**	0.024	
	[0.067]		[0.082]		[0.116]	
Mum left school minimum age	-0.023		-0.053		0.030	
	[0.043]		[0.054]		[0.071]	
Mum worked CM aged 5	-0.005		-0.017		0.010	
	[0.038]		[0.048]		[0.063]	
CM has younger siblings at 5	-0.019		-0.035		0.002	
	[0.041]		[0.051]		[0.069]	
Qualifications at 26: NVQ3 or above	-0.078		-0.016		-0.216	**
	[0.045]		[0.055]		[0.081]	
Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)						
skilled non-manual/manual	0.059		0.106		-0.057	
	[0.047]		[0.054]		[0.101]	
partly skilled/unskilled	0.141	**	0.164	*	0.068	
	[0.049]		[0.067]		[0.075]	
Dependent children at home at 26	-0.025		-0.065		0.027	
	[0.041]		[0.053]		[0.067]	
Relationship breakdown prior to 26	-0.074		-0.044		-0.133	
	[0.102]		[0.123]		[0.174]	
Constant	3.702	***	3.698	***	3.588	***
	[0.142]		[0.171]		[0.240]	
Observations	1216		759		457	
r <sup>2</sup>	0.017		0.026		0.039	
F(12,1203)	1.740		F(11,747)=1.80		F(11,445)=1.66	
p>F	0.054		0.051		0.081	

Table A61 Parameter estimates from the linear regression of attitudes at 30, BCS sample of first time married respondents at 26

ATTITUDES AT 30						
	ALL		Women		Men	
Women	-0.023 [0.036]					
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.011 [0.004]	**	0.011 [0.005]	*	0.009 [0.005]	
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.012 [0.043]		-0.092 [0.057]		0.115 [0.065]	
partly skilled/unskilled	0.017 [0.057]		-0.015 [0.076]		0.069 [0.085]	
Mum left school minimum age	0.046 [0.036]		0.053 [0.048]		0.028 [0.054]	
Mum worked CM aged 5	-0.039 [0.034]		0.017 [0.046]		-0.126 [0.050]	*
CM has younger siblings at 5	0.001 [0.037]		-0.010 [0.050]		-0.011 [0.053]	
Qualifications at 26: NVQ3 or above	0.020 [0.040]		0.024 [0.049]		0.005 [0.071]	
Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)						
skilled non-manual/manual	0.032 [0.043]		0.031 [0.050]		0.072 [0.089]	
partly skilled/unskilled	0.040 [0.044]		0.117 [0.063]		-0.045 [0.063]	
Dependent children at home at 26	0.047 [0.036]		-0.007 [0.049]		0.113 [0.053]	*
Relationship breakdown prior to 26	-0.097 [0.078]		-0.085 [0.106]		-0.073 [0.116]	
Divorced between 26 and 30	-0.776 [0.100]	***	-0.853 [0.108]	***	-0.473 [0.215]	*
Attitudes at 26	0.585 [0.025]	***	0.557 [0.033]	***	0.619 [0.036]	***
Constant	1.177 [0.150]	***	1.290 [0.200]	***	1.069 [0.220]	***
Observations	1207		752		455	
r <sup>2</sup>	0.372		0.367		0.412	
F(14,1192)	51.870		F(13,738)=34.40		F(13,441)=26.00	
p>F	0.000		0.000		0.000	

Note: parents separated and employment at 26 variables were not included in the analyses

Table A62 Parameter estimates [standard errors] from the logistic regression of divorce taking place between 26 and 30, BCS sample of first time married respondents at 26

Predicting DIVORCE	ALL	Women	Men	
Women	1.020 [0.349]	**		
Mother's age at birth of CM	-0.057 [0.032]	-0.082 [0.037]	* [0.063]	0.020
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)				
skilled manual/non-manual	0.020 [0.409]	0.073 [0.470]		-0.505 [0.878]
partly skilled/unskilled	-0.005 [0.512]	0.180 [0.588]		-0.892 [1.113]
Mum left school minimum age	0.292 [0.323]	-0.008 [0.354]		1.989 [1.100]
Mum worked CM aged 5	-0.077 [0.290]	-0.237 [0.338]		0.561 [0.620]
CM has younger siblings at 5	-0.423 [0.309]	-0.497 [0.350]		-0.190 [0.685]
Qualifications at 26: NVQ3 or above	0.342 [0.335]	0.247 [0.369]		0.667 [0.851]
Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)				
skilled non-manual/manual	-0.221 [0.357]	-0.392 [0.385]		1.207 [0.989]
partly skilled/unskilled	0.025 [0.373]	-0.183 [0.444]		0.560 [0.819]
Dependent children at home at 26	0.367 [0.293]	0.403 [0.335]		0.366 [0.646]
Relationship breakdown prior to 26	1.230 [0.425]	** [0.477]	1.332 [0.477]	** [1.130]
Attitudes at 26	-0.082 [0.212]	-0.204 [0.244]		0.373 [0.455]
Constant	-2.282 [1.293]	0.099 [1.457]		-7.671 [2.868]
Observations	1207	752		455
LR chi2	24.843	19.031		9.063
p>chi2	0.024	0.088		0.698
Pseudo R2	0.053	0.055		0.082

Note: parents separated and employment at 26 variables were not included in the analyses

Table A63 Odds Ratios from the logistic regression of divorce taking place between 26 and 30, BCS sample of first time married respondents at 26

Predicting DIVORCE	ALL	Women	Men
Women	2.774	**	
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.945	0.922	* 1.021
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)			
skilled manual/non-manual	1.020	1.076	0.603
partly skilled/unskilled	0.995	1.197	0.41
Mum left school minimum age	1.339	0.992	7.305
Mum worked CM aged 5	0.926	0.789	1.753
CM has younger siblings at 5	0.655	0.609	0.827
Qualifications at 26: NVQ3 or above	1.408	1.28	1.948
Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)			
skilled non-manual/manual	0.801	0.676	3.343
partly skilled/unskilled	1.025	0.833	1.751
Dependent children at home at 26	1.443	1.496	1.442
Relationship breakdown prior to 26	3.420	** 3.787	** 2.205
Attitudes at 26	0.921	0.816	1.452
Observations	1207	752	455
LR chi2	24.843	19.031	9.063
p>chi2	0.024	0.088	0.698

Note: parents separated and employment at 26 variables were not included in the analyses

## Section 5.2 Coefficients and standard errors from multinomial and binary logistic models

In the main text of Chapter 7, I presented odds ratios and relative risk factors for binary and multinomial logistic regressions respectively. These tables show the associated with these models regression coefficients and their standard errors.

Table A64 Parameter estimates and standard errors of coefficients from the multinomial logistic regression of the partnership/marital formation between 26 and 30, BCS

	Start cohabiting /single	Got married /single		Start cohabiting /got married	
Women	0.177 [0.156]	0.430 [0.139]	**	-0.252 [0.159]	
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.007 [0.015]	-0.052 [0.015]	***	0.061 [0.016]	***
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)					
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.151 [0.193]	0.079 [0.175]		-0.237 [0.201]	
partly skilled/unskilled	0.288 [0.259]	0.129 [0.245]		0.161 [0.264]	
Mum left school minimum age	0.125 [0.163]	0.046 [0.146]		0.082 [0.167]	
Mum worked CM aged 5	-0.110 [0.157]	0.057 [0.140]		-0.164 [0.160]	
CM has younger siblings at 5	-0.010 [0.165]	-0.016 [0.148]		0.010 [0.168]	
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.005 [0.228]	0.038 [0.201]		-0.055 [0.229]	
Qualifications at 26: equivalent NVQ3+	-0.347 [0.177]	-0.101 [0.158]		-0.246 [0.181]	
Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)					
skilled non-manual/manual	0.274 [0.189]	-0.366 [0.172]	*	0.637 [0.193]	***
partly skilled/unskilled	0.077 [0.201]	-0.374 [0.180]	*	0.440 [0.206]	*
Dependent children at home at 26	-0.872 [0.483]	1.247 [0.288]	***	-2.065 [0.444]	***
Relationship breakdown prior to 26	-0.271 [0.218]	-0.234 [0.192]		-0.030 [0.227]	
Attitudes at 26	-0.096 [0.108]	0.225 [0.097]	*	-0.317 [0.110]	**
_Constant	-0.289 [0.641]	-0.327 [0.957]		-0.853 [0.666]	
Observations	1258				
LR chi2	106.080				
P>chi2	0.000				
Pseudo R2	0.040				
Log likelihood	-1304.294				

Note: employment variable was not included in the regressions shown in this table.

Table A65 Parameter estimates and standard errors of coefficients from the multinomial logistic regression of the partnership/marital formation between 26 and 30, BCS

	Women			Men		
	Start cohab /single	Got married /single	Start cohab /got married	Start cohab /single	Got married /single	Start cohab /got married
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.000 [0.023]	-0.071 [0.021]	0.071 ** [0.023]	0.008 [0.022]	-0.044 * [0.021]	0.052 * [0.023]
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled manual/non-manual	0.022 [0.298]	0.147 [0.254]	-0.125 [0.296]	-0.281 [0.258]	0.014 [0.241]	-0.296 [0.275]
partly skilled/unskilled	0.655 [0.405]	0.412 [0.366]	0.243 [0.379]	0.001 [0.345]	-0.092 [0.334]	0.093 [0.367]
Mum left school minimum age	0.062 [0.242]	-0.113 [0.208]	0.175 [0.232]	0.148 [0.226]	0.173 [0.205]	-0.026 [0.238]
Mum worked CM aged 5	-0.193 [0.230]	-0.083 [0.200]	-0.110 [0.223]	-0.062 [0.219]	0.248 [0.198]	-0.310 [0.229]
CM has younger siblings at 5	0.036 [0.238]	0.066 [0.206]	-0.030 [0.228]	-0.092 [0.235]	-0.126 [0.214]	0.034 [0.247]
Parents separated	-0.492 [0.353]	-0.208 [0.279]	-0.283 [0.345]	0.384 [0.306]	0.276 [0.286]	0.107 [0.309]
Qualifications: NVQ3+	-0.464 [0.266]	-0.244 [0.231]	-0.220 [0.257]	-0.301 [0.247]	-0.110 [0.225]	-0.191 [0.261]
Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled non-manual/manual	0.140 [0.265]	-0.311 [0.227]	0.451 [0.254]	0.411 [0.279]	-0.405 [0.278]	0.815 ** [0.306]
partly skilled/unskilled	0.087 [0.319]	-0.566 [0.285]	0.653 * [0.314]	0.055 [0.263]	-0.162 [0.235]	0.217 [0.273]
Dependent children at 26	-1.005 * [0.501]	-0.011 [0.347]	-0.994 * [0.485]			
Relationship breakdown	-0.639 * [0.310]	-0.488 [0.252]	-0.151 [0.309]	0.090 [0.315]	0.008 [0.297]	0.083 [0.333]
Attitudes at 26	-0.136 [0.163]	0.115 [0.139]	-0.250 [0.156]	-0.034 [0.146]	0.317 * [0.136]	-0.351 * [0.155]
Constant	0.365 [0.948]	2.104 [0.847]	-1.740 [0.925]	-0.512 [0.894]	-0.071 [0.842]	-0.441 [0.959]
Observations	614			644		
LR chi2	48.100			32.644		
P>chi2	0.019			0.112		
Pseudo R2	0.005			0.024		
Log likelihood	-635.148			-676.841		

Note: employment variable was not included in the regressions shown in this table. Additionally, an indicator of children at home was also omitted from the regression using the sample of men.

Table A66 Parameter estimates [standard errors] from the multinomial logistic regression of marital/partnership formation between 33 and 42, NCDS sample of never married (not cohabiting) respondents at 33

	Start cohab /single		Got married /single		Start cohab /got married	
Women	-0.247 [0.261]		-0.742 [0.231]	**	-0.495 [0.304]	
Mother's age at birth of CM	0.000 [0.024]		-0.002 [0.022]		-0.002 [0.028]	
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled manual/non-manual	0.430 [0.327]		-0.117 [0.260]		-0.547 [0.367]	
partly skilled/unskilled	0.414 [0.420]		0.075 [0.359]		-0.339 [0.480]	
Mum left school minimum age	-0.107 [0.278]		-0.279 [0.238]		-0.172 [0.316]	
Mum worked CM pre-school	-0.098 [0.295]		0.104 [0.256]		0.202 [0.336]	
CM has younger siblings at 7	0.168 [0.265]		0.053 [0.231]		-0.116 [0.307]	
Educational qualifications NVQ3+	0.130 [0.283]		-0.179 [0.254]		-0.309 [0.328]	
Social class (professional/managerial – ref)						
skilled non-manual/manual	0.045 [0.345]		-0.695 [0.302]	*	-0.74 [0.401]	
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.385 [0.325]		-1.137 [0.306]	***	-1.522 [0.386]	***
Relationship breakdown prior to 33	1.723 [0.264]	***	0.798 [0.264]	**	-0.925 [0.303]	**
Attitudes at 33	-0.120 [0.170]		0.322 [0.144]	*	0.443 [0.193]	*
_cons	-1.877 [1.034]		-1.076 [0.897]		0.8 [1.194]	
Observations	581					
LR chi2	92.634					
p>chi2	0.000					
Pseudo R2	0.085					
Log likelihood	-500.304					

Note: The following variables were not included in the analyses shown in this table due to sample limitation: parents separated, employment at 33, dependent children at home at 33

Table A67 Parameter estimates [standard errors] from the multinomial logistic regression of the partnership/marital formation between 33 and 42, NCDS

	WOMEN			MEN		
	Start cohab /single	Got married /single	Start cohab /got married	Start cohab /single	Got married /single	Start cohab /got married
Mother's age at birth of CM	-0.009 [0.037]	0.012 [0.037]	0.021 [0.047]	-0.001 [0.033]	-0.012 [0.028]	-0.011 [0.037]
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled manual/non-manual	0.375 [0.486]	-0.668 [0.448]	-1.042 [0.586]	0.522 [0.457]	0.161 [0.338]	-0.361 [0.492]
partly skilled/unskilled	0.131 [0.645]	0.086 [0.579]	-0.045 [0.764]	0.568 [0.566]	0.067 [0.465]	-0.501 [0.628]
Mum left school minimum age	0.206 [0.437]	-0.582 [0.416]	-0.788 [0.535]	-0.346 [0.369]	-0.226 [0.300]	0.119 [0.403]
Mum worked CM pre-school	-0.484 [0.481]	-0.364 [0.460]	0.12 [0.604]	0.137 [0.383]	0.360 [0.321]	0.223 [0.413]
CM has younger siblings at 7	-0.052 [0.408]	-0.064 [0.411]	-0.012 [0.514]	0.283 [0.358]	0.001 [0.290]	-0.282 [0.396]
Educational qualifications NVQ3+	0.183 [0.466]	-0.714 [0.473]	-0.897 [0.595]	0.192 [0.369]	0.054 [0.312]	-0.137 [0.410]
Social class (prof/managerial – ref)						
skilled non-manual/manual	0.395 [0.503]	-0.375 [0.478]	-0.770 [0.618]	-0.430 [0.541]	-1.291 [0.445]	** -0.861 [0.623]
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.725 [0.588]	-1.282 [0.680]	-2.007 [0.817]	* 0.245 [0.391]	-1.188 [0.350]	*** -1.433 [0.444]
Relationship breakdown prior to 33	1.671 [0.412]	*** 1.016 [0.434]	* -0.656 [0.520]	1.763 [0.361]	*** 0.723 [0.354]	* -1.040 [0.389]
Attitudes at 33	-0.059 [0.313]	0.607 [0.303]	* 0.665 [0.393]	-0.136 [0.206]	0.262 [0.170]	0.398 [0.227]
_cons	-2.169 [1.739]	-2.345 [1.682]	-0.175 [2.149]	-1.776 [1.319]	-0.844 [1.092]	0.932 [1.475]
Observations	241			340		
LR chi2	40.146			60.079		
p>chi2	0.010			0.000		
Pseudo R2	0.095			0.091		
Log likelihood	-191.295			-300.939		

Note: The following variables were not included in the analyses shown in this table due to sample limitation: parents separated, employment at 33, dependent children at home at 33

Table A68 Parameter estimates [standard errors] from the logistic regression of divorce taking place between 26 and 30, BCS sample of first time married or cohabiting at 26 respondents

	ALL	Women	Men	
Women	0.213 [0.175]			
Mother's age at birth of CM	-0.025 [0.018]	-0.009 [0.024]	-0.047 [0.029]	
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)				
skilled manual/non-manual	0.150 [0.229]	0.058 [0.292]	0.211 [0.379]	
partly skilled/unskilled	-0.081 [0.300]	-0.108 [0.385]	-0.089 [0.490]	
Mum left school minimum age	-0.249 [0.179]	-0.448 [0.229]	-0.005 [0.299]	
Mum worked CM aged 5	-0.256 [0.171]	-0.240 [0.224]	-0.285 [0.276]	
CM has younger siblings at 5	-0.241 [0.183]	-0.215 [0.236]	-0.173 [0.297]	
Parents separated CM 16 or under	-0.001 [0.214]	-0.355 [0.299]	0.363 [0.331]	
Qualifications at 26: NVQ3 or above	-0.075 [0.202]	-0.284 [0.265]	0.191 [0.325]	
Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)				
skilled non-manual/manual	-0.166 [0.213]	-0.148 [0.254]	-0.250 [0.430]	
partly skilled/unskilled	-0.229 [0.212]	-0.131 [0.296]	-0.279 [0.315]	
Dependent children at home at 26	0.030 [0.195]	0.223 [0.249]	-0.245 [0.323]	
Relationship breakdown prior to 26	0.722 [0.218]	*** 1.129 [0.281]	*** 0.199 [0.362]	
b26status_m	-2.075 [0.186]	*** -1.699 [0.233]	*** -2.780 [0.354]	***
scale26	-0.177 [0.125]	-0.205 [0.162]	-0.212 [0.200]	
_cons	0.529 [0.719]	0.396 [0.909]	1.169 [1.172]	
Observations	1681	990	691	
chi2	211.401	108.516	122.571	
p>chi2	0.000	0.000	0.000	
Log likelihood	-509.665	-307.401	-192.419	

Table A69 Parameter Estimates [standard errors] from the logistic regression divorce taking place between 33 and 42, NCDS sample of first time married respondents at 33

Predicting divorce	ALL	Women		Men
Women	0.123 [0.150]			
Mother's age at birth of CM	-0.020 [0.014]	-0.049 [0.019]	*	0.012 [0.020]
Father's Social Class (prof/managerial – ref)				
skilled manual/non-manual	-0.326 [0.184]	-0.449 [0.248]		-0.185 [0.278]
partly skilled/unskilled	-0.315 [0.229]	-0.451 [0.310]		-0.146 [0.342]
Mum left school minimum age	0.115 [0.170]	0.090 [0.231]		0.123 [0.252]
Mum worked CM pre-school	0.072 [0.148]	0.204 [0.200]		-0.088 [0.223]
CM has younger siblings at 7	-0.099 [0.149]	-0.150 [0.202]		-0.021 [0.222]
Parents separated	0.084 [0.249]	-0.229 [0.352]		0.441 [0.356]
Educational qualifications NVQ3+	-0.387 [0.159]	* -0.202 [0.223]		-0.555 [0.227]
Social Class (professional/managerial – ref)				
skilled non-manual/manual	0.189 [0.187]	0.202 [0.232]		0.238 [0.335]
semi-skilled/unskilled	0.093 [0.172]	0.050 [0.261]		0.113 [0.233]
Employed	0.149 [0.198]	0.169 [0.216]		-0.108 [0.536]
Dependent children	-0.053 [0.190]	-0.049 [0.271]		-0.034 [0.267]
Relationship breakdown prior to 33	0.500 [0.253]	* 0.360 [0.361]		0.614 [0.358]
Attitudes at 33	-0.344 [0.099]	*** -0.522 [0.140]	***	-0.184 [0.141]
_cons	-0.915 [0.650]	0.595 [0.858]		-2.173 [1.032]
Observations	3697	1819		1878
Chi2	34.000	29.021		15.860
p>Chi2	0.003	0.010		0.322